

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 13 April 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 335 Praise the Savior Now and Ever

Confession of Sin

O great and everlasting God, Who dwells in unapproachable light, Who searches and knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart; We confess that we have not loved You with all our heart, nor with all our soul, nor with all our mind, nor with all our strength; Nor our neighbors as ourselves. We have loved what we ought not to have loved; We have coveted what is not ours; We have not been content with Your provisions for us. We have complained in our hearts about our family, about our friends, about our health, about our occupations, about Your church, and about our trials. We have sought our security in those things which perish, rather than in You, the Everlasting God. Chasten, cleanse, and forgive us, through Jesus Christ, who is able for all time to save us who approach You through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:17-18

Psalm of Preparation: 86B Lord, My Petition Heed

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 32:1-8

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 26:47-56

Sermon Title: *Arrested According to Plan*

Psalm of Response: 77 I Cried Aloud to God for Help 1-4

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 350 Beneath the Cross of Jesus

PM Worship

239 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

98C Sing a New Song to Jehovah

263 O Savior, Precious Savior

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 14:8-24

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 7:1-10

Sermon Title: *Melchizedek and Abraham*

Adult Sunday School: Inaugurated Eschatology: Jesus & the Holy Spirit, Part II

Suggested Preparations

Monday (4/7) Read and discuss Matthew 26:47–56

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his

sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

For utterly different reasons, Judas’ plan and the divine plan agree that Jesus must be condemned and die. The unnamed disciple, however, tries to prevent this from happening! Jesus utterly rejects the murderous attack by one of His disciples as contrary to God’s will on two counts. First, it was an utterly ineffectual attempt to show human force. Second, it worked directly against the plan laid out in “the Scriptures,” the plan that will not be fulfilled through force or violence, but through Jesus’ obedient suffering, death, and resurrection.

After rejecting His disciple’s error, Jesus lays bare the two plans that agree on what should happen. Jesus shows that His enemies do not even know why they are there in Gethsemane! They have acted as if they intended to arrest a violent troublemaker, a thief and an evil person. But that is not why they are there. They are there in order to (unwittingly) fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets. God’s whole plan is coming down to this focus, this sequence.

Read or sing Hymn 335 Praise the Savior Now and Ever

Tuesday (4/8) Read and discuss Matthew 26:36–46

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” (ESV)

Michael Wilkins writes:

Jesus goes away from the trio of disciples to be alone, because he must plead with His Father privately, although having His closest followers near provides necessary human support. There alone, “He fell with His face to the ground and prayed.” In this posture of abject humility, Jesus lays His life before His Father in utter honesty and trust. Matthew reveals one of the most profound insights into the intimacy between Father and Son. In this time of prayer that lasts an hour, Jesus probably reiterates various expressions of this central theme, which accounts for the variation among the four Gospel writers.

With harmless urgency and trustfulness, Jesus lays His life in His Father’s safe-keeping as He calls out with tender intimacy, “My Father.” This continues Matthew’s unique insight into the special relationship of Son and Father in this Gospel. Jesus pleads, “If it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.” Jesus is facing a real temptation, the most severe of His life. He started His earthly ministry by being tempted by the devil in the desert, and He was variously tempted by satanic devices at other points in His ministry. The significant feature of the earlier temptations was the satanic attempt to deter Jesus from the cross. Now, at the moment when He is ready to accomplish His life’s mission, the temptation is intensified to the maximum. This is the devil’s last-ditch effort to attempt to convince Jesus that the cross is unnecessary.

But Jesus has demonstrated a complete confidence in His Father’s sovereign power and perfect will throughout His life, so at this moment of greatest temptation, He turns to His Father for guidance. Jesus has prophesied that He must endure this cup of crucifixion to accomplish redemption of humanity, but Satan still tempts Him to believe that it is not absolutely necessary.

