

## Not Measuring Up

**“Woe to me!” I cried, “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isaiah 6:5).**

**Scripture:** Isaiah 6:1-8

**Song:** “Jesus, Thank You”

People have fun posting on social media pictures of their attempts at decorating cakes. They show a picture of their hilarious decorating flop next to a professional photo of the intended design. While failure at cake decorating could be embarrassing, the people posting are laughing at their creative attempts and sharing their experiences so we get a laugh as well.

Isaiah, however, did not laugh when he saw himself compared to the almighty, holy, and perfect God. Instead Isaiah cried out, “Woe to me! I am ruined!” (Isaiah 6:5).

The good news is that the story didn’t end there. God sent an angel to Isaiah to remedy the situation. God provided a way to take Isaiah’s guilt away and atone for Isaiah’s sin. God has done the same for us through His Son Jesus’ death and resurrection. We too can have our sins atoned for and our guilt taken away. What good news that is!

**Father**, we do not measure up to You or Your expectations for us. Thank You for remedying our situation with the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name, amen.

November 15–21. **Harriet E. Michael** lives in Louisville, Kentucky, with her husband of 41 years. She works as a substitute teacher in a Christian school. She and her husband have four adult children and three grandchildren who bring her great joy.

## Man-Made Gods

**Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens** (1 Chronicles 16:25-26).

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 16:23-34

**Song:** “Our God Is an Awesome God”

Many years ago, my father served as a medical missionary in Nigeria, West Africa. He worked in a hospital in a city, but held small clinics in remote villages, sharing the gospel after the day-long clinics. On one of these excursions, he was met at the village gate by a man. Daddy spoke the local language and explained why he had come. The man told him to wait while he got the village elder. My dad sat down on a large rock and waited.

In a few minutes two men came toward him shouting and gesturing. Daddy understood their words. They were yelling, “Get up! You are sitting on our god!” The villagers worshipped the big rock my dad had chosen to rest on while he waited.

Most people today do not worship rocks, though with the rise of paganism, worship of inanimate objects like rocks is sadly increasing. A Christian would never worship a rock. Yet don't we have other things in our lives that we focus on with such intensity that we are practically worshipping them? Today's passage makes it abundantly clear that God alone is worthy of our worship!

**Father,** You alone are to be worshipped. Help us to make You the focus of our lives and to cease focusing on and fretting about things that do not have eternal value. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Angels Among Us

**Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?** (Hebrews 1:14).

**Scripture:** Hebrews 1:5-14

**Song:** “All Night, All Day”

My husband once hiked the Grand Canyon with his uncle. By the third day, the uncle suffered some type of a health crisis. The thought of continuing seemed daunting. Images of having to carry his uncle all the way back up plagued my husband’s mind. Then a man, claiming to be an experienced hiker, happened by. He shared his supplies and instructed them on how to hike—during the mornings and evenings instead of in the heat of the day like they had been doing. After a day of rest, the uncle felt well enough to continue, and the man left.

My husband wondered whether this man was an angel. They had not seen any other hikers for three days when this man suddenly showed up offering the guidance they needed to climb back up.

We may never know in this lifetime whether the experienced hiker was an angel or just a person, but what we do know from today’s passage is that angels are beings whose purpose is to do just what this man did—minister to believers, like my husband. We also know that as wonderful as angels are, they are not to be worshipped. Jesus is far more wonderful, and only He is worthy of our worship.

**Father,** thank You for sending angels to minister to us in our times of need, even when we are not aware of them. But turn our thoughts and hearts to Jesus, who is far greater than angels. In Jesus’ name. amen.

## The Greatest Battle Ever Waged

**The armies of heaven were following him [the Word of God], riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean** (Revelation 19:14).

**Scripture:** Revelation 19:9-16

**Song:** “Battle Hymn of the Republic”

On June 6, 1944, the Allied Forces launched Operation Overlord, one of the greatest human battles ever fought. It marked the beginning of the successful invasion of German-occupied western Europe during World War II. A 5,000-vessel amphibious assault on the beaches of Normandy, France, was quickly followed by an airborne assault involving 1,200 airplanes. Altogether, some 160,000 troops crossed the English Channel that day. It was the beginning of the end of Hitler’s evil reign.

