

WEEK SEVEN

—Sunday—

This is a "good earth" — a beautiful awesome place. It carries the imprint of its Creator. Create in me a new heart — as I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

King of all the earth. Bless your beautiful name! You are much more than king of all the earth, the creator and sustainer of ten trillion galaxies — but for this little speck called "earth" you are indeed ruler and Lord, but a loving, non-interfering ruler, i.e., if we do not want your rule in our lives then your rule will only include the physical universe and the creatures (great and small). One of our days (when days shall cease to be) all mankind will know of your kingship — every knee shall acknowledge and every tongue will pronounce the words of wonder either in horror or honor. Right now I am most happy to own you as my king.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

King of all the earth for me. To stand back and contemplate the globe and relate yourself with the land surface — nay — all the peoples who live and move upon the land mass — and if there be other worlds with other peoples, you are the king, creator and owner of each of them. But in a particular personal manner you are king of my life and my world. Dear King, how strange it seems to describe your rule in such large dimensions and then circumscribe and hinder your rule in my own daily living — forgive me! How I do want you to reign. Long live the King! In my own heart, home, job — total life!

How do you personally relate to the kingship of God, and God who is king? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

To confess my sins becomes totally monotonous and useless unless I truly repent. Dear God, move me to repentance. I know this is a dangerous prayer, but I do pray it because I sincerely want to repent and

change. Sins named in your book form the basis of my confession in the general area of my sin, then my particular sins will be confessed along with them. "Railing" — I am blood guilty of this sin. I have railed at my students and have asked their forgiveness, and yours; at my wife and no one deserves less such treatment. Forgive, forgive. I have railed at circumstances when they are under your control. Open my eyes, humble my heart, forgive my sin.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers:
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours.
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours;
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.

⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. —Acts 12:5-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a thought! You know by name and experience every member of that church in Jerusalem. You could repeat every prayer. How I would like to have been

there! What commitment! Peter was sound asleep the night before his execution! What was in his mind? How did he so view yourself that he was able to accept the restful peace of sleep? Sentries at the entrance and soldiers, between which slept Peter the Apostle. These men, all of them, needed you. All of them were soon to be abruptly ushered into your eternal presence. Who were they? Were any of them saved from hell? Who was the angel? I know you know and one day I believe I will!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Is there a connection between the prayers of the church and the appearance of the angel? This strikes at a very basic issue. I think it altogether wonderful how you are able to answer prayer and then leave it up to man to interpret it as a coincidence or happenstance or "good luck." What you want and I want to give is real trust and confidence in your interest and answer to prayer — would he have been there if there had been no prayer? Why ask such a question? It is of little or no profit.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Amen — so be it. Thank you for: (1) *Earnest* prayer — it effects and affects much in its working. (2) The inclusive word "church" — no doubt there were present there, as today, some who were immature in their prayer life. (3) The wonder of sleep — how much a boon it is to man — the power of the peaceful heart to bring peaceful rest! (4) The very real physical efforts of man to thwart (defeat) your plans. How puny they are when you are ready to deliver! (5) The suddenness of some of your acts — all are sudden when not expected — a delightful surprise is the name of your game with me! (6) The light that shone into the cell — you didn't have to use a light, but you did. It surely brightened up the whole picture. (7) The materialization of the angel — or is this the explanation? At least Peter could see him. Perhaps it was giving Peter capacities of sight into a dimension that exists all the time — the Spirit world.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared." Since the meaning of the word "angel" is messenger, it would be easy to say that any humble servant of the Lord who carries a message from the Lord is God's angel. Of course this is an accommodated use of the word, but the lowest servant of our Lord, like Ananias of Damascus, can do what an archangel like Gabriel could not do: tell the good news to Saul of Tarsus and baptize him that his sins might be washed away and he could be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Sudden-

ly" somewhere, sometime a messenger of the Lord appeared and told us the good news or we would not be here to record it. It would be *oh, so good* to have an angel materialize in the midst of the busy activities of life, but it would be better to go where you know no one has ever come with the glad tidings of great joy — after all it was given "for all the people."

