

THINK ABOVE THE BOX
Bible Study Guide for
Hansel and Gretel*
By The Brothers Grimm



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.



HANSEL AND GRETEL

Many years ago, a woodcutter and his wife, with their two children, Hansel and Gretel, lived upon the outskirts of a dense wood. They were very poor, so that when a famine fell upon the land, and bread became dear, they could no longer afford to buy sufficient food for the whole family.

One night, as the poor man lay tossing on his hard bed, he cried aloud in his grief and anguish, "Alas! what will become of us? How can I feed my hungry little ones when we have no food for ourselves?"

"Listen to me, good-man," answered his wife, who was stepmother to the children. "As it is no longer possible for us to keep our children, we will take them into the woods with us tomorrow, light a fire for them, and give each a piece of bread and leave them. They will not easily find their way back, and so we shall be rid of the burden of them."

But the father said: "No, no! I could not find it in my heart to leave my darlings to perish. The wild beasts would tear them limb from limb."

"Then," answered the wife, "we must all four die of hunger." She gave her husband no peace until he promised to do as she wished, and at last, very unwillingly, he consented.

Now, the two children had been too hungry to go to sleep that night, and so it happened that they overheard all that their parents were saying. Gretel wept bitterly, but brave little Hansel did his best to comfort her. "Don't be afraid," he said; "I will take care of you."

As soon as his father and stepmother were asleep, he slipped on his coat, and opening the door softly, went out into the garden. The moon was shining brightly, and by its light he could see the little white pebbles that lay scattered in front of the house, shining like little pieces of silver. He stooped and filled his pockets as full as he could, and then went back to Gretel, and once more bidding her be comforted, for God would be sure to watch over them, he jumped into bed, and they both fell fast asleep.

Early in the morning, before the sun had risen, the stepmother came and woke the children. "Rise, little lie-a-beds," she said, "and come with us into the woods to gather fuel."

She gave them each a piece of bread for their dinner, and told them to be sure not to eat it too soon, for they would get nothing more.

Gretel carried the bread in her pinafore, because Hansel had his pockets full, and then they all set out upon their way to the wood.

As they trudged along, the father noticed that his little son kept turning back to look at the house. "Take care, my boy," he said, "or you will slip. What are you looking at so earnestly?"

"I am watching my kitten, father: she is sitting on the roof to bid me good-bye."

"Silly little lad, that is not your cat," said the stepmother; "it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney."

But Hansel had not been watching his cat at all; he had stayed behind to drop the pebbles upon the path.

When they reached the thickest part of the forest, the father bade the children gather wood, so that he might kindle a fire for them, so that they might rest beside it and warm themselves whilst he and his wife were cutting the fuel. So they gathered a pile of brushwood and twigs, and as soon as it was well alight, the parents left them, promising to return as soon as they had finished their work.

Hansel and Gretel sat down by the fire, and when midday came they ate their bread and sat listening to the strokes of their father's axe, thinking all the time that he was near to them. But what they heard was only a dry branch which the man had bound to a tree, so that the wind swung it hither and thither, and the noise it made deceived the children. At last the poor, tired, little eyelids closed, and, side by side, brother and sister fell asleep.

When they awoke, the night was very dark, and Gretel was frightened, and began to cry. Hansel put his arms around her and whispered. "Wait, dearie, till the moon rises; we shall soon find our way home then."

As soon as the bright moon rose, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and all night long they followed the track of the little white pebbles, until at daybreak they came to their father's house.

They knocked at the door, and no sooner did the stepmother open it than she began to scold them for having stayed out so long in the wood; but the father greeted them kindly, for he had grieved sorely for his little ones.

In a short time they were as badly off as ever, and one night they again heard their mother trying to persuade her husband to take them out into the woods and lose them. "There is nothing left in the house but half a loaf of bread," she said; "for our own sakes it is better to get rid of the children; but this time we will lead them farther away, so that they will not be able to find their way home."

But the man would not agree. "Better to divide our last morsel with them," he said, "and then die together."

His wife would not listen to what he said, but scolded him for his want of thought for her; and at last the poor man gave way a second time, just as he had done at first.

But the children had overheard all that was said, and as soon as the mother and father were asleep, Hansel stole down to the door, meaning to go and collect pebbles as he had done before; but the door was locked and bolted, and he could not get out. "Never mind, Gretel," he said consolingly, "the good God will surely help us."

Early in the morning the woman woke the children, and, giving them a small piece of bread, bade them follow her and their father into the wood. As they went, Hansel crumbled his morsel of bread in his pocket and strewed the crumbs upon the path.

"Come, Hansel," said the father, "don't loiter so, sonny. What can you see to stare at so often?"

"My little dove, father. It is sitting on the housetop, bidding me good-bye."

"Nonsense," said the woman, "it is not your dove; it is only the rising sun shining upon the chimney."

Hansel did not answer, but he went on strewing his crumbs carefully until the last morsel of bread was gone.