Jesus lays the temptation out to His Father, but He does not ask to shirk His destiny. He wants only to obey His Father’s will. This is the landmark example of honesty and trustfulness in prayer. The Father will not respond to the petition in the way requested, but it does not reflect any fault in the One requesting. The Father does hear the Son’s plea, but it is the Son’s obedience to the Father’s answer to continue to the cross that brings salvation to humanity.

Read or sing Psalm 86B Lord, My Petition Heed

Wednesday (4/9) Read and discuss Isaiah 32:1–8

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,
and princes will rule in justice.
Each will be like a hiding place from the wind,

a shelter from the storm,
like streams of water in a dry place,
like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.
Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed,
and the ears of those who hear will give attention.
The heart of the hasty will understand and know,
and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly.
The fool will no more be called noble,
nor the scoundrel said to be honorable.
For the fool speaks folly,
and his heart is busy with iniquity,
to practice ungodliness,
to utter error concerning the LORD,
to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied,
and to deprive the thirsty of drink.
As for the scoundrel—his devices are evil;
he plans wicked schemes
to ruin the poor with lying words,
even when the plea of the needy is right.
But he who is noble plans noble things,
and on noble things he stands. (ESV)

Willem VanGemeren writes:

The future age will be characterized by righteousness and justice. The king, leaders, and people will be concerned with the pursuit of wisdom from above. The wise man is blessed in that he represents God's blessedness, being likened to "a shelter," "a refuge," "streams of water in the desert," and shade. No longer will God's people be characterized by deafness and blindness, but all will hear, see, and act in accordance with the Word of God. They will hasten to do His will upon the earth in contrast to the past when they hastened to do their own will. In their pursuit of godly wisdom, they will hate folly and wickedness. The wise person pursues what is noble. The wise people of God will no longer take their counsel in accordance with earthly standards and be primarily concerned with earthly matters, but rather they will have new standards and concern about the things that pertain to God Himself.

Read or sing Psalm 77 I Cried Aloud to God for Help 1-4

Thursday (4/10) Read and discuss Genesis 14:8–24

Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the

rest fled to the hill country. So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.” (ESV)

Tremper Longman writes:

Melchizedek is a priest before the institution of priesthood among the later descendants of Abraham, and he acts like one conferring blessing upon the people of God, here Abram. By blessing Abram, he asks God to live in harmony with him and grant him good relationships with other people as well as to meet his material needs. Melchizedek invokes God as “Creator of heaven and earth” and thus more than able to provide for Abram. Melchizedek is acting as God's agent and acting in harmony with God's intention that Abram would be blessed (Gen 12:2-3). Further, the king-priest praises God and attributes Abram's victory over the four kings of the east to Him ... Abram ... responds by giving Melchizedek a tenth of the plunder, the first time a tithe is given in the Bible. ...

Abram's response and actions in regard to Melchizedek contrast quite sharply with those toward the king of Sodom. The latter appears

appreciative and generous when he asks Abram to return the captives but to keep the plunder for himself.

Abram makes it quite clear that he wants absolutely nothing to do with Sodom and its king, having taken an oath to the LORD, whom he also refers to by the nomenclature used by Melchizedek in verse 19, giving us no doubt that Abram sees Melchizedek as a worshiper of the true God. By refusing to accept the plunder to enrich himself, he makes it clear that he is unwilling to in a formal relationship with the king of Sodom. He will accept absolutely nothing (“not even a thread or the strap of a sandal,” v. 23). He will allow his allies (Aner, Eshkol and Mamre) to benefit from the victory, but he will not be beholden to the king of Sodom.

It is not that Abram is loath to accept gifts from foreign kings. The reason must be that Sodom’s exceptional evil keeps him from any involvement that might show him dependent on that city. In this he also differentiates himself from Lot, who now freed will return to Sodom.