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How many requests can I find in the example of Peter: (1) I want to be an example of "earnest prayer" — help me. (2) Give me the settled peace that guarded the heart of Peter. (3) I am aware of angels, but not as much as I should be — help me! (4) I want to affirm that there are no doors you cannot open! (5) Shine the light of your word upon my own bondage and set me free! (6) Keep me alert. Sometimes you act suddenly. I do not want to miss your direction. (7) I praise you that as I go about life today you are aware of it all. Sensitize my heart.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Through your word, visit me! What do you say? (1) "I am listening to those who pray — even if they have but little faith." (2) "The word of God is not bound." (3) "I am interested in all the details of life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Somalia — Points for prayer: (1) *This closed land* needs to be prayed open for the gospel. Only a few areas were ever exposed to the gospel, and this was just a limited period of 20 years. (2) *The work of missions* ended in 1973-74 after some very difficult years of seeking to win Somalis under almost impossible restrictions. Yet the courageous witness of *SIM* and the Mennonites led to the conversion of a number of Somalis and also the translation of the Somali Bible. (3) *National believers* continue to live for the Lord under very difficult conditions. Many are isolated and it is hard to meet for fellowship. They face much opposition from both the authorities and their own families. Some believers took refuge in Kenya. Pray that God may preserve his own and bless their witness.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee;
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

WEEK SEVEN

—Monday—

You reign — many do not know it — many more do not accept it. I do — I bow before you in willing submission.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Reigning. The fact is you *are* reigning *now* and always have been, and always will be, over the entire physical inanimate world, over all the animal kingdom you are king, and in the hearts of all men who want your Lordship you reign. Dear Lord, count me as one who wants your rule because I need it so desperately. To attribute all power, all authority in heaven and on earth is to but repeat the words of your dear Son. One day, when there are no more days, you will claim your reign and all that has not yielded, gladly, to your reign will be removed. Right now I am most happy to acknowledge your supreme Lordship and try, help my trying, to yield my whole being to you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“Let not therefore sin (Satan) reign in your mortal body that you should fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12). It is possible for me to “let” either you my great, loving Father-Creator to reign or sin through Satan, or Satan through sin. I can *let* either one — the choice is mine — but is there really a choice considering the results? As much as we choose Satan and sin one would imagine there was some benefit, at least beyond the momentary pleasure of the moment, or season. What I need to do is to be creative about the means of entering into the joys, delights and satisfactions of the Lord!

How do you personally relate to the reign of God, and God who reigns? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Selfish ambition — how can I eliminate this? By being sure the purpose or goal of my ambition is unselfish. But there are other sins for which I should be and am heartily sorry and want to repent. At the bottom line

is selfishness — perhaps the largest is “self-deception,” i.e., pretending I am something I am not. It must appear positively humorous to you, or infinitely sad. All that I deceive is myself. Dear God, cleanse me in the blood of your Son, clothe me in the best robe in your house — the red robe of righteousness. Comfort me and deepen my dependence on you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have found a friend in Jesus,
He's everything to me,
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay,
He tells me every care on Him to roll:
He's the Lily of the Valley,
the Bright and Morning Star,
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

⁸Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him.

⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

—Acts 12:7-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What amazement filled the face and heart of Peter when he opened his eyes and saw the angel! Even after he saw the angel and heard him he yet could not believe it. How good it is that we can live this incident all over again. What must it be to live in the "eternal present" — it is just as clear and real today with you as it was two thousand years ago! How precise and thoughtful is the angel. Angels seem to have a habit of waking people up — the shepherds, Cornelius and now Peter. How I do want to awake with the apostle — chains and iron gates mean nothing when you are ready to deliver! You can and do direct the thinking and actions of people, i.e., when it suits your purpose — the first and second guards did not know Peter left!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Your angels are here in this room, I just cannot see them. Are they saying much the same thing to me? "Quick, get up," it is late and the world is going to hell! All chains of hesitancy and bondage can and do fall off! "Put on the whole armor of God" — righteousness, truth, good news of peace, faith, etc. Fasten this armor on tightly, i.e., be personally knowledgeable that you have it on. "Follow me," God's angel — the angel of God says this to me. I can follow him out of prison. Oh, the amazement of it all! Oh, the total freedom!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How I love to do this. (1) Thank you for your servants who needed to be awakened. I do, too! (2) That personal contact can and is made to wake us up — of one type or another. (3) When my hands are set free I can serve. (4) He wants me dressed to serve him. (5) The angel compensates for Peter's dullness or lack of belief. (6) There were visions in which you communicated. (7) The poor soldiers were left behind.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He had no idea it was really happening"! This could well characterize most of life. In a dozen ways I have been delivered and I really do not know it. (1) I had no idea what was happening when our three children were born. (2) I had no idea what was involved when our children were married — I thought I did, but I didn't. (3) Grandchildren are full of surprises! (4) I had no idea what was really happening when I baptized the very first convert — a little boy about 10 or 11. (5) I knew not that the humble meeting I held of 10 or 15 saints was "the house of God and the gate of heaven." (6) I had no idea what really happened when

