

The Bible Banner

March 2020



“EARS TO HEAR”

A hardened unbeliever went one day to see—but not to hear—George Whitefield when he preached outdoors to a great throng. In order to have a good vantage point, he climbed a nearby tree. Putting his fingers in both ears, he began to watch the mighty preacher. Then a persistent fly lit on his nose. He shook his head, but the fly wouldn't move. Just as he removed a finger from his ear to flick the fly away, Whitefield quoted the verse, *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”* (Matt. 11:15). Then he spoke of the willful refusal of many to hear the Spirit's voice. The unbeliever was so impressed by what happened that he opened not only his ears to the gospel, but also his heart.

Skillet-Roasted Asparagus



- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil or roasted sesame oil
- 1 bunch of asparagus (about 1 lb. or 1/2 kg), trimmed
- 2 to 3 cloves of garlic, pressed or finely chopped
- Salt to taste

Wash your asparagus. The bottoms of asparagus stalks tend to be tough and woody, and aren't that pleasant to eat. The best way to figure out where to trim your asparagus is to take a stalk and bend it. Wherever the stalk snaps is where the tender part starts and the tough part ends. Additionally, I like to break or cut the stalks in half for easier eating. Heat the oil and the asparagus in a large skillet over medium heat. After it is slightly cooked, add the garlic and cook both, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Cook until the asparagus is a tender-

crisp texture (not soggy) that can be easily poked with a fork (about 3 to 7 minutes depending on the size of the asparagus spears). Toss well. Serve. Note: This recipe is very versatile, so you can adjust to your tastes.

PROFITABLE TRADITIONS

Cultivate a Love of Nature

Take a “Rainbow walk” with your children. See if you can find an object in nature for each color of the rainbow. Begin with red, and continue in order through orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. Remind your children of God's covenant. *“I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”*

Genesis 9:13

Quotable Quotes

“When Satan has undermined faith in the Bible, he directs men to other sources for light and power...

Those who turn from the plain teaching of Scripture and the convicting power of God's Holy Spirit are inviting the control of demons.” Desire of Ages, pg. 258



Hearing Impaired?

"She has a hearing impairment," I was told of the little girl that we would be keeping in our home for the next several months. Surprisingly, the only hearing impairment that we noticed during the entire time she was with us was "selective hearing." The little girl heard everything perfectly fine when she wanted to, but didn't "hear" at all when she didn't want to obey or follow orders. Finally, I understood why one of Jesus' most commonly used phrases was *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."* (Matt. 11:15) This idea of "ears to hear" is repeated at least 8 times in the gospel record and an additional 8 times in "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," showing its importance.

Throughout the Bible, we find some similar situations where people refused to hear God's messages. Ezekiel 12:1, 2 records, *"The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house."*

Sometimes people don't listen, simply because they don't want to hear the answers. For example, a school teacher lost her life savings in a business scheme that had been elaborately explained by a swindler. When her investment disappeared and her dream was shattered, she went to the Better Business Bureau. "Why on earth didn't you come to us first?" the official asked. "Didn't you know about the Better Business Bureau?" "Oh, yes," said the lady sadly. "I've always known about you. But I didn't come because I was afraid you'd tell me not to do it."



The folly of human nature is that even though we know where the answers are to be found and "heard"—God's Word—we don't turn there for fear of what it will say and what it might prevent us from doing. This "selective hearing" is equated with rebellion, making it a serious problem since 1 Samuel 15:23 states, *"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."*

Zechariah describes a similar situation with people refusing to hear *"the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets"* He records, *"But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear."* Zech. 7:12, 11

Not too long ago, I heard the story of a doctor who demonstrated close-mindedness by doing this very thing. His patient was told they needed to be admitted to the hospital immediately. But the patient refused, choosing instead to go home and take lots of natural remedies for their infirmities. Surprisingly, a few weeks later, instead of being dead or very weak as the doctor expected, the patient walked into his office and testing showed the health problems had completely disappeared. When the patient asked the doctor if he wanted to hear what they had done to correct the problems and began filling him in on all the natural remedies they had taken—he actually plugged his ears with his fingers to avoid hearing whatever they had to say. Sadly, people also often "plug their ears" when the Holy Spirit speaks to them - for when he comes *"he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"* John 16:8

Hosea 4:6 tells of a people like this, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee... seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."*

