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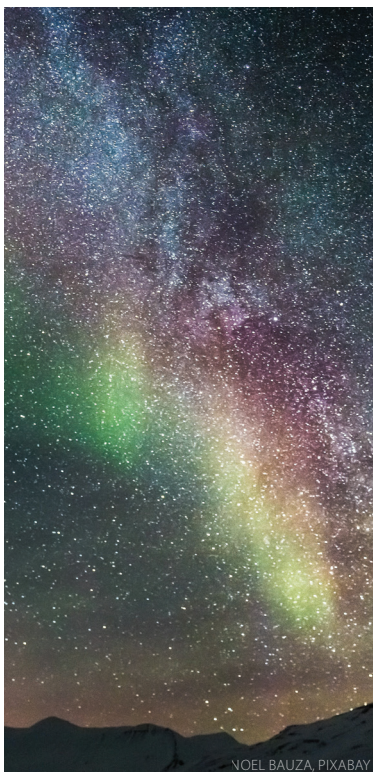
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NOEL BAUZA, PIXABAY

## Yes, There Is A God \_\_\_\_\_

Essay by *LaVonne Hein Metter*



**M**y name is LaVonne Hein Metter. I have suffered the loss of my two sons, David in 2013 and Randy in 2015, and my husband, Raymond, in 2020. About 30 years ago I was diagnosed with essential tremors. These cause my hands to shake so badly that there are many things I cannot do. Medications all had adverse side effects, including hair and memory loss which is becoming more prevalent every day, along with dementia that causes confusion and severe hallucinations. I am now in an assisted living facility.


God and church have always been very important to me. I feel I have been blessed by God my entire life and have felt God's existence many times. I am almost 94 years old and have asked God why he is keeping me alive. I believe he wants me to tell my stories to witness to people that he really does exist. Here are two of my stories.

During the summer of 1935 — the height of the Dirty Thirties — at 3 years old, I became very sick with dust pneumonia. I remember being sick and pulling on my mother's skirt while she was doing dishes. I wanted to be held. My mother picked me up and rocked me to sleep, then laid me down in the bed I shared with my sister. During the night, I woke up, and my body was in bed, but I was flying around using my arms like wings. When I tired, I started to fall, so I beat faster. I had this vision of a wall across a deep, dark chasm. The wall had an open door and the brightest light was shining out through that door. All the colors of the rainbow were swirling around in the air, something like I would now describe as the Northern Lights. There was a platform by the door with steps going down, and the platform was full of little angels. They beckoned me to come over. I wanted to because it was so beautiful. But before I went over I stopped to think and asked if I could come back. They said no — if

I went over, I would have to stay. Not wanting to leave my momma, I said no. Instantly I was back in my bed. My sister called for our mother who came in, felt my forehead, and said, "Her fever has broken; she is going to live now." The next morning when I told them what I had seen they did not believe me and told me because of my high fever, I was just hallucinating. I didn't even know what that meant, but I know what I saw!

In 1980, when my husband and I had been married for 30 years, he had a massive heart attack. After arriving at the hospital, a nurse came out of the emergency room and said, "He's not going to make it. What pastor do you want?" A young pastor was summoned and asked what he could do. I replied, "Say the Lord's Prayer," thinking, "Thy will be done." As he was praying I felt a pressure on my head, and I thought it was someone's hand. It pushed a little harder, so I opened my eyes. No one was there! Then I had the sensation of a warm blanket being laid across my shoulders and down my back. At the same time, the young doctor attending to my husband felt a presence in the room. Although the medical staff had already shocked my husband several times and broken his ribs pounding on his chest, the doctor gave him an injection and shocked him one more time. God caused his heart to start beating again, after seven minutes without a heartbeat. The doctor left the room, saying, "I can't believe it!" My husband and I had almost 40 more blessed years together doing things we never would've been able to do without God's intervention.

We are all God's people and must live by faith and know that by his grace we are saved. I am on the bus and God is in the driver's seat, and I'm not getting off until he takes me home.

Yes, [your name], there is a God! 