Deeper and deeper into the wood they went, where the children had never been before. There a great fire was kindled, and the mother said: "Stay here, children, whilst your father and I go to cut wood. If you are tired you may sleep a while, and we will fetch you when it is time to go home."

When dinner-time came, Gretel divided her piece of bread with Hansel, because he had scattered all his share upon the road; and then they went to sleep. The evening shadows fell, but still no one came to fetch the poor children, and it was not until midnight that they awakened.

Hansel put his arms round his sister and told her not to fear, for when the moon rose they would easily be able to see the crumbs, and so find their way home again.

So when the moon rose they set out upon their way; but alas! there were no crumbs to be seen, for the little birds that lived in the green wood were as hungry as the children, and had eaten them all up.

"We will find the way somehow," cried cheerful little Hansel; but though they traveled all night long, and the next day too, they could not find it. Poor little mites, how tired and hungry they were, for they had nothing to eat but the berries that grew by the roadside!

When at length the weary little feet could go no farther, the children lay down beneath a tree and slept.

On the third day they were still as far away as ever, and it seemed to them that the longer they walked the deeper they got into the wood, and they began to be afraid that they would die of cold and hunger.

But presently, when the midday sun was shining brightly, they noticed a little snow-white bird singing so sweetly that they could not help but stay to listen. When the birdie's song ended, he spread his wings and flew away.

The children followed him until they reached a little house, on the roof of which he perched. Then the children saw with surprise that the strange little house was built entirely of bread, roofed with cakes, and with windows of barley sugar.

"See, Gretel," cried Hansel joyfully, "there is food for us in plenty. I will take a piece of the roof, and you shall have one of the windows."

He stretched out his hand to help himself, and Gretel had already begun to nibble one of the window-panes, when suddenly they heard a voice call from within, "Nibbly, nibbly, mouse! Who's nibbling at my house?"

The children answered quickly, "'Tis my Lady Wind that blows, as round about the house she goes."

And then they went on eating as though nothing had happened for the cake of which the roof was made just suited Hansel's taste, whilst the barley-sugar window-panes were better than any sweetmeat Gretel had ever tasted before.

All at once the door of the cottage flew wide open, and out came an old, old woman, leaning upon a crutch. The children were so frightened that they dropped their food and clung to each other.

The old woman nodded her head to them, and said: "Who brought you here, my pets? Come inside, come inside; no one will hurt you."

She took their hands and led them into the house, and set before them all kinds of delicious foods, milk, sugared pancakes, apples, and nuts. When they had finished their meal she showed them two cosy little white beds, and as Hansel and Gretel lay snugly tucked up in them, they thought to themselves that surely they had now found the most delightful place in the whole wide world.

But the old woman had only pretended to be friendly and kind, for she was really a wicked old witch, who was always lying in wait to catch little children, indeed, she had built the little house of bread and cakes especially to entice them in. Whenever anyone came into her power, she cooked and ate him, and thought what a fine feast she had had.

Witches have red eyes and cannot see far, but they have a keen sense of smell, like animals, and can tell at once when a human being is near to them.

As soon as Hansel and Gretel came into her neighborhood she laughed to herself and said mockingly: "Ha, ha! they are mine already; they will not easily escape me."

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she stood beside them and admired their rosy cheeks and soft round limbs. "What nice tidbits for me," murmured she. Then, seizing Hansel by the hand, she led him to a little stable, and, in spite of his cries and screams, shut him up and left him. Then she shook Gretel until she was awake, and made her get up at once and carry food and drink to her brother, and it must be of the best too, for she wished to fatten him.

"When he is nice and plump, I shall eat him," said the cruel old witch. Gretel wept bitterly, but it was quite in vain, for she was obliged to do the witch's bidding; and every day she cooked the choicest food for her brother, while she herself lived upon nothing but oyster-shells.

Day by day the old woman visited the stable and called to Hansel to put his finger through the window bars, that she might see if he were getting fat; but the little fellow held out a bone instead, and as her eyes were dim with age, she mistook the bone for the boy's finger, and thought how thin and lean he was. When a whole month had passed without Hansel becoming the least bit fatter, the old witch lost patience and declared she would wait no longer. "Hurry, Gretel," she said to the little girl, "fill the pot with water, for to-morrow, be he lean or fat, Hansel shall be cooked for my dinner."

The tears chased each other down Gretel's cheeks as she carried in the water, and she sobbed aloud in her grief. "Dear God," she cried, "we have no one to help us but Thou. Alas! if only the wild beasts in the wood had devoured us, at least we would have died together."

"Cease your chattering," cried the old witch angrily. "It will not help you, so you may as well be still."

The next morning poor Gretel was forced to light the fire and hang the great pot of water over it, and then the witch said: "First we will bake. I have kneaded the dough, and heated the oven; you shall creep inside it to see if it is hot enough to bake the bread."

But Gretel guessed that the old witch meant to shut the door upon her and roast her, so she pretended that she did not know how to get in.

