



Life on Earth: Abundance

Christian Text:

Matt 6: 26-33

²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

²⁶ ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ὅτι οὐ σπείρουσιν, οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν, οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας, καὶ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;

²⁷ τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πηχὺς ἓνα;

²⁸ καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε; καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ, πῶς αὐξάνει οὐ κοπιᾷ, οὐδὲ νήθει·

²⁹ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομῶν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων.

³⁰ εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ, σήμερον ὄντα, καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον, ὁ Θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν, οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;

³¹ μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε, λέγοντες, Τί φάγωμεν, ἢ τί πίωμεν, ἢ τί περιβαλώμεθα;

³² πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητεῖ· οἶδε γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρήζετε τούτων ἀπάντων.

Notes:

This text comes from one of the Gospels (accounts of Jesus' life written by some of the first Christians). It is part of the 'Sermon on the Mount' in which Jesus instructs his disciples on radical Christian living, including sexual purity, dealing with anger, giving to the poor, prayer and fasting.

Discussion starter: How does the idea of God as the one who provides fit with modern knowledge about ecological systems and agricultural practices?





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Jewish Text: Ps 65:9-13

- ⁹ You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.
- ¹⁰ You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
- ¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with
richness.
- ¹² The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with
flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

י פָּקַדְתָּ הָאָרֶץ וַתְּשַׁקְקֶהּ רַבֵּת
תַּעֲשֶׂרְנָהּ פֶּלֶג אֱלֹהִים מָלֵא מַיִם
יֵא תִלְמֵיהָ רַוִּיה נַחַת גְּדוּדָהּ
בְּרִבֵּיבִים תִּמְלֶגְנָה צְמֹחָהּ תִּבְרָךְ
יב עֲטַרְתָּ שָׁנַת טוֹבָתָךְ וּמַעְגְלֶיךָ
יִרְעִפוּן דָּשָׁן.
יג יִרְעִפוּ נְאוֹת מִדְּבָר וְגִיל גְּבָעוֹת
תִּחְגְּרְנָה.
יד לָבְשׁוּ כָרִים הַצֵּאֵן וְעֲמֻקִּים
יַעֲטֹפוּ בָר
יִתְרוּעְעוּ אֶף יִשִּׁירוּ.

Notes: This text is from the book of Psalms, a collection of religious songs and hymns that would have been used in the Israelite temple and are still an important part of Jewish (and also Christian) worship.





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Muslim Text: The Bee 16:10-18

10 It is He who sends down water for you from the sky, from which comes a drink for you, and the shrubs that you feed to your animals. 11 With it He grows for you grain, olives, palms, vines, and all kinds of other crops. There truly is a sign in this for those who reflect. 12 By His command He has made the night and day, the sun, moon, and stars all of benefit to you. There truly are signs in this for those who use their reason. 13 He has made of benefit to you the many-coloured things He has multiplied on the earth. There truly are signs in this for those who take it to heart. 14 It is He who made the sea of benefit to you: you eat fresh fish from it and bring out jewellery to wear; you see the ships cutting through its waves so that you may go in search of His bounty and give thanks. 15 He has made mountains stand firm on the earth, to prevent it shaking under you, and rivers and paths so that you may find your way, 16 and landmarks and stars to guide people. 17 Can He who creates be compared to one who cannot create? Why do you not take heed? 18 If you tried to count God's blessings, you could never take them all in: He is truly most forgiving and most merciful.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ (١٠) يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (١١) وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (١٢) وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَذَكَّرُونَ (١٣) وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حَبِيبًا تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَازِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلِعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (١٤) وَالْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ (١٥) وَعَلَّمَتْهُمُ الْوَسْطَى وَالْجَمْعَ هُمْ لَا يُحْتَدُونَ (١٦) أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (١٧) وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٨) وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ

English translation: M.A.S. Abdel Haleem

Notes: This passage is from a Meccan chapter of the Qur'an, taking its title from the bee which is 'inspired' by God in its behavior. It is one of many signs of God's grace given in this chapter, and this passage details some of those blessings to mankind, which should cause man to ponder and show gratitude to God.