Sadly, continued rejection of truth creates a very dangerous and deadly condition of spiritual apathy and indifference. During the great Chinese famine of 1906-1907, a visit was made to the refugee camp outside the walls of Chinkiang. Mrs. Paxton was taking simple medicine to the sufferers; and as she and a helper made the rounds of the miserable straw mat shelters, within which the starving people hungered on the cold ground, she turned to her helper with a startled expression and said, "Do you know what most of them are saying? They complain of lack of appetite." These famine victims were not hungry—because they were starving. They had passed the stage of desire for food. That picture portrays many a soul's state. It has lost interest in or longing for spiritual satisfactions because it is starving. It no longer has "ears to hear" and a hunger for truth.

No wonder the same Jesus who said *"If any man have an ear, let him hear."* (Rev 13:9) also said, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."* Matt. 5:6

Prophetic News Notes – Jehovah's Witnesses Imprisoned for "Extremism" in Russia

On November 5, 2019, NPR reported, *"A Russian court has sentenced a man to six years in prison. His crime? Being a practicing Jehovah's Witness."*

"Sergei Klimov was sentenced Tuesday in the Siberian college town of Tomsk. He is one of a number of Jehovah's Witnesses to be convicted in the two years since Russia's Supreme Court banned the religious group as an extremist organization."

"The court said that Klimov had continued heading a regional Jehovah's Witnesses branch in defiance of the government's ban. Russian state media referred to Klimov's group as a 'cell of an extremist organization.' Russia effectively considers Jehovah's Witnesses on par with the Islamic State."



*"Human Rights Watch says the group has been increasingly persecuted as part of an 'escalating crackdown on Jehovah's Witnesses, who are targeted simply for practicing their faith.'"*¹

Reuters expounded concerning Vladimir Alushkin (pictured), another Jehovah's witness who was jailed, *"Jehovah's*



Witnesses are a Christian denomination known for door-to-door preaching, close Bible study, and rejection of military service and blood transfusions. The group has about 170,000 followers in Russia, and 8 million worldwide."

"Rachel Denber of New York-based Human Rights Watch called on Russian authorities to halt its crackdown on the group. 'Alushkin and the others have done nothing wrong. They have the right to freedom of worship,' Denber wrote on social media after his sentencing. 'Russia should reverse the 'extremist' designation against Jehovah's

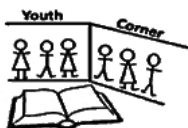
*Witnesses. And drop charges against all and free those in custody.'"*²

Do you actively share the gospel with others? Are you a close Bible student or a conscientious objector? Do you object to some medical interventions? Is your religion out of the ordinary—maybe you are a Sabbath keeper? Could you also be labeled as an "extremist"?

Then lift up your head, signs of the times are being fulfilled-- *"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and **ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.**"* Matt. 24:9

1— <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/05/776354474/russian-court-sentences-jehovahs-witness-to-6-years-in-prison-for-extremism>

2-- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-politics-religion/russia-jails-jehovahs-witness-adherent-for-six-years-over-extremism-idUSKBN1YH132>



The Fence

A man who prided himself on his morality, and expected to be saved by it, was constantly saying, *"I am doing pretty well on the whole. I sometimes get mad and swear, but then I am strictly honest. I work on Sabbath when I am particularly busy, but I give a good deal to the poor, and I never was drunk in my life."*

This man hired a canny Scotchman to build a fence around his lot. He gave him very particular directions. In the evening, when the Scotchman came in from his work, the man said, *"Well, Jock, is the fence built, and is it tight and strong?"*

"I cannot say that it is all tight and strong" replied Jock, *"but it is a good average fence, anyhow. If some parts are a little weak, others are extra strong."*

I don't know, but I may have left a gap here and there, a yard wide, or so; but then I made up for it by doubling the number of rails on each side of the gap. I dare say that the cattle will find it a very good fence on the whole and will like it; though I cannot just say that it's perfect in every part."

"What!" cried the man, not seeing the point, "Do you mean to tell me you have built a fence around my lot that has weak places and gaps in it? Why you might as well have built no fence at all. If there is one opening, or a place where an opening can be made, the cattle will be sure to find it, and will go through. Don't you know, man, that a fence must be perfect, or it is worthless?"



