

Charles Spurgeon and Joseph Parker both had churches in London in the 19th century. On one occasion, Parker commented on the poor condition of children admitted to Spurgeon's orphanage. It was reported to Spurgeon, however, that Parker had criticized the orphanage itself. Spurgeon blasted Parker the next week from the pulpit. The attack was printed in the newspapers and became the talk of the town. People flocked to Parker's church the next Sunday to hear his rebuttal.

"I understand Dr. Spurgeon is not in his pulpit today," Parker said, "and this is the Sunday they use to take an offering for the orphanage. I suggest we take a love offering here instead."

The crowd was delighted. The ushers had to empty the collection plates three times. Later that week there was a knock at Parker's study. It was Spurgeon. "You know Parker, you have practiced grace on me. You have given me not what I deserved; you have given me what I needed." Likewise, *"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."* Eph. 2:4-7 -- ONLY GRACE

Not-a-Ritz Cracker ("Reformed" Ritz Crackers)

2 cups flour, spelt OR whole wheat and unbleached

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp lecithin

1 pkg. yeast (1 Tbsp)

1/3 cup olive oil

1/2 cup rich soy or nut milk

Dissolve yeast in milk. Mix all ingredients together. Roll 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick on the back of greased cookie sheet. Prick and mark in squares.

Sprinkle with salt. Bake at 250°F (125°C) for 1 hour or until hardened. These are best a day old. (Pictured- as my son likes them, spread with peanut butter.)



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Quotable Quotes

"Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." Edmund Burke

The Suppression of Protestantism in Bohemia

*"The first great tentative measure was the expulsion of the Anabaptists from Moravia. **The most unbefriended, they were selected as the first victims.** The Anabaptists ...were much respected by their neighbors for their quiet and orderly lives..."*

*"Stop the fountains, and the streams will dry up of themselves. Acting on this maxim, **it was resolved to banish the pastors,** to shut up the churches, and to burn the books of the Protestants..."*

*"**After the pastors, the iron hand of persecution fell upon the schoolmasters.** All teachers who refused to conform to the Church of Rome, and teach the new catechism of the Jesuit Canisius, were banished..."*

*"**The third great measure adopted for the overthrow of Protestantism was the destruction of all religious books.** A commission traveled from town to town, which, assembling the people by the tolling of the bells, explained to them the cause of their visit, and "exhorted them," says George Holyk, "in kind, sweet, and gentle words, to bring all their books." If gentle words failed to draw out the peccant [offending] volumes, threats and a strict inquisition in every house followed.*

"...while immoral works escaped, all in which was detected the slightest taint of heresy were condemned... Many thousands of Bohemian Bibles, and countless volumes of general literature, were thus destroyed. Since that time a Bohemian book and a scarce book have been synonymous." (History of Protestantism, Vol. 3, Book 19, pg. 214-216)

A Sealing Message

"Ugh!" I groaned as I pulled the jar of peaches out of the cabinet. The brown color and occasional mold, as well as the horrific odor when the lid was removed, testified to the fact that yet another jar of peaches obviously wasn't properly sealed. One particular year, to my despair, this happened repeatedly, and every year when I can peaches, I consider again what lessons God might be trying to teach me through this affliction.

As I preserve fruits and vegetables for winter, putting them through the "sealing process", I often think about the message of Rev. 7:2-4 *"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."*

While I recognize that the seal of God delivered by the angel is somewhat different than that of putting a lid on a canning jar, there are still some distinct parallels that can be learned. In Isaiah 8:16 God says *"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."* Thus, we learn that those who are sealed will reflect the character of God, as shown in His law, to the world. All are "called", but some are obviously "spoiled rotten". They do not love God most of all and their neighbor as themselves and thus will not be sealed with the seal of God. Like rotten fruit fallen from the tree, they may not even be "chosen" and "picked" for processing. *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."*

Jer. 8:20

But those that are "called" and "chosen" must go through an interesting sealing process in order to see if they will be faithful. The parallel to canning is an interesting one. In order to for the jars to seal they are either put through a hot water bath or a steam bath in a pressure canner. The hot water bath doesn't have all the pressure, but it takes longer typically. The steam bath in a pressure canner is generally shorter, but due to the extreme pressure, it must be executed carefully. I began thinking, is this how God seals His people? This is what Isaiah 48:10 as well as Acts 14:22 suggest. *"Behold, ... I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.---Continue in the faith, and that we*

must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." In order to be sealed, are God's "chosen" people going to have to go through either a longer hot water bath process of affliction (like persecution) or a shorter process but under extreme pressure (like martyrdom)?