a totally sincere girl gave her heart to me and pledged her life with mine. How could I ever know the ten thousand blessings she would bring?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Wake me up to the requests I should make as related to these verses. (1) Show me just what is urgent and what is not in your work. (2) Release me from the bondage of useless routine. (3) Strike from my hands all desire to do my own will. (4) Show me the reality of what appears as but a dream of spiritual conquest. (5) Clothe me for the battle of following your leading. (6) Lead me past all the barricades of Satan. (7) Open doors for me I really never knew could be opened.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What living word do you speak to me from this text? (1) "Get up and tell of your deliverance." (2) "Leave all and follow me." (3) "I can deliver from every prison."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Point for prayer: The racial issue overshadows all others. Pray for: a) The tensions and hatreds in society to drive Christians into earnest prayer for the spiritual health of their nation. b) Courage for those in authority to rectify injustices and implement policies that will bring about meaningful and nonviolent political changes. c) Christian leaders to be uncompromising for both biblical truth and social justice. Few have the balance. Liberation theology has become a major emphasis in a climate where all legitimate means for change have been thwarted. d) The Church to be a true agent for reconciliation. Christians need to put loyalty to their Lord before the security or advancement of their own ethnic group. There are Christians on both sides of the racial divide who advocate violence in either repression or protest. Pray for repentance from wrong attitudes and that credibility for a biblically prophetic role may be regained. e) True fellowship links irrespective of language and race. Pray for those working to this end. f) The primary task of the Church for evangelism and missions not to be lost, but reemphasized.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me,
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see,
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.

WEEK SEVEN

—Tuesday—

What a solid encouragement it is to know you are planning our good — not evil. I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

For us. Wonderful Lord, great God, I know you love me and every man, every woman. You have planned and provided the very best for each of us. It is a wonderful source of strength to know of your infinite interest. How carefully you have given us “all things to enjoy.” In the smallest of detail you have indicated your interest and concern that we have all we need. In you we are full and have all things. If you are for us — and we know you are — then who could be against us — i.e., successfully oppose us?

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. In so many little areas of life I have found evidence of your interest! How I praise you this is true. For today and all its needs and opportunities I know you will be there to help me, to indicate your involvement in all human affairs. Man may not see it or appreciate it, or acknowledge it, to say nothing of thanking you for it, nonetheless, you are there behind what man can see, or interpret, to provide. How is it we have an atmosphere on this small piece of matter that is especially suited to our needs?

How do you personally relate to the love of God, and God who is for you? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Hardening of the heart. This is a sin and I want to be rid of it. I want to hold an open, tender heart toward yourself. How shall I learn of your heart and your interest if I am not sensitive toward your will in my life? Dear God, I do want you to penetrate my inmost being and have control of my thoughts. Most of all, just now, cleanse and forgive me of all and each of my sins. I confess them all to you!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

“Are ye able,” said the Master,
 “To be crucified with Me?”
 “Yea,” the conquering Christians answered,
 “To the death we follow Thee.”

Lord, we are able, our spirits are Thine,
 Remold them, make us like Thee, divine:
 Thy guiding radiance above us shall be
 A beacon to God, to love and loyalty.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. —Acts 12:10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

On Peter's strange journey — I want to think of it as you do, and as Peter did, for you do know how he felt! Here again we walk with Simon — you are as involved in all human affairs — they are your affairs, too. How does it feel to follow an angel in the middle of the night — or better, in the wee hours of the early morning? How do the stones feel on your feet? Did the iron gate make a noise when it opened? How many houses did they pass before they had walked the length of the street? Did Peter get a really good look at the angel just before he left? What expression was on the angel's face? I'm sure you can answer all these foolish questions, but I wish I could.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I would much rather follow an angel than to have an angel follow me. Could you arrange that for today? I do not say this or pray this in an

altogether facetious manner. Can you through the angels open closed doors to cities today? Oh, indeed, indeed. More than sixty years of my life have gone by, but even now I know you can deliver me from all that binds me, limits me, confines me. You can lead me into the "wide place." You can find for me my own "Rehoboth" (Gen. 26:22). Dear God, open the gate to the city!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

With enthusiasm I do! Thank you: (1) For all barricades put up by men — for how else could we know your power except through overcoming? (2) For some gates — hindrances that seem to solve themselves — now I know who is really doing it. (3) That we "never walk alone" — your servants of heaven are with us, you are with us, the Holy Spirit is in us. (4) We can go "through" all hindrances to your way. (5) Your personal, powerful, sensate presence need be with us but for "the length of one street." (6) Night is no hindrance or problem with you. (7) The angel did — and did not — leave him.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The iron gate leading to the city opened for them by itself." Why did Luke include this little insight? Why mention the iron gate? Because to men such seems unmovable, impregnable, but with God in the fulfillment of God's purpose it becomes animated, no longer cold, unmoved metal, but a living thing responsive to the will of God. Nothing is indifferent when God speaks. Dear Lord, great God, moving Holy Spirit, ministering angels — this is the *real* world. When God moves into the sphere of man there are no barriers.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Into the excitement of that memorable night I want to go for petitions: (1) Keep me aware that even when I do not know it you are leading me. (2) Teach me over again that so many things that "work out" are of your own doing. (3) Impress upon me that if I do not move you cannot. (4) I need a lesson in patience retaught to me each day. (5) Let me know how far it is from where I am to where you want me to go. (6) Teach me how to separate what I should do from what you are doing. (7) Thank you for the simple, trusting faith of Peter.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying in this verse? (1) "Iron gates are

