

The Season of Epiphany

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

Revised January 23, 2017

The Epiphany of our Lord

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
Evangelical Heritage Version®

First Lesson

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD is dawning upon you.
²Look, the darkness covers the earth,
and deep darkness covers the peoples,
but the LORD will dawn upon you,
and his glory will be seen over you.
³Nations will walk to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
⁴Look up. Look all around and see!
All of them are gathered. They come to you.
Your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters will be carried on the hip.
⁵Then you will look and be radiant.
Your heart will race with excitement and burst with joy.
For the great riches of the sea will be delivered to you.
The wealth of the nations will come to you.
⁶Caravans of camels will cover your land,
young camels from Midian and Ephah.
All of them from Sheba will come.
They will carry gold and incense,
and they will announce the good news of the LORD's praises.

Second Lesson

Ephesians 3:2-12

²Surely you have heard of the administration of God's grace given to me for you, ³namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation (as I have already written briefly). ⁴When you read this, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. ⁵This mystery was not made known to people in past generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This mystery is that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and people who also share in the promise through the gospel.

⁷I became a servant of this gospel, in keeping with the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸To me—even though I am the very least of all the saints—was given this grace: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ⁹and to enlighten everyone about the administration of this mystery. In past ages this mystery remained hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰He did this so that, through the church, the multifaceted wisdom of God in the heavenly

places might now be made known to the rulers and authorities. ¹¹This was done according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him we can freely approach God with confidence through faith in him.

Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ²“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He gathered together all the people’s chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet:

⁶You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel.”

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.”

⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. ¹¹After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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The First Sunday after the Epiphany—The Baptism of our Lord

*Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

Isaiah 42:1-7

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight.
I am placing my Spirit upon him.
He will bring forth the verdict for the nations.
²He will not cry out.
He will not raise his voice.
He will not make his voice heard in the street.
³A bent reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out.
He will faithfully bring forth the verdict.
⁴He will not grow dim, and he will not be crushed
until he establishes the verdict on the earth.
The coastlands will wait for his teaching.
⁵This is what the true God says, the LORD,
who creates the heavens and stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth
and everything that comes out of it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and life to those who walk on it.
⁶“I am the LORD.
I am calling you in righteousness.
I will grasp your hand,
and I will guard you.
I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people,
to be a light for the nations,
⁷to open blind eyes,
to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon
and to bring those who live in darkness out of prison.

Second Lesson

Acts 10:34-38

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: “Now I really am beginning to understand that God does not show favoritism, ³⁵but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶He sent his word to the people of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

³⁷“You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached. ³⁸God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, because God was with him.

Gospel

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John at the Jordan. ¹⁴But John tried to stop him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?”

¹⁵But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, because it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John let him. ¹⁶After Jesus was baptized, he immediately went up out of the water. Suddenly, the heavens were opened for him! He saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove and landing on him, ¹⁷and a voice out of the heavens said, “This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him.”

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The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

Isaiah 49:1-7

Listen to me, you coastlands.

Pay attention, you far away peoples!

The LORD called me from the womb.

When I was inside my mother he mentioned my name.

²He made my mouth like a sharpened sword.

He hid me in the shadow of his hand.

He made me a polished arrow.

He concealed me in his quiver.

³He said to me, “You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my glory.”

⁴But I myself said, “I have labored in vain.

I spent my strength and got nothing at all.

Yet my verdict is with the LORD,
and my reward is with my God.”

⁵But now the LORD

who formed me from the womb to be his servant,

to turn Jacob back to him,

so that Israel might be gathered to him,

so that I will be honored in the eyes of the LORD,

and my God has become my strength—

⁶the LORD said,

“It is too small a thing that you should be my servant

to raise up the tribes of Jacob

and to restore the ones I have kept in Israel,

so I will appoint you to be a light for the nations

so that my salvation may be known to the end of the earth.”

⁷This is what the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, its Holy One,

says to the one deeply despised,

to one abhorred by the nation,

to the servant of rulers:

“Kings will see and stand up.