**LaVonne Hein Metter** of Huron, South Dakota, is a lifelong Lutheran. She is a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Huron.

# Journey Through the Psalms



## Mini Bible Study Installment

### PSALM 18:3,46

I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.  
The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation ....

One of my favorite camp songs is “I Will Call Upon The Lord.” It begins with the lilting words of Psalm 18:3 and continues on to the bold belting of verse 46. Its clapping and hand motions make it ideal for children, but what makes it my favorite is that it’s often sung in a round. Voices overlap and echo around us as the older generations lead the younger generations in singing that the God of their salvation may be exalted.

At first glance, Psalm 18 seems to encapsulate the theme of many of the early psalms. God’s chosen king is in battle with enemies, and we join our voices to the psalmist’s to recite a joyful part of our history the same way we sing about the fulfillment of the Covenant of Abraham when singing “Father Abraham” or the triumph of Exodus in “Pharaoh, Pharaoh.”

But upon closer read, the enemies described in Psalm 18 are not gossips or invading armies. These enemies make the earth shake, hail clatter from the sky, and the world seem dark. The enemies of sin and death are at hand, and this king doesn’t merely call upon God for help. He pursues these enemies. He crushes them under his pierced foot until they are a fine dust blown on the wind. This king is the Messiah, and he is actively pursuing the cosmic triumph of salvation for God’s people throughout the nations. When voices singing this psalm overlap, we hear the echoes of salvation throughout all time. We hear the assurance of descendants who outnumber the stars, the hope of freedom from


bondage, and sure and certain promise that death itself has been defeated for the young and the old.

### FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Read the psalm and reflect upon the following questions provided for your own personal devotions or in a short Bible study session.

1. How do the psalms unite us to the worries and triumphs of our ancestors? How does that make you feel? What hope does that give you?
2. How does praying or singing in unison echo salvation to us? What comfort does that provide you? What about your neighbor?
3. How does “the Lord live” in your life? How is God active in our world? How might we understand that activity in light of the resurrection?
4. What does it mean to have Jesus as our king in light of the description of the king in this psalm?

### PRAYER

O Lord, you are alive and exalted. We praise you for pursuing the enemies of sin and death and winning for us the promise of eternal life. Allow us to sing songs of exultation and praise to you for eternity, and write the words of eternal life on the hearts of our children. Amen. 

The author of this installment, **Rev. Taylor Rister-Stempniak** of Fresno, California, is pastor of [Immanuel Lutheran Church in the community of Easton](#).

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### BE A PARTNER

If your organization or an organization whose work you appreciate would be a great Ministry Partner, write to Karen Nelson at [knelson@solapublishing.com](mailto:knelson@solapublishing.com) for more info.

Connections Online, and Connections as a print magazine for more than a 15 years before it, operates as a ministry of Sola Publishing. And, Sola Publishing is part of WordAlone Ministries, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization.

WordAlone is like many organizations in the Church writ large — not formally affiliated with any particular congregation or denomination, but working alongside these and many other organizations to point people to Christ and the Church.

Many of the groups who write on this page for the Ministry Partner Focus feature have been partners of WordAlone, Sola Publishing and Connections for years. Others are newer or have been on board for a short time. The intention of this page is to highlight these many solid ministries whose work furthers the Church, allowing them to spread information about their purpose.

Perhaps you've been reading Connections Online since the start, perhaps this is just the first or second issue you've laid eyes on, or maybe you fall somewhere in between. No matter how long you've been reading, if you know of a potential Ministry Partner Focus organization, please share this issue so that we can help highlight their mission.

Here's how it works: Each of the small ads on Connections Online is a paid partner ad at \$35 per issue. Each of the partners has the oppor-



*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

2 Timothy 3:14-15

tunity to take a turn as the Ministry Partner Focus — writing its story in about 300 words plus sharing a logo and information about mission, vision, purpose, events and contacts. In exchange for writing, the partner's ad is free in that issue — and there's no obligation to ever purchase an ad to gain the space to spread the message, and repeats are invited as part of the ongoing cycle.

