

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 27 July 2025

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 420 Christ for the World We Sing

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 86:12-15

Hymn of Preparation: 371 Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Title: *The Glorious Commission*

Hymn of Response: 424 All Authority and Power

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 425 How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place

PM Worship

229 Holy God, We Praise Your Name

233 O Father, You Are Sovereign

234 The God of Abraham Praise

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 19:1-9

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 1:10-12

Sermon Title: *Our Heritage, Our Privilege*

No Sunday School – Extended Time of Fellowship

Suggested Preparations

Monday (7/21) Read and discuss Matthew 28:16–20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

In His opening words that assuage the doubt experienced by some of the Eleven, Jesus declared, “All authority that is in heaven and on earth was given to Me.” These words communicate a world of meaning about the risen Jesus, and some of that world will be explored in the excursus “The Resurrection of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel and in the New Testament” following this pericope. For the moment, I will take my stand with many other commentators in noting here an allusion to the vision of the glorious son of Man in Dan 7:13-14. Strong connections to this vision have already been a part of Matthew’s Gospel. In that night vision, Daniel saw “one like a Son of Man.” Although this title by itself does not convey divinity, this figure is glorious and powerful. He arrives before the Ancient of Days, that is, the God of Israel. ... As a result of what was given to Jesus, the Son of Man, by the Ancient of Days, all the peoples will serve/worship Him; in Matthew 28:9, 17, people worship Jesus. Although the final fulfillment of Dan 7:13-14 awaits the consummation of the age, there on the mountain in Galilee, the risen Jesus declares to His eleven disciples that because He was raised from the dead, this has fulfilled the presentation of the Son of Man to God. He is exalted for the sake of His people.

Read or sing Hymn 420 Christ for the World We Sing

Tuesday (7/22) Read and discuss Matthew 28:11–15

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

[This passage] reminds Matthew’s readers/hearers of the things Jesus taught about the mystery of divine revelation and anthropology. The Christ provides a number of images to explain how in the world human unbelief can remain as impervious as it sometimes does. There is the problem of holding on to old wineskins, even at the risk of ruining them. It is the cares that Satan, the cares of this age, and other things take away the Word or choke it, preventing it from bearing fruit. People who reject God’s ways in Jesus are also described directly as “evil,” a “brood of vipers,” and “hypocrites” who bear the blame and consequences of their own unbelief. God is well-pleased to hide the mysteries of the reign of God from the wise and to reveal them to babies. All of these descriptions are true.

No matter how it might be explained, the unbelieving plot of the chief priests and the elders here should not really surprise us – not if we are honest

women and men. We also have our categories of thinking, our assumptions that govern how we organize the claims that come at us – and we do not relinquish them willingly. Only the Father can break through and grant new ways of fitting all of the pieces together. When I read about how these Jewish religious leaders went to such lengths to oppose and undermine the good News of Christ's resurrection from the dead, I confess that my primary reaction is to think "there but for the grace of God go I." To be sure, they are culpable for their hypocrisy; I cannot, however, bring myself to despise them for it.

The unbelief of men will not stop the plan of God. After narrating the ongoing opposition of the Jewish leadership, Matthew presses on to tell how Jesus kept His promise to the Eleven that they would see Him in Galilee. The keeping of that promise has saving consequences not only for them but also for all the Gentiles – indeed, all the nations of the world.

Read or sing Hymn 371 Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

Wednesday (7/23) Read and discuss Isaiah 49:1–7

Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the LORD,
and my recompense with my God."

And now the LORD says,
he who formed me from the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him;
and that Israel might be gathered to him—
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength—
he says:
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,
the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

The loyal Servant recalls the mission given Him by Yahweh (49:1-3), which seemed to meet with no success (49:4). Yahweh reiterates the Servant’s worldwide mission and continues to encourage Him through 49:12. In passages such as Matthew 11:20-24 and 17:17, Je3sus, who was expending His strength for the salvation of the world, expresses ire at the lack of response. But as the Servant, He entrusts His cause to the Father.

If the sinless Servant could be frustrated by people’s apathy and disbelief, all the more is that true of His fallible servants. One example is John the Baptist. At one point, he wondered whether his ministry had been in vain (Mt 11:2-23). He languished in prison before his martyrdom, yet in the end he was vindicated.

In Is 49:9-12, the message of redemption continues with the Servant’s release of prisoners. He will lead them back from all directions. While the specific word “shepherd” is not used, the words “feed,” “pasture,” “lead,” and “guide” make it clear that the Servant is depicted as a Shepherd.

And this implies that the Israelites were like stray sheep. Sheep are not intimidating creatures; truth be told, sheep are dumb. They graze on the same hills until those hills turn to desert wastes; they bend down to drink from a pond, get too close and allow the water to absorb into their wool, fall in, and drown! Sheep are also dirty. Their wool is like a magnet. It attracts mud, manure, and maggots and becomes caked with dirt, decay, and disease. Sheep absorb every particle of filth in the atmosphere. Finally, sheep are defenseless. They sometimes roll over onto their backs but then are unable to get up. Canines, coyotes, and cougars all know that cast sheep is a sitting duck!

Israel was just like sheep. The nation was dumb. “The ox knows its owner, the donkey the manger of its master, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand” (1:3). Israel was also dirty. “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy garment” (64:6). And the nation was defenseless. “From the sole of the foot to the head, there is in it no soundness, [instead] a bruise and stripe and a wound”

(1:6). This is not only a portrait of Israel. “*All of us* like sheep wandered away; each one to his way we turned” (53:6).