"Silly goose," said the witch. "The door is wide enough, to be sure. Why, even I could get inside it." As she spoke, she popped her head into the oven. In a moment, Gretel sprang towards her, pushed her inside, shut the iron door, and shot the bolt. Oh! how she squealed and shrieked, but Gretel ran off as fast as she could, and so that was the end of the cruel old witch.

Quick as a thought, Gretel ran to her brother. "We are saved, Hansel," she cried, opening the door of the stable, "the wicked old witch is dead!"

Hansel flew from his prison as a bird from its cage, and the two happy little children kissed each other and jumped for joy. No longer afraid of the old witch, they entered the house, hand in hand, and then they saw that in every corner of the room were boxes of pearls and diamonds, and all kinds of precious gems.

"Ah!" said Hansel merrily, "these are better than pebbles, Gretel," and he stuffed his pockets with the jewels, whilst Gretel filled her pinafore. "Now," said Hansel, "we will leave the witch's wood behind us as fast as we can."

So off they ran, and never stopped until they came to a lake, upon which swam a large white duck.

"How can we cross," said Hansel, "for there is no bridge anywhere?"

"And no ship either," Gretel answered; "but we will ask the pretty white duck to carry us over." So they cried aloud, "Little duck, little duck, with wings so white, carry us over the waters bright."

The duck came at once, and, taking Hansel upon her back, carried him over to the other side, and then did the same for Gretel. They went merrily on their way, and very soon they found themselves in a part of the wood they knew quite well.

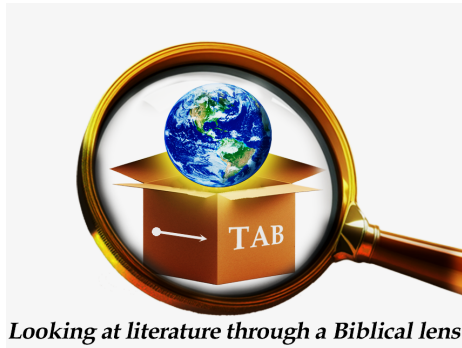
When they saw the roof of their father's house in the distance they began to run, and, breathless with haste, half laughing and half crying, they rushed into the cottage and flung themselves into their father's arms.

Oh! how pleased he was to see them once again, for he had not known a happy hour since he had left them alone in the woods. Gretel shook out her pinafore, and Hansel emptied his pockets, and the floor of the little room was quite covered with glittering precious stones.

So now their troubles were at an end, for the cruel stepmother was dead, and Hansel and Gretel and their father lived together happily ever after.

The End

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1. Our story begins with the little family dealing with how to survive with no food to be had anywhere, *“They were very poor, so that when a famine fell upon the land, and bread became dear, they could no longer afford to buy sufficient food for the whole family.”* Most of us cannot even imagine what it would be like to not have food to eat. With all the large grocery stores, fast food joints and food pantries available to most people in the U.S., there is always a way to get *something* to eat. In the Book of Genesis in the Bible, Chapter 41 finds ancient Egypt facing a famine and its people starving to death. Let’s see how God handled that:

Genesis 41:29-31 ERV For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt. But then there will be seven years of hunger. The people will forget how much food there had been in Egypt before. This famine will ruin the country. It will be so bad that people will forget what it was like to have plenty of food.

*“From the depths of a dungeon to the heights of Pharaoh’s court, **Genesis 41** shows how divine wisdom can change the course of nations. Pharaoh’s disturbing dreams, Joseph’s God-given interpretation, and the shocking promotion that followed—it’s all brought to life in this Scripture video with cinematic visuals that honor every word of the King James Bible. Witness how one man’s obedience prepared him to become the vessel for God’s plan during famine.”*

- **Make Heaven Crowded - YouTube**

📺 **Ch.41 What Did Pharaoh See That No One Could Explain? | Genesis 41: KJV**

EXTRA CREDIT: We can’t just leave the story here, so how about watching the rest?

*“Experience the prophetic tension of **Genesis 42**, where famine forces Jacob’s sons to journey to Egypt—unknowingly into the hands of the very brother they once betrayed. The dreams Joseph once shared—sheaves bowing before him—begin to materialize as his brothers humbly seek grain from Egypt’s powerful governor... not realizing he is their long-lost brother Joseph.”*

- **Make Heaven Crowded - YouTube**

📺 **Ch.42 Famine & Fear: The Brothers Go to Egypt 🤔 | Genesis 42: KJV**

Hat tip: Want more of the above? Watch the whole series on Genesis here, but I bet you *won’t* fall asleep!

🌙 **Fall Asleep to Genesis 📖💤 | KJV - YouTube**

2. The step-mother had a solution to their starvation problem - get rid of the kids! The children's father objected but eventually gave in without much of a fight. Seems like the wrong route to take! Most parents would sacrifice themselves first to protect their kids, don't you think? There seems to be no sense of love or self-sacrifice on the stepmother's part and the father is too weak to resist.

Acts 20:35 **ESV** In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

"Putting others first is not our default setting. We are selfish by birth and by nature, looking not to the interests of others but to ourselves. But God's Word calls us to a different lifestyle—one that follows Christ's example of putting the needs of others before our own. He is the ultimate example of self-emptying, self-sacrificial love. When we love others and put their needs first, we act like Christ. This is how the world will know we belong to him."