In my canning lessons, I have noted that some jars of garden produce don't pass the heat test. Certain things sometimes go wrong and keep the jars from sealing. If there is an imperfection in the glass, it may crack and fall apart. Similarly, some people can't take the heat and pressure of the sealing process and just fall apart and give up trying to follow God altogether.

Sometimes, the jar is too full and it overflows making the lid not able to seal. In like manner, some chosen candidates anger easily and have an "outburst" or they are prideful and too "full of themselves" instead of being hid in Christ. Either of these problems ruins the reflection of Christ in His people and fouls up the sealing process.

There is another thing that fouls up the sealing process—missing ingredients. The right materials must go into the jar. One time, when I pulled several jars of pears out of the canner, I found that the fruit in one was much darker than all the others. Upon further examination, I found that I had left the water/syrup out of the jar. Proper canning of fruits and vegetables requires water or at least liquid containing water. Likewise, the sealing process requires the water of the Spirit (John 7:37-39). For we are told in Eph. 4:30, *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*

But what had gone wrong with those peaches? I had placed peaches in the jar and I had added the juice/water to the jar. I finally came to one conclusion of what the problem was--- I had been in such a hurry to get finished canning that day, that I had perhaps not been careful enough to remove ALL the bruises/bad spots thoroughly. As the peaches sat, the little spots fermented, and the bad spots spread causing the whole jar of fruit to go bad. Spiritually speaking, the spots are spots of worldliness. For James 1:27 says, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."* Why is this worldliness such a problem in the sealing process? Because James 4:4 explains that, *"the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."* Unfortunately many, even among Christians today, want to hold onto elements of the world. But to be a 99% Christian and 1% spotted by the world is to be 100% lost. Though God is not willing that any should perish, His merciful nature will not force those who are at enmity with Him into a sealed relationship with Him. Therefore, they will not be sealed. The following quotation from a devotional book gives us a hint into how these spots apply to the seal of God.



"The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven." {FLB 288.3}

The Bible tells us the 3-part legacy of true Reformers, **"And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."** Rev 12:11 Reformers can't overcome without the blood of the Lamb. But, they must also recognize that, like Enoch who was translated, they must have this testimony, "that they please God". (Heb. 11:5) Their lives must demonstrate that any and all attachments to the spots of this world are gone. Since true Reformers have the hope of eternal life, they would rather die than sin against God. For it is written, **"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them [cause them to fall]."** Psalm 119:165

Soon the tribulation of this "sealing" process will be over. The fruit of the harvest will be permanently sealed for life eternal, or left unsealed, meaning eternal separation from God. (Rev. 22:11) Those who are sealed with the seal of God will have the Father's name, His character, His law, written in their foreheads. Today, before canning season is over-- before the time of the "sealing process" is ended and probation closes forever on humanity, won't you strive to be among the Reformers who receive God's sign of approval, the "seal of God"?



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PROFITABLE TRADITIONS

Cultivate Something Better--- Why not celebrate Reformation Day with your kids on Oct. 31st (the day upon which Luther pinned the 95 Thesis on the church door at Wittenberg)?

A special music worship program with stories or poems as well as songs from the Reformation (like Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is our God") is a nice way to revisit history.

Other fun activities for little ones may include:

- transcribing a Bible verse with a feather pen, like Luther translated the Bible into German
- Making potato stampers (or if you are really adventuresome an old-fashioned printing press) to teach about how the printing press helped to spread the Bible to the people.



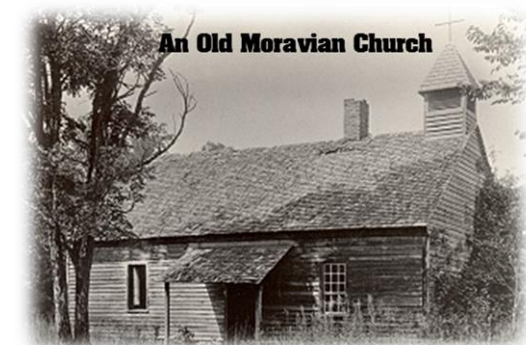
ONLY FAITH and a Song

"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and ...And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." 2 Chronicles 20:17a, 22

The stories of faith of Moravian Protestants amidst persecution are numerous and inspiring. Moravian emigrants in many places held views derived from the teachings of Huss and accepted the Bible as the only source of faith. They developed the very effective Moravian missionary movement. This often made them the targets of persecution, but following in the steps of their Master they let God fight their battles for them. On one occasion in 1723, the Moravians were holding a meeting in Kunewalde.