Friday (4/11) Read and discuss Hebrews 7:1–10

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. (ESV)

John Kleinig writes:

The royal office of Melchizedek distinguishes him. Its character is disclosed by his name in Hebrew, which means “king of righteousness.” This throne name, the name given to him at his coronation, shows his mission as king. By its conferral, the Most High God commissioned him to administer his righteousness on earth. Melchizedek’s additional title, “king of Salem,” which means “king of peace,” discloses how he does this, and where. By righting what has gone wrong, he establishes peace in Salem, that is, Jerusalem, Zion, the city of the Most High God (see Psalm 76). The contrast

between his royal title “king” (the first element of his name, “Melchizedek,” and in his title as “king of Salem”) and his liturgical title “priest of the Most High God” may also imply that he does not administer God’s righteousness politically by engaging in battle, like Abraham, who fought the four kings named in Gen 14:1, but ritually by the performance of benediction in God’s name.

The teacher also explains Melchizedek’s unique royal office with three negative adjectives, based on inferences from what has not been said about him in Genesis. He does not have the normal credentials for a legitimate priest or king in the ancient world. Since he is “without father or mother,” he also lacks a “genealogy” that would locate him in a royal or priestly family and give him his human office, identity, and status. He does not have “a beginning of days nor an end of life.” No scriptural records exist of his birth or death. Most significantly, the silence about his death provides the basis for the author’s later argument that he is still alive (7:8). He does not resemble any human ancestor but is “like the Son of God” (7:3), who provides the heavenly model for him. The eternal Son, who has coexisted with the Father from eternity past and will continue to do so forever, is the archetype of Melchizedek’s earthly priesthood., without beginning or end. “Like the Son of God,” Melchizedek “remains a priest without interruption.” The exercise of his priesthood was not terminated by his retirement nor ended by his death. He therefore had no human successor. Thus his priesthood is unique in the annals of human history. It stands as a sign and token of the eschatological, eternal priesthood of Jesus.

Read or sing Hymn 350 Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Saturday (4/12) Read and discuss Matthew 26:47–56

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

What does Jesus' disciple do, and why does he do it? To the first question, not that "the slave of the high priest" may not be a minor figure in the crowd, but perhaps the leader of the group, and that could be why the disciple attacks him. The next part of the first answer, however, is more important. What does the disciple do? *He tries to kill the man, but he misses.* The man ducks, or the disciple swings blindly, or whatever. But it is extremely unlikely that the small wound inflicted is the wound the disciple intended. The disciple swung at the slave's head, trying to kill him. He thought he was supposed to defend Jesus by killing one of His enemies.

The second question about this one of Jesus' disciples is "why?" Why did he do what he did? Did the disciple think things through and act deliberately? That seems unlikely, given the setting in the dark with a sudden incursion of a hostile crowd. Did the disciple panic and perhaps even later regret what he had done? Perhaps that is what happened, although Matthew does not fill in that gap for us. But why did he do it? *He did it because he would not or could not accept what was happening, and this means that the disciple had rejected Jesus' teaching about the cross.* He did it because, with all of the others, he had rejected the prediction and the promise found most recently in 26:30-32. *He acted as he did because he had an alternative plan, one that had no place in it for Jesus' defeat and death – not even an atoning and penultimate place.* Whether impulsively or in a way that expresses a deep-seated conviction, the disciple put forward a plan that places violence at the center of the reign of God that stands near in Jesus. The disciple acted as if God's reign will come through force rather than through suffering servanthood.

Jesus speaks in 26:52-54, and His words accomplish at least two things. First, the narrative implies that Jesus takes control of the situation and that His words suffice both to subdue the violent disciple as well as to prevent any retaliation against the disciple from the hostile crowd. We hear nothing more about the incident after Jesus speaks.

Second, as Jesus speaks, he warns His disciple not to use force to attempt to bring in the reign of God. If force were needed, the perfect Son of the almighty Father could appeal for an army of holy angels, who would appear at His disposal. In light of such supernatural power, anything that Jesus' disciples could do disappears into insignificance. It is not, however, part of the scriptural plan to defend Jesus – with natural or supernatural force. To borrow from the Fourth Gospel, if that were the path set before Jesus, then all of His followers would be fighting to keep Him from being handed over to His enemies. In that case, then, His reign, His way of bringing the reign of God, would be "from this world" (Jn 18:36).

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