- Cara Ray

20 Bible Verses About Putting Others First

Please read the following story from the Old Testament:

1 Kings 3:16-28 AMP Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. And the one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. And on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. And we were [alone] together; no one else was with us in the house, just we two. Now this woman's son died during the night, because she lay on him [and smothered him]. So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from [his place] beside me while your maidservant was asleep, and laid him on her bosom, and laid her dead son on my bosom. When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead. But when I examined him carefully in the morning, behold, it was not my son, *the one* whom I had borne." Then the other woman said, "No! For my son is the one who is living, and your son is the dead one." But the first woman said, "No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one." [This is how] they were speaking before the king.

Then the king said, "This woman says, 'This is my son, the one who is alive, and your son is the dead one'; and the other woman says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the one who is alive.'" Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. Then the king said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to the one [woman] and half to the other." Then the woman whose child was the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply moved over her son, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; cut *him*!" Then the king said, "Give the first woman [who is pleading for his life] the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother." When all [the people of] Israel heard about the judgment which the king had made, they [were in awe and reverently] feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him to administer justice.

"...the story of Jesus... He's willing to sacrifice the ease and the pleasure of heaven to come to the earth and die for the good of his children and so if you have yet to make a decision consciously about which story you'll believe in which path your life will take I'd suggest that you make your decision the same way that Solomon did: follow the story that's true, that we know is true because of the love behind it."

- **2BeLikeChrist**

▶ How Solomon's Baby Guides the Direction of Our Lives || 1 Kings 3 || 2BeLikeChrist

3. *"Gretel wept bitterly, but brave little Hansel did his best to comfort her. 'Don't be afraid,' he said; 'I will take care of you.' ... He stooped and filled his pockets as full as he could, and then went back to Gretel, and once more bidding her be comforted, for God would be sure to watch over them, he jumped into bed, and they both fell fast asleep."*

Hansel was so reassuring to his little sister, reminding her that God is with them, as Scripture tells us:

Psalms 121:5-8 NLT The LORD himself watches over you! The LORD stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night. The LORD keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Psalms 139:2-3 ERV You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know my thoughts from far away. You know where I go and where I lie down. You know everything I do.

Psalms 33:18-19 ESV Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

"In a society driven by uncertainty, we can stand on God's promise that He is always watching over us. Yet His watching goes far beyond mere observation. God does not stand back simply witnessing the events of our lives. Instead, He enters into our circumstances. He is actively watching over and protecting us."

- **Scripture Lullabies**

What Does it Mean That God is Watching Over Us?

"I am watching over you, ever watching over you. / Never will I sleep, you're mine to keep always. / And when you feel afraid, know that you can call My name. / I am with you. / I am for you."

- **Scripture Lullabies**



Watching Over You

BONUS TRACK!

"Oh, my baby, when you're older / Maybe then you'll understand / You have angels that dance around your shoulders / 'Cause at times in life you need a loving hand / Oh, my baby, when you're prayin' / Leave your burden by my door / You have Jesus standing near your bedside / To keep you calm, keep you safe, away from harm."

- Mindy Smith



Mindy Smith - Come To Jesus



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Have you ever been in a situation where you felt the presence of God watching over you? How about when you couldn't feel Him at all? Was there a difference in your prayers, outlook and hope? How can we get through those times? We are not alone, as the following post recounts people in the

Bible going through the very same thing! Ever hear of Isaiah, Asaph, Joseph, Moses, David, Gideon, Mary or Paul?

Judges 6:13 GW Gideon responded, "Excuse me, sir! But if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all the miracles our ancestors have told us about? Didn't they say, 'The LORD brought us out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and has handed us over to Midian."

Psalms 74:9 TLB There is nothing left to show that we are your people. The prophets are gone, and who can say when it all will end? How long, O God, will you allow our enemies to dishonor your name? Will you let them get away with this forever?

"Why does God sometimes leave us feeling alone, deserted, humiliated, abandoned — like we are in darkness, like He doesn't care — as though He's abandoned us altogether? Why is the only sound we hear at those times the echo of a door slammed in our faces? I don't know the full answer, but I know that part of it has to do with the fact that He wants us to walk by faith, not by sight; and walking by faith means sometimes pressing on when we can't feel or see Him."

- J. D. Greear

When You Can't Feel God – FaithGateway

EXTRA CREDIT: *"In [the following video] Jesus, Continued, J.D. Greear focuses on a central truth that unites us: God wants to be vitally present in and through people. To live empowered, fruitful lives, we have to become intimately aware of where God is moving in our lives, how He is speaking to us, and how He has gifted us."*

▶ Jesus Continued - Session 1

"It's enough to drive a man crazy or break a man's faith. / It's enough to make him wonder if he's ever been sane. / When he's bleeding for comfort from thy staff and thy rod / And the heavens' only answer is the silence of God."