"On this occasion their enemies again came upon them with great force, for they feared the people. As they entered the place, the [Moravian] brethren began to sing, with a clear and strong voice, Luther's celebrated hymn:

*'If the whole world with devils swarmed,
That threatened us to swallow,
We will not fear, for we are armed,
And victory must follow.
We dare the devil's might,
His malice, craft and spite;
Though he may us assail,
He never shall prevail:
The word of God shall conquer.'*"



An Old Moravian Church

The officer demanded silence. But when the Moravians repeated the verse a second, and then a third time, it struck him with such terror that he ran away, leaving behind him a number of books he had collected. Truly, faith, song, and the Word of God did conquer. Why not trust God to fight your battles for you too?

(Story adapted from The Hand that Intervenes, 205,206)



MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The words of a Forbes article caught my attention, *“Like you, I love my smartphone... I probably love it more than anything else. But research is making it increasingly clear that our first love is hurting all the other relationships that it's supposed to assist with...”* And relationships are not all it is hurting, recently there has been a marked increase in many mental health problems.

Mental health professionals are starting to speak out that smartphones and other screened devices are NOT making us smart after all. In a recent presentation to high school students, depression specialist, Dr. Neil Nedley compared cell phones to a drug that was given to the public without any warning about what the negative side effects might be. He stated that although electronic devices are *“not the only factor in the marked increase of mental illness... it's the primary factor in the last few years.”*¹

It is little wonder why when you recognize some of the “first love” statistics. *“Americans check their phone on average once every 12 minutes – burying their heads in their phones 80 times a day, according to new research. A study by global tech protection and support company Asurion found that the average person struggles to go little more than 10 minutes without checking their phone.”*²

A Wall Street Journal headline warns, *“How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds”*. It declares, *“Research suggests that as the brain grows dependent on phone technology, the intellect weakens”*. The article cites multiple studies and reasons including the fact that *“A 2015 Journal of Experimental Psychology study, involving 166 subjects, found that when people's phones beep or buzz while they're in the middle of a challenging task, their focus wavers, and their work gets sloppier—whether they check the phone or not. Another 2015 study, which involved 41 iPhone users and appeared in the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, showed that when people hear their phone ring but are unable to answer it, their blood pressure spikes, their pulse quickens, and their problem-solving skills decline.”*

*“In another study, published in Applied Cognitive Psychology in April, researchers examined how smartphones affected learning in a lecture class with 160 students at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. They found that students who didn't bring their phones to the classroom scored a full letter-grade higher on a test of the material presented than those who brought their phones. It didn't matter whether the students who had their phones used them or not: All of them scored equally poorly.”*³

A recent study at the University of Texas found startling results which have been published with the headline *“Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity”*. They tested by having 800 participants place their smartphone in one of three different locations while taking a cognitive test. The phones were placed upside down on their desk but in sight, in a pocket or bag, or in another room. *“The researchers found that participants with their phones in another room significantly outperformed those with their phones on the desk, and they also slightly outperformed those participants who had kept their phones in a pocket or bag.”*⁴ They state that *“Our data indicate that the mere presence of one's smartphone adversely affects two domain-general measures of cognitive capacity—available working memory capacity (WMC) and functional fluid intelligence (Gf)—even when participants are not using their phones and do not report thinking about them (experiment 1).”*⁵

In other words, the mere presence of a cell phone, even when it is on silent or, as in part of the experiment, actually turned off unconsciously negatively affected the fluid intelligence (what we would call IQ) and the memory of the test participants. So what are the mental health experts suggesting society should do about the problem? Some suggest replacing your smartphone with a “dumb phone” or a better yet an old-fashioned corded phone. If you feel you must use electronic devices they suggest limiting your screen-time to less than an hour a day. But many actually suggest trying an e-fast for 10 days to 6 weeks to see if symptoms of depression, ADD, memory loss, autism, and even bipolar-like disorders don't improve.

In fact, Victoria Dunkley, MD, the author of *Reset your Child's Brain*, is said to refuse to diagnose a child with a mental disorder like ADD or autism until after a 4-week screen fast. She believes the frequent underlying cause of many of these disorders is indeed Electronic Screen Syndrome (ESS). On her website, she states, *“Because of the impact on the frontal lobe and other parts of the brain and body, Electronic Screen Syndrome can mimic or exacerbate virtually any psychiatric disorder.”* She details the everyday use of interactive screen devices — such as computers, video games, smartphones, and tablets — can easily overstimulate a child's nervous system causing chronic stress. She then details how chronic stress, results *“in blood flow shifting from the more developed part of the brain (frontal lobe) to the more primitive parts of the brain. Because the frontal lobe governs emotional regulation, attention, creativity, and social behavior, any of these areas can become impaired.”*⁶ (Continued on pg. 5)



