

Noah

& other poems

Jeremy James

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

- Proverbs 25:11

1. Noah

I came to talk with you, Methuselah,

I came to talk.

Those far distant years have disappeared,

and all that remain

– yes, I can see it now –

are your son (but one),

his magnificent ship,

and the pouring rain.

2. Manna

For six days

in seven

the hand of heaven

peppered the parched land

with unspeakable sweetness.

3. Jerusalem

This invincible city, we said,

but the Chaldeans ate it like a piece of bread.

We thought we were untouchable

but the weight of our sins

came crashing in upon us.

Now the jangling of our chains

is a daily reminder

of all that remains.

4. Zacchaeus

There are days when it pays
to scramble up a tree
just to see
what they were talking about,
to hear him shout,
'Come down!'
and take him home to tea.

5. Samaritan

How the woman at the well could tell
is hard to understand,
when all the rest were blessed
with the resounding bounty
of His holy hand,
His staff and rod,
and
– if they cared to listen –
the oracles of God.

6. Elijah's Ravens

Together they dispense
their tenderness,
collecting where they can
the scraps
on which you snack.

7. Joshua

When he called it stalled
and stood in the sky
as though observing
the unnerving scenes below,
as nation after nation
was excised.

8. Naomi

Tell me what went through your mind
when she walked away.
Did you think to say,
'Dear girl, those gods of yours
are fraught with peril!'
or something similar,
enough to show
that the path she took would lead below?

9. Wall

Who would have thought!
Just fifty-two days,
and now the outline of His footstool
is plainly displayed,
the place where His Son will one day rule
and every idle design
will come to naught.

10. Shiloh

She came here every year,
with his little coat,
a mantle that only
a mother could sew
– her eyes aglow –
and all to clothe
the loan she had made.

11. Balaam

That ass of yours
was in a class of his own,
for what other animal
had the knack
of answering back!

12. Zacharias

This tongue-tied Levite
fathered a boy,
a Nazarite,
kicking with delight,
and wrote a name
unknown to his seed,
as the angel decreed.

13. Eve

The fruit of this particular tree
was the property
– legally –
of their generous Benefactor,
but they wanted
everything for themselves
and chose to ignore
– like so many thieves –
the pain in store.

14. Cana

Few of their guests
had guessed
what occurred,
how their host
had secured
the most wonderful
wine in the world.

15. Moses

When you withdrew
that hoary hand
you clearly knew
how few would understand
the scenes that would ensue.

16. Job

We can see here
the complete
reconstruction
of a man
in a manner
too unmanly
to expand.

17. Sparrows

One by one,
beneath the sun,
such folk are noted
– their numbers done! –
yet none can tell their sum,
not one.

18. Adam

We are each
a reflection
of his original
perfection,
but why exactly
he acted
as he did
is the question.

19. Arimathean

The tomb you had hewn
for your own funeral
became the most precious
piece of real estate
on earth.

20. Tetelestai

Neither technical nor dull,
but wonderful!
Who would believe
a single word
could say so much
– and to such effect! –
Paid in full.

21. Babel

Not even a thesis
in linguistics
could repeat the expletives
that leaped
into existence
that remarkable day!

22. Plagues

With each affliction
a cryptic dart
was directed
at the demon heart
of Egypt.

23. Alabaster Box

It made the cynics rage,
but when opened
it betokened
an age of
breathtaking grace.

24. Galilee

From an open boat
he spoke.
A place from which to teach.
They came to hear
his words,
to patiently partake
of him,
like pebbles on a beach.

25. Pentecost

A room in Jerusalem
is consumed
by a sound
and all therein are filled
to the brim
with Him.

26. Bartimaeus

Loud hailing vagrant
proclaiming
your ailment
with such insistence
that even the crowd
is cowed!

27. Robe

Just a touch
was enough
to stem the flow
and mend the breach,
to bring a healing
within reach.

28. Samson

No man could handle
a mandible
in anger
quite like this
philanderer.

29. Damascus

Not a moment too soon!
Everything you believed
disintegrated
and all your fallenness
decayed
in your rendezvous at noon.

30. Gadarene

After he had seen
his demons
screaming into swine
and careening
into the sea,
how relieved he must have been!

31. Nebuchadnezzar

Exemplary men
who would not bend
he sent to be
incinerated!

(That should have been the end.)

32. Naaman

All the way from Syria
for a dip!
Oh dear, no bling
or ding-a-ling.
The hour is now,
don't let it slip,
they said.
And in he went.

33. Jeremiah

What a shock you must have got
when your Father called.
What thoughts
you must have thought!
Brought in for the long haul.

34. Luke

How daring you were to embark
with that remarkable man,
to share the unforgiving sea,
toting a load which only
the most noble
could shoulder.

35. Daniel

Few bother to read
the clock he gave
– to watch those hands! –
yet Jesus said
Whoso readeth,
let him understand.

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For further information visit www.zephaniah.eu

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