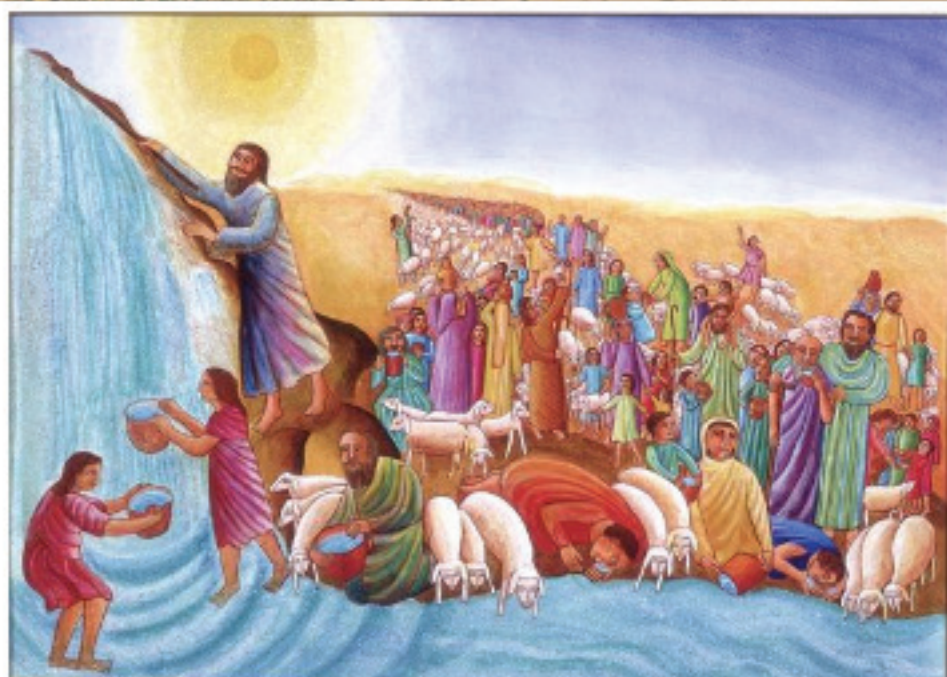


# AS THE *SPIRIT* MOVES

SPIRITUAL NOTES FOLLOWING the  
COMMON LECTIONARY and CHURCH YEAR



Art by John August Swanson

Swanson, John August. Moses, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-image/ink.pl?RC=56554> [retrieved February 13, 2022]. Original source: [www.JohnAugustSwanson.com](http://www.JohnAugustSwanson.com) - copyright 1983 by John August Swanson.

## SCRIPTURE OVERVIEW

MARCH 20, 2022

### OLD TESTAMENT

[Isaiah 55:1-9](#)

[Psalm 63:1-8](#)

### NEW TESTAMENT

[1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#)

[Luke 13:1-9](#)

[Isaiah 55:1-9](#) puts us in our place. God is above us—in every way.

In [Psalm 63:1-8](#) David finds joy in his lifelong relationship with God—and it wasn't always easy.

In [1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#), Paul talks with the Corinthians about the power of God to support us when we are feeling weak.

In the gospel lesson, [Luke 13:1-9](#), Jesus reminds people that good things and bad things happen to everyone. Christ had yet to die on the cross. Nevertheless, Jesus encouraged people to recognize that despite the thinking of the day, bad things happening are not a measure of the victims' worth, guilt, or innocence.

A common thread in this week's scriptures is our thirst for God. We have advantages over the people of Bible times. We have the cross to remind us that even God's son experienced hardship.

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### Isaiah 55 Scripture Songs

Let him turn to The LORD  
and He will have mercy on him  
and to Our God for  
He will freely pardon

### **COME, ALL YOU WHO THIRST**

Greg Stulz performs this scripture song. He writes:

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters, and you who have no money come buy and eat..."

So begins this moving passage from the Bible. God would speak to YOU today in His word; Jew, non-Jew, Peasant, King, Hear this, God Himself is kindly imploring you to drink from the living waters, water you buy "without money and without cost" from Yeshua Ha-Mashiach, the Jewish Messiah who has come to save the whole world.

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### Fernando Ortega - Oh God, You Are My God (Psalm 63) WITH LYRICS



### PSALM 63

Fernando Ortega sings Psalm 63. Imagine a weary David singing this as he tries to sleep.