The before-mentioned Forbes article from Nov. 10, 2014, reiterates this sad fact, stating *“4 Ways Your Smartphone is Making You Dumber”*. The article continues by explaining how, *“1. We’re tossing out a decent chunk of our IQ.”* Between sleep deprivation (since many people actually sleep with their cell phones) and the 2-dimensional multitasking, you may actually reduce your IQ by 10-15 points. In fact, *“Psychologist Daniel Levitin and others have also pointed out that multitasking—the essential smartphone activity—lowers your IQ and then spreads that weakened thinking across as many areas of life as possible. In **The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information**, Levitin reported that ‘being in a situation where you are trying to concentrate on a task, [while] an e-mail is sitting unread in your inbox, can reduce your effective IQ by 10 points.’”*

In addition, the Forbes article also explains how we are reducing creative intelligence, that’s #2. As well as #3, *“We’re impairing our social and emotional intelligence.”* But coming from a worldly source, #4 is perhaps the scariest. *“4. We’re impairing our spiritual intelligence—which simply consists of living in the present, whether or not we believe in any particular deities or dogmas.”*⁷

This statement should really make serious Christians stop and reassess the situation. But the answer to the screen induced mental health crisis is simple. If we would increase the intellect, with the fear of the Lord being the beginning of wisdom, we must go back to what should be our “first love”—the Word, **SOLA SCRIPTURA**. Pick up the “good Book” again. For *“The Bible is the only rule of faith and doctrine. And there is nothing more calculated to energize the mind, and strengthen the intellect, than the study of the word of God. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose, that is rarely seen in these times.”*⁸

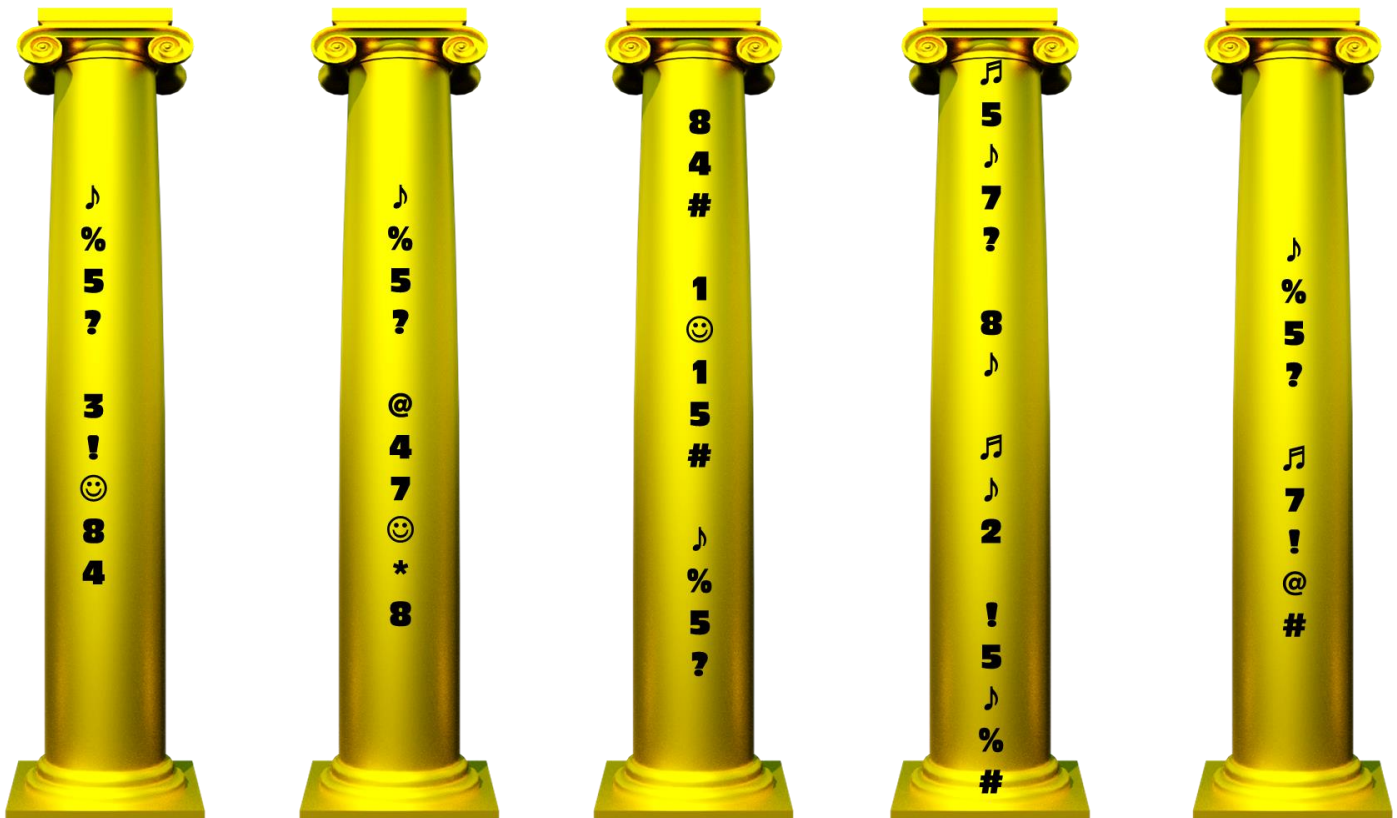
Picture from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/06/27/just-looking-smartphone-makes-less-intelligent-study-finds/> 1— Neil Nedley, Fletcher Academy, “The Rapid Rise of Emotional Disorders in Generation Y, Z, Millennials and Boomers” 2-- <https://nypost.com/2017/11/08/americans-check-their-phones-80-times-a-day-study/> 3-- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-smartphones-hijack-our-minds-1507307811> 4-- <https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power> 5-- <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/691462> 6-- <https://drdunkley.com/reset-your-childs-brain/> 7-- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robasghar/2014/11/10/4-ways-your-smartphone-is-making-you-dumber/#47e445f07f2c> 8-- {Christian Education, pg.118.2}

