

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 20 October 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 292 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Confession of Sin

Most merciful God, Who are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and hast promised forgiveness to all those who confess and forsake their sins; We come before You with a humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold transgressions of Your righteous laws. But, O gracious Father, Who desires not the death of a sinner, look upon us, we beseech You, in mercy, and forgive us all our transgressions. Make us deeply sensible of the great evil of them; And work in us a hearty contrition; That we may obtain forgiveness at Your hands, Who are ever ready to receive humble and penitent sinners; for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, our only Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 130:7-8

Hymn of Preparation: 268 Of the Father's Love Begotten

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 3:1-10

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 22:23-33

Sermon: *God of the Living*

Psalm of Response: 103D The Tender Love a Father Has

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Diaconal Offering

Closing Psalm: 100B All People That on Earth Do Dwell

PM Worship

14 The Fool Speaks in His Heart

11B The LORD Is My Refuge

435 Not What My Hands Have Done

Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 2:1-10

New Covenant Reading: Jude 8-13

Sermon Title: *A Call to Christ-Centered Humility*

Adult Sunday School: Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School

Suggested Preparations

Monday (10/14) Read and discuss Matthew 22:23-33

The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” [33] And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. (ESV)

R.T. France writes:

With the spotlight now moving to the Sadducees, we meet the other main theological viewpoint within the Sanhedrin, which most of the priests, and probably the elders, would have supported. Jesus has disposed of His Pharisaic questioners, so now the attack comes from the other wing. This time, however, it is not a politically loaded question, but one which asks Jesus to declare His stance on one of the main theological issues which divided Jewish opinion. The question presupposes (and ridicules) the Pharisaic belief in resurrection, presumably with the expectation that Jesus would declare His position in favor of the Pharisaic view and thus alienate a large (and probably at this time the more influential) part of the Sanhedrin. Josephus tells us that the Pharisees enjoyed greater popular support, but their “progressive” theology was rejected by the more conservative ruling classes. But the aim is not simply to get Jesus to align Himself publicly with one faction, but also to discredit Him as a teacher by making Him appear foolish in public: the scenario which the Sadducees propose is designed to expose the whole resurrection idea, which Jesus is assumed to support, as ridiculous.

Jesus’ response is on two fronts. First He takes up the specific issue they have raised and explains how they have misunderstood the nature of resurrection life by assuming that it must be analogous to the present life. But then He turns to the basic issue underlying their question, whether there are scriptural grounds for believing in the resurrection at all. Aware of the Sadducees’ disregard for the later parts of the OT, He draws His argument from a central text within the books of Moses themselves. As with all the places in this gospel where Jesus asks, “haven’t you read?” the text is one with which they are very familiar, but the inference Jesus draws from it is one which they would not have thought of.

Read or sing Hymn 292 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Tuesday (10/5) Read and discuss Matthew 22:15-22

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to

Caesar, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away. (ESV)

R.T. France writes:

Jesus’ request for a denarius was more than just the provision of a visual aid. Pious Jews objected to the “idolatrous” coin, which carried not only a human portrait but also an inscription which described the Roman emperor as *Divi Filius*, son of god (in contravention of the first commandment). Roman imperial policy, aware of this sensitivity, allowed the Jews to coin their own non-idolatrous copper money, which sufficed for normal everyday business; there was therefore no need for them to carry the silver denarius, a coin of higher value. And Jesus apparently did not have one – but they did, and in the holy precincts of the temple at that! Well then, if they were using the emperor’s (idolatrous) coinage, they could hardly object to paying his tax. The verb in v. 21, “give back to the emperor,” neatly presses the point, and underlines Jesus’ description of them as hypocrites.

