

## It Was Me All Along

**Judah recognized [the items belonging to him] and said, “[Tamar] is more righteous than I, since I wouldn’t give her to my son Shelah” (Genesis 38:26).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 38:12-19, 24-26

**Song:** “Give Us Clean Hands”

I recently watched a TV show in which the main characters were condemning the homeless. The matriarch of the family, in particular, believed that all who were without homes were to blame for their plight. That changed when she listened to a relative share the story of how she ended up on the streets. The older woman realized she had misjudged and could be considered partly to blame because of condemning rather than helping.

Similarly, Judah had been ready to condemn Tamar to death because of her apparent sin, until he realized he himself shared the blame. Sometimes we find it easy to blame others for a particular problem when, in fact, we may bear responsibility for the problem as well—if not directly, then through hypocrisy. Like Judah, we are often quicker to point a finger at others than at ourselves.

Jesus admonished in Matthew 7:3, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” We will never grow personally by focusing on others’ mistakes; we grow, rather, by facing and learning from our own.

**Father**, give us courage to acknowledge our mistakes—and wisdom to learn from them. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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September 19–25. **Jenifer Regennitter** has a certificate in biblical studies. She has served in music and prayer ministries. Antiques, old movies, and gardening are among her favorite pastimes.

## Above and Beyond

**The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!” (Ruth 4:14).**

**Scripture:** Ruth 4:9-17

**Song:** “He Is Able”

A couple of years ago, I moved back to my home state after living several years elsewhere. I planned to stay with family until I could get settled. After weeks of online house-hunting prior to moving, on the very day I arrived at my family’s place, there was a home listed in the area where I was looking to move. Other homes I’d looked at would have required me to compromise in one area or another, but this home “ticked all the boxes” on my list. I was able to purchase it, and it has turned out to bless me far beyond what I envisioned.

After Naomi’s husband and sons died, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth found themselves destitute. However, when Ruth married Boaz and had their son, it was clear that God’s provision had “ticked all the boxes” on a list of needs for both women. God didn’t stop there, though; Ruth and Boaz became the continuation of a family line that led to Jesus himself.

God is master not only of meeting our needs but also of exceeding our expectations. He will provide what we need today, perhaps far more, and through Jesus we will receive an inheritance of unimaginable blessing when we are finally home.

**Father,** I will trust Your ability meet my needs today, and I give thanks that You have an inheritance for me above and beyond what I can conceive. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Wait for It

**“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”** (Numbers 23:19).

**Scripture:** Numbers 23:18-26

**Song:** “All the Power You Need”

In the past, if someone wanted to purchase an item, there were very few ways, other than word of mouth, to find out consumers’ experience with that product or company. Now, thanks to the internet, we can access thousands of consumer reviews on nearly every product and service to find out if the company delivers on what they promise.

Unlike some businesses or service providers, God always delivers on what He promises. God is not a liar, nor is He fickle. He doesn’t waver on His decisions. God is able and willing to accomplish all He has promised. He has a plan to do so—for, in, and through us. He may not always do so in the time frame we prefer, but He will follow through.

In much the same way we wait for a purchase to arrive, we often must wait on God to act on what He has said. Waiting for Him to fulfill His promises requires us to trust in His ability and character. He knows how His plan for our lives fits into His plan for all humanity, which is a perspective we do not have. We must trust Him to know the perfect timing to act on what He has said.

**Father,** today I will choose to trust Your perfect timing and wait patiently for You to fulfill all You have promised. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## God's Purpose Prevails

**“Water will flow from [the Israelites’] buckets; their seed will have abundant water. Their king will be greater than Agag”** (Numbers 24:7).

**Scripture:** Numbers 24:2-9, 15-17

**Song:** “The Lion and the Lamb”

If you’ve ever been to an apple orchard, odds are you were not surprised to see apple trees producing apples. One would not expect apple trees to produce peaches or lemons, only apples. That is what apple trees do, because that is what God intended for them to do. Nothing can stop an apple tree from fulfilling God’s purpose for it.