"I used to think so," said the dry Scotchman, "but I hear you talk so much about averaging matters with the Lord it seems to me we might try it with the cattle. If an average fence won't do for them, I am afraid an average character won't do for you in the day of judgement.

When I was on shipboard, and a storm was driving us on the rocks, the captain cried: 'Let go the anchor!' But the mate shouted back: 'There's a broken link in the cable!' Did the captain say when he heard that: 'No matter, it's only the one link. The rest of the chain is good. Ninety-nine of the hundred links are strong. Its average is high. It only lacks one percent of being perfect. Surely the anchor ought to respect so excellent a chain, and not break away from it?' No, indeed, he shouted, 'Get another chain!'

"He knew that a chain with one broken link was no chain at all. That he might as well throw the anchor overboard without any cable, as with a defective one. So with the anchor of our souls -- If there is the least flaw in the cable, it is not safe to trust it. We had better throw it away and try to get a new one that we know is perfect."

*"Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **all my words** that I shall speak unto thee **receive in thine heart**, and **hear with thine ears.**" Ezekiel 3:10*



7 Reasons You should Grow (and Eat) Asparagus



1. **Asparagus--Plant it once; enjoy it over and over again.** Asparagus is a popular spring vegetable. Most vegetables are annuals, meaning they need to be planted every year. However, asparagus is one of only a few perennial vegetables, meaning it comes back year after year. That's why you can sometimes still find asparagus growing in the wild. Perhaps it is one of the herbs described in Prov. 27:25 *"The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and **herbs of the mountains are gathered.**"*

2. **"Asparagus Has a Nutritional Uniqueness that is Second to None."**¹ Our family first took notice of the nutritional uniqueness of asparagus when looking for a food source that was high in glutathione. *"Asparagus is the highest plant-based source of glutathione."*² It is followed closely by avocado. Glutathione is a powerful antioxidant that helps the body to eliminate toxins. It boosts the immune system, and reduces your risk of cancer, as well as being beneficial to joints and cartilage.³

3. **Asparagus accounts for a significant portion of your daily nutritional needs.** As we studied different nutrients and where they could be found in plant foods, asparagus was almost always on the list. It is almost like a multi-vitamin. *"According to the reference daily intake (RDI) issued by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine, asparagus accounts for a significant portion of your daily nutritional needs, Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, the RDI [Recommended daily intake] breaks down as follows [for what appears to be a heaping serving of asparagus—maybe 5-6 spears]:*

Vitamin A: 18% of the RDI	Vitamin C: 12% of the RDI	Vitamin E: 7% of the RDI
Vitamin K: 57% of the RDI	Folate (vitamin B9): 34% of the RDI	Phosphorous: 5% of the RDI
	Potassium: 6% of the RDI	

*Asparagus also offers ample supplies of riboflavin (vitamin B2), thiamine (vitamin B1), and iron."*⁴

4. Nutritionally speaking, asparagus is extremely well-balanced, anti-inflammatory and good for the brain.

"High in vitamin K and folate (vitamin B9) [which can prevent neural tube defects in the fetus], asparagus is extremely well balanced, even among nutrient-rich vegetables.' Asparagus is high in anti-inflammatory nutrients,' said San Diego-based nutritionist Laura Flores. It also 'provides a wide variety of antioxidant nutrients, including vitamin C, beta-carotene, vitamin E, and the minerals zinc, manganese and selenium.'"

*"Furthermore, the vegetable contains the amino acid asparagine, which is important in the development and function of the brain, according to a study published in 2013 in the journal Neuron. It also contains chromium, a trace mineral that helps insulin do its job transporting glucose. It's also especially rich in glutathione, a detoxifying compound that can help destroy carcinogens. For this reason, asparagus may help fight or protect against certain cancers, including bone, breast, lung and colon cancers."*⁵

5. Remember, asparagus contains vitamin E and it's filled with vitamin K.

"Asparagus is also a source of vitamin E, another important antioxidant. This vitamin helps strengthen your immune system and protects cells from the harmful effects of free radicals. To fill up on its benefits, roast asparagus with a little olive oil: 'Our body absorbs vitamin E better if it's eaten alongside some fat,' says Gans. 'And when you cook it with olive oil, you're getting healthy fat and vitamin E.'



Along with other green, leafy vegetables, asparagus is a good source of vitamin K. The vitamin is crucial for coagulation (which helps your body stop bleeding after a cut) as well as bone health.