Jesus’ answer in v. 21 [also] calls into question the basic presupposition behind their question, that there is an essential incompatibility between loyalty to the governing authority and loyalty to God. This was precisely Judas’s position as explained by Josephus in War 2.118 [Judas led a tax-revolt revolution against Rome that had been crushed when Jesus was a boy]. [According to Judas]: to pay the tax was to tolerate a mortal sovereign in place of God. Jesus asserts that this is not necessarily so: it is possible to pay one’s dues both to the emperor and to God, to both a dutiful citizen and a loyal servant of God. This principle, more fully expounded in Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17, has now been so widely recognized for so long that it causes no surprise to many of us in many parts of the world, but in first-century Palestine under Roman rule it was not all so obvious.

Read or sing Hymn 268 Of the Father’s Love Begotten

Wednesday (10/16) Read and discuss Exodus 3:1-10

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for

the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” (ESV)

Duane Garrett writes:

God’s first commission of Moses begins with a recitation that essentially repeats 2:23-25. God draws Moses into the heavenly perspective on Israel’s enslavement, allowing Moses to, as it were, sit beside God as He sees the suffering of His people. Moses now knows the truth, that God had not abandoned Israel. The significance of this emerges in v. 10, where God in effect invites Moses to join Him in His enterprise of freeing the Hebrews. The first commission is therefore a very high calling. Moses is brought alongside God, made privy to God’s view of the world and His intentions, and is invited to participate in God’s work.

Exodus 3:8 contains the first of 20 occurrences of Canaan being called a “land flowing with milk and honey.” The expression always occurs within the divine promise to give the land to the Israelites. It is almost always found in the Pentateuch, and even when it occurs in later books, it is always in a context of citing the pre-conquest promises. That is, this is the language of promise; it is not a term that Israelites customarily used to describe the land. It implies that the land is abundantly productive of foodstuff, with emphasis on foods high in fat content or sugar content. In other words, it is a place where one can enjoy life and not merely survive.

Read or sing Psalm 103D The Tender Love a Father Has

Thursday (10/17) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 2:1–10

And Hannah prayed and said,

“My heart exults in the LORD;
my horn is exalted in the LORD.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.

“There is none holy like the LORD:

for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,
and on them he has set the world.

“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.” (ESV)

Herbert M. Wolf writes:

While still at the sanctuary, Hannah again prays to God, this time lifting her heart in praise for the goodness of God. She rejoices not so much in her son, Samuel, but in the LORD who gave him to her. He is the “Rock,” the all-powerful god who provides security for His people. Verses 3-9 show how God humbles the proud and the rich and exalts the weak and the poor. These reversals are mentioned later by Mary in her song of praise (Luke 1:51-53), and for both Hannah and Mary it is the birth of a son that brings such great blessing. God is sovereign in the lives of all people, and His special protection rests on the “saints.” Those who are wicked and who oppose the LORD will face judgment and destruction.

In the final couplet of the song (v. 10), Hannah speaks prophetically about a coming king. By calling the king “His anointed,” Hannah is the first to use

the term *messiah* with reference to a ruler. Both the Hebrew word *messiah* and the Greek word *Christ* mean “anointed.” Hannah’s prophecy is most appropriate since her son Samuel was the one who anointed both Saul and David and figured prominently in the establishment of the monarchy.

Friday (10/18) Read and discuss Jude 8–13

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error and perished in Korah’s rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. (ESV)

William H. Baker writes:

Jude characterizes the false teachers as “dreamers” (v. 8), because they live in a religious world of unreality. He has deliberately selected the three examples of God’s judgment in the past because the sins involved are similar – sexual immorality and the rejection of authority. The rejection of authority is expressed, Jude now adds, in slander of celestial beings. It is not clear just what this involved, but Jude illustrates his case using an example from the apocryphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*, on how “celestial beings” – Satan in this case – should be respected. Like false teachers of all periods of history, they “speak abusively” of things they do not understand. Jude further describes them as understanding only that which animals understand, sensual animal pleasures of instinct. When these passions are unleashed, they go out of control and the dissipations that follow destroy them.