Feel free to pass along this issue and explanation to any organization that might be interested in participating, or direct suggestions to Karen Nelson by writing to [knelson@solapublishing.com](mailto:knelson@solapublishing.com).

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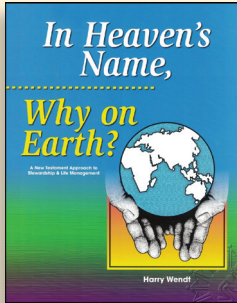
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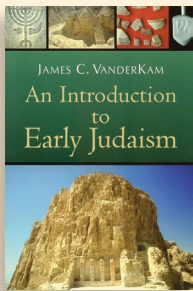
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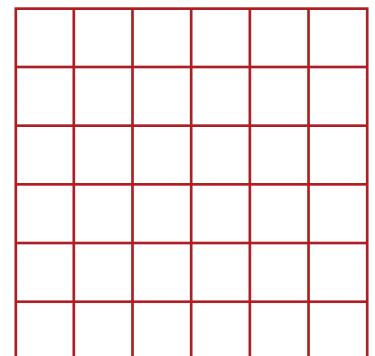
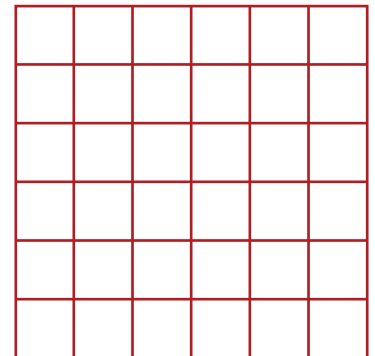
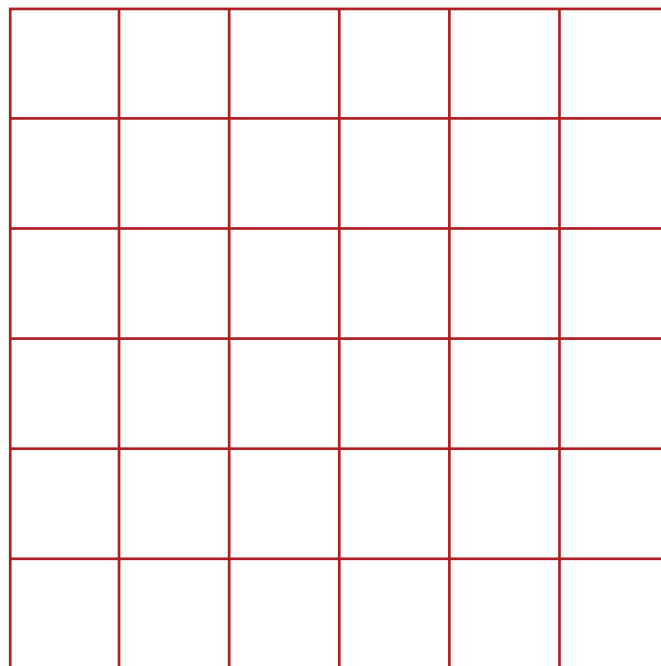
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Professor Emeritus James C. VanderKam's book **An Introduction to Early Judaism** is based on recent archaeological research and explores the history of Judaism from 516 BC to AD 70, including literature, institutions and practices. Softcover, 246 pages. [Item Q-5106, \\$12.95, solapublishing.com](#)

## ... AND A GAME

Find a friend and try a round (or three) of Order vs. Chaos! One player is Order; the other is Chaos. Players alternate turns, each drawing either an X or an O on a 6-by-6 grid. Neither player "owns" a symbol; rather, both players can choose to write either symbol on their turn. The player who is Order is attempting to get five in a row of the same symbol, either orthogonally or diagonally. If Order is successful, Order wins. The player who is Chaos is trying to prevent five in a row of either symbol. If Chaos is successful, Chaos wins. Here are some grids to get you started.

Reading Connections Online in your browser? Try [this digital jigsaw puzzle](#) from Rev. Mark Ryman.



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