In the same way, God’s purposes for us cannot fail, because His plans “stand firm forever” (Psalm 33:11). In today’s passage, a prophetic blessing is being spoken over Israel that lets everyone know God’s purpose is to bless them and help them overcome their enemies. This served as both a warning to their enemies and an encouragement to Israel. To the Israelites, it may not have looked like God’s way would prevail, as they faced many challenges in the wilderness. Yet despite how their circumstances appeared, God promised them He would bless and prosper them. He assured them of victory.

We may have difficulty today understanding how God will fulfill His purpose for us, when our circumstances tell us it is impossible. Yet God promises He will accomplish all He intends, and He desires for us to rest in that promise.

**Father,** when I feel overwhelmed by my circumstances and I struggle to trust that Your purposes will prevail, I will remember how faithful You have been in the past and will renew my trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Created for a Purpose

**“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being”** (Revelation 4:11).

**Scripture:** Revelation 4

**Song:** “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made”

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Dickson lived around the beginning of the twentieth century. Mrs. Dickson, a novice at cooking, tended to cut or burn herself while working in the kitchen. To make it easier for her to treat those injuries herself, Earl started placing pieces of gauze on surgical tape ahead of time for her to use. It so happened that Mr. Dickson worked for the Johnson & Johnson company, and his invention became the self-adhesive bandages we use today.

Mr. Dickson’s invention happened according to circumstance, but when God created you, it was not by situational happenstance. The author of Psalm 139 declared that he was “fearfully and wonderfully made” and said to God, “You knit me together in my mother’s womb” (vv. 13-14). God planned for you to be alive, at this time and place—*for a purpose*. Like an inventor takes joy in his or her invention, so our Creator takes joy in us, His creation—including you!

Every person plays a specific, unique, God-designed role in His kingdom. Know today that you are neither an accident nor the outcome of some random circumstance. The God who created the universe also intentionally created you, and you have a meaningful place in His kingdom plans.

**Father**, thank You for creating me and for Your loving purposes and plans for my life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## His Most Precious Possession

**“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation”** (Revelation 5:9).

**Scripture:** Revelation 5

**Song:** “Worthy Is the Lamb”

The most exciting moments on a popular antique-appraisal TV show occur when an item far exceeds the value its owner expected it to have. Sometimes the owner found the item at a yard sale or thrift store, and sometimes it’s a family heirloom that has been passed down. I must admit, I often find myself saying “Sell it!” regardless of how the owner acquired it. Not surprisingly, though, those with a family heirloom are usually not interested in selling their precious possession.

It’s easy for us to lose sight of the fact that, as valuable as some of our earthly possessions may seem to us, they are worth nothing in light of the eternal value of people—ourselves included. We are infinitely valuable to God. He purchased us not with money but with the blood of His own Son. Our God loves us so passionately that He decided there was no price too high to pay.

How comforting to know we serve a God who desires a relationship with us so much that He was willing to make that sacrifice. One day we will see Him and worship Him forever, but we don’t have to wait for that day to begin living out our gratitude.

**Father**, thank You for loving us so much that You purchased us with the blood of Your Son. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Ruler of All

**“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his”** (Genesis 49:10).

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:8-12

**Song:** “Above All”

In Cincinnati in 1817, John and Henry Pearce developed an adaptation of the cotton gin and began selling the machinery for it. Later, during the Civil War, they began producing candlewicks, and their fiber-based products are still being manufactured today. With operations based in Kentucky, the Atkins & Pearce company has remained in the same family for seven generations and is still going strong.

Today’s Scripture contains a portion of Jacob’s deathbed blessings over his sons, specifically Judah’s blessing. A scepter was a symbol of sovereign authority. The phrase “from between his feet” can also be understood as “from his descendants.” In light of God’s plan of salvation that has been revealed to us since then, we have come to see that Jacob was prophesying about a descendent of Judah—Jesus—who will never lose His sovereign authority. God protected Judah’s line through the generations until Jesus came in the flesh.

Jesus continues to hold all authority, even when the world seems out of control. Jesus is and always will be the ultimate ruler over all the earth, including your life and mine. Even when we are not sure how things will work out, God knows and is in control of it all, through all generations.

**Father**, help us to rest in the assurance that Jesus has authority over all things, even every aspect of our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.