no problem for me." (2) "Some problems will solve themselves." (3) "It takes time to lead even in a miraculous manner."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise for the positives:* a) *The strength of Protestant Christianity* despite the widely publicized negatives. The Spirit of God is moving in all the major racial groups, and with touches of revival in some areas. There are large numbers of evangelical believers in the country. b) *The increasing prayer concern* among Christians, and growth of interracial and interdenominational prayer movements. (2) *The missionary commitment of South African Christians* suffered severely because of the country's increasing political isolation since 1961. South African missionary outreach has been large, and some world renowned missionary thrusts have been of South African origin.

[Additional Note: The fourth edition of Operation World, from which our Intercession notes have been obtained, came out in 1986. As readers are aware, 1989-1990 saw great changes in Eastern Europe and in South Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela in early 1990 has reduced many of the racial tensions in South Africa, but has not totally eliminated them. Prayer is still vitally needed that people will focus their attention on the Prince of Peace, and not be side-tracked by social issues, important as they are. We can also praise God that the Dutch Reformed Church has re-evaluated its theological stance on blacks that has long underpinned South African racism.]

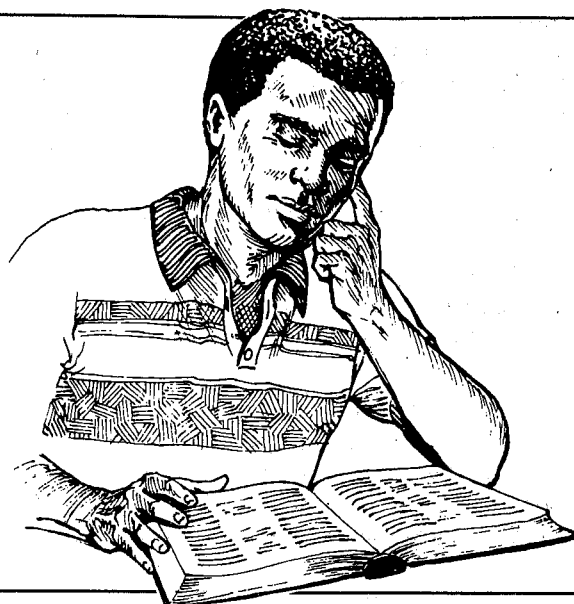
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our songs shall rise to Thee;
Holy! Holy! Holy!
Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

What comfort there is in the truth that you are the same, yesterday — today — forever. I want to renew this thought just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Faithful. How beautifully this word does describe your very self. This quality means so *very* much — consistency is a habit we all need to cultivate — you need not; you are consistent in *every* relationship. Faithfulness means you keep every promise. How glad we are to acknowledge this. No one promise has fallen short in any regard, for anyone. Faithfulness presupposes an interest. I am so glad you have an interest in all men all the time.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Faithful to me. It is for my need and my weakness you express your faithfulness. You have given me every good and perfect thing, or event, or relationship that I have — for this I praise you. I love you for being just the same yesterday, today and tomorrow — as spelled out in man's perspective — but remaining only what you have always been. Glory and honor, adoration and amazement are all words to say how deeply grateful I am to you.

How do you personally relate to the faithfulness of God, and God who is faithful? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Deceit. Dear God, when it would be better to tell the truth, i.e., for our own advantage, we tell a lie. When it would be better to love we hate. When it would be so much better to admit we evade. Dear God, forgive me (not them). Cleanse me, free me, love me. I love you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I've found a Friend, oh such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

¹⁵"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." —Acts 12:11-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it must have been to hear Peter express the very thoughts you intended by your action in his life! "To know without a doubt!" Ah, fond desire! But this we can and do have in our confidence in your character as revealed in your word and the life of your Son. Peter knew of the plans of Herod and the Jews. He knew also where the prayer meeting was held. How do you view the actions of Rhoda? It must be your delight to surprise with joy all such young women and all such faithless disciples. Thank you, thank you that you desire to so speak to man.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just whose place shall I take? Could I be as confident as Peter in the face of soon coming death? I am sure I would be as surprised as he in the deliverance. Can I approximate the overjoyed wonder of Rhoda? Dear Lord, I *want* to. Peter was not only knocking but speaking. I wonder what he said. One day I shall ask Rhoda — and know. Until then I would be like to hear in my imagination a few of his shouts of joy. Has anyone accused me lately of losing my mind because of my testimony concerning the living Savior? Or my telling of a supernatural deliverance of one of his servants? I wonder what someone meant by saying "It must be his angel"? Did Peter have a single angel assigned to him? Do all of us have such?