As Jesus did the Pharisees, Jude pronounces a “woe” (v. 11) upon these heretics. They go the way of Cain – they promote a religion of works without faith. They commit Balaam’s error – they practice religion for profit. They are like Korah – they reject God-ordained authority.

Further, Jude says, they are “blemishes at your love feasts.” This means that they unashamedly participate in the meals during which believers celebrate the Lord’s Supper. They pervert the feast’s true meaning and feed only themselves. Jude also calls them “clouds without rain” which soon passes by, because their teaching promises that which it cannot deliver, namely freedom. Instead, it leads to slavery to lusts. Jude describes them as “autumn

trees, without fruit.” At that time of year, the fruit is gone; often, also some of the trees are uprooted for failing to bear fruit and thus a double disappointment occurs (“twice dead”). Following this, he calls them “wild waves of the sea,” restless and unstable. The foaming refers to the mixture of bubbles and scum and serves as a picture of the uselessness of their teaching. Last of all, Jude describes them as “wandering stars” – planets which due to their unpredictability, offer no guidance in navigation.

Read or sing Hymn 444 Come to the Waters

Saturday (10/19) Read and discuss Matthew 22:23-33

The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”

But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” [33] And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. (ESV)

Many commentators have struggled with this passage. It might be wise, therefore, to start by clarifying the structure:

A1. The Sadducees appeal to Scripture (“Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother”).

B1. The Sadducees interpret Scripture (by combining the levirate laws with a hypothetical situation to reach what they think is an irrefutable conclusion. This is an attempt to prove A by showing that not-A isn't possible).

C1. The Sadducees apply Scripture (Their question can be taken as a statement: We should not believe in a resurrection).

Transition: Jesus condemns the Sadducees for not knowing Scripture and flatly declares that their conclusion is wrong because they haven't considered the differences between “this age” and “that age” in their application. Then ...

A2. Jesus appeals to Scripture. “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”

B2. Jesus interprets Scripture. “Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.”

C2. Jesus applies Scripture. “You are quite wrong”.

(Some might suggest that the application of Scripture in C2 is the implied application that God really does raise the dead. I believe it is better to see that the primary point of this passage is not about what God will do with those who die in faith, but about who Jesus is. Therefore, the more important application is that Jesus is who He claims to be.)

It is worth noting that while the Sadducees were wrongly appealing to, interpreting, and applying Scripture; Jesus was rightly appealing to, interpreting, and applying Scripture. Jesus is not doing something odd. He is showing us how the Scripture should be applied.

At this point you can see that:

1. Jesus is condemning the way that the Sadducees are interpreting and applying Scripture. No problem there. You don’t know any Sadducees – but you are quite willing to accept that Jesus is right, and they are wrong.
2. While the Sadducees drew a false conclusion from Scripture, Jesus appeals to the book of Exodus and plainly claims that “Moses showed” that the dead are raised.

But why does the LORD saying that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob demonstrate the resurrection of the dead? The answer requires us to read Exodus 3:6 in its context. The LORD is giving Moses something that will encourage the Jews and Egypt to believe that He is going to deliver them in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles. Why should they believe that the LORD was going to use an 80-year-old man with a shepherd’s staff to deliver them from the world’s greatest super-power? Well, the LORD had promised to make Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the heirs of the land of Canaan as the Promised Land. If the Patriarchs died and stayed dead ... there would be absolutely no reason for these words to encourage the slaves in Egypt. It is only because the Patriarchs continue to personally and consciously exist that these words give unshakeable encouragement. And it is only because the Patriarchs will be bodily raised – that inheriting a physical land – the New Heavens and the New Earth is meaningful for them!

Modern Christians (including some of you!) may find this to be a rather obscure argument. Yet, the LORD’s covenant promises to and through the Patriarch’s typified by the Promised Land are at the very heart of Israel’s faith.

Prayer: Please lift up tomorrow’s morning and evening worship services.