



One Word (or Two) for Twenty- Twenty-Two

*Leanna Bolden
Eternally Speaking Now*

*"The angel of the Lord **encamps all around** those who fear Him,
and delivers them." Psalm 34:7*

Last Sunday, I got an unexpected, unplanned 13-minute window of time alone before heading to church. Grabbing my journal, I kneeled at the bedside to write a few thoughts. I began by scribbling the date at the top of the page:

1-2-22

After writing the date, I noticed the numbers and thought it was amusing that we had just set the date for Zach's 13th birthday party to be **1-22-22**. That then provoked me to reflect on the date when, 13 years ago, Zach and I had been **discharged** from the hospital five days after his birth:

Our day of **release** was January 22, or **1-22**.

Since this stuff is delightful to me, I **circled** all the similar numbers on the page-- **1, 2, and 22**--- then closed my journal and stood up to leave. Immediately, I found myself asking the Lord,

*"For the fun of it God, if there's a Scripture **or two** that coincide with these numbers that you want me to focus on, please reveal it to me." Then I added, "Maybe something like **22:12**, or **22:1-2**?"*

I smiled, tucked away my journal, and exited the bedroom.

As I turned the corner, the enemy whispered a threatening word against my son. Stopping in my tracks, I **looped** back **around** to Zach's bedroom and

stood in front of his door. In Jesus' name, I rebuked the enemy and his fear-mongering tauntings then spoke a personalized prayer from some verses I pray almost every night for Zach:

*"Lord of hosts, God of Angel Armies,
be the wall of fire **around** Zachariah,
and may Your **glory** be in his midst."
(from Zechariah chapter 2)*

After arriving at church and before the service began, I checked in with a fellow mom, inquiring how she was. While we chatted she expressed concern about upcoming travel. She felt uneasy about leaving her older children behind and needed that extra reassurance from the Lord that He would be with her while also protecting them. Minutes later the service began, and we soon were led to sing the song "God of Angel Armies." As you may know, one of the lines in the song is,

*"I know who goes before me;
I know who stands behind:
The God of Angel Armies is always by my side."*

A magnificent theme was developing, and the other mom saw it too:
God is with us.
He goes before us.
He's our rear guard.

*"And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you.
He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you;
do not fear nor be dismayed."
Deuteronomy 31:8*

*"For the Lord will go before you,
and the God of Israel will be your rear guard."
Isaiah 52:12*

These are God's promises to His children,
to those who have put their hope in Him.
We may know these truths,
but when life becomes challenging or discouraging,
it sure means a lot when we're reminded, isn't it?

Then the sermon began. As Robin preached on the fear of the Lord, he took us to a verse in Genesis:

*And He (God) said,
"Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him;
for now I know that you fear God,
since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

Would you like to know the reference for this Scripture?

Genesis **22:12**.

Was this a word for me? Absolutely.
Is it also a word for others? Very much so.
Why am I sure of that? Because it's the Word of God.
His Word is not limited to one person--
Jesus is the Word, and He is for all believers.

As I took time later that Sunday to pray through and revisit *Genesis* **22:12**,
this is what came to the surface:

First of all, the context of this Scripture is Abraham willingly and obediently **sacrificing** his son to God. The Lord had told him to do that, and he did it, even though doing so appeared to go against the very promise God had given Abraham-- which clearly involved his son Isaac.

Isaac symbolizes many things, some of which may be:

A promise from the Lord,
a gift He has given you,
a calling or vision for a particular work,
a literal person or thing in your life.

It may be something already in your hands,
or it may be something yet to come.

What is your Isaac?
Do not withhold it from the Lord.
Do not lay your hands on it-- it's His.
Fear God and **wholeheartedly surrender** it to Him.

Sacrifice it to the point that you're willing to **give it up**:
Like, **never hold it** again,
not own it anymore,
and **not see it come to pass**
(especially in the way you may have pictured in your mind).

I know this can be difficult. Father, give us the grace to do it.

Oh, how many times have I found myself **letting go** of yet another Isaac to God! Every time though, He brings it full **circle**-- He brings that thing back to me and somehow makes it even better.

Remember, we are not **submitting** our Isaacs to the enemy or to the world system. We are **yielding** them to the Lord.
The Lord of Hosts.
The God of Angel Armies.

Well, I promised this would be encouraging,
so hang in there.
Here it comes.

The Holy Spirit continued to echo these precious themes all week.