Public officials will see,

and they will bow down,

because of the LORD, who is faithful,

because of the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

Second Lesson

Acts 13:38-49

³⁸“So, gentlemen, brothers, let it be known to you that through this Jesus forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you, also forgiveness from everything from which you could not be justified through the law of Moses. ³⁹In this Jesus, everyone who believes is justified. ⁴⁰So watch out that what is said in the prophets does not happen to you:

⁴¹Look, you scoffers,
be amazed and perish!
For I am going to do something in your days,
something you would never believe,
even if someone were to explain it to you.”

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving, the people kept begging them to speak again on this same subject on the next Sabbath. ⁴³When the meeting of the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with envy and began to contradict what Paul was saying by slandering him.

⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas responded fearlessly, “It was necessary that God's word be spoken to you first. But since you reject it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, look: We are now turning to the Gentiles! ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has instructed us:

I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.”

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they were rejoicing and praising the word of the Lord. All who had been appointed for eternal life believed.

⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was being carried through the whole region.

Gospel

John 1:29-41

²⁹The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know who he was, but I came baptizing with water so that he would be revealed to Israel.”

³²John also testified, “I saw the Spirit descend like a dove from heaven and remain on him. ³³I myself did not recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴I saw this myself and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

³⁵The next day, John was standing there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When John saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look! The Lamb of God!” ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸When Jesus turned around and saw them following him, he asked, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹He told them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying. They stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which is translated “the Christ”).

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The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

Isaiah 8:19-9:2

¹⁹When they tell you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists, who whisper and mutter,” shouldn’t a people seek their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰Turn to the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, there will be no dawn for them. ²¹They will pass through the land, distressed and starving, but when this happens and they are starving, they will be frustrated, and they will curse their king and their God. They will turn their faces upward, ²²and they will look down to the ground, but listen: They will see only distress, darkness, and the gloom that brings anguish. They will be banished into thick darkness.

^{9:1}On the other hand, there will be no more gloom for the one who was in anguish. In the former time, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will cause it to be glorious, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

Second Lesson

1 John 2:3-11

³This is how we know that we have known him: if we keep his commands. ⁴The one who says, “I know him,” but does not keep his commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵If anyone keeps God’s word, the love of God is truly made complete in him. This is how we know that we are in him: ⁶The one who says he remains in him should walk as Jesus walked.

⁷Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one that you have had since the beginning. The old command is the message you heard. ⁸At the same time, the command I am writing is new—it is true in Jesus and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. ⁹The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and nothing causes him to stumble. ¹¹The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Gospel

Matthew 4:12-23

¹²When Jesus heard that John was put in prison, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴He did this to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,

¹⁶the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
and on those dwelling in the region and the shadow of death a light has dawned.

¹⁷From that time, Jesus began to preach: “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near.”

¹⁸As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

²⁰They immediately left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

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First Lesson

Daniel 3:13-27

¹³In a furious rage Nebuchadnezzar said to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then these men were brought before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and that you do not worship the golden statue that I set up? ¹⁵Now, if you are ready, at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, harp, triangular harp, drum, and all kinds of musical instruments, you must fall down and worship the statue I made. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace. What god will be able to save you from my hands?”

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “We have no need to answer you about this matter. ¹⁷Since our God whom we serve exists, he is able to save us from the blazing fiery furnace. So he may save us from your hand, Your Majesty. ¹⁸But if he does not, you should know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods, and we will not worship the statue of gold that you set up.”

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and the expression on his face changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He said to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was usually heated. ²⁰And he ordered some men, soldiers from his army, to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in order to throw them into the blazing fiery furnace. ²¹Then these men were bound in their robes, their pants, their turbans, and their clothes, and they were thrown into the middle of the blazing fiery furnace. ²²Because the king’s order was urgent and the furnace was extremely hot, those men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—the intense heat of the fire killed them. ²³But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who had been bound, fell into the blazing fiery furnace.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and immediately stood up. He said to his counselors, “Didn’t we throw three men who had been bound into the middle of the fire.

They answered the king, “Certainly, Your Majesty.”

²⁵He said, “Look! I see four men unbound and walking around in the middle of the fire unharmed. What is more, the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the door of the blazing fiery furnace. He said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out!”

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the middle of the furnace. ²⁷The satraps, the prefects, and the governors, and the royal counselors gathered and looked at these men. The fire had no power over their bodies. The hair on their head was not singed, their robes were not damaged, and the smell of fire had not stuck to them.

Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶For example, consider your call, brothers. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were powerful, and not many were born with high status. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are strong, ²⁸and God chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to do away with the things that are, ²⁹so that no one may boast before God. ³⁰But because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us the wisdom from God, namely, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. ³¹God did this so that, just as it is written, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them. He said these things:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
because they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the gentle,
because they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
because they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful,
because they will receive mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
because they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
because they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. In fact, that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

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The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

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First Lesson

Joshua 24:14-24

¹⁴Joshua said, “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly and faithfully. Remove the gods that your fathers served in the region across the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵But if you see no benefit in serving the LORD, then choose for yourselves today whomever you will serve—whether the gods that your fathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household—we will serve the LORD!”

¹⁶The people responded by saying, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD in order to serve other gods! ¹⁷For the LORD our God, he is the one who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, where we were slaves. He is the one who performed before our eyes these great signs and protected us on the whole journey that we made and among all the peoples through whom we passed. ¹⁸The LORD drove out of our presence all the peoples and the Amorites who were living in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God!”

¹⁹But Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰If you forsake the LORD and you serve foreign gods, then he will turn and cause disaster for you, and he will put an end to you after he has done good for you.”

²¹But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will most certainly serve the LORD!”

²²So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves in order to serve him.”

The people said, “We are witnesses!”

²³Joshua said, “Now, therefore, remove the foreign gods that are among you, and turn your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

²⁴The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God, and we will listen to his voice.”

Second Lesson

1 Peter 2:9-12

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.

¹¹Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and temporary residents in the world, to abstain from the desires of the sinful flesh, which war against your soul. ¹²Live an honorable life among the Gentiles so that even though they slander you as evildoers, when they observe your noble deeds, they may glorify God on the day he visits us.

Gospel

Matthew 5:13-20

¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its flavor, how will it become salty again? Then it is no good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶In the same way let your light shine in people’s presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸Amen^a I tell you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter, or even part of a letter, will in any way pass away from the Law until everything is fulfilled. ¹⁹So whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰Indeed I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and experts in the law, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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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 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 26-27

Springtime arrived, the time when kings go out to war. David sent Joab out with his officers and with all Israel. They ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem.

²One evening David had gotten up from upon his couch and was walking on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very good-looking. ³David sent to inquire about the woman, and he was told, “Isn’t this Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

⁴David sent messengers and took her. She came to him, and he lay down with her. (She had been purifying herself from her menstrual uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.

⁵The woman became pregnant. So she sent a message to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”

⁶David sent a message to Joab, “Send Uriah the Hittite to me.” So Joab sent Uriah to David, ⁷and Uriah came to him.

David asked how Joab and the troops were doing, and how the war effort was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.”

When Uriah went out from the palace, the king sent a gift to him. ⁹But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all the servants of his master. He did not go down to his own house.

¹⁰David was informed, “Uriah has not gone down to his house.” So David said to Uriah, “Haven’t you come a long distance? Why didn’t you go down to your house?”

¹¹Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are living in shelters, and my master Joab and the servants of my master are camped in the open field. Should I go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie down with my wife? As surely as you are alive, I will not do such a thing.”

¹²Then David said to Uriah, “Stay here today also. Tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³David summoned him, and he ate as his guest, and David got him drunk. But in the evening he went and slept on his mat where the servants of his master were. He did not go to his own house.

¹⁴In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and he sent it in the hands of Uriah. ¹⁵In the letter he wrote, “Station Uriah in a dangerous spot on the front lines. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.”

¹⁶So when Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew that the enemy’s strongest warriors were. ¹⁷The men of the city came out and fought against Joab and some of the troops of David fell. And Uriah the Hittite also died...