- Andrew Peterson



▶ "Silence of God" by Andrew Peterson (LYRICS)

4. Hansel, his father and his step-mother were deceitful towards each other, one to save his sister and himself and the other two to make sure that the children perished in the deep woods:

"As they trudged along, the father noticed that his little son kept turning back to look at the house. 'Take care, my boy,' he said, 'or you will slip. What are you looking at so earnestly?' 'I am watching my kitten, father: she is sitting on the roof to bid me good-bye.' 'Silly little lad, that is not your cat,' said the stepmother; 'it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney.' But Hansel had not been watching his cat at all; he had stayed behind to drop the pebbles upon the path."

So here we have Hansel checking his pebble action and lying to his dad and stepmother. But God says:

Leviticus 19:11 GNT Do not steal or cheat or lie.

So then Hansel is a bad guy, right? Not so fast!

"In an evil world, and in a desperate situation, it may be the right thing to commit a lesser evil, lying, in order to prevent a much greater evil. However, it must be noted that such circumstances are extremely rare." - **Got Questions**

Is it ever right to lie? | GotQuestions.org

"When they reached the thickest part of the forest, the father bade the children gather wood, so that he might kindle a fire for them, so that they might rest beside it and warm themselves whilst he and his wife were cutting the fuel. So they gathered a pile of brushwood and twigs, and as soon as it was well alight, the parents left them, promising to return as soon as they had finished their work...Hansel and Gretel sat down by the fire, and when midday came they ate their bread and sat listening to the strokes of their father's axe, thinking all the time that he was near to them. But what they heard was only a dry branch which the man had bound to a tree, so that the wind swung it hither and thither, and the noise it made deceived the children."

Sadly, both adults lied to the children to secure their demise and to increase their own caloric intake! And yes, they *are* the bad guys here!

Psalms 5:6 ERV You destroy those who tell lies. LORD, you hate those who make secret plans to hurt others.

Exodus 21:14 AMP But if a man acts intentionally against another and kills him by [design through] treachery, you are to take him from My altar [to which he may have fled for protection], so that he may be put to death.

Proverbs 20:17 GNT What you get by dishonesty you may enjoy like the finest food, but sooner or later it will be like a mouthful of sand.

"Many people in the world live by the truth and cherish it. But others have only a "loose affiliation" with the truth. They're willing to tell half-truths, spin tall tales, and spout bald-faced lies, all to serve their ends. What does the Bible say about being deceived?" - Lori Stanley Roeleveld

What Does the Bible Say about Being Deceived? | Christianity.com

Here's an interesting take on the greatest deception ever in rap form:

"From the dawn of history, the mystery of lawlessness / Hijack the cosmic order, interrupted flawlessness / Introduce fallenness and now the servant-king / Who used to rule the land forfeited everything / And now the image bearers, Adam and Eve / Gave up their authority and were forced to leave / The sanctuary of Eden, The world was the kingdom / But Adam brought the curse / Because of his disobedience / Now demonic powers, rule the universe / Satan is the leader, and death is the curse / The Father sent Jesus, to come press reverse / But he had to hit the wilderness first / To overcome temptation, overcome sin / These are the things that are common to man / And that's exactly what he did, after the resurrection / The safest place to be is in Him for protection / For perfection / For correction / To escape the great deception..." - Marcus Tyrone Gray / Flame

 **▶ The Great Deception**

For the full lyrics, link to this video:

[The Great Deception Song Lyrics | FLAME Lyrics | Christian Music Song Lyrics, Christian Music | NewReleaseToday](#)

5. After wandering in the woods for three days, the children had spotted a most unbelievable sight - a cottage made out of bread, cake and sugar. Who's hungry belly could resist that?

"Then the children saw with surprise that the strange little house was built entirely of bread, roofed with cakes, and with windows of barley sugar. 'See, Gretel,' cried Hansel joyfully, 'there is food for us in plenty. I will take a piece of the roof, and you shall have one of the windows.' He stretched out his hand to help himself, and Gretel had already begun to nibble one of the window-panes, when suddenly they heard a voice call from within, 'Nibbly, nibbly, mouse! Who's nibbling at my house?' The children answered quickly, 'Tis my Lady Wind that blows, as round about the house she goes.' And then they went on eating as though nothing had happened for the cake of which the roof was made just suited Hansel's taste, whilst the barley-sugar window-panes were better than any sweetmeat Gretel had ever tasted before."

They were quite surprised when the door swung open, but were quickly reassured: *"The old woman nodded her head to them, and said: "Who brought you here, my pets? Come inside, come inside; no one will hurt you."* After thoroughly spoiling them with food and other comforts, *"they thought to themselves that surely they had now found the most delightful place in the whole wide world."* But all was not as it seemed! *"...the old woman had only pretended to be friendly and kind, for she was really a wicked old witch, who was always lying in wait to catch little children, indeed, she had built the little house of bread and cakes especially to entice them in."*

This horrible hag sounds like one of the Bible's main characters! Can you guess who?

Revelation 12:9 NLT This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

2 Corinthians 11:14 NIV And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

How can a being so dark and evil camouflage himself as your shining rescue hero? Click below!