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Of many texts this should be a source of gratitude: (1) For the fact that you are in the "resource business." (2) That you do not ignore or minimize the opposition of man. (3) That your revelation, even to Peter, was progressive. (4) That the largest part of praying is adoration and thanksgiving. (5) That even a lowly servant girl was known of you and knew Peter in a personal way, i.e., she knew his voice. (6) Excitement is a part of your work with men. (7) Sharing God's blessings is natural and compatible with your plan.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It must be his angel." The term angel means "messenger" so it seems strange to relate this expression to the death of Peter — as if this person is saying he died and his spirit has returned. We have not known the spirit of man and the term angel being used interchangeably. Are we to learn here that each person has an angel assigned to them? If so, why would the angel knock at the gate? Perhaps it was but the outpouring of amazed confusion. There is one static lesson: angels are very real, intelligent beings who have a great interest in men. They are deathless beings alive in the world today.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How like the disciples in Mary's house are all of us! (1) Shock me into the reality of the spirit world. (2) Deliver me today from Satan's clutches and all he has anticipated. (3) I do knock on the doors of opportunity today, confident that you will open. (4) Help me to be patient with those who act out of impulse and not thought. (5) If the door does not open right away keep me persistent in knocking. (6) Give me the joy of Rhoda as related to my Lord knocking on the door of my heart. (7) In spite of all who doubt or deny move

me to affirm that he is indeed knocking for admission into all of my life.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say just here? (1) "My answers to prayer are not always what people expect." (2) "Joy need not always make sense." (3) "Believe me first, last and always."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: (1) *The White community*. The *Afrikaners* are mostly members of the three major Reformed Churches, primarily the theologically conservative Dutch Reformed Church. The *English speaking people* tend to be less religious than the *Afrikaners*. (2) *The Colored (racially mixed) community*. Their unfortunate past has left a legacy of social instability which can only effectively be changed by the power of the gospel. Unstable family life, immorality and alcoholism are real problems. (3) *The Asian community*. The *Indian* community has gone through traumatic social and economic changes since their arrival in Natal a century ago. Many are very Westernized. The *Chinese* live mainly in Transvaal; many are still non-Christian. (4) *Black African communities*. Black nationalism has become a potent force. Politically this has led to violent protest in some areas and widespread rejection of the ideals of the dominant white community. This could lead to a rejection of biblical Christianity and persecution of true Christians.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the Lifegate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

What a delight to know you have made an agreement with your Son on my behalf. I bow before you to rejoice!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Covenant-maker. How remarkable that you want to make an agreement with man. You want man to enter your mind and heart and agree with you concerning this matter or that. We have such a full record of your faithfulness in covenant agreements — of land, of a great nation, of your dear Son. But of all the agreements you have made and kept, none are more important, indeed all seem to be but the preparation for your final agreement in the blood and righteousness of your dead Son. That you would want to transact business with me is a total amazement. Praise your faithful name! How glad I am for your goodness.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Covenant-maker with me. To claim my part of this testament is so important and yet so very humbling. How glad I am to claim the remission (the stopping of sin) in my life and record. I want to enter the fullness of fulfillment as related to your covenant with me. Trusting reliance upon your faithfulness is my part — which I gladly give — but to stop sinning is accomplished in fact in only a relative manner; to stop all sinning I would have to know all things, i.e., where I am imperfect and would need a power I do not now have. “To will is present, but to perform is not.” I can see and claim the guilt of sin stopped — the record of sin removed — but the practice?? Dear God, I surely, sorely want to!

How do you personally relate to the covenant-making of God, and God who is covenant-maker? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Which indeed leads me to openly admit my need, deep, deep need. I am a sinner — one who violates

your law, misses your mark, falls far, far short of your glory (character). I could (and do) specify several categories, and specific sins. I cast myself daily and momentarily upon your mercy and love. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow! I claim by faith, not by work, my freedom and joy of acceptance. I am such a poor example of obedience if obedience is performance. I have failed if obedience is an attitude and desire. Dear God, I agree! I want to obey. I see no reason at all for myself not to obey, but there is another law in my members bringing me into bondage. Thanks be to yourself! There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are hidden in him.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Thou, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me;
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷Peter motioned for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the brothers about this,” he said, and then he left for another place.

