

The Season of Easter

*Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version[®]
following the Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal 3-Year Lectionary, Year A*

Revised March 2, 2017

The Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter Dawn)

*Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
Evangelical Heritage Version®*

First Lesson

Isaiah 12:1-6

In that day you will say,

“I will give thanks to you, LORD,
for though you were angry with me,
your anger has turned away,
and you comfort me.”

²Surely God is my salvation.

I will trust and will not be afraid;
for the LORD Yahweh is my strength and song,
and he has become my salvation.”

³Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

⁴In that day you will say:

“Give thanks to the LORD! Proclaim his name.

Declare his deeds among the peoples.

Proclaim that his name is exalted!

⁵Sing to the LORD, for he has done amazing things!

Let this be known in all the earth!

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, daughter of Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel is great among you!”

Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

⁵¹Look, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴But once this perishable body has put on imperishability, and this mortal body has put on immortality, then what is written will be fulfilled:

Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵Death, where is your sting?

Grave, where is your victory?

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she left and ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she told them, “and we don’t know where they put him!”

³So Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. ⁵Bending over, he saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter, who was following him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there. ⁷The cloth that had been on Jesus’ head was not lying with the linen cloths, but was folded up in a separate place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who arrived at the tomb first, also entered. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.)

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she bent over, looking into the tomb. ¹²She saw two angels in white clothes sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She told them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have laid him.”

¹⁴After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?”

Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, “Sir, if you carried him off, tell me where you laid him, and I will get him.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned and replied in Aramaic, “*Rabboni!*” (which means, “Teacher”).

¹⁷Jesus told her, “Do not continue to cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father—to my God and your God.’”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” She also told them the things he said to her.

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The Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter Day)

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First Lesson

Jonah 2:2-9

²He said:

“In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.

From the belly of the grave I cried out;
you heard my voice.

³You threw me into the depths,
into the heart of the seas.

The currents surrounded me.

All your breakers and your waves swept over me.

⁴I said, ‘I have been driven away from your sight;
yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’

⁵Waters encompassed me to the point of death.

The deep surrounded me.

Seaweed was wrapped around my head.

⁶To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth with its bars was around me forever.

But you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

⁷When my life was ebbing away, I remembered the LORD.

My prayer came to you, to your holy temple.

⁸Those who cling to worthless idols forsake the mercy that could be theirs.

⁹But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will indeed sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed, I will indeed repay.

Salvation belongs to the LORD.”

Second Lesson

Colossians 3:1-4

Therefore, because you were raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Gospel

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²Suddenly, there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came

down from heaven, and going to the tomb, he rolled away the stone and was sitting on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴The guards were so terrified of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here. He has risen, just as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷Go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead! And look, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.’ See, I have told you!”

⁸They hurried away from the tomb, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!”

They approached, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go, tell my brothers that they should go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

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The Second Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them:

²²“Men of Israel, hear these words! Jesus the Nazarene was a man recommended to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know.

²³This man, who was handed over by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, you killed by having lawless men nail him to a cross. ²⁴He is the one God raised up by freeing him from the agony of death, because death was not able to hold him in its grip.

²⁵“Indeed, David says concerning him:

I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

²⁶Therefore my heart was glad,

and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will rest in hope,

²⁷because you will not abandon my life to the grave,

nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence.

²⁹“Gentlemen, brothers, I can speak confidently to you about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹he saw what was coming and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, saying that he was neither abandoned to the grave nor did his flesh see decay.

³²“This Jesus is the one God has raised up. We are all witnesses of that.

Second Lesson

1 Peter 1:3-9

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵Through faith you are being protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

⁶Because of this you rejoice very much, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various kinds of trials ⁷so that the proven character of your faith—which is more valuable than gold, which passes away even though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet by believing in him, you are filled with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you.” ²²After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³Whenever you forgive people’s sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴But Thomas, one of the Twelve, the one called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples kept telling him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶After eight days, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Take your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue to doubt, but believe.”

²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, did many other miraculous signs that are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

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The Third Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 2:14a, 36-47

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them:

³⁶“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷Now when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Gentlemen, brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸Peter answered them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰He testified solemnly with many other words and was appealing to them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added.

⁴²They continued to hold firmly to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. ⁴³Awe came over every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They were selling their possessions and property and were distributing the proceeds according to what anyone needed.