Kids' Corner

Memory Verse: **“I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.”** Psalm 77:11

Hey, Kids! Can you Decode the Five Pillars of the Reformation using the code below?

A-! B-1 C-@ D-2 E-# F-3 G-♯ H-4 I-☺ L-5 N-% O-♪ P-& R-7 S-* T-8 U-/ Y-?



Answers are on page 6.



Study to Show Thyself Approved—Prophecies of the Messiah

"Until the time of reformation..." Hebrews 9:10

The Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, contains over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled through His life, death, and resurrection. *"Mathematically speaking, the odds of anyone fulfilling this amount of prophecy are staggering. Mathematicians put it this way: 1 person fulfilling 8 prophecies: 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000*

1 person fulfilling 48 prophecies: 1 chance in 10 to the 157th power

1 person fulfilling 300+ prophecies: Only Jesus!" ONLY CHRIST <http://www1.cbn.com/biblestudy/biblical-prophecies-fulfilled-by-jesus>

Prophecy Characteristics	Old Testament Prophecy	New Testament Fulfillment
God would provide Himself a Lamb as an offering	Genesis 22:8; Isaiah 53:7	John 1:29, 36
Of the seed of Abraham	Genesis 12:3; Genesis 22:15-18	Matthew 1:1-17; Galatians 3:16; Acts 3:25,26
From the tribe of Judah/Star out of Jacob	Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:1-3; Matthew 2:1-11
Born of a virgin, & called Immanuel "God with us"	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22-23 Luke 1:26-31
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7
Called the Son of God	Psalm 2:7	Matthew 3:17; John 3:16
Presented with gifts	Psalm 72:10-15; Isaiah 60:3-6	Matthew 2:1, 11
Called out of Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14, 15
He would teach in parables	Psalm 78:2	Matt 13:34,35
Betrayed by a friend	Psalm 41:9; Psalm 55:12-14	John 13:18
Rejected by men	Isaiah 53:3	Matthew 21:42; Mark 8:31, 12:10; Luke 9:22, 17:25
Heal blind/deaf/lame/dumb	Isaiah 35:5-6; Isaiah 29:18	Matthew 11:5
Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12, 13	Matthew 26:15; 27:5-10 Luke 22:5
His body was pierced	Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16	John 20:25, 27
Spat upon, smitten and scourged	Isaiah 50:6, 53:5; Micah 5:1	Matthew 27:26, 30
Crucified with criminals/Soldiers cast lots for his garment	Isaiah 53:9,12; Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35
Given vinegar and gall for thirst	Psalm 69:21	Matthew 27:34
Side pierced / No bones broken	Zechariah 12:10; Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20; Numbers 9:12	John 19:33-34
Darkness over the land	Amos 8:9	Matthew 27:45
With rich in death	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:39
He would be resurrected from the dead	Psalm 16:10-11; 49:15	Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6
He would ascend into Heaven	Psalm 68:18	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11

Answers for pg. 5: From left to right—Only Faith, Only Christ, The Bible Only, GORY TO GOD ALONE, Only Grace