

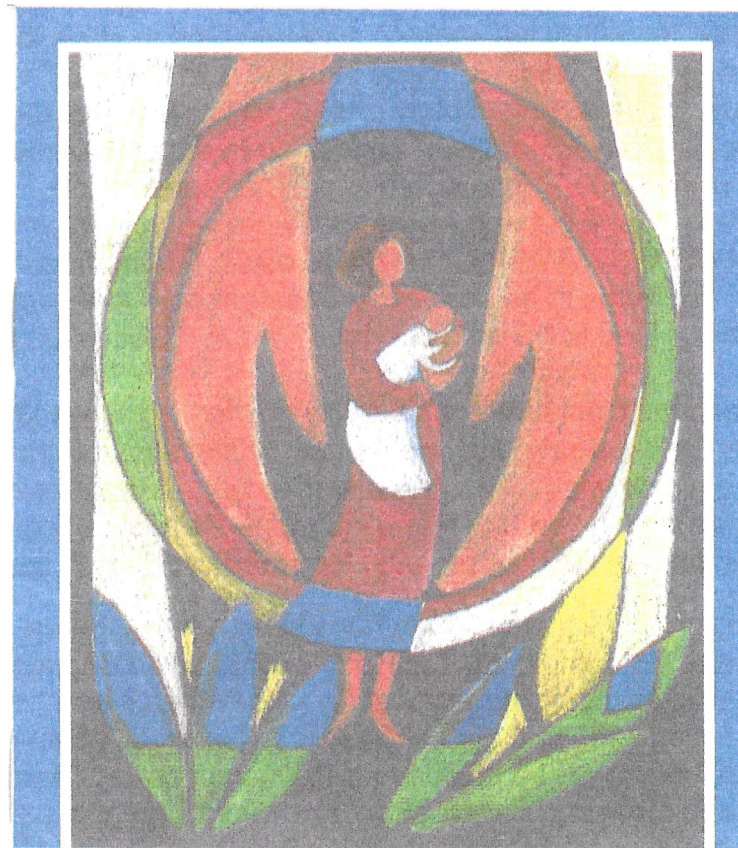
## 1 Peter 2:2-10

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by man but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and “a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

## “In Her Holy Name”

Strong mother God, working night and day,  
planning all the wonders of creation.  
Setting each equation, genius at play;  
Hail and hosanna, strong mother God!

(Bring Many Names by Brian Wren, vs. 1)



Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me . . .  
No one shall appear before me empty-handed.

(from Exodus 23:14-19)

In his devotional, “Who Do You Think you are, God?” Anthony Robinson wrote: “Who exactly does this God think he or she is? “Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me.” Period. Just ordering, prescribing, demanding really, that three times a year we do this whether we feel like it or not, whether it’s



convenient or not. And, for good measure, "See that you don't come empty-handed." God in this passage sounds as sharp and direct as my grandmother, Victoria Moon Robinson. Though I was the apple of her eye, she was completely capable of setting me straight in no uncertain terms. When my words were those of a callow youth, she fixed me with the stern look of her craggy visage and said, "Mister, don't you ever think that you are any better than anyone else." Like the slap of a Zen master. So often today, too often, we seem to construe God in ways that suggest that God's whole purpose in being is to serve us, to comfort us, to make us feel okay or peaceful or less stressed. God as a "Sleep Number Bed," adjustable to our own particular "comfort preference." God becomes another consumable, adjusted to fit our taste and needs. But what if that's not who God is at all? What if the point is not to adjust God to fit and serve us, but for us to be adjusted---transformed---to serve God? What if God is not safe but good? What if God is God?'

Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "they have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you."

John 2:1-11

Reflecting on this verse in "A Mother's Imagination," Lillian Daniel wrote: You know, my mother thought I could do anything, too. She was always exaggerating my gifts. When it was time to apply to college she told me I should go to Harvard. When I explained that my grade point average was not represented anywhere in that school's statistics, she would say, "Oh, nonsense, just apply." Once I started working, she was always giving me a promotion, telling people I was doing the work of my boss. When I tried to correct her, she would just keep talking. My churches were tripled in size; my first articles turned into books and a seat on the association's committee on ministry made me a bishop---all through the power of my mother's imagination. Listening to my mother, you would have thought I was some kind of miracle worker, but I knew better, and so did Harvard. So I have always delighted that the first miracle Jesus

performs is the result of his mother's imagination. His mother tells him that they have run out of wine, and he says, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?' He's annoyed as anyone when his mother put her enormous vision for him out there. But Jesus actually was a miracle worker. And someone had to get him started. Sometimes a mother's imagination is a miracle in itself.'

Yet God saved them for God's name's sake, to make God's mighty power known. God rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up;

God led them through the depths as through a desert. . . The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived.

Then they believed God's promises and sang God's praise.

Psalm 106:8-12

Lastly, Kenneth Samuel in "The Value of a Good Name" wrote: 'I'm old enough to remember when a person's good name meant something. My mother would send me to the corner store in our neighborhood with a list of things that she needed, but with no money. The grocer would fill the bag with the items on my mother's list and give the bag to me to take home. No payment was required at the time, simply because of my mother's good name and her reputation for paying her debts. My mother's good name alone put food on our table many nights. A good name is still worth protecting and preserving. Promises are only as good as the people who make them. The many names of God are celebrated and revered around the globe today because those names bring the loving, sustaining, forgiving, delivering character of God before us. And whether we call God Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Ground of Being, Love Incarnate, Way Maker, Awesome Wonder, or Constant Friend, God's character is always consistent with God's name. The children of Israel had fallen into sin, idolatry, and disobedience. But God, being true to the names of mercy and forgiveness, saved them from their self-destruction and from their menacing detractors. The salvation of Israel was not due to Israel's righteousness, but to the commitment of God to protect and preserve the integrity of God's own name. The name of God still has the power to lift us despite our downfalls and to redeem us despite our unworthiness.'