

Scriptures July 19, 2026

Litany of Hope based on Psalm 139

One: O God, you have searched us and know us.

All: You know our fears and hopes, our wounds and wonders. t we avoid.

All: Where can we hide from your Spirit? Your presence holds us wherever we go.

One: If we climb to the heights of joy...

All: You are there.

One: If we sink into the depths of sorrow...

All: You are there.

One: If we rise on the wings of the morning or settle into the farthest night...

All: Your hand will guide us, and your light will find us

One: Search us O God and know our hearts!

All: Test us and lead us in the way that brings life. Amen.

~silence is kept~

Ancient Testimony Genesis 28:10-19 NRSV Jacob's Dream at Bethel

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder^[a] set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the LORD stood beside him^[b] and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the

earth shall be blessed^[c] in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!’ ¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel;^[d] but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Ancient Testimony

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (MSG)
The parable of the weeds

Jesus told another story. “God’s kingdom is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. That night, while his hired men were asleep, his enemy sowed thistles all through the wheat and slipped away before dawn. When the first green shoots appeared and the grain began to form, the thistles showed up, too.

“The farmhands came to the farmer and said, ‘Master, that was clean seed you planted, wasn’t it? Where did these thistles come from?’

“He answered, ‘Some enemy did this.’

“The farmhands asked, ‘Should we weed out the thistles?’

“He said, ‘No, if you weed the thistles, you’ll pull up the wheat, too. Let them grow together until harvest time. Then I’ll instruct the harvesters to pull up the thistles and tie them in bundles for the fire, then gather the wheat and put it in the barn.’”

Jesus dismissed the congregation and went into the house. His disciples came in and said, “Explain to us that story of the thistles in the field.”

So he explained. “The farmer who sows the pure seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the pure seeds are subjects of the kingdom, the thistles are subjects of the Devil, and the enemy who sows them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, the curtain of history. The harvest hands are angels.

“The picture of thistles pulled up and burned is a scene from the final act. The Son of Man will send his angels, weed out the thistles from his kingdom, pitch them in the trash, and be done with them. They are going to complain to high heaven, but nobody is going to listen. At the same time, ripe, holy lives will mature and adorn the kingdom of God.

“Are you listening to this? Really listening?