

Wild Beasts

by Tricia Berg

The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. Deuteronomy 7:22

full passage:

If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?' you shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So will the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. Moreover, the LORD your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed. You shall not be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God. The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. But the LORD your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed. And he will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven. No one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction. Deuteronomy 7:17-26 (Also see 1John 2:15-17)

I have heard people criticize God for being "brutal" against these evil people without even understanding why they were destroyed by our holy, righteous God. So let's review why the people were going to be driven out of the land God was giving to His people. (Psa. 24:1-2) In Lev. 18:6-23, we learn that the sort of things they were doing that God detested included incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality and sacrificing children to false gods.

"Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these

abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God." Leviticus 18:24-30

Remember, the promised land was a foreshadow of the kingdom of God. He still hates the same things now as he hated then. He doesn't "change with the times." (Mal. 3:6, Heb. 13:8) If He did, we couldn't be sure of His promises. But He made a way for us (believing Gentiles who are being grafted into Israel by entering into the New Covenant, forming the Church along with believing Jews in this age - Rom. 11:17-25, 1Cor. 11:25-26, Matt. 9:17, Heb. 8:13, Eph. 2:11-22, Heb. 11:39-40, Gal. 3:28-29, Rom. 2:28-29) to be cleansed through the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus. Once having been cleansed, we are to refrain from doing those same things that the heathens and pagans were doing in the promised land before they were driven out. (1Cor. 6:9-20, 1Thess. 4:3-8) (These restrictions are in addition to obeying the "law of Christ." Mark 12:28-34, Rom. 13:8-14, Jam. 2:12)

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. Acts 15:19-20

Not only that, but the Israelites entering the promised land were not to FEAR those who were being dispossessed of the land, even though some of them were giants. (Num. 13:32-33, Josh. 1:9) We're in a situation these days where the inhabitants of the land we live in are embracing evil, but we're not supposed to go along with it, or fear those who hate us for refusing to do so. (1John 5:18-19, 4:5, John 15:19, 1Cor. 15:33-34, 1Pet. 4:3-5, Phil. 1:27-30, Matt. 10:28, 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23) Jesus will be cleansing the land of all who cause sin when He takes His great power and begins to reign. (Matt. 13:40-43, 47-50, Rev. 11:17-18, Psa. 2, 50:16-23, Zeph. 3:11-13, Joel 3:13-17, Isa. 57:21)

Whoever can't accept God's terms can't enter into the kingdom of God. Only those who are born again will enter in, and those who ARE born again will NOT continue **living in sin** as they did before. (John 3:3-8 1John 3:4-10, Titus 3:3-8) Those who are abiding IN Jesus (and thus belong to Him) bear GOOD fruit

(John 15:1-10, Gal. 5:13-25, Titus 2:11-15, Rom. 8:9, 13-23) The Bible says that those who never even hear the Gospel are better off than those who heard it, accepted it and then returned to wallowing in the mud of their sins instead of desiring the holiness offered by the blood of Jesus. (1John 1:9, Rev. 3:4-6, 2Pet. 2:20-22, Jude 1:23, 2Tim. 2:22-26, Jam. 5:19-20, Gal. 6:1)

Jesus said that most would NOT persevere in following Him until the end. (Matt. 13:18-23, 7:13-29, John 6:63-71, 1John 2:19) The foolish virgins in the parable let their lamps go OUT and couldn't see their way to the bridegroom when he arrived. (Matt. 25:1-13, Psa. 119:105, 111:10) The eye is the lamp of the body. (Luke 11:34) As the children's song goes, "be careful little eyes, what you see." (The same goes for hearing. Luke 8:16-18) Inheriting the kingdom of God is reserved for those who LOVE Him more than the world or anything in it, including than their sin. (Deut. 7:9, John 14:15, 15:10, Jam. 1:12, 2:5, 1Cor. 2:9, 2Tim. 4:8, Matt. 10:37-38, Rev. 2-3, Rev. 21:7-8)

