

O LORD of Hosts!

By Mary Kane

My junior year of college, my roommates and I decided to move off campus and rent a house. We were a little tired dorm food and the constant noise and thought an off-campus home would be a welcome relief! We began checking the want-ads for houses to rent and making phone calls. Eventually, we found a house that was close to campus, had access to the inner city bus line and was affordable. I made an appointment to see the house with the realtor, Nancy, for the following week.



I met the Nancy at the appointed time. We chatted as we climbed up the porch steps to the front door of the house. As she opened the door, I noticed that the house had a name, *Sprague Place* which was etched into the glass of the oak door. The old Victorian house had been vacant (except for many large spiders) for several months. As we toured the residence, I noticed with glee that the house had many built-in oak cabinets and closets. I fell in love with the French doors that separated the entry way from the living room. After we inspected the first floor, we went upstairs to look over the bedrooms.

The first bedroom off the top of the stairs was tiny, with a small built in closet. I made a mental note to claim that room for my own. The second bedroom was much larger with a view of the backyard. When we came to the third bedroom, however, it was locked. The realtor rattled the doorknob and tried opening the door several times, thinking that perhaps it had warped over time. Nancy looked for a lock or latch that needed to be released but found none. Suddenly, we both realized that the door was locked from the *inside*. My heart froze inside of my chest as I heard footsteps make their way across the floor from the inside of the room. The door was opened by a homeless man who had taken up residence inside the vacant house. My knees were knocking as Nancy told the homeless man to clear out of the house immediately. Then we fled down the stairs, out the door and waited in the yard for him to

leave. The man left without incidence and Nancy and I recovered from our fright.

Despite the scare, my roommates and I made a down payment on the house and went home for the summer. The "homeless man incident" was soon forgotten. I was the first one to arrive on campus the following semester. As I drove up to the empty house by myself, I became fearful. I did not want to go into that house *alone*. What if there was another person living in the house? As I battled my fears and tried to decide what to do, God sent me help in the form of a retired marine who was out for an afternoon PT session. I flagged him down and told him about my problem. The marine was more than happy to help. He immediately secured the house with many terrifying shouts and pounding noises while I waited outside. I felt quite confident that he would have been able to handle a whole platoon of squatters had they been residing in the house. After assuring me that the house was safe, he said I could call upon him if I had any further trouble. I entered my house with a peaceful heart; I had a protector backing me up! The United States Marines were on the job! As Christians, we also have a military commander watching over us; He will never leave us or forsake us! His Word says that we may call upon Him whenever we are in trouble because He never sleeps or slumbers. The Lord of Hosts is His Name!

Please take a moment to confess the sin and pride you find within your heart. Ask your Holy Father to make you ready to receive from His Holy Word this day. We praise you Holy Father for your power and might!

Please read Psalm 84.

What name for God is used in verse 1?

In Hebrew, *Lord of Hosts* is rendered *Y@hovah Tsaba'* which means *Lord of the Army*. *Tsaba* itself translates as: that which goes forth, army, war, warfare, go out to war, a host of angels, soldiers, service.

"Evidently the meaning of the title is that all created agencies and forces are under the leadership or dominion of Yahweh, ... It is used to express

Yahweh's great power."¹ The Lord of Hosts is the commander and chief of a vast army of angels and soldiers; the most powerful army in the universe and He is Almighty!

When I was little we used to sing a song about our dads that went something like "My dad's bigger than your dad, my dad's bigger than yours..." It made me feel safe to have a dad who was big enough and strong enough to take care of and protect me; how much more comforting now that I have the Lord of Hosts covering me. "♪ My God is bigger than your god... ♪"

Please look up the following verses and record what you learn about the Lord of Hosts:

1 Chronicles 11:9:

Psalms 46:7

Isaiah 47:4

Haggai 2:7

Malachi 3:10

Malachi 4:3

¹ "Lord+of+Hosts," *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. Edited by James Orr. Blue Letter Bible. 1913. 1 Apr 2007. 6 Jul 2010.

<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?type=GetTopic&Topic=Lord+of+Hosts&DictList=4#SBE>>

Let's go back to Psalm 84.

Where did the Lord of Hosts dwell at this point in history (verse 1)?

How is the tabernacle described?

Why was the tabernacle lovely?

On one hand the tabernacle was lovely due to the beautiful elaborate furnishings of gold and bronze and the striking tapestry that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tabernacle. The real reason for the beauty of the temple, however was that the presence of God resided there.

Please record the verbs used by the Psalmist in verse 2 to describe how he felt about the Lord of Hosts.

The NKJV uses the words *longs*, *faints* and *cries*. The meanings of these words are respectively: *to yearn most intensely*, *exhausted with desire* and *sings with joy*.