²⁶The wife of Uriah the Hittite heard that her husband was dead. So she mourned for her husband. ²⁷When her mourning was completed, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife. She gave birth to a son for him. But what David had done was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

Second Lesson

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Therefore, beyond this, brothers, just as you received instruction from us about how you are to walk so as to please God (as indeed you are doing), we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that you do so even more. ²To be sure, you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³Indeed, this is God's will: that you be sanctified, namely, that you keep yourselves away from sexual immorality. ⁴He wants each of you to learn to obtain a wife for yourself in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵not in lustful passion like the heathen, who do not know God. ⁶No one is to overstep and take advantage of his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we said previously and solemnly testified to it. ⁷For God did not call us for uncleanness, but in sanctification. ⁸Consequently, whoever rejects this is not rejecting a man, but the God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

⁹Concerning brotherly love, there is no need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God, with the result that you love one another. ¹⁰In fact, you are doing so toward all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers, to do this even more, ¹¹and to make it your ambition to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, just as we instructed you. ¹²Do this so that you are conducting yourselves decently toward outsiders and are not lacking anything.

Gospel

Matthew 5:21-37

²¹"You have heard that it was said to people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, '*Raca*,' will have to answer to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of hell fire.

²³"So if you are about to offer your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother. Then come and offer your gift.

²⁵"If someone accuses you, reach an agreement with him quickly, while you are with him on the way. Otherwise your accuser may bring you to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Amen^a I tell you: You will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' ²⁸but I tell you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to fall into sin, pluck it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to fall into sin, cut it off and throw it away from you. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

^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

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to be regarded as an adulteress. And whoever marries the divorced woman is regarded as an adulterer.

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to people long ago, ‘Do not break your oaths, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I tell you, do not swear at all: not by heaven, because it is God’s throne; ³⁵and not by earth, because it is his footstool; and not by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your own head, since you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Instead, let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes,’ or ‘No, no.’ Whatever goes beyond these is from the Evil One.

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The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

1 Samuel 26:(1-6) 7-25

The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah and said, “You should know that David is hiding at the Hill of Hakilah, which is near the badlands.”

²So Saul set out and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph with three thousand men, who were hand-picked from Israel, to search for David in the Wilderness of Ziph. ³Saul set up camp near the road at the Hill of Hakilah, which is near the badlands. David, however, stayed in the wilderness. When he heard that Saul had come into the wilderness after him, ⁴David sent out scouts, who confirmed that Saul had come.

⁵Then David moved out and came to the place where Saul had set up camp. David saw where Saul lay sleeping near Abner son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was sleeping inside the defensive perimeter of the camp, and the rest of the men were camped around him.

⁶Then David responded to the situation by saying to Ahimelek the Hittite and to Abishai son of Zeruah, the brother of Joab, “Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?”

Abishai said, “I will go down with you.”

⁷So during the night David and Abishai went through the people in the camp, and they saw that Saul lay sleeping inside the defensive perimeter of the camp, with his spear stuck into the ground beside his head. Abner and the rest of the men were lying all around him.

⁸Then Abishai said to David, “God has delivered your enemy into your hand today. Please let me strike him and pin him to the ground with my spear. One time, that’s all I’ll need. I won’t need to strike him a second time.”

⁹But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD’s anointed and be guiltless?” ¹⁰David continued, “As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come and he will die, or he will go down into battle and be swept away. ¹¹May I be cursed if I stretch out my hand against the LORD’s anointed. Now go and take the spear that is beside his head and the jar of water, and we will go.”

¹²So David took the spear and the jar of water that were next to Saul’s head, and they left. No one saw them. No one knew anything. And no one woke up. They were all sound asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

¹³Then David moved over across from the camp and stood on the top of the mountain some distance away. There was a lot of space between them. ¹⁴Then David shouted to the people and to Abner son of Ner, “Abner, are you going to answer?”

Abner responded, “Who are you to be shouting at the king?”

¹⁵David said to Abner, “Aren’t you a man? Who is like you in Israel? So why haven’t you kept watch over your lord, the king? For someone came into the camp to destroy your lord, the king.

¹⁶This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because all of you

have not kept watch over your master, the LORD's anointed. Now look around! Where are the king's spear and the jar of water that was next to his head?"

¹⁷Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, David, my son?"

David said, "It is my voice, my lord, the king." ¹⁸He added, "Why does my lord pursue his servant? What have I done? What evil is there in my hand? ¹⁹So please, let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant. If it is the LORD who has stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering. But if it is other people, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out today so that I cannot remain in my share of the LORD's inheritance. They keep saying, 'Go, serve other gods!' ²⁰Now therefore, do not let my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD, for the king of Israel has come out searching for a flea, or like someone who hunts for a partridge in the mountains."

