



A is for Ashes

**Praying Through
Lent from A to Z**

A is for Ashes

You are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Genesis 3:19

Is this really how our ABC journey begins, Lord Jesus? With ASHES? Ashes on my forehead that point to ashes deeper inside of me? Ashes seem like an ending, not a beginning.

I am made of ashes, I know. Your word reminds me of that simple fact. And to ashes I will someday return.

It's just that it seems an awfully awful way to begin our journey. But ... well, it is a journey to your cross—to your death. So I suppose beginning with a reminder of MY death is the right way to begin.

We start with ashes, MY ashes—a reminder that I am in need of saving from the death that awaits me. I need a savior.

Good thing I am making this journey with you, my Savior! Amen.



Thursday after Ash Wednesday

A is for Adam & Eve

The woman took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband...

Genesis 3:6

The problem with sin is an old one, isn't it, Lord Jesus?

It goes back to a garden where a couple of naughty children listened to a slippery snake rather than listening to their loving Father.

I'd like to blame those two for my sin problem, Jesus. But it's no good playing the blame game. I am just as guilty as they ever were. Yesterday's ashes proved that. I'm dirty with sin.

I'm sorry, Lord.

Lead me on this Lenten journey to your cross, where I can look and see your loving forgiveness. There you wash my dirty sin away. Amen.



Friday after Ash Wednesday

B is for Bruise

He will strike your head, and you will bruise his heel. Genesis 3:15

My dirty sinfulness goes all the way back to the garden of Eden, Lord Jesus.

But look how far back your cleansing promises go! All the way back to the garden as well!

You would have nothing to do with the blame game that Adam and Eve insisted on playing:

"She told me to eat it ..."

"No, it's that slippery snake's fault ..."

You went beyond blame to the promise of a plan. You promised that some day that old snake would get his head crushed and that sin would be nipped in the bud.

But it would cost you a bruise, wouldn't it, Lord Jesus? Worse than a bruise ... it would cost you a cross—to which I am following you this Lent. Lead me from sinfulness to your promised salvation. Amen.



Saturday after Ash Wednesday

B is for Boat

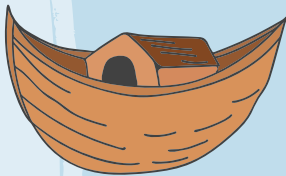
*The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. **Genesis 7:18***

When sinfulness had so infected humans, you decided that destruction was the answer.

But not all of humanity was destroyed, Lord. Inside the ark, Noah and his family were buoyed up upon the destructive waters. You kept them safe.

When raging waters threatened to destroy your disciples on the Sea of Galilee, you shouted, "Peace!" and "Be still!" You kept your disciples safe too.

Keep me safe, Lord Jesus, when I feel threatened by any sort of "rough waters" I sense in my day-to-day life. Buoy me up and whisper "peace" in my ear. Amen.



C is for Caravan

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country ... to the land that I will show you."

Genesis 12:1

You called to Abraham and he listened, Lord! He uprooted himself and his family and drove his herds half a world away to the land that you would show him.

I've heard the phrase "a leap of faith." Abraham displayed no simple jump, but an entire CARAVAN of faith.

How strong is my faith, Lord? Will I follow you wherever you lead? Even to the cross?

I will. Because I know your promise. You promise to lead me BEYOND the cross, to everlasting life.

I believe! Help my unbelief. Amen.



C is for Covenant

*"Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then the Lord said to Abram, "So shall your descendants be." **Genesis 15:5***

Your promises to Abraham were scribbled on paper or even sealed in stone. Your promises to Abraham were written in the heavens, Lord Jesus. "Look at the stars," you told him on that clear desert night. "Count them if you can." Could he, Lord? Could Abraham's old mind even begin to grasp the number of stars his old eyes were taking in? "That's how many grandchildren I will give you!"

Your promises are BIG, Lord Jesus! As big as the whole night sky. As big as the world's biggest family. As big as forever and ever, amen—which happens to be where you are ultimately leading ME. And so I thank you, my promise-making, promise-keeping Lord! Amen.



Tuesday of the First Week

D is for Donkey

God said to Abraham, "Take your son ... whom you love and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering ..." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took ... his son Isaac ...

Genesis 22:2-3

What is this, Lord Jesus? Abraham had waited for a son. And now, after all these years ... after all of your promises ... you are commanding Abraham to offer up his beloved son as a sacrifice?!

Fortunately, I know how this story turns out. You would stop Abraham before Isaac could be sacrificed. Another sacrifice—a ram—would be provided in Isaac's place. Whew!

But I also know about another story—a bigger story—in which another beloved Son's sacrifice is NOT stopped. You were sacrificed in my place, Lord Jesus. You are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.



Wednesday of the First Week

D is for Dream

*Joseph said to his brothers, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf." **Genesis 37:6-7***

Joseph's dream would come true, Lord Jesus. But it would take a long time for the dream to come true.

Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery out of their angry jealousy. He would be taken to Egypt in chains. He would end up in prison even! Yikes!

But then Joseph would begin to interpret dreams—even the dreams of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh would promote Joseph to be a prince of Egypt. And Joseph's brothers would indeed bow before him.

You had special plans for your child Joseph, Lord Jesus. What are your plans for me? Amen.



Easter Sunday

Z is for Zip-a-dee-doo!

As the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" **Matthew 28:1-9**