Let us ask ourselves a few questions (I'll be asking myself these same questions!):

1. Is your most intense desire to know Jesus and walk closely with Him?
2. Are you ever tired from your continued efforts to seek Him, read His word or converse with God in prayer?
3. Does your relationship with God bring you great joy?

If you answered *no* to any or all of these questions, don't despair—ask God to give you a heart that yearns for Him! He will be pleased to grant your request for it is His will that you love Him above all other things!

Who is able to find a home in the Tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts (verse 3)?

While we may think of commanders and generals as very tough, harsh and aggressive individuals, the Lords of Hosts has a merciful side as well. Even the sparrows and swallows were allowed to nest in the tabernacle. In the Bible, "sparrows are mentioned among the offering of the very poor."² Two sparrows were sold for a penny, and five sparrows could be bought for two pennies. The poorest little birds in nature were welcomed in the tabernacle of the Lord!

Please fill in the blanks for verse 5:

" _____ is the man whose _____ is in You, whose heart is set on _____."

The NKJV reads: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on *pilgrimage*." Some versions add "whose heart is set on pilgrimage to Jerusalem." The original word for *pilgrimage* used in this verse is *mecilla* which translates a highway, raised way or public road. The meaning of this verse is that we will be blessed when we seek to walk closely with the Lord of Hosts.

How, exactly, will we be blessed when we walk closely with the Lord of Hosts? The answer is in verse 6. Please fill in the missing word:

If we choose to walk with God, we will pass through the Valley of _____.

Baca translates as weeping or lamenting. It is derived from *bekah* which means to bewail, to cry, to shed tears.

² *The Blue Letter Bible CD*, CD-ROM, version 2.1.1. Sowing Circle, 2006.

What happens to the tears that are shed by those who are seeking God?

They water the land! The tears of the pilgrims become a "spring" and the land is refreshed. The NLT says: "When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs, where pools of blessing collect after the rains."³ After you have walked through a time of hardship and pain because you are seeking the Lord, please be aware that you will be greatly blessed by the Lord of Hosts. God promises to use all things for our good; though the road is long and rocky, we need to continue to trust Him.

What does God promise to give us when we go through the Valley of Weeping?

He says we will go from "strength to strength." One commentary translates the phrase as "*They go from strength to strength; their company increases by the accession of more out of every town they pass through, till they become very numerous.*"⁴ We can be strengthened, then by asking other Christians to help us on our journey through the Valley of Weeping by joining with us in prayer.

The hardship you are facing today cannot defeat you in and of itself; you can only be defeated if you decide to quit the battle. God has supplied you with all the strength you need for this day. The original word for *strength* means strength, efficiency, ability, army, integrity, fitness.

From the above definition, please name some of the blessing we will gain after coming out of a trial (a few of my ideas are listed below):

³ Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

⁴ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Psalms 84." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2010. 7 Jul 2010.
< [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm? AuthorID=4&contentID=1207&commInfo=5&topic=Psalms&ar=Psa_84_7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1207&commInfo=5&topic=Psalms&ar=Psa_84_7) >

1. We will become stronger in our faith. Trials often require us to develop new muscles we never knew we had.
2. We will become more efficient at battling through the hard times. For example, due to a recent trial we may have learned not to waste precious energy on bitterness but to devote that same energy to prayer.
3. We will discover new skills, abilities and character qualities that surface within our hearts due to times of hardship.

Please write verse 10 in the space provided:

- The NLT says: "A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else."⁵
- The NIV states: "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere."⁶

My favorite translation is the last one...

- The NASB says: "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside."⁷

For the Psalmist, it was better to sit in the doorway of the temple for one day than to spend one thousand days doing anything else anywhere else; wicked or otherwise.

⁵ Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

⁶ THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®
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⁷ "Scripture quotations taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®,
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It is better to spend one day with God than to spend one thousand days...

Fishing...eating...shopping...at a party...gardening...reading...going to a movie...scrapbooking...making money...than doing crossword puzzles...at the Cheesecake Factory...etc.

Fill in a few of your own:

Now please read verse 11.

Please list two things that God *is* and list two things that God *gives*.

The NVJV says that God is a *sun* and a *shield* and that He gives *grace* and *glory*. God is a *sun* when we need light, warmth, heat and energy to reap a harvest. He is a *shield* when we need darkness, coolness and shelter from the cold, rain and enemies. The Lord of Hosts gives us *grace* when we fall and *glory* when we are obedient. Light and dark, heat and cool, grace and glory ...He is all we need.

Please fill in the missing word for the end of verse 11

**"...No good thing will He withhold from those who walk
_____."**

Uprightly means to be complete, whole, entire, sound, healthy. When we walk according to the truth of God's Word not only will He give us all good things, but we will be what He created us to be; whole, complete and healthy. God's Word is medicine for our souls; it heals our wounds, soothes our scars and cures the sin sickness of our hearts.

Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in you!