And so we need an extraordinary Shepherd. Enter the Servant! He leads His flock to find food on barren heights (49:9), and in the hottest of weather, He gives His sheep unlimited water (49:10). Their path is straight (49:11) despite the hilly country where sheep usually graze. This Servant even has the ability to tend to a huge number of sheep that are drawn from great distances (49:12).

Read or sing Hymn 424 All Authority and Power

Thursday (7/24) Read and discuss Exodus 19:1–9

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.”

Christopher Wright comments:

Verse 5a is expressed as a condition: “Now *if* you obey Me fully and keep My covenant,” but is very important to see what is *not* condition on Israel’s obedience. This is not a condition of salvation, as if God had said to the Israelites in Egypt, “If you obey My laws, then I will save you and you can be My people.” No, He already had saved them, because they were His people. Furthermore, obedience is not (in this context) a condition of blessing. Later God will spell out some of the blessings that Israel could continue to enjoy if they remain within the boundaries of covenant loyalty and obedience. But in this specific text God does not say, “If you obey My laws, then I will pour out lots of wonderful blessings on you.” No, the emphasis here is not on Israel getting blessed, but Israel being a *blessing* by fulfilling their Abrahamic calling through priestly and holy presence in the midst of the nations. “If you will obey ... then ... you will *be* for Me.”

Obedience, then, is not (ever) a condition of salvation. Nor (here) is obedience a condition of blessing. But obedience *is* emphatically a condition of *mission*. Only if God's people heed God's voice and keep God's covenant can they fulfill God's purpose and be what God wants them to be in the world. When God's people know who they are (their identity) and know the story they are in, then the call to responsive obedience to live in God's way is a celebration of grace – the grace of obedience responding to the grace of salvation for the sake of the grace of God's mission. And that, as we shall see, is exactly the message that Peter discerns in this text as he quotes and applies it in 1 Peter 2:9-12.

When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, (ESV)

Friday (7/25) Read and discuss 1 Peter 1:10–12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (ESV)

Martin Luther writes:

The salvation of which I speak and you will receive is sure because the holy prophets have borne witness to it.

Peter refers us here back into the holy Scriptures, to see how God keeps what He has promised, not because of any merit on our part, but out of pure grace alone. For the whole Scriptures aim at this one thing, namely, to tear us away from our own works and bring us to faith. Therefore it is necessary that we study the Scriptures in order to be certain and clear as to faith. Likewise Paul also leads us into the Scriptures when he said in Romans 1:2 that God promised afore the gospel through His prophets in the holy Scriptures; and Romans 3:21, “The righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ and avails before God, hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”

Thus also in Acts 17:2 and following we read that Paul preached faith in Christ to the Jews at Thessalonica and later at Berea. He reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, etc. And when they had heard this, they examined the Scriptures daily to see if they held the same doctrine they were taught by Paul. We also therefore should search the Scriptures, for it is they that testify of Christ, as He Himself says in John 5:39. It is also written in verse 46: “If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me.” And thus we learn to confirm and establish the New Testament out of the Old Testament, and

never give our confidence to the useless babblers, who despise the Old Testament and say it is no longer necessary. Thus we must establish the foundation of our faith out of the Old Testament and from no other source, for God sent the prophets for the purpose to the Jews, that they should bear witness of the future Christ. Hence the Apostles everywhere convinced and overwhelmed the Jews with proofs from their own writings that this Jesus whom they preached unto them was Christ.

Read or sing Hymn 425 How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place

Saturday (7/26) Read and discuss Matthew 28:16–20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

To confess on the basis of 28:18-20 and indeed the entire Gospel that Jesus is God’s son is also to confess *that Jesus is Israel, the people of God*. In god’s plan, Jesus sums up Israel in His own person. God had said to Pharaoh, “Israel is My firstborn son. ... Let My son go that he may serve Me,” but that son of God, when set free, did not serve obediently. The first explicit declaration in Matthew that Jesus is God’s Son reads Hos 11:1 typologically in order to disclose this corporate identity: “out of Egypt I called My Son” (Mt 2:15). At Jesus’ baptism, the Father’s declaration from heaven expresses this corporate identity: “this one is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” means “this is the true Israel, standing the place of the sinful, needy Israel.” Marked by His humble and ultimately cruciform baptism, for forty days this Son went into the wilderness, where Israel, God’s son, had faltered for forty years long before. Tempted by the devil to be a different sort of Son, Jesus did not falter; His identity as the perfect Israel, the perfect Son, remained intact, and He was obedient to His calling to worship and serve the LORD His God only.

That perfect obedience came to its climax in His trials and in His death. Jesus stands before His interlocutors as the Christ/Messiah, as Israel’s true King. He also stands there as “the Son of God,” the mighty Judge who submitted to John’s baptism because it fittingly presaged how God would put things right for Israel and for the world. This is the path from which Satan in the wilderness had tried to divert Jesus. This is the act of paying a ransom in exchange for the many. Jesus dies instead of the people dying. Jesus is abandoned instead of the people being abandoned.

And now Jesus is raised as God's Son – as Israel. Because of Israel's sinfulness – which was a symptom of the sin of the entire human race – God sent a representative and a substitute. That perfect Son now makes a new beginning. Jesus, risen from the dead, is that new beginning, the new Israel, the people of God begun anew in His own person.

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