⁴⁶Day after day, with one mind, they were devoted to meeting in the temple area, as they continued to break bread in their homes. They shared their food with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷as they continued praising God and being viewed favorably by all the people. Day after day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Second Lesson

1 Peter 1:17-21

¹⁷If you call on the Father who judges impartially, according to the work of each person, conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence, ¹⁸because you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was chosen before the foundation of the world but revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Gospel

Luke 24:13-35

¹³Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” Saddened, they stopped.

¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹“What things?” he asked them.

They replied, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. ²¹But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel. Not only that, but besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. ²³When they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb. They found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.”

²⁵He said to them, “How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going to travel farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over.”

So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. ³¹Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

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The Fourth Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 6:1-9, 7:2a, 51-60

In those days, as the number of disciples was increasing, a complaint arose from the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

²So the Twelve called together the whole group of disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers, carefully select from among you seven men with good reputations, who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of this service. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

⁵This proposal pleased the entire group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte from Antioch.

⁶They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷The word of God kept on spreading, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly. Also a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹Some men who were from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia) rose up and disputed with Stephen.

^{7:2}Stephen said, “Gentlemen, brothers and fathers, listen!

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit! You are doing just what your fathers did. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who prophesied the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers— ⁵³you who received the law as transmitted by angels, but did not keep it.”

⁵⁴When they heard these things, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed up into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶He said, “Look, I see heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷But they screamed at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and rushed at him with one purpose in mind. ⁵⁸They threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” ⁶⁰Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” After he said this, he fell asleep.

Second Lesson

1 Peter 2:19-25

¹⁹For this is favorable: if a person endures sorrows while suffering unjustly because he is conscious of God. ²⁰For what credit is it to you if you receive a beating for sinning and patiently endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is favorable with God.

²¹Indeed, you were called to do this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you would follow in his steps. ²²He did not commit a sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. ²³When he was insulted, he did not insult in return. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself carried our sins in his body on the tree so that we would be dead to sins and alive to righteousness. By his wounds you were healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but you are now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Gospel

John 10:1-10

“Amen, Amen,^a I tell you: Anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the door, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The doorkeeper opens the door for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own sheep, he walks ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will never follow a stranger, but will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this illustration in speaking to the people, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷So Jesus said again, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: I am the door for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

¹⁰“A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

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^a Usually, people say Amen at the end of a prayer. But Jesus used this Hebrew word at the beginning of a statement, which was unique. The inspired writer simply transliterated the Hebrew word that Jesus spoke, instead of using a Greek term. This translation does the same in English. The basic meaning is I solemnly tell you the truth. For more information about this, see FAQ #1 at wartburgproject.org/faqs

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 17:1-12

When Paul and Silas had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As was his custom, Paul went to the Jews, and on three Sabbath days he led them in a discussion from the Scriptures, ³explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. He also said, “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” ⁴Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great number of God-fearing Greeks and more than a few of the prominent women.

⁵But the Jews became jealous and gathered from the marketplace some wicked men, who formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house and searched for Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the mob. ⁶When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These men, who have stirred up trouble all over the world, have come here too, ⁷and Jason has welcomed them as guests! They are all acting contrary to Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, Jesus!” ⁸The crowd and the city officials were stirred up when they heard these things. ⁹They took a security bond from Jason and the others and then let them go.

¹⁰That same night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians. They received the word very eagerly and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these things were so.

¹²Many of them believed, along with more than a few prominent Greek women and men.

Second Lesson

1 Peter 2:4-10

⁴As you come to him, the Living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious, ⁵you also, like living stones, are being built as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, in order to bring spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it says in Scripture:

See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who believes in him will certainly not be put to shame.

⁷Therefore, for you who believe, this is an honor. But for those who do not believe:

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,
⁸and,
a stone over which they stumble
and a rock over which they fall.

Because they continue to disobey the word, they stumble over it. And that is the consequence appointed for them.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the people who are God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰At one time you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. At one time you were not shown mercy, but now you have been shown mercy.

Gospel

John 14:1-12

"Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. ⁴You know where I am going, and you know the way."

⁵"Lord, we don't know where you are going," Thomas replied, "so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. ⁷If you know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸"Lord," said Philip, "show us the Father, and that is enough for us."

⁹"Have I been with you so long," Jesus answered, "and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves.

¹²"Amen, Amen,"^a I tell you: The one who believes in me will do the works that I am doing. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

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The Sixth Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 17:22-31

²²Then Paul stood up in front of the council of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. ²³For as I was walking around and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which had been inscribed, ‘To an unknown god.’ Now what you worship as unknown—this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made with hands. ²⁵Neither is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives all people life and breath and everything they have. ²⁶From one man, he made every nation of mankind to live over the entire face of the earth. He determined the appointed times and the boundaries where they would live. ²⁷He did this so they would seek God and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘Indeed, we are also his offspring.’