"Washed their robes" in Rev. 22:14-15 does not mean washed, but then took them OFF or drug them through the mud, ignoring the Holy Spirit when He tried to get them to return to Jesus, who would have forgiven and cleansed them had they only heeded the prompting of the Holy Spirit to repent and asked (1John 1:9, Eph. 4:30, 1Thess. 5:19, Matt. 22:11-14) - had they not been deceived into thinking that you can love Him and the world, enjoy sin now and the kingdom later. (Eph. 4:17-24, 2Pet. 1:9-11, 1Pet 4:3-5, Heb. 3:12-14) When the Scriptures refer to "such WERE some of you" and "former manner of life" that MEANS something. It's not imaginary. (1Cor. 6:11, 1Pet. 1:14-19, Eph. 2:1-3, 5:3-17, 1Thess. 4:3-8, Rom. 6:15-23, 12:1-2, Col. 3:5-7, Titus 3:3) Those who have been set free FROM SIN will behave differently than they did when they were slaves to it. (John 8:34, Rom. 8:13-14, 2Pet. 2:18-22, Gal. 5:24, Rom. 13:14)

It's NOT about perfectly keeping a set of regulations to "earn your way" (which is impossible!) People who make up a detailed set of rules for others to follow love power like the Pharisees did. (Matt. 23, 7:1-6, Rom. 2:1-11, Luke 6:24-49, 11:42-54, Matt. 20:25-29, 1Pet. 5:3, 3:7, Eph. 6:4, Rom. 14, Col. 2:16-23) They like to pronounce judgments on people to make themselves feel important, but our aim is LOVE and restoration to fellowship. (1Cor. 4:4-5, 1Tim. 1:5, Eph. 4:15-16, 1John 1:5-10) Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6) God is Spirit and desires to be worshiped in truth and spirit, from the heart of each soul who LOVES Him. (John 4:23-24, Rom. 6:17-23, Mark 7:6-9) If the fear of punishment were enough to deter people from evil, there would be no need for jails, would there? (1John 4:18, 1Thess. 5:22) No, it's love that keeps someone faithful. That love comes from God and works its way

out through those who are saved. (1John 4:8-13, Jam. 1:17-27, 13-16, Phil. 2:12-16, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 2Tim. 2:3-7, 1Cor. 16:22, 1Pet. 1:8-9, also notice what precedes it in 1Pet. 1:6-7.)

We're to examine OURSELVES in the light of the Scriptures (the normal Bible, not an edited version published to support a particular set of beliefs, to "spin" the truth to fit them). We who believe are being TESTED to see what we're made of. Is our true character pure gold or silver, or mostly dross? Will we allow our Savior to purify us through trial? (Rev. 3:18-19, 1Pet. 1:6-7, Jam. 1:2-3, 12, Rev. 3:10-13, Jer. 6:27-30, Isa. 48:10-11) Do we want to give God our BEST or leftovers? Do we BELIEVE it when we read that God considers those who love the world (not in the context of saving them, but their fallen ways) to be His enemies? (Jam. 4:4-7, 1John 2:15-17, John 15:18-21, 1John 3:12-13, 4:5-6) He gives grace (including mercy and the power to resist temptation) to the humble. (1Pet. 5:6-11, Isa. 2:10-19, Rev. 6:15-17)

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, Proverbs 6:16-23 (Also see Matt. 18:7-9.)

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:4-10

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So

I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:13

We're told not to harden our hearts, but instead, we should yield to God (not just for a moment, but steadfastly, by dying to self and living to Christ day by day, by the power of the Spirit who dwells in those who are born again). (Heb. 3:12-14, 5-6, 7-11, 6:11-12, 10:23-31, Rev. 2:25-27, 3:11, Matt. 16:24-27, 2Cor. 4:7-11, 1Pet. 2:21, Heb. 13:13, John 3:3-8, Eph. 2:22, 2Tim. 1:13-14, 1Thess. 4:7-8, 1Cor. 3:16-17, Rom. 8:9-11, Gal. 5:16-25) He didn't force us to believe, and He doesn't force us to obey Him. If He were going to do that, then He wouldn't have given angels free will, either, and Eve would not and could not have been tempted by Satan. We make our own choice, using His GIFT of free will. He DRAWS us, not DRAGS us. (John 6:65-71) He doesn't cast us out or LOSE us (John 6:37-39), but we are free to go if we insist upon it (but not until we have "succeeded" in putting out the lamp of faith by prolonged, persistent quenching the Spirit, such that we no longer hear Him, the Giver of faith and thus, no longer believe - Rom. 10:17, Heb. 3:12-14, Eph. 2:8-10).

