

Genesis 17.23-18.5. Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him. The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.'

Exodus 7.3. "I will harden Pharaoh's heart."

Leviticus 14. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: This shall be the ritual for the leprous person at the time of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest; the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination. If the disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command that two living clean birds and cedar wood and crimson yarn and hyssop be brought for the one who is to be cleansed. The priest shall command that one of the birds be slaughtered over fresh water in an earthen vessel. He shall take the living bird with the cedar wood and the crimson yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. He shall sprinkle it seven times upon the one who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease; then he shall pronounce him clean, and he shall let the living bird go into the open field. The one who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, but shall live outside his tent for seven days. On the seventh day he shall shave all his hair: of head, beard, eyebrows; he shall shave all his hair. Then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean. On the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish, and a grain-offering of three-tenths of an *ephah*¹ of choice flour mixed with oil, and one log of oil. The priest who cleanses shall set the person to be cleansed, along with these things, before the Lord, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The priest shall take one of the lambs, and offer it as a guilt-offering, along with the log of oil, and raise them as an elevation-offering before the Lord. He shall slaughter the lamb in the place where the sin-offering and the burnt-offering are slaughtered in the holy place; for the guilt-offering—like the sin-offering—belongs to the priest: it is most holy. The priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt-offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot. The priest shall take some of the log of oil and pour it into the palm of his own left hand, and dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and sprinkle some oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. Some of the oil that remains in his hand the priest shall put on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt-offering. The rest of the oil in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed. Then the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the Lord: the priest shall offer the sin-offering, to make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterwards he shall slaughter the burnt-offering; and the priest shall offer the burnt-offering and the grain-offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement on his behalf and he shall be clean. But if he is poor and cannot afford so much, he shall take one male lamb for a guilt-offering to be elevated, to make atonement on his behalf, and one-tenth of an *ephah* of choice flour mixed with oil for a grain-offering, and a log of oil; also two turtle-doves or two pigeons, such as he can afford, one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt-offering.

¹ An ancient dry measure roughly equivalent to a bushel (about 64 pints).

21 Numbers 4-9. From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’ ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’ ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

1 Samuel 5. When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod; then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and placed it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. But when they rose early on the next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and struck them with tumours, both in Ashdod and in its territory. And when the inhabitants of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, ‘The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us; for his hand is heavy on us and on our god Dagon.’ So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, ‘What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?’ The inhabitants of Gath replied, ‘Let the ark of God be moved on to us.’ So they moved the ark of the God of Israel to Gath. But after they had brought it to Gath, the hand of the Lord was against the city, causing a very great panic; he struck the inhabitants of the city, both young and old, so that tumours broke out on them. So they sent the ark of the God of Israel to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, ‘Why have they brought across to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people?’ They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, ‘Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people.’ For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there; those who did not die were stricken with tumours, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

2 Chronicles 26.16-21. But when he [King Uzziah] had become strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to make offering on the altar of incense. But the priest Azariah went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valour; they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, ‘It is not for you, Uzziah, to make offering to the Lord, but for the priests the descendants of Aaron, who are consecrated to make offering. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honour from the Lord God.’ Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to make offering, and when he became angry with the priests a leprous disease broke out on his forehead, in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense. When the chief priest Azariah, and all the priests, looked at him, he was leprous in his forehead. They hurried him out, and he himself hurried to get out, because the Lord had struck him. King Uzziah was leprous to the day of his death, and being leprous lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord. His son Jotham was in charge of the palace of the king, governing the people of the land.

Selections from Job.

One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser also came among them. The Lord said to the Accuser, ‘Where have you come from?’ The Accuser answered the Lord, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’ The Lord said to the Accuser, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.’ Then the Accuser answered the Lord, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has,

and he will curse you to your face.' The Lord said to the Accuser, 'Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!' ... *After all of Job's family and flocks are killed:* The Lord said to the Accuser, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason.' Then the Accuser answered the Lord, 'Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.' The Lord said to the Accuser, 'Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life.' So the Accuser went out from the presence of the Lord, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes. *After Job is visited by three friends who are convinced that Job's suffering is a punishment for his sin because—they believe—God does not cause innocent suffering. They advise him to repent, which angers him because he does not believe that God would cause an innocent person to suffer:* 'As for you, you whitewash with lies; all of you are worthless physicians. If you would only keep silent, that would be your wisdom! ... I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all.'

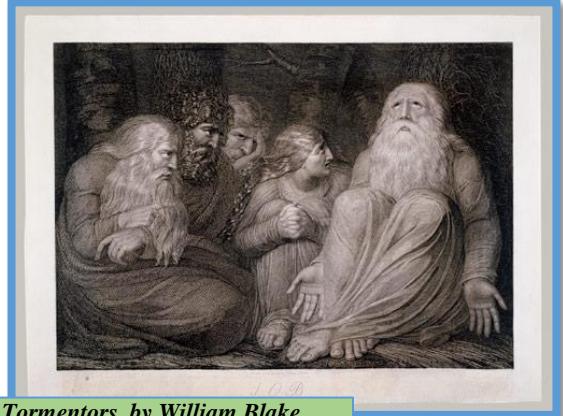
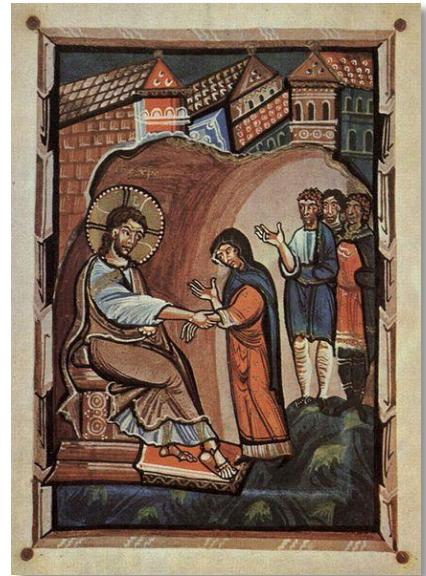


Figure 1: Job's Tormentors, by William Blake.

Isaiah 38.1-6. In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him, and said, 'Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.' Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed: 'Remember now, O Lord, I implore you, how I have walked before you in faithfulness with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: 'Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of your ancestor David: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and defend this city.'

Mark 1. The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" 4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." 9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." 12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." 16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed



him. 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. 21 They went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. 29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32 That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered around the door. 34 And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. 35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37 When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 38 He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." 39 And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons. 40 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." 41 Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. 43 After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, 44 saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to



the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Mark 2 When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room

for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—11 "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" 13 Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. 14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. 15 And as



he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples-- for there were many who followed him. 16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." ...



Mark 3 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." 4 Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored...

Mark 5 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. 3 He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him anymore, even with a chain; 4 for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. 6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; 7 and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 Then Jesus asked, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 He begged him not to send them out of the country. 11 Now on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; 12 and the unclean spirits begged, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the bank into the sea, and were drowned. 14 The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what happened. 15 They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. 17 Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed. 21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and begged him repeatedly, "My daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so she may be made well, and live." 24 So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. 26 She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." 29 Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told the truth.



34 He said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." 35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 7. ...From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, 25 but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet.

26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go--the demon has left your daughter." 30 So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. 31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "*Ephphatha*," that is, "Be opened." 35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

Mark 8 In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, 2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way--and some of them have come from a great distance." 4 His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" 5 He asked, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." 6 Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd.

Mark 12 ...They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