*"So, when **2 Corinthians 11:14** tells us that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light," it means that Satan capitalizes on our love of the light in order to deceive. He wants us to think that he is good, truthful, loving, and powerful – all the things that God is. To portray himself as a dark, devilish being with horns would not be very appealing to the majority of people. Most people are not drawn to darkness, but to light. Therefore, Satan appears as a creature of light to draw us to himself and his lies."*

- **Got Questions**

[What does it mean that Satan masquerades as an angel of light? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Just as the witch fooled Hansel and Gretel, there have been people in Scripture whose outward appearance fooled many, either in an evil way or a good way.

"The theme of deceptive outward appearances is a recurring motif throughout the Bible, emphasizing the importance of discerning the true nature of individuals and situations beyond what is immediately visible. This concept is rooted in the understanding that God values the heart and inner character over external appearances."

- Bible Hub

Matthew 23:27-28 NIV "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."

Matthew 7:15-16 AMP "Beware of the false prophets, [teachers] who come to you dressed as sheep [appearing gentle and innocent], but inwardly are ravenous wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them [that is, by their contrived doctrine and self-focus]. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"

1 Samuel 16:7 ERV But the LORD said to Samuel, "Eliab is tall and handsome, but don't judge by things like that. God doesn't look at what people see. People judge by what is on the outside, but the LORD looks at the heart. Eliab is not the right man."

Topical Bible: Outward Appearances Can Be Deceptive

6. Once she had gotten the children into her cottage, she proclaimed to herself, *"Ha, ha! they are mine already; they will not easily escape me."* But was that true? The situation did indeed seem hopeless, with Hansel locked in a cage and Gretel being the witch's little slave, all to end in them being a delicious meal for her! *"Hurry, Gretel," she said to the little girl, "fill the pot with water, for to-morrow, be he lean or fat, Hansel shall be cooked for my dinner."*

There are times in life that it seems like Satan has gotten a hold of us and there is no escape, but is that true? Are we really totally lost to his power?

"Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to dealing with the devil. In fact, the more knowledge we have of his tactics, the more we will have the insight to gain the victory over him through the power of the Word of God. The Scripture gives a clear picture of the devices Satan has used to gain an advantage--weapons he still uses today."

- Norman P. Sports, D.D.

Satan's Advantage | The Institute for Creation Research

1 Peter 5:8-9 AMP Be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert *and* cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour. But resist him, be firm in *your* faith [against his attack—rooted, established, immovable], knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being experienced by your brothers and sisters throughout the world. [You do not suffer alone.]

Ephesians 6:11 AMP Put on the full armor of God [for His precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier], so that you may be able to [successfully] stand up against all the schemes *and* the strategies *and* the deceptions of the devil.

"...then the witch said: "First we will bake. I have kneaded the dough, and heated the oven; you shall creep inside it to see if it is hot enough to bake the bread." But Gretel guessed that the old witch meant to shut the door upon her and roast her, so she pretended that she did not know how to get in. "Silly goose," said the witch. "The door is wide enough, to be sure. Why, even I could get inside it." As she spoke, she popped her head into the oven. In a moment Gretel sprang towards her, pushed her inside, shut the iron door, and shot the bolt."

Now that's how you should handle Satan too!

2 Corinthians 2:11 GW I don't want Satan to outwit us. After all, we are not ignorant about Satan's scheming.

So how can we push Satan into the proverbial oven?

"I'm overwhelmed and terrified. The task before me seems insurmountable, the fear in my heart overpowering. But every time, without fail, God has brought me through, and done things greater than I could fathom. So I'm pushing through. Not giving up. And most importantly, I'm fighting." - Sara Starkey

[The Rebelution means *rebell*ing against low expectations.]

Prepare For Battle: The Key to Defeating Satan and His Lies - The Rebelution



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Can you compare and contrast how Hansel and Gretel handled the evil cannibal witch to how Adam and Eve handled the serpent Satan in the Garden of Eden? If an oven had been available by the Tree of Knowledge, could Eve have cooked Satan's goose? Why or why not? Cite some Scripture! (Hint: Genesis 3)

Do you wish that Adam and Eve could have proclaimed as Gretel did, *"We are saved, Hansel," she cried, opening the door of the stable, "the wicked old witch [Satan] is dead!"* Would it even have been in their power to annihilate him? Again, why or why not? Big hint:

Why Didn't God Kill Satan?

Bonus link!

*"The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not evil by its nature. There was nothing wicked about the tree. To claim this would imply that God created something evil, which would contradict **Genesis 1:31**. The tree was not the source of sin; man was. God gave man a very clear command in **Genesis 2:17**: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* - Harry F. Sanders III

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: Evil or Good? | Answers in Genesis

EXTRA CREDIT: *"Satan wants to lure us into his traps, and he knows exactly what kind of 'bait' will appeal to us. He knows what we're like, and he will attack us exactly where we are the weakest."*
– Billy Graham

How about some more quotes about this guy:

"There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan."
– C. S. Lewis

Quotes on Our Archenemy – Satan - Bible Apologetics - A DAILY DEVOTIONAL

7. *"Ah!" said Hansel merrily, "these are better than pebbles, Gretel," and he stuffed his pockets with the jewels, whilst Gretel filled her pinafore. "Now," said Hansel, "we will leave the witch's wood behind us as fast as we can."* You might say that these were their rewards for overcoming the evil witch. Did you know that believers will receive awards from God in Heaven?