¹⁸In the morning, there was a great commotion among the soldiers. “What could have happened to Peter?” they asked. — *Acts 12:16-18, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It must please you to see men pleased, especially when

the surprise is associated with your answer to prayer! How totally beyond belief was the deliverance of Peter, was the presence of Peter and the recounting of your action in his life. Who asked what? What were the comments in the house of Mary that day? I want to hear it all over again — you know James so much better than we do — what was his response? Leadership was a very real and needed activity in the church at Jerusalem. You know the names (and serial numbers) of every one of the soldiers in the empty cell of the prison. Was it your choice that they die? No, No, You have no pleasure in the death of wicked (or lost) — it was Herod's choice!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to "be quiet" and hear, as for the first time, what Peter — what are you saying to me! The Lord brought him out of prison — even when angels are the means the cause is "the Lord" — yourself, or your Son. You are cognizant of physical wood and stone buildings. "Tell James and the brothers" — James the brother of my Lord, James the one who did not know his own brother, i.e., the One who lived with him in the same house — but now he did — now he leads others to know. My, how he could speak with help to me! It is so good to have spiritual brothers just like those in Jerusalem!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed I can: (1) Thank you for the persistence and boldness of Peter. (2) Thank you for the thrill of divine astonishment. (3) Thank you that in quietness we learn. (4) Thank you that it can still be told to the leaders and brothers and sisters how the Lord can and does deliver his servants! Amen! (5) Thank you that Peter never stayed around for congratulations — he cared more for the safety of the disciples. (6) Thank you that he never told them where he was going — what wisdom he had from you! (7) Thank you that this incident could have caused some of these soldiers to become Christians before they saw you.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"What could have happened to Peter?" This was the question of the soldiers, but it can be a question for each of us. (1) What could have happened to Peter if Jesus had not made a personal resurrection appearance to him? He could have become discouraged and quit. (2) What could have happened to Peter if our Lord had not prayed for him that his faith fail not? (3) What could have happened to Peter if Jesus had given up on him the third time he went to sleep when he asked him to watch and pray? (4) What could have happened to Peter if he decided God was against him

and therefore he was in prison? (5) What if the Christians had not prayed for him?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of the excitement of these verses there arise requests: (1) I want to keep the capacity to be astonished at your goodness. (2) Help me to tell someone today what the Lord has done for me. (3) I want to respect and admire your work in others. (4) May I seek to protect others by what I do not say. (5) May I, like John Mark, drink in eagerly every word of the wonder of your grace. (6) It is good at times to leave — help me to know when. (7) Keep me alert to the beautiful accuracy of this text.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My ears are open — speak to me from these verses: (1) "Time is a very important factor in some of my work." (2) "People need to hear over and over again all I have done." (3) "There is no avoiding loss as well as gain in some of my work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: *The 10 National States/Independent States* are a patchwork of larger and smaller ethnic enclaves within the area of S. African provinces according to the majority ethnic group: (1) *Bophuthatswana*: pop. 1,490,000; 40% of Tswana. Fairly viable economy. Christian 90.4%, of which African Independent Churches (AICs) form 24%. (2) *Ciskei*: pop. 738,000; 12% of Xhosa. Independent 1981; government has poor record on human rights. Christian 75%. (3) *Gazankulu*: pop. 618,000; 40% of Shangaan/Tsonga. Economically backward. Christian 51%; only AICs and RCs growing significantly. (4) *Kangwane*: pop. 185,000; 16% of Swazi. Christian 68%; massive growth of AICs. (5) *KwaNdebele*: pop. 173,000; 35% of S. Ndebele. Christian 85%, much nominalism; AICs 50% of population. (6) *KwaZulu*: pop. 3,940,000; 60% of Zulu. Has refused independence. Very fragmented geographically. Christian 75%. (7) *Lebowa*: pop. 2,020,000; 60% of Pedi. Poor and economically unviable. Christian 57%; rapid growth of AICs and RCs. The Zion Christian Church, largest AIC, is predominantly Pedi.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the word:
From Heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

WEEK SEVEN

—Friday—

You are at the head of an innumerable throng of angels — of the spirits of just men made perfect. I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Lord of hosts. The hosts of heaven are under your command. Indeed, all the hosts of men and angels will be (and now in the light of eternity are) under your control. Praise your powerful name! In all the battles of the Old Testament record you led forth in triumph — in whatever opposition to the hearts or lives of men there are ten million angels — all the strength of omnipotence ready for use. I doubt not your total ability — it is only that you do not choose to use such power.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Lord of hosts for me. There are truly legions of angels at work on behalf of man's needs. I praise you for such interest and involvement in the passing show of man's little flutter of existence. Oh, dear God, keep me open and reaching out to you in praise and wonder — you merit all such praise, yea, much, much more. Lead on. O King Eternal — the day of march has come!

How do you personally relate to the power of God, and God who is Lord of hosts? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

To simply and fully confess all my sin to you is no burden — it is a grand release! I have at times been bitter at you (at least indirectly) for the inequities of life — and even now I do not understand them any better than before, but bitterness is totally self-defeating, for which I ask forgiveness. It is a sin against myself, as well as yourself! Against my dear wife who surely does not deserve such treatment. Cleanse and relieve me of this! Calmness and peace are the fruit of forgiveness. Praise your name forever!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all;
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall.
When I am sad, to Him I go,
No other one can cheer me so;
When I am sad He makes me glad,
He's my Friend.