²¹Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son, for I will not harm you anymore, because my life was precious in your eyes today. I have acted like a fool and have made a terrible mistake."

²²David responded, "Look, here is your spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and get it. ²³May the LORD deal with every man according to his righteousness and his faithfulness, because the LORD handed you over to me today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. ²⁴Just as your life was precious in my eyes today, so let my life be precious in the LORD's eyes, and let him deliver me from all persecution."

²⁵Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, David my son. You will certainly accomplish great things, and you will certainly endure."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his own place.

Second Lesson

Romans 12:9-21

⁹Do not just pretend to love others. Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another with brotherly love. Think of others as deserving more honor than yourselves. ¹¹Do not be lagging behind in zeal, but be fervent in spirit, as you continue to serve the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope. Endure trials patiently. Persist in prayer. ¹³Share with the saints who are in need. Be quick to welcome strangers as guests.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping. ¹⁶Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves.

¹⁷Do not pay anyone back evil for evil. Focus on those things that everyone considers noble. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, maintain peace with everyone. ¹⁹Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰But:

If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him a drink.

For by doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Gospel

Matthew 5:38-48

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evildoer. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you to take away your shirt, give him your coat too. ⁴¹Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶Indeed if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even tax collectors do that, don’t they? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the unbelievers do that? ⁴⁸So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

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The Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany

Christian Worship: Supplement 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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First Lesson

Genesis 32:6-12

⁶The messengers returned to Jacob and reported, “We came to your brother Esau. Now he is coming to meet you, and he has four hundred men with him.”

⁷So Jacob was terrified and very distressed. He divided the people who were with him, as well as the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two camps. ⁸He said, “If Esau comes to one camp and strikes it, then the other camp will escape.” ⁹Jacob said, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD, who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will do good for you,’ ¹⁰I am not worthy of even a bit of all the mercy and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for I crossed over this Jordan with just my staff, and now I have grown into two camps. ¹¹Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid that he will come and strike me and the mothers, as well as the children. ¹²You said, ‘I will surely do good for you and make your descendants like the grains of sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because there are so many.’”

Second Lesson

Philippians 4:8-13 (14-20)

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if anything is excellent, and if anything is praiseworthy, think about these things. ⁹The things that you learned, received, heard, and saw in me: Keep doing these things. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I rejoice greatly in the Lord now that you have revived your concern for me once again. Actually, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I lack anything; in fact, I have learned to be content in any circumstances in which I find myself. ¹²I know what it is to live in humble circumstances, and I know what it is to have more than enough. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, while being full or hungry, while having plenty or not enough. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

¹⁴Nevertheless, you did well by becoming partners with me in my affliction.

¹⁵You Philippians know that in the beginning of your experience with the gospel, when I left Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. ¹⁶Even while I was in Thessalonica, you sent help more than once for my needs. ¹⁷Not that I am seeking a gift, but I am seeking the fruit that adds to your account. ¹⁸I have been paid in full, and I have more than enough. I am fully supplied since I’ve received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, a sweet-smelling fragrance, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will fully supply your every need, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever! Amen.

Gospel

Matthew 6:24-34

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and *mammon*.”

²⁵“For this reason I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

²⁷“Which of you can add a single moment to his lifespan by worrying? ²⁸Why do you worry about clothing? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, ²⁹but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not clothe you even more, you of little faith?”

³¹“So do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For the unbelievers chase after all these things. Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

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The Last Sunday after the Epiphany: The Transfiguration of Our Lord

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First Lesson

Exodus 24:12, 15-18

¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands that I have written, so that you can teach them.”

¹⁵Moses went up onto the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The Glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses out of the middle of the cloud. ¹⁷The appearance of the Glory of the LORD looked like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered into the middle of the cloud and climbed up the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Second Lesson

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶To be sure, we were not following cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the powerful appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when the voice came to him from within the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” ¹⁸We heard this voice, which came out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹We also have the completely reliable prophetic word. You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts, ²⁰since we know this above all else: No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James; and he led them up onto a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothing became as white as the light. ³Just then, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you want, I will make three shelters here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them. Just then, a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.”

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell face down and were terrified. ⁷Jesus approached and as he touched them, he said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” ⁸When they opened their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Do not tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

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