

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 27 September 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 274 Jesus, My Great High Priest

Confession of Sin

O eternal God and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before your great majesty, against which we have frequently and grievously sinned. We acknowledge that we deserve nothing less than eternal death, that we are unclean before you and children of wrath. We continually transgress your commandments, failing to do what you have commanded, and doing that which you have expressly forbidden. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We are not worthy to be called your children, nor to lift up our eyes heavenward to you in prayer. Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that your mercy toward those who turn to you is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon you, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Forgive all our sins for Christ's sake. Cover us with his innocence and righteousness, for the glory of your name. Deliver our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all willfulness and rebellion, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. *Amen*

Assurance of Pardon: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hymn of Preparation: 451 Approach, My Soul, the Mercy Seat

Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 2:12-36

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Sermon Title: *The Dangers of an Unconverted Priesthood*

Hymn of Response: 529 Lead Me Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness

Confession of Faith: 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)

Doxology (Hymn 569)

Closing Hymn: 277 Before the Throne of God Above

PM Worship

45B My Heart Does Overflow

496 My Jesus, I Love Thee

283 Fairest Lord Jesus

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 45 (sermon text)

New Covenant Reading: Revelation 22:1-5

Sermon Title: *A Love Song to the King*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (9/21) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 2:12–36

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would

thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD." So then they would return to their home.

Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon

your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.”” (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

Eli knew about his sons exploits, so “he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons,; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad.’” Eli’s failure is seen in that although he heard about his sons’ sins and he talked to them about their behavior, he did nothing to curb these wicked actions.

We can easily imagine that this pattern had characterized Eli’s parenting all through his sons’ upbringing. His first error was in failing to supervise their priestly service. The result was that instead of intervening and correcting his sons on the spot, Eli merely came to them later to discuss what he had heard. His second and greater error was that his rebuke did not lead to immediate punishment. According to the Bible, the failure to discipline our children is the surest way of ruining their souls. It will later be said of David that he never “displeased” his sons by holding them to account (1 Kings 1:6); the treachery, murder, rape, and treason committed by his progeny bear testimony to David’s parental failure.

In dealing with his grown sons, Eli had an obligation to at least remove them from their office and install other qualified and godly priests. In the original days of the Israelite priesthood, even Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu had been struck dead by God for bringing “Unauthorized fire” into the tabernacle. How much more atrocious were the sins of Hophni and Phinehas! But though Eli rebuked his sons, he took no action. Blaikie writes that Eli “could not bring himself to be harsh to his own sons. He could not bear that they should be disgraced and degraded. He would satisfy himself with a mild remonstrance, notwithstanding that every day new disgrace wa heaped on the sanctuary, and new encouragement given to others to practice wickedness.”

Read or sing Hymn 274 Jesus, My Great High Priest

Tuesday (9/22) Read and discuss Read and discuss 1 Samuel 1:21–2:11.

The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the

child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And he worshiped the LORD there.

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.”

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. (ESV)

Andrew Steinmann writes:

When the boy was weaned Hannah brought him with a sacrifice consisting of a three-year-old bull, and ephah of flour, and a full container of wine. An ephah was about .6 bushel or 22 liters. The items match well with those needed for a peace offering to fulfill a vow, although there is no mention of olive oil mixed with the flour. That these items are associated with the fulfilling of Hannah’s vow is implied by 1 Sam 1:25, which mentions both the slaughtering of the bull and the bringing of Samuel to Eli. The text also emphasizes that Samuel was still only a young boy when he was dedicated to Yahweh.

Hannah’s speech not only reminds Eli of her prayer to Yahweh at Shiloh but also states the reason she is dedicating Samuel to Yahweh. During her earlier conversation with Eli she did not mention what her request from Yahweh was. Now she declares the contents of her prayer and vow. This is immediately followed by worship. The masculine verb “he worshipped” in 1:28 is ambiguous as to who worshipped Yahweh. Was it Elkanah, Samuel, or Eli? Since this statement about worship immediately follows Hannah’s words about Samuel, he is the closest antecedent to the verb. So we ought to understand Samuel as beginning his worship of Yahweh in Shiloh at the time when Hannah presented him to Eli. This also continues the implied contrast between Elkanah’s pious family and Eli’s impious family, whose sins are catalogued immediately following the return of Elkanah to Ramah.

Read or sing Hymn 451 Approach, My Soul, the Mercy Seat

Wednesday (9/23) Read and discuss Hebrews 4:14–16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are,

yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (ESV)

Drawing near to the LORD is bold because it is not something that guilty sinners would naturally do. Only a madman runs towards His executioner. Yet, we can draw near with confidence because Jesus has already trampled all of our guilt into the dust and clothed us in His own perfect righteousness.

This is the first time in Hebrews that we are called to draw near to the LORD but it will by no means be the last. We are to draw near with confidence not only because of what Jesus has done for us but because of who He is and because of the office that He occupies.

Suppose you were trying to get a job at a huge and highly successful company and the only way you could get that job is by getting a meeting with the company's CEO. Most of us would quickly realize that our dream of getting such a job is just that a dream. Now, if your best friend were to tell you that he could get you in to see the CEO what difference would that make to you? I guess that depends on who your friend is. If he worked in the mailroom of the company you would realize that even his best intentions wouldn't do you the slightest bit of good; but if he was the brother of the CEO and he owned half of the company you would rightly have great confidence that he could get you the interview.