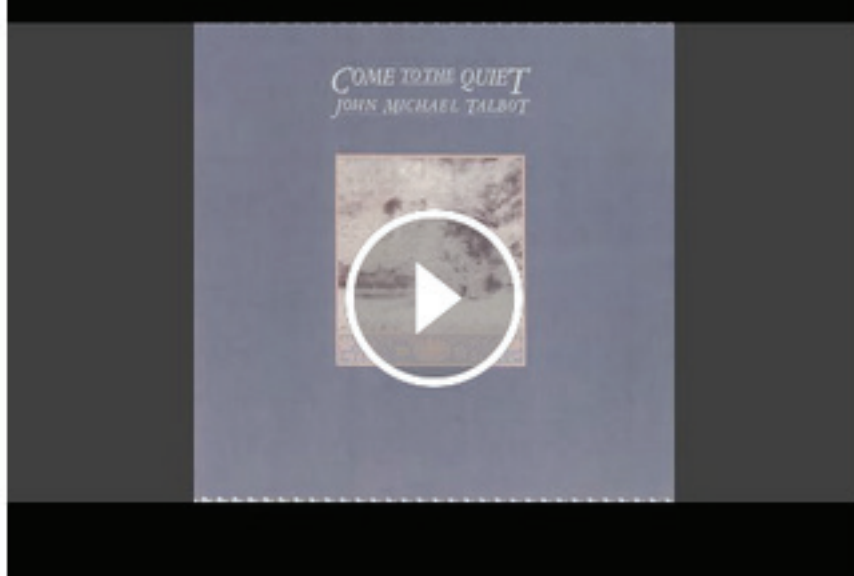
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### As Morning Breaks (Psalm 63)



### COME TO THE QUIET

David is resting. He may be having trouble sleeping. But his mind is on God. He talks to him, He prays to him. He praises him.

This music is by John Michael Talbot, a Catholic priest and recording artist.

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# AS THE *SPIRIT* MOVES

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**What is the Meaning of the Fig Tree Parable? A Lesson  
about the Fig Tree**

**WHICH  
FIG TREE  
ARE YOU?**



## **ABOUT FIG TREES**

A nutritionist provides some background on fig trees and their meaning in the Bible along with what these teachings might mean for us.

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## TWO FESTIVE MID-LENT TRADITIONS

On Thursday, March 17, 2022, two religions will be celebrating heroes.

Anyone with a drop of Irish blood will celebrate St. Patrick, one of three patron saints of that divided island (along with Brigid and Columba). Jews will celebrate Purim.

St. Patrick was British. He was captured by Irish raiders sometime in the 400s and served much of his youth as a slave in Ireland. He escaped back to Britain but later returned to Ireland as bishop. He was a pious man who would probably be mortified by the annual festivities in his honor.

The date for Purim floats like Easter, following the Jewish calendar. This year, the Jewish celebration of Purim falls on March 17, (beginning at sunset on the 16th). Purim celebrates the Old Testament book of Esther, who like Cinderella rose from slave-status servanthood to become queen of Persia. She had won a beauty contest! She used her position to free the Jews from Persian oppression.

Just as we read the Passion story each year, Jews read the 10 chapters of Esther—a dramatic tale of good vs evil. Esther and her cousin Mordecai are the heroes. Haman is the villain. [And what a villain!](#) He plotted genocide of all the Jews in Persia.

This isn't a somber ceremonial reading. Every time Haman's name is said, listeners shout, whistle and spin noisemakers to drown out his name. There are games, costumes, parades and traditional foods and wine. It is a bit like Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

In the image above, you'll see symbols of the costumes, and the noisemakers. The pastries are called Hamantaschen. The triangular-shaped pastries filled with poppy seeds or jam represent the pockets of the villain. Like Judas, Haman accepted payment for evil intent.

Esther and Mordecai prevail. An annual celebration is ordained at the end of the book of Esther. But Christians spend this season remembering Jesus' sacrificial victory.

Would Jesus and the disciples have taken time on the way to Jerusalem to reread the Book of Esther and denounce the name of Haman? Would Judas have seen himself in the villain Haman?

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## THE BEAUTY OF FIG TREES

Jesus' lesson this Sunday is less about fig trees and more about forgiveness. Fig trees do not bear fruit during their first years of growth. A grower who gives up on a fig tree after three years misses out on the beauty and bounty awaiting him.

Be thankful this Lent for the power of forgiveness and second chances!



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Art by 19th century French artist, James Tissot

## JESUS AND CURRENT EVENTS

We don't know much about the Tower of Siloam. We know there was a pool of Siloam. Some think the tower might have been part of an aqueduct providing water to the pool. Others think it may have been part of a series of towers in one of Jerusalem's fortifying walls.

All we know is that the tower falling had killed 18 people and was the news on everyone's mind. Think of times when you went to church shortly after a newsworthy crisis. Imagine the gossip over coffee before or after worship. Are we still tempted to think that tragedy is comeuppance for wrong-doing?

Jesus uses the recent tragedy to point out that bad things happen to both good and bad people. Tragedy is not a scarlet letter for sin. Neither are those living lives of popular influence and abundance necessarily on a heavenly fast track.

God expects us to live lives of service and humility.

Think of current events. Bad things happening in the Ukraine war zone are happening to good people as well as bad.

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## The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree



### **A SORRY TREE GETS A SECOND CHANCE**

The parable of the barren fig tree is meant to inspire us to action. Yes, our God is forgiving. Forgiveness is a gift. Using God's gift responsibly is up to us.

This Lent, how can we bear fruit?

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