*'Most people think of calcium for healthy bones, but vitamin K is also important,' says Gans. 'It can actually help your body absorb calcium.'"*⁶

6. You don't have to buy asparagus organic! *"Asparagus is a 'Clean 15' vegetable because it has a low pesticide load and is one of the safest conventionally grown crops to consume. According to Dr. Andrew Weil, it is a food that does not need to be purchased organic."*

7. "The good Lord made it, and we should eat it." to quote my grandfather, a Greek chef. Genesis 3:18's "... *thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*" also reminds us that asparagus (and other veggies) are included in God's plan for good health.

1-- <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=12> 2-- <https://www.myhdiet.com/healthnews/ampm/natural-sources-glutathione/>

3--Drug Muggers, Suzy Cohen, RPh, pg. 142 4- <https://www.verywellfit.com/asparagus-nutrition-facts-calories-and-their-health-benefits-4118017>

5-- <https://www.livescience.com/45295-asparagus-health.html> 6-- <https://www.health.com/nutrition/asparagus-health-benefits>

7-- <http://www.michiganasparagus.org/recent-news/2015/5/26/the-clean-15>

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STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED—Take heed what ye Hear



The wise will hear (and understand)--*"Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."* Proverbs 8:33

(See also Deuteronomy 4:6, Proverbs 1:5, 19:20, 22:17, 23:19, Ecclesiastes 7:5, Daniel 12:10)

Jesus said those who hear, will receive more and those who refuse to hear, lose even what they have—"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, **Take heed what ye hear:** with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath." Mark 4:23-25

Those who neglect to hear (and keep) God's last day message will be "unblessed"-- "Blessed is he that **readeth**, and they that **hear** the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 1:3

"Says the prophet: 'Blessed is he that readeth'--there are those who will not read; the blessing is not for them. 'And they that hear'--there are some, also, who refuse to hear anything concerning the prophecies; the blessing is not for this class. 'And keep those things which are written therein'-- many refuse to heed the warnings and instructions contained in the Revelation; none of these can claim the blessing promised. All who ridicule the subjects of the prophecy... all who refuse to reform their lives and to prepare for the coming of the Son of man, will be unblessed." {GC 341.2}

Refusal to hear the messengers God has sent has serious consequences—"And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent." Mark 6:10-12

Those who hear God's word will be joyful at His second advent, but those who don't hear and thus persecute God's people will be ashamed-- *"Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."* Isaiah 66:5

The conclusion of what to hear -- *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."* Ecclesiastes 12:13

Kids' Corner

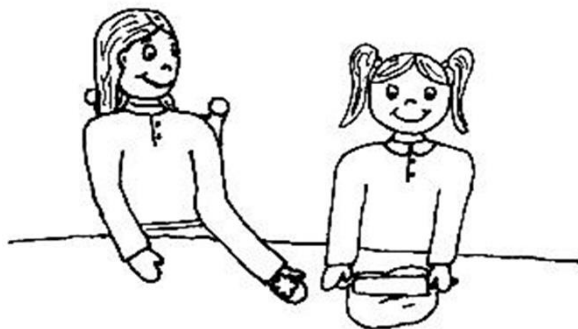
GOD'S AMAZING CREATURES

The lyrebird is one of the world's largest songbirds. Both kinds of lyrebirds live in Australia. The lyrebird in the picture is called the superb lyrebird. It is called a lyrebird because its tail looks like a harp-like instrument called a lyre. The males have long tail feathers that go up and over the head during courtship. Lyrebirds listen to other sounds and copy or mimic them. The males are commonly known for their ability to mimic the calls of other birds, such as the kookaburra. The call made by the lyrebird sounds so much like the kookaburra that it can even fool a kookaburra. Some lyrebirds that have been kept in captivity have even been known to mimic construction sounds like saws, drills and hammers. I think it is wonderful that God made lyrebirds with such excellent hearing, memory, and voices, don't you?



"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children:
for blessed are they that keep my ways." Proverbs 8:32

Patience came quickly when her mother called for her to come help. She made Jesus happy. Patience had fun helping her mommy cut and decorate shaped cookies. She was glad she had listened and obeyed.



Passion pretended she didn't hear when her mother called for her to come help. She didn't want to do more work. She made Jesus sad. Passion missed helping her mommy cut and decorate shaped cookies. That made her sad. She wished she had listened and obeyed.



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