This analogy pales in comparison with who Jesus is. Jesus loves you so much, that He took to Himself a true human nature to live the life that you should have lived and to die the death that you should have died; yet being very God of very God He has not entered heaven as a suppliant but as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He fully sympathizes with you in your human weakness He also reigns at the right hand of God.” It would do us absolutely no good, to have an all-powerful High Priest who didn’t care about us nor to have a deeply compassionate High Priest who lacked the power to act on our behalf. Thankfully, Jesus Christ who loves you with an everlasting love has been given all power in heaven and on earth.

Thursday (9/24) Read and discuss Revelation 22:1–5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (ESV)

Louis Brighton comments:

Because the present creation was put under God’s curse as a result of human sin, it “was subjected to futility.” It was subjected to ruin, decay, and atrophy, but also it was subjected “on the basis of hope, because creation itself will be set free from this slavery of destruction into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” This is a clear biblical promise that the present earth, which is suffering God’s judgment and thus is wasting away, will be restored to its original state – even as God’s people will have their bodies restored in the resurrection so that they will be like Christ’s own glorious resurrection body. This renewal of the present decaying earth agrees with Rev 21:5, where God promises, “I make all things new!”

The theology of the incarnation itself suggest that, as a result of Christ’s redemptive activity and His own bodily resurrection, those in Christ in the resurrection will be restored to God’s original design for humanity’s bodily state, and so also will the present earth be restored to its original, divinely intended state as the home of God’s resurrected people. Paul himself hints at such a connection between Christ’s resurrection, the resurrection of all those in Christ, and the renewal of the present earth in 1 Corinthians 15.

Pastor Booth adds: Dr. Brighton’s emphasis on restoration is not wrong, but the good news is actually better than this. Jesus doesn’t bring His people back to Eden. He brings us to

the state that Adam and Eve would have been advanced to had they remained faithful during their period of probation. We gain more in Christ than we lost in Adam!

Read or sing Hymn 529 Lead Me Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness

Friday (9/25) Read and discuss Psalm 45

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.
Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!

In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!

Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,
and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him.
The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people.

All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.
In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind her.
With joy and gladness they are led along

as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.
I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

This [Psalm] describes a royal wedding. The king is humble yet majestic, gracious yet terrible, but the language runs to shocking extremes. In verses 6-7 the king is called God. The book of Hebrews (1:8-9) says this is Christ Himself, the ultimate King, infinitely high yet humble. And in verse 7 we have a glimpse of the ascension, when Jesus, after accomplishing our salvation, is given the throne of the world by the Father, to rule and direct all things until evil and suffering are destroyed. We should be as smitten with His beauty as a new spouse – for that is what we are.

The bride is led to the king. If the king is Jesus, we are His spouse. He is enthralled with us, but Ephesians 5:25-27 teaches that He doesn't love us because we are lovely but in or to make us so, by grace. On the last day we will be united with Him, as will all others, in love forever. Christian marriages can display a small bit of the joy that awaits us in heaven. But idolatry is a temptation. We must let our marriages reveal Christ, not replace Christ. And if we are not married but wish to be, we should remember that we already have the only spousal love that will truly fulfill.

Read or sing Hymn 277 Before the Throne of God Above

Saturday (9/26) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 2:12–36

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

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with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.” So then they would return to their home.

Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

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And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.”’” (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

A famous example of God’s honoring the honorable is that of Eric Liddell, the Scottish Olympian who won a gold medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

Liddell was born and raised in China as the son of Christian missionaries. Returning to Scotland in his adolescence, he emerged as one of the finest runners Britain ever produced, at a time when British national pride greatly coveted Olympic glory. Liddell was a favorite to win the 100-meter race. But a problem emerged as he learned that the championship race would be held on a Sunday. Liddell was convinced by Scripture that he should not compete in a race on the Lord's Day, so he refused to participate. Denounced by newspapers as a traitor, and personally pressured by the Prince of Wales to compromise his principles, Liddell held firm, determined to honor the LORD above his personal well-being and even before his country.

A compromise was reached in which Liddell would bypass the 100 meters and compete instead in the 400 meters, one of the few races with no heats on Sunday. Liddell had not trained for this event, yet he would run it as his sole opportunity to win at the Olympics. As he prepared that morning, a member of the British training staff approached Liddell and handed him a note. Eric opened the piece of paper on the track before the race. On it were written the words from 1 Samuel 2:30: "He who honors Me, I will honor." With the piece of paper balled in his hand, Liddell ran the race, not only winning the gold medal but shattering the world record.

Britain went wild with adulation for Liddell, but instead of cashing in on his fame, he fulfilled a commitment to return to China as a missionary. When he departed from Scotland, the crowd seeing him off was so large that more than a thousand people were unable to be admitted to his farewell. Twenty years later, Liddell was still honoring the LORD in China when he died valiantly in a Japanese internment camp shortly before the end of World War II. At the end of the movie made in Liddell's honor, *Chariots of Fire*, the screen bore these words: "Eric Liddell, missionary, died in occupied China at the end of World War II. All of Scotland mourned." Liddell had honored God behind the scenes and on the international stage, and God honored his name before angels and men.

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