God could have made robots if He wanted to, but that wasn't what He did, in His sovereignty, according to HIS will (not according to what He "has" to do by OUR definition of sovereignty). Robots do not love. They can be programmed to simulate love, but it's not genuine. Although that would have saved God a LOT of pain and anguish, He is always true to His nature--He IS truth. (Gen. 6:5-6, Isa. 52:13-53:12, John 14:6, Rev. 19:11-16, Rom. 3:1-8, 2Tim. 2:11-

13) We choose who we will BELIEVE, follow and serve. (Josh. 24:15, John 10:27, Gen. 3, John 8:44) Will we listen to and love (and therefore obey) God (John 14:15-26, 15:8-10, 1John 5:3, 3:24) or will we listen to people God warned us about telling us what we love hearing--that Jesus died so that we would be free to revel in the filth of the world now and enter the kingdom later (no repentance required ever at any time)? (Luke 6:43-49) Paul explained what our attitude should be in Phil. 3:8-21.

Will we follow Jesus on the narrow, difficult path, or deceivers on the broad, easy path? (Matt. 7:13-27, 2Tim. 3:12-17, 2Pet. 3:14-18) Some will enter "as through the fire" with loss of reward, but some who fully expected to enter in will be told "I don't know you." (1Cor. 3:10-20, Matt. 25:11-13, 7:21-23, Luke 13:24-30) They SAID they believed with their mouths, but their hearts proved them to be liars. (Rom. 10:10, Mark 7:20-23, 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 3:8-10) Is it worth taking that kind of chance to "live it up" now? Did the prodigal son think it was worth it that he spent his inheritance on worthless living? (Luke 15:11-32) Did Esau regret selling his firstborn inheritance to his brother for a bowl of soup? (Gen. 25:29-34, 27:34-38, Heb. 12:16-17, 22-29) Those with the "faith of Abraham" act upon it like those in the "giants of faith hall of fame" in Heb. 11 (also see Jam. 2:18-26 - "walking in the steps of faith of Abraham" requires taking steps like he did - Rom. 4:12 - empty words are not enough). (Matt. 3:7-12)

These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:17-22

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the

one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:26-39

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. Hebrews 12:14-17

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:25-29

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. Hebrews 3:12-14 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from

the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. Hebrews 3:12-14

God is not putting this up for discussion. He is God and we are not. Grace is NOT a license to "sin boldly." It's how God provides us with HIS power to overcome our old sinful flesh for the remainder of the time we live in it after coming to the knowledge of the truth (after being washed clean and forgiven because of Jesus' one sacrifice). (Rom. 6, 7:4-6, 8:5-19, Col. 3:2-11, 23-25, Heb. 9:24-26, 10:26-27, 1Pet. 4:1-5) He protects those who abide (willingly, faithfully) in Him from the evil one. (John 15:1-17, 1John 5:18) We put on HIS armor and overcome by HIS power. (Eph. 6:10-20) When He returns, it will be to JUDGE the disobedient. (Heb. 9:27-28, 4:12-13, Rom. 14:12, 2Cor. 5:10, 1Pet. 4:17-19, Eph. 5:6, Rev. 22:12)

Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. Job 41:11

You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? Isaiah 29:16

But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Romans 9:20

Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? Deuteronomy 32:6

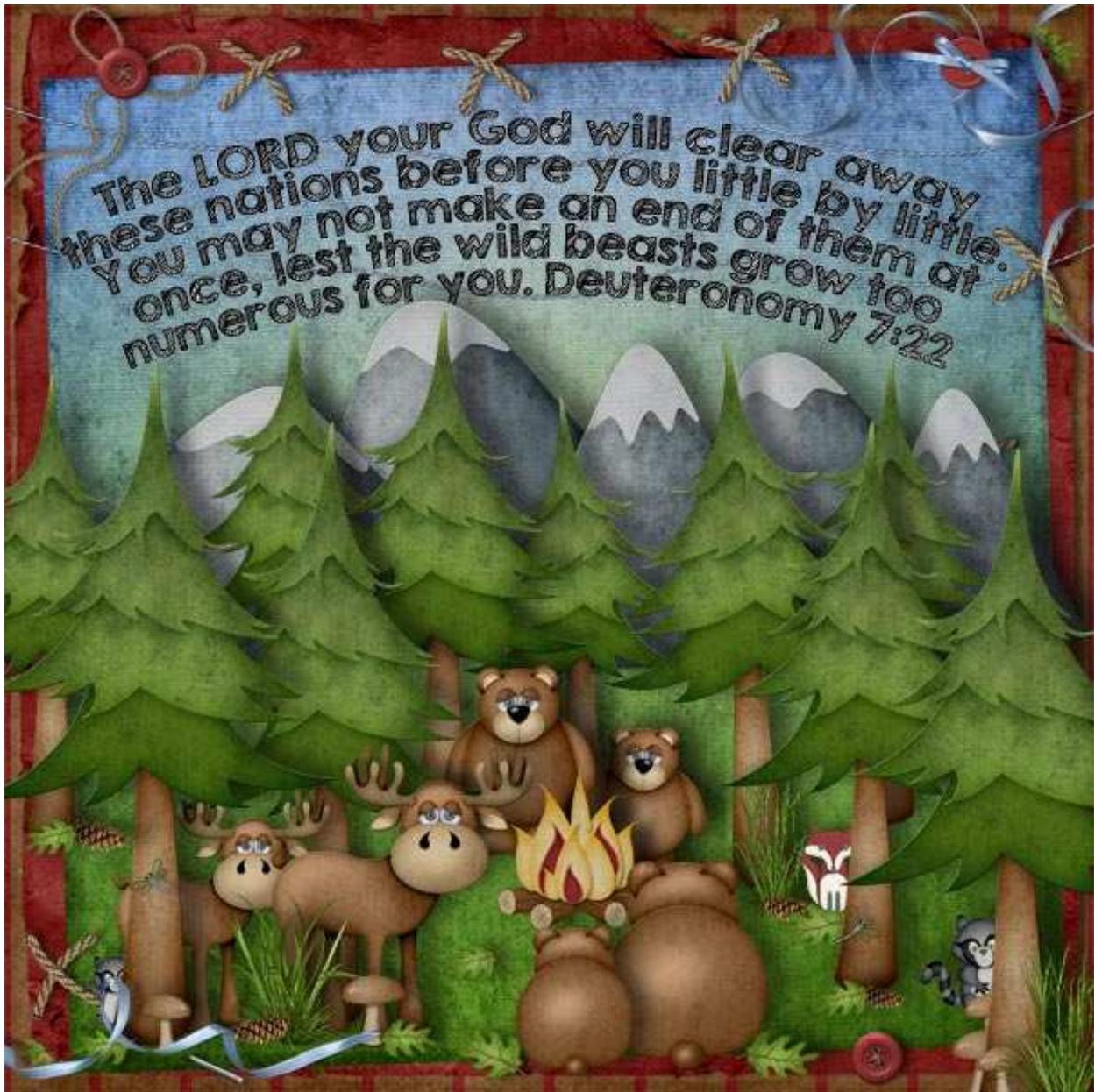
See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. Deuteronomy 32:39-41

O LORD, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth! Rise up, O judge of the earth; repay to the proud what they deserve! O LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast. They crush your people, O LORD, and afflict your heritage. They kill the widow and the sojourner, and murder the fatherless; and they say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob does not perceive."

Understand, O dullest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see? He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge—the LORD—knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath. Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law, to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked. For the LORD will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage; for justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it. Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers? If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. When I thought, "My foot slips," your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul. Can wicked rulers be allied with you, those who frame injustice by statute? They band together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death. But the LORD has become my stronghold, and my God the rock of my refuge. He will bring back on them their iniquity and wipe them out for their wickedness; the LORD our God will wipe them out. Psalm 94:1-23

He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives. "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. Isaiah 59:17-20

Written by Tricia Berg, (October 2018), 10 pp. inc. digital scrapbook layout If you have been blessed by this article, you are free to share but do not claim as your own or sell, and do not make modifications and attribute them to me. You can download as many free pdf devotional articles as you wish from my blog: <http://layoutfortoday.blogspot.com/> (The most recent articles are at the bottom of the page after you click on the "free pdf downloads" link.) You can also read this article there, where the Bible verses should pop up when you hover over the cites.



kits: Cabin in the Woods by Kristmess Designs (available at GingerScraps), Winter Woodland collab by Scrap Orchard Designers (store closed)