HIS WORD

¹⁹After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. ²⁰He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. — *Acts 12:19-20, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How typical of all men are the soldiers of Herod. I'm sure that thought occurred to you. When you do not want someone or something to be found it will not be found. You have your own purposes for hiding all that is hidden. Such purposes are also past tracing out. Perhaps one day (when there is no day) you will open the treasure of your hidden secrets to our wondering view. At the same time, these soldiers represent all men who are in a search for you — at least implicitly this is true — some are truly reaching out, although you are not far from any one of us. These poor soldiers represent all of us — cross-examined by your truth we have no defense — we, unlike them, are blood guilty and deserve to die. You, unlike the cruel, selfish, prideful king, are the king of mercy and love. Praise your name!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As I have already said, it is not difficult to take my place in the frantic search of the soldiers. I am so glad that I have found you! I have deserved to die and you have forgiven me! I am more than glad I do not have to accept the judgments of men, but of yourself. I do accept all my mistakes among men and their consequences — some deserved and some undeserved — both good and bad — but only because I know my eternal judge and sentence is in your hands. Blessed, wonderful judge of all the earth! It is good to have the close record of a little despot long ago and far away to let us know that no one and not a thing is either long ago or far away with you!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Oh, indeed! Thank you, thank you: (1) For every Christian home in Jerusalem. (2) That none of the Christians knew where Peter was. (3) For your way of making the authorities aware of the number of Christians and the miraculous aspect of their faith. (4) That a measure of justice, i.e., responsibility and guilt, prevails in human society, even some pagan societies. (5) For death that will usher us into the larger life — awesome, awful thought for those unprepared. I have a hard time believing the soldiers did not accept our Lord and his hope of eternal life before they were executed. How many days were involved, etc., we do not know. (6) For the total accuracy of the Acts account, historical and geographical. (7) That we do not have such a ruler over us today.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

A thorough search was made for him and did not find him. I am so glad that this in *no way* describes you, my blessed Lord — indeed, you have been in a thorough search for all men since before the beginning of time, and you have “found” those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to believe. Dear God, you have found me! The Son of Man came to “seek” — you “seek” those to worship you. You are the shepherd in search of the sheep — the Samaritan who found poor, robbed and beaten mankind on the roadside of life. You are the shepherd who calls and leads and carries his sheep. Bless your tender heart! In another figure you are “the hound of heaven” — the love that will not let me go! What a lovely captivity to be caught and held by you!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I love to think through every word of these two verses: (1) I want to be aware that any time you wish I can show up very inadequate in the presence of

men. (2) May I not take out my punctured pride in the hurt of others. (3) May I remember if you do not want us to find something it is useless to look. (4) Forgive me dear Lord if I cause any innocent people to suffer because of my selfishness. (5) May I find setbacks a lesson in humility. (6) Dear Lord, help me to freely admit the miraculous in the record of your book. (7) Give me a clear memory of all you have done to prove your love and your power.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me from these two verses? (1) “Learn from Herod that your conscience can become dull.” (2) “Sometimes innocent people suffer.” (3) “You will find no peace in browbeating other people.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Spain — Points for prayer: (1) *The new era of liberty* gives a thrilling opportunity for the gospel. The stirrings of the Holy Spirit in Spain at the time of the Reformation were crushed by the Inquisition. For five centuries Spain had no liberty, and a repressive superstitious Catholicism dominated the life of the country. Pray that religious liberty may lead to spiritual liberty for many. (2) *The changes in Spain have not resulted in an openness to the gospel.* Satan’s means of blinding people must be torn away: a) The rapid secularization of Spain has led to indifference to Christianity, a rejection of absolutes, a big drug problem and an alarming rise in crime. b) Deeply ingrained superstitious Catholic practices and teachings have given a suspicion of any other view — especially foreign ones. c) Evangelicals are often mistaken for Jehovah’s Witnesses, whose activities are widespread and growing.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Through eternal ages let His praises ring;
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God,
Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I’m standing on the promises of God.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

Your essential being — your whole person is to be honored — adored — revered! I so worship you just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Reverend. “Reverend and holy is his name.” How interesting that a title so often applied to men is really your name — a quality of your character. Dear God, I accept this quality as perhaps the *one* quality I most relate to yourself. To me you are to be worshiped, hallowed, respected, and so indeed reverence is one of the first qualities that comes to mind. I want to bow before you, prostrate myself before you — holy, pure, separate, sanctified and reverend is your total person.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Reverend for me — all men should and ultimately will reverence your name and I count myself as among them. “Sacred wonder” would be a good way to describe my attitude. How beautiful to lift up my inner being to you. To know you are altogether, yea and more, the source and full origin of all that is clean, right, good and holy. I love you, but it is a love full of amazement and shock! Dear God, I want to be speechless with true reverence before your face!