Monday

Robin and I watched an interview with a Christian who shared her testimony. Half-way through, at the heart-wrenching point of her story, the host interrupted and said,

*"Every time I hear bad things, I'll say to myself, If I'm **surrounded** with the **glory** (of God), no weapon formed against me will prosper...the Holy Spirit will be my rear guard, will be **all around** me, on top of me, in me, **all around**. Who could even penetrate that presence of God?"*

Tuesday

A woman I haven't communicated with for about 6 months phoned me 'out of the blue'. The Lord had told her to call and sing a specific song to me. She obeyed. I'd never heard the lyrics before; so I wrote the words as she serenaded, and this is exactly what she sang:

*"Oh, the **glory** of Your presence;
We Your people give You reverence.
Come and dwell in our midst
And be blessed by our praise,
As we **glory** in Your embrace,
As Your presence now fills this place"*

As I transcribed my scribbles for this writing, I wanted to ensure accurate lyrics, so I found them online. Intriguingly, I discovered that the third line was originally composed to say, *"Come and rise from Your rest."*

Instead, my friend had sung, "***Come and dwell in our midst.***"

Accident? Not at all. In fact, this is monumental. At the time of her divinely appointed phone call, only the Lord knew what I'm sharing with you today. Jehovah was speaking, and He used her as a beautiful vessel for a crystal clear, consistent message. Or **two**.

Wednesday

During our mid-week prayer gathering, in the process of praying, a woman thanked the Lord for something encouraging she had read by Anne Graham Lotz. To summarize my understanding of the devotional she described, readers were challenged to imagine drawing a **circle** around themselves and all their issues, concerns, and circumstances, both good and bad; then **surrender** it all to God, repenting of any sin and **entrusting** everything to Him.

After the prayer gathering that evening, Robin and I joined a worship service online that memorialized the life of a very dear pastor-friend of ours from San Diego who passed away this week. They sang one of my favorite songs I like to sing in the midst of life's battles. The song repeated what was presenting itself to be a cherished theme for the year **'22**.

*"It may look like I'm **surrounded**, but I'm **surrounded** by You."*

Incredible. Are you once again in awe of the Lord
as you read what He did this week?
Notice how He used the Body of Christ to speak to the Body of Christ.
I'm humbled and thankful for each person referenced above--
for their obedience to walk by the Spirit
and be used by Jesus in ways they don't even know.
As a result, we can all be encouraged
by this timely and reassuring message from our Father.

CHALLENGE

After I'd written Genesis **22:12** in my journal last Sunday, I sensed the Holy Spirit nudging me to look up Psalm **22:12**. Admittedly, I was a bit nervous to do that, as I'm aware of what that Psalm is about. It's a prophecy of Jesus and His suffering; and since it's the Word of God, it speaks to us in our afflictions as well.

Hmmm. I don't like the idea of more discomfort or adversity.

I confess initially cringing at the topic, tempted not to read that verse. I love Jesus more though, and His Word is life, not death; so I looked up the verse. (I've also learned that it's always the enemy who, however creatively or sneakily, will attempt to keep us away from the Bible. If you don't want to walk in agreement with the devil, then do the opposite of what he suggests.)

Here is Psalm **22:12**.

*"Many bulls have **surrounded** Me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have **encircled** Me."*

Verse 13 continues,

*"They gape at Me with their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion."*

Without going into all the details (although I'd be happy to do so if you'd like to dialogue directly), here's the bottom line:

The bulls of Bashan represent wickedness, idolatry, and evil.
Indeed, the 'bulls' **surround** us today, don't they?
They can be very strong, **encircling** us.

Verse 13 emphasizes how the devil works, as echoed in 1 Peter 5:8-9.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

Here's the comforting part. I'm so glad I didn't miss it.

Yes, we may be **fenced in** by horrible stuff,
but God's presence in us and **encompassing** us
is enormously larger and hugely mightier.

*"Do not fear,
for those who are with us
are more than those who are with them."
2 Kings 6:16*

Jesus already dealt with the bulls and lions that **encircle** us.
He did it on the Cross.
And He won.

*"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them,
because the one who is in you is greater
than the one who is in the world."*

1 John 4:4

We are in Christ!

Nothing can separate us from His love. (Romans 8)

No one can snatch us out of His hand. (John 10)

Our Father knows the day He will call us home, and until then, nothing can stop His work in and through us here.

The Lord of Hosts, our God of Angel Armies, goes before us.

He stands behind us, and He remains beside us.

He **surrounds** us, and His **glory** is in our midst.

Now that's **one** good word (or **two**) for 2022.

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[Link to the Song "I Love Your Presence"](#)



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