



SHARING SCRIPTURE

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Children of the Promise

For use: April 25 - May 1

Texts: Genesis 15:1-3, Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Revelation 22:1-5, 1 Peter 2:9, Genesis 11:4, Genesis 12:2

Blindfolded. Surrounded by armed captors. Bruised and beaten almost beyond recognition. What had started as a trip to Syria to further a journalistic career quickly enveloped in darkness when American Austin Tice was abducted by the Syrian government during his trip to Damascus. That was in 2012.

Although 9 years have passed, many still hold out hope for Tice's safe return, especially since his release was being sought as recently as the closing days of President Donald J. Trump's administration. And American efforts haven't seemed to cease.

"We are calling on you at the outset of your administration to use your full capabilities to secure Austin's long overdue release," 80 members of the United States Congress penned in a letter to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. [1]

The New York Times reports that the Biden administration is "committed to finding and rescuing Mr. Tice" and that successfully negotiating his release is its top priority. However, securing Tice will be quite the feat, as former President Trump, the Russian government, a Hollywood actor, and even the Vatican have been thus far unsuccessful in bringing the journalist home. [2]

In a world dominated by human reason and to be "like God" or finding the god within ourselves as described in [Genesis 3:4-6](#), only darkness can reign. Take

the builders of the Tower of Babel. As we see in [Genesis 11](#), they attempted to create their own “holy” nation by limited human design and understanding. By seeking “light” they found only confusion and spiritual delusion.

Unfortunately, their exploits have been followed in some shape or form by every nation in Earth’s history. And no matter how hard we try to break the bonds imposed by these governments and kingdoms, we can never fully escape.

There can only be one Solution. And that Solution is Jesus Christ who came to fulfill the covenant promise and be the Light of the world.

Paul says, as recorded in [1 Corinthians 2:9](#), that God has designed for those who love the Lord marvelous things beyond the scope of human comprehension. We will reign with God in a new, light-filled kingdom created by God’s omnipotent design. Together we will be a truly holy nation. This claim is further supported in [1 Peter 2:9](#) and in prophecy described in [Revelation 22:1-5](#).

Like Tice, by human devices we cannot escape the things shackling us to the widespread results of sin on this earth. However, we can have the hope that the true Hero will bring us into a sinless kingdom. The Light will come, we’ll rip off the blindfolds, and will no longer be hostages to a sin-ridden world.

~Stefani Leeper

[1] <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/nation-world/national/article250975939.html>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/us/politics/austin-tice.html>

For Reflection

Connecting: We cannot imagine a life without boundaries. Via your online connections if you are not yet meeting in person, go around your group and discuss what you each believe will be the most amazing transition from limited to limitless.

Sharing: [Hebrews 11:9-16](#) intimates that sojourning is a constant in life. Stability, especially in political terms, is not necessarily to be. How can we balance the unknown with a natural desire for stability?

1. We need to rid ourselves of the notion of nationalism
2. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. ... ([Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV](#))
3. We need to have Doomsday prep material at the ready
4. We need to leave the cities and live like the [Mountain Men](#) reality TV stars
5. We need to acknowledge that change is natural
6. Other:

Applying: Do you want to help hostages like Austin Tice? You can petition governments to release hostages and prisoners through Amnesty International,

and if you don't feel comfortable putting your name on paper, you may choose to donate to help others advocate for their release. Visit <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/>, [change.org](https://www.change.org), or another advocacy group to make your voice heard.

Valuing: Tice's story demonstrates that human efforts are powerless against the effects of sin in this world. Likewise, the only way we have power is through Christ who conquered all sin. Pray for God to keep that lesson in your heart as you face the tragedies surrounding us today.

Other Helpful Resources

[Creative Ministry's website](#) equips you with [friendship evangelism](#), [small group](#), [community outreach](#), and [healing ministry](#) tools right at your fingertips. Our website also features [Adventist research conducted by Monte Sahlin](#), as well as [Sharing Scripture archives](#), [ScripShots](#), and more. And if you're tired of staring at a screen, digital files are available for download as PDFs and to print.

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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