How do you personally relate to the reverence of God, and God who is reverend? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

In this frame of heart it is not at all difficult to bow in contrition before you. How shall my heart (entire inward being) be moved to change? I struggle each day with this problem — I do so need to change — I ask for a full view of your goodness that I might repent. “Love suffers long with kindness” — I do neither! How longsuffering you have been and now are with me! Dear God, Holy Father, forgive, but *change* me! May my fear of your judgment and condemnation in an endless suffering or punishment move me, shock me, startle me into a deep change of

mind! Dear God, forgive — but change me.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you,
Take it, then, where'er you go.
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of Heav'n;
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of Heav'n.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁰He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

²¹On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. ²²They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not a man.” ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten with worms and died.

²⁴But the word of God continued to increase and spread. —Acts 12:20-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

To read this account in the light of eternity surely gives a vastly different estimate of the actions of those involved. As Herod looked down upon the people so you looked down on the whole scene. What had Blastus told the people of Tyre and Sidon that helped them as they appeared before this poor puppet?

Perhaps he said to flatter him as much as possible — did he tell them that Herod had an inexhaustible desire to be accepted by men — to be recognized as a man of power — and he would do *anything* to get it? Poor, poor man! You alone can satisfy the human ego — for the human ego is the human spirit created in *your* image and restless and unfulfilled until at rest and completed in you! But the options are no options at all — we either give you the praise or we are “eaten of worms.”

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What powerful words are in these verses! From what we are told by contemporary writers Herod *was* a good speaker — he did have real ability in oratory — but at the best his voice was not in any sense “the voice of a god,” and what he said was blaspheming to the true One God. Dear Lord, help me to remember the source of all speaking ability — to know how fickle and fallible are the praises of men. To remember that you *are* listening to every word I speak (or write). It is a fearful, wonderful, awesome thing to speak in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the holy angels.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you: (1) For letting me know honesty and duplicity do exist in all human exchange. (2) That our country is not dependent upon a despot for food supply. (3) That we have peace and prosperity in our free land. (4) For clothes and shelter — dear God, help us to be content. (5) For the plain lesson on the results of pride and pomp. (6) For the strong message that we should give you the praise for all we are and have. (7) That in spite of all, your word can and does spread.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's remember and learn from these questions: (1) From what was Peter delivered? From “Herod's clutches and everything the Jewish people were anticipating.” It is interesting that the motives of Herod and the Jews are spelled out and in no uncertain terms. (2) Explain the strange actions of a servant girl. For all time her exuberant joy and surprise will be ours. Her overlooking the obvious is so characteristic of such surprise — the account becomes all the more authentic. (3) The appearance of Peter was either the imagination of a distraught mind or the supernatural appearance of an angel — of course, it was neither one — but such is the disbelief of men. Lord, have mercy.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How powerfully do these verses move me to ask of you! (1) Dear Lord, I want to seek my importance in you — not men. (2) Keep me aware that there is always a way to deceive — guard me from it. (3) Teach me what a blessing is my daily bread from your hand. (4) May I remember that native talents can be given to you or prostituted. (5) Make me more aware how deadly is the praise of men. (6) Help me to brand as a lie that man has said anything of truth without you. (7) I want to remember that sooner or later the worms will eat us all.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Directly from heaven via your word — speak to me: (1) “I will not share my glory with another.” (2) “Most men are liars.” (3) “The word of God will continue long after all the world is gone.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Spain — Points for prayer: (1) *The growth of the Protestant Church has been steady but disappointing.* The 6,000 Protestants in 1932 had increased to 20,000 in 1963 and 50,000 in 1986, but they are very unevenly distributed. Active Evangelicals are still only one in 1,000 in the whole country. The only major advance has been the exciting outpouring of the Spirit among the gypsies among whom there are many thousands of radiant, witnessing believers; their numbers may now be as high as 20,000. (2) *Unreached peoples.* a) *The Basques* are an ancient and proud people, but there is not a single Protestant church among them. The few churches in the four provinces where Basques live are Spanish speaking. There is only a handful of known believers among possibly 750,000 Basques in Spain. b) *The 43 million tourists* each year from all over Europe. c) *The Muslims* have a considerable influence in the cities of Granada, Cordoba and on the Costa del Sol where there are also communities of Spanish converts to Islam. Youth With a Mission and other groups are beginning to work among them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have a song I love to sing,
Since I have been redeemed,
Of my Redeemer, Savior, King,
Since I have been redeemed.
Since I have been redeemed,
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in His name;
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in my Savior's name.