²⁹“Therefore, since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and planning. ³⁰Although God overlooked the times of ignorance, he is now commanding all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he appointed. He provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

Second Lesson

1 Peter 3:15-22

¹⁵But regard the Lord, the Christ, as holy in your hearts. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶But speak with gentleness and respect, while maintaining a clear conscience, so that those who attack your good way of life in Christ may be put to shame because they slandered you as evildoers.

¹⁷Indeed, it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, ¹⁸because Christ also suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in flesh but was made alive in spirit, ¹⁹in which he also went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison. ²⁰These spirits disobeyed long ago, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In this ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. ²¹And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body but the guarantee of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. ²²He went to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel

John 14:15-21

¹⁵“If you love me, hold on to my commands. ¹⁶I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. ¹⁷He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹The one who has my commands and holds on to them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him.”

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The Ascension of Our Lord

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First Lesson

Acts 1:1-11

I wrote my first book, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began doing and teaching ²until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After he had suffered, he presented himself alive to the apostles with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and told them things about the kingdom of God.

⁴Once, when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for what the Father promised, which you heard from me. ⁵For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they were together with him, they asked, “Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹After he said these things, he was taken up while they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently into the sky as he went away. Suddenly, two men in white clothes stood beside them. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Second Lesson

Ephesians 1:16-23

¹⁶I never stop giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowing Christ fully. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know the hope to which he has called you, just how rich his glorious inheritance among the saints is, ¹⁹and just how surpassingly great his power is for us who believe. ²⁰It is as great as the working of his mighty strength, which God worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²God also placed all things under his feet and made him head over everything for the church. ²³The church is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Gospel

Luke 24:44-53

⁴⁴He said to them, “These are my words, which I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹And while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²So they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³They were continually in the temple courts, praising and blessing God. Amen.

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The Seventh Sunday of Easter

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First Lesson

Acts 1:1-14

I wrote my first book, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began doing and teaching ²until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After he had suffered, he presented himself alive to the apostles with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and told them things about the kingdom of God.

⁴Once, when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for what the Father promised, which you heard from me. ⁵For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they were together with him, they asked, “Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹After he said these things, he was taken up while they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently into the sky as he went away. Suddenly, two men in white clothes stood beside them. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

¹³When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. Peter and John were there, also James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All of them kept praying together with one mind, along with the women, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Second Lesson

1 Peter 4:12-17, 5:6-11

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised by the fiery trial that is happening among you to test you, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead rejoice whenever you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴If you are insulted in connection with the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or as a meddler. ¹⁶But if you suffer for being a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God in connection with this name. ¹⁷For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. Now if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who disobey the gospel of God?

^{5,6}Therefore humble yourselves under God's powerful hand so that he may lift you up at the appointed time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him by being firm in the faith. You know that the same kinds of sufferings are being laid on your brotherhood all over the world.

¹⁰After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you. ¹¹To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 17:1-11a

After Jesus had spoken these things, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you. ²For you gave him authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent. ⁴I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵Now, Father, glorify me at your own side with the glory I had at your side before the world existed.

⁶"I revealed your name to the men you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me, and they have held on to your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me, and they received them. They learned the truth that I came from you. They believed that you sent me.

⁹"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All that is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine. And I am glorified in them. ¹¹I am no longer going to be in the world, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you."

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The Coming of the Holy Spirit: The Day of Pentecost

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First Lesson

Joel 2:28-29

²⁸After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.

Your old men will dream dreams.

Your young men will see visions.

²⁹Even on the male servants and the female servants,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Second Lesson

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently.

⁵Now there were godly Jewish men from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶When this sound was heard, a crowd came together and was confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷They were completely baffled and said to each other, “Look, are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them speaking in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, and of Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring in our own languages the wonderful works of God.” ¹²They were all amazed and perplexed. They kept saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³But others mocked them and said, “They are full of new wine.”

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them: “Men of Judea, and all you residents of Jerusalem, understand this, and listen closely to my words. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶On the contrary, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷This is what God says will happen in the last days:

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions.

Your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

¹⁹I will show wonders in the sky above,
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and a rising cloud of smoke.

²⁰The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹And this will happen: Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Gospel

John 16:5-11

⁵“But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶Yet because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth: It is good for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment: ⁹about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; ¹¹about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.”

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