Revelation 19 describes an even greater battle. This passage draws vivid pictures of a glorious rider on a white horse, followed by His armies. The rider is Jesus. We know this from the description given of Him—His “robe dipped in blood,” He is called “Faithful and True” with “many crowns” on His head (Revelation 19:11-13). If there was any doubt, the last verse in today’s passage removes it when it identifies this rider as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

What a victorious day that will be! How we will worship Him on that day! But we can worship now with just as much awe and amazement, for He is always the same.

**Father**, we stand in awe of You. We worship and adore You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## The Enemy Is Vanquished

**The beast was captured, and with it the false prophet. . . . The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of sulfur** (Revelation 19:20).

**Scripture:** Revelation 19:17-21

**Song:** “Crown Him with Many Crowns”

I work at a Christian school a few days a week as a substitute teacher. You might find me almost anywhere. Some days I substitute in math or science classes, and other days I’m in history or literature. I’ve even subbed in music classes, though I don’t have an ounce of musical talent.

Some time ago I substituted in a middle school English and literature class. The students were learning new vocabulary words that day, and one of the words was *vanquish*, defined for them as “to defeat thoroughly.”

This is what Jesus does in the battle described in Revelation 19. Jesus, who is the rider on the white horse, followed by His armies dressed in white linen (Revelation 19:11, 14), thoroughly defeats the enemy. Specifically, He defeats the beast and the false prophet, two secular servants of Satan who will rise up at the end of time and attempt to lead the kings of the earth in a war against God. But Jesus wins! He thoroughly defeats the enemy—He vanquishes all our enemies.

**Father**, how great is Your strength! How mighty is Your power! The enemy is strong in our world today, but You have shown us how the story ends. Victory is Yours. And for that You are worthy of our praise, thanksgiving, and worship. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## From Prisoner to President

**“I [God] will deal with all who oppressed you. I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they have suffered shame”** (Zephaniah 3:19).

**Scripture:** Zephaniah 3:14-20

**Song:** “Rescue the Perishing”

Born to a royal family and educated as a lawyer, Nelson Mandela spent years fighting apartheid, a system of racial segregation, in his home country of South Africa. He spent 27 years in prison for his efforts. In 1990, Mandela was released, and in 1994 he was elected president of South Africa, becoming its first black president.

Mandela was oppressed for many years, then rescued from that oppression and rose to a position of power and influence. He was, as our key verse says, given praise and honor in the very land where he had been oppressed.

This is the picture Zephaniah paints of what God will do for His people. He will rescue us, lift us up to positions of honor, and give us tasks to do for His kingdom that we never could have imagined. He did this in Bible times—lifting Moses from herding sheep to be a leader of God’s people, David from a shepherd to a king, and so many more. And God still does this now. Are you feeling oppressed today? From what do you need to be rescued? God is still able.

**Father**, thank You for Your power to rescue us and for Your delight in us. We acknowledge Your power and thank You for Your love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Praise Him!

**A voice came from the throne saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!”**  
(Revelation 19:5).

**Scripture:** Revelation 19:1-8

**Song:** “Praise Him! Praise Him!”

Ennis, Texas, is a special city and a tourist attraction every spring when thousands of wild bluebonnet flowers bloom. People come from miles around to see the breathtaking view of the fields of bluebonnets. Ennis offers bus tours of a 40-mile stretch of land that is known as the Official Bluebonnet Trail of Texas.

Bluebonnets are small things. Even as flowers go, they are small. Yet they produce such magnificent beauty when they do what God created them to do—cover the ground with gorgeous blossoms. They give praise to God in their own way. As they paint the fields with hues of blue, they glorify the one who created them.

Today’s passage speaks of all things praising God. When you read the word “great” in this passage, what do you think of? Perhaps powerful people, like kings and rulers, come to your mind. When the passage mentions the “small,” I think of small creatures or flowers, such as bluebonnets.

The word *hallelujah* is written repeatedly in today’s passage. It’s an expression of praise to God. Bluebonnets say hallelujah by blooming and letting their beauty reflect their Creator. How do you say, “Hallelujah”?

**Father**, we lift our hallelujah to You! Help us to glorify You in such a way that those around us can see the beauty of our Creator too. In Jesus’ name, amen.