"When we stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, our faithful service to Him will be evaluated and rewarded. With perfect knowledge, He will assess our every thought, motive and action. The prospect of this coming judgement should motivate us to be more like Christ in our daily life, running our spiritual race towards His heavenly rewards."
- Dr. David Jeremiah

What Kind of Rewards Will Believers Receive in Heaven? - David Jeremiah Blog

"I'm looking to the reward / Oh I'm looking to the reward / I got my heart in heaven / And my eyes fixed on the Lord / ...After the testing of my faith / I'm gonna see Him face to face / So I'm never turning back, no / Oh I'm never turning back."
- Todd Mendez



▶ **Todd Mendez - The Reward (Official Live Video)**

Now the children had to find their way home, which was going well until they came upon a lake. *"How can we cross," said Hansel, "for there is no bridge anywhere?" "And no ship either," Gretel answered; "but we will ask the pretty white duck to carry us over."* Happily, the duck transported the two across the lake so they could continue their journey home. Here's 100 verses where God promises us that He will carry us too! Which is your favorite?

Isaiah 40:31 AMP But those who wait for the LORD [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] Will gain new strength *and* renew their power; They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; They will run and not become weary, They will walk and not grow tired.

Isaiah 46:4 ESV Even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.

What Does the Bible Say About God Will Carry Us?



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Doesn't the following scene resemble how a believer enters Heaven?

"When they saw the roof of their father's house in the distance they began to run, and, breathless with haste, half laughing and half crying, they rushed into the cottage and flung themselves into their father's arms."

Just as Hansel and Gretel ran to their father, the prodigal son in Luke 15 sheepishly returns home only to see his forgiving father run to meet him in joy:

"The father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son was waiting for his son to return. In fact, "while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him" ([Luke 15:20](#)). He runs to his wayward son, embraces him, and kisses him. In Jesus' day, it was not customary for a grown man to run, yet the father runs to greet his son, breaking convention in his love and desire for restoration (verse 20). The returning son begins his prepared speech (verse 21), but his father cuts him off and begins issuing commands to honor his son—the best robe, the best ring, the best feast! The father does not question his son or lecture him; instead, he joyfully forgives him and receives him back into fellowship. What a picture of God's love, condescension, and grace! God's heart is full of compassion for His children; He stands ready to welcome the returning sinner back home with joyous celebration."

- [Got Questions](#)

Watch/read the following:

[What is the meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Who do Hansel and Gretel resemble more, the prodigal son or the father in Jesus' parable? Why? Who would you say their father resembles? Why?

8. Once their father experienced this happy reunion, besides his joy, he must also have had strong feelings of shame and regret. Would his children (and God) ever be able to forgive him for not having the strength to refuse to follow his now deceased second wife in her evil plan? How can *we* ever deal with our guilt and remorse concerning our sins?

Jeremiah 29:11 **ESV** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Go here for some relief:

"We all experience shame or regret over past sins at some point, but the Bible says that if we have accepted salvation through Jesus, our sins have been forgiven ([Ephesians 1:7](#); [Romans 8:1](#)). We aren't defined by our sinful past because we're new creations in Christ, made to serve Him faithfully ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Temptations to dwell on past shame and regret will only freeze our faith into immobility. God has forgiven our past; it's time we do the same. God has a hopeful

future for us all ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)), but we can only move forward if we choose to let go of past shame and regret. Instead of focusing on our past regrets, let's focus instead on the new life we have in Jesus." - [412Teens.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about shame and regret? | 412teens.org](#)

"God I ask for your forgiveness / I rejected Your divine plan / chose my will over Yours / walked a path that was so bad / You lifted me from my darkest days / made me clean and whole / filled my life with joy and love / You truly saved my soul ..." - [PrayerinSongs](#)

🎵 [God, I ask for Your forgiveness \(Song of Repentance 🙏\) | Lyrics Video 🎵](#)



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: *"Oh! how pleased he was to see them once again, for he had not known a happy hour since he had left them alone in the woods. Gretel shook out her pinafore, and Hansel emptied his pockets, and the floor of the little room was quite covered with glittering precious stones. So now their troubles were at an end, for the cruel stepmother was dead, and Hansel and Gretel and their father lived together happily ever after."*

Now that's a happy ending (unless you're the cruel stepmother!) Would things have turned out better if the father had followed God's way and not sent his two children to their probable deaths?

2 Timothy 4:7 NIV I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Acts 3:19 AMP So repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins] and return [to God—seek His purpose for your life], so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased], so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord [restoring you like a cool wind on a hot day.]

