

(1) Genesis 1:26-28 The Message

<sup>26-28</sup> God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them  
reflecting our nature

So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,  
the birds in the air, the cattle,

And, yes, Earth itself,

and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

God created human beings;

he created them godlike,

Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

God blessed them:

"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,

for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

(2) Psalm 42 The Message

**42** <sup>1-3</sup> A white-tailed deer drinks  
from the creek;  
I want to drink God,  
deep drafts of God.  
I'm thirsty for God-alive.  
I wonder, "Will I ever make it—  
arrive and drink in God's presence?"  
I'm on a diet of tears—  
tears for breakfast, tears for supper.  
All day long  
people knock at my door,  
Pestering,  
"Where is this God of yours?"

<sup>4</sup> These are the things I go over and  
over,  
emptying out the pockets of my life.  
I was always at the head of the  
worshiping crowd,  
right out in front,  
Leading them all,  
eager to arrive and worship,  
Shouting praises, singing  
thanksgiving—  
celebrating, all of us, God's feast!

<sup>5</sup> Why are you down in the dumps,  
dear soul?  
Why are you crying the blues?  
Fix my eyes on God—  
soon I'll be praising again.

God puts a smile on my face.  
God is my God.

<sup>6-8</sup> When my soul is in the dumps, I  
rehearse  
everything I know of you,  
From Jordan depths to Hermon heights,  
including Mount Mizar.  
Chaos calls to chaos,  
to the tune of whitewater rapids.  
Your breaking surf, your thundering  
breakers  
crash and crush me.

Then God promises to love me all day,  
sing songs all through the night!  
My life is God's prayer.

<sup>9-10</sup> Sometimes I ask God, my rock-solid  
God,  
"Why did you let me down?  
Why am I walking around in tears,  
harassed by enemies?"  
They're out for the kill, these  
tormentors with their obscenities,  
Taunting day after day,  
"Where is this God of yours?"

<sup>11</sup> Why are you down in the dumps,  
dear soul?  
Why are you crying the blues?  
Fix my eyes on God—  
soon I'll be praising again.  
God puts a smile on my face.  
God is my God.

(3) Psalm 62 The Message

<sup>1-2</sup> God, the one and only—  
I'll wait as long as God says.  
Everything I need comes from God,  
so why not?  
God is solid rock under my feet,  
breathing room for my soul,  
An impregnable castle:  
I'm set for life.

<sup>3-4</sup> How long will you gang up on  
me?  
How long will you run with the  
bullies?  
There's nothing to you, any of  
you—  
rotten floorboards,  
worm-eaten rafters,  
Anthills plotting to bring down  
mountains,  
far gone in make-believe.

You talk a good line,  
but every "blessing"  
breathes a curse.

<sup>5-6</sup> God, the one and only—  
I'll wait as long as God says.

Everything I hope for comes from  
God,  
so why not?  
God is solid rock under my feet,  
breathing room for my soul,  
An impregnable castle:  
I'm set for life.

<sup>7-8</sup> My help and glory are in God  
—granite-strength and  
safe-harbor-God—  
So trust him absolutely, people;  
lay your lives on the line for  
God.

God is a safe place to be.  
<sup>9</sup> Humans as such is smoke,  
a mirage.  
Put them together, they're nothing;  
two times nothing is nothing.  
<sup>10</sup> And a windfall, if it comes—  
don't make too much of it.

<sup>11</sup> God said this once and for all;  
how many times  
Have I heard it repeated?  
"Strength comes  
Straight from God."

<sup>12</sup> Love to you, God!  
You pay a fair wage for a good  
day's work!

(4) John 3:16-21 Inclusive Bible

- <sup>16</sup> Yes, God so loved the world as to give the Only Begotten One, that whoever believes may not die but have eternal life.
- <sup>17</sup> God sent the Only Begotten into the world not to condemn the world, but that through the Only Begotten the world might be saved.
- <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in the Only Begotten avoids judgment, but whoever doesn't believe is judged already for not believing in the name Of the Only Begotten of God.  
For not believing in the name of the Only Begotten of God.
- <sup>19</sup> On these grounds is sentence pronounced:  
that though the light came into the world,  
people showed they preferred darkness to the light  
because their deeds were evil.
- <sup>20</sup> Indeed, people who do wrong hate the light and avoid it,  
for fear their actions will be exposed;
- <sup>21</sup> but people who live by the truth come out into the light,  
so that it may be plainly seen that what they do is done in God."