"When I'm overwhelmed within from the weight of all my sin / I need a friend to call my own / I need a house to call my home / When I'm broken down inside and there's nowhere else to hide / I need a place where I feel known / Can someone help me? / Then I hear Your reply bringing teardrops to my eyes / Saying I'm not alone / Oh Lord, I need You now more than ever / Would You put my heart back together / I searched the world 'til my head hurt just to find out Your way's better / Oh-oh, Your way's better / Oh-oh, Your way's better / Oh, Lord, Your way's better / Jesus, Your way's better."
- Forrest Frank

🎵 [Forrest Frank - YOUR WAY'S BETTER \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)

REAL LIFE: **Merriam-Webster** defines the word **integrity** as “firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values : **incorruptibility**.” Read about a man who had to make a choice just like Hansel and Gretel’s father...

“Tom Larson was a rising star in corporate real estate. His charm and wit had earned him the reputation of being able to close any deal. But his success often came at the cost of cutting corners, bending the truth, and relying on schemes that left others worse off. Tommy convinced himself it was just how the world worked. “You’ve got to play the game to win,” he often told himself.”
- Tim Burt

Proverbs 10:9 NLT People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed.

Proverbs 11:11 ESV A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight.

Deuteronomy 25:15 ERV You must use weights and measures that are correct and accurate. Then you will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

The True Reward: An Inspirational Story

APOLO-GET-ITS: We have all been taught in school that coal (yes, that substance that Santa gives to the naughty) formed over millions of years. But, wait, there’s *another* theory? We can learn about coal formation either the hard (as coal) way or the easy way!

Let’s start with the hard:

“We know today that it does not take millions of years for coal to form. In fact, there is nowhere on Earth where it can be proven that coal is forming slowly in swamps or bogs. We have learned that coal did not form millions of years ago. And we now know that coal can form in just a few years.”
- Kyle Butt, D.Min.

How Coal Forms - Apologetics Press

And for the science geeks out there:

“As Derek Ager, a militant evolutionist, conceded a few years back: “The hurricane, the flood, or the tsunami may do more in an hour than the ordinary processes of nature have achieved in a thousand years” ...Dr. Donald Chittick has noted that the failure to recognize the relatively rapid formation of coal and oil on the part of evolutionary scientists has seriously deterred solutions to the energy crisis that is plaguing much of the world.”
- Wayne Jackson

The Record Buried in Coal | Christian Courier

And now for the easy:

“Textbooks claim that coal takes millions of years to form, but laboratory experiments have shown that coal can form in as little as 2 weeks to a year under the right conditions.”
- **Creation Moments**

▶ The Truth About Coal’s Origins

The next time you cook burgers over a charcoal grill, remember the above!

A canary, a lump of coal and the Holy Spirit walk into a bar...

"Canary in a Coal Mine by MercyMe is a clever, gritty metaphor wrapped in the warmth of gospel truth. Drawing from the old mining practice of sending a canary ahead to detect danger, the song paints Jesus as the One who goes before us—not just watching for trouble, but actively keeping us safe. If He's fine, we're fine. If He's singing, we can keep moving."

- Faith in Music Lyric Videos

  **MERCYME - CANARY IN A COAL MINE (FAITH IN MUSIC LYRIC VIDEO)**

EXTRA CREDIT: Just for fun, here's more about those hard-working canaries!

Canary in a Coal Mine | Not Your Grandfather's Mining Industry

EXTRA EXTRA CREDIT: *"The Holy Spirit is that secret place of comfort and safety for the Christian. When we feel anxious and doubt God's love, the Spirit comforts us. He reminds us that we belong to God as his sons and daughters. As Paul writes in Romans, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" ([Rom. 8:16](#), NIV). We can even trust that the Holy Spirit will be with us when we face death."*

- Jared Kennedy

Find Safety with the Holy Spirit

LOVE TO LINK!

The depth of content offered in the Think Above the Box Study Guides would not have been possible without the many talents and Spirit-inspired links that are included for each book. Isn't it great that while you use the study guides you can click on a link and go to these great sites without searching for them?

We would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to all the Bible publishers, pastors, bloggers, filmmakers, musicians and Christian media websites for the vast amount of information they provide online. Your efforts are truly a blessing to all who access your sites!

TAB highly encourages students to explore each of the links at their leisure as it is like going down a holy rabbit hole!

[**Project Gutenberg**](#)

[**Top Illustrations by Top Artists**](#)

[**Make Heaven Crowded - YouTube**](#)

[**Bible Gateway**](#)

[**Cara Ray**](#)

[**2BeLikeChrist**](#)

[**Scripture Lullabies**](#)

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Apologetics Press

Christian Courier

Creation Moments

Faith in Music Lyric Videos

MercyMe

Not Your Grandfathers Mining Industry

The Gospel Coalition

Afterword

Please check out [**Think above the Box**](#) for more study guides, blogs, and links to thought-provoking material.

*And please leave us a note on our site about your experience!
We would love to hear your comments!*



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

