

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**  
Week 5

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<b>Monday</b>	Exodus 22-24	Psalm 24	Matthew 25
<b>Tuesday</b>	Exodus 25-27	Psalm 25	Matthew 26
<b>Wednesday</b>	Exodus 28-30	Psalm 26	Matthew 27
<b>Thursday</b>	Exodus 31-33	Psalm 27	Matthew 28
<b>Friday</b>	Exodus 34-36	Psalm 28	Mark 1
<b>Saturday</b>	Exodus 37-39	Psalm 29	Mark 2

**Sunday:** *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under “Adult Education, Bible Study”.*

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**The Exodus readings:**

1. In chs. 22-23 the “Covenant Code” which began in ch. 20 continues, with ch. 24 describing the ratification of the covenant.
  - a. The people of Israel ratify the covenant with the words, “All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do” (Exod. 24.3).
    - i. Compare these words to those of the people the *next time* they speak in Exodus, at 32.1!
2. In chs. 25-31 detailed instructions are given concerning the building and maintenance of a dwelling for God (the Ark of the Covenant, within a tent or “tabernacle”, etc.)
  - a. The physical presence of God is mediated by priests (ch. 29), but the people participate through giving (ch. 25).
    - i. In comparable ancient Near Eastern societies, the king built the temple. In Israel, the people do, as a free will offering.
    - ii. The Ark was a box measuring 45” x 27” x 27”, with two rings on each side for carrying poles. It contained the tablets of the Law, as received by Moses on Mt. Sinai.
      1. The top surface of the Ark was considered to be a place for encounter between humans and God, and is subsequently referred to as the “mercy seat”.
  - b. Chs. 30 and 31 are in effect an appendix concerning ritual practices.
    - i. All of these sections are ascribed to the P source, either as an author or editor.
      1. The P source is focused on ritual, on what priests do.
3. In ch. 31 Moses receives the tablets containing the Law from God, while meeting upon Mt. Sinai. Immediately following this, in ch. 32, the people are apostate (they renounce the LORD), and ask that Aaron make “gods” for them.
  - a. Note that when the people renounce the LORD, He refers to them as ‘your’ [Moses’s] people (32.7).
    - i. In intervening, Moses reminds God that the people are His [God’s] (32.11, *ff.*)

- ii. Moses intervenes with God, yet Moses destroys the tablets of the Law, and punishes the people.
  1. The people lament when they learn that the LORD is not with them (ch. 33).
    - a. The remainder of Exodus is thought to be more dependent on the J and E sources, instead of P. (*Refer back to Week 1.*)
  2. Now the LORD comes down from the mountain, and meets with Moses in the tent, all in response to Moses' plea.
  3. The covenant is remade (ch. 34).
  4. The people build the dwelling for God.

**The psalms:** *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

1. The psalms encountered this week include:
  - a. 24: A hymn of praise to God as the victorious Creator, including an "entrance liturgy" for use on entering the Temple.
  - b. 25: An individual lament in acrostic form. The major theme of the psalm is the "way" of the LORD.
    - i. In describing the way of God, the psalm is an example of Wisdom literature.
  - c. 26: This psalm is hard to classify. It may be an individual lament, a protestation of innocence by one falsely accused, or a communal hymn for protection.
    - i. The psalm contains parallels to Exod. 30.17-21. Therefore, the speaker may be a priest.
  - d. 27: The combination of a psalm of trust and an individual lament.
    - i. The references to the Temple should be read in light of the references to enemies. The Temple was a place of refuge and sanctuary.
  - e. 28: An individual lament and hymn of thanksgiving. A contrast is drawn between the trusting, joyful heart of the psalmist and the treacherous hearts of his enemies.
  - f. 29: A recitation of God's universal supremacy and rule. God's glory is described in an address to the heavenly court, and the court makes acclamation of God's glory.

### **The Gospel readings:**

#### Matthew:

1. The balance of Matthew's gospel includes Jesus teaching in parables, and His passion and resurrection.
  - a. Ch. 25 concludes a teaching discourse which began in ch. 23.
    - i. The famous parables of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Talents, and the Judgment of the Nations all speak to the reality of judgment for which all must be prepared at all times.
      1. Judgment includes accountability for one's failure to act as well as for positive wrongs (ch. 25).
      2. Properly speaking, the description of the Judgment of the Nations is not a parable, but a teaching which summarizes Jesus' fifth (and final) teaching discourse.
        - a. In His teaching, the Lord engages in what scholars classify as the literary form of "apocalyptic".

- i. *apokalypsis* is the Greek word for “revelation” (as in the title of the last book of the Bible), in the sense of a curtain being pulled aside.
- 2. Ministry and passion are linked. The plot to kill Jesus is described as arising when He “had finished *all* these sayings” (26.1), *i.e.*, at the completion of the entire public ministry of Jesus.
  - a. As the plot hatches, Jesus is anointed. This is a prophecy of His death.
  - b. Jesus is betrayed by a disciple, in direct contrast to the loyal love expressed by the anonymous woman who anoints Him.
- 3. Jesus’ cry at death is quotation from the beginning of Psalm 22. (*See the summary for Week 4, for the discussion of this psalm.*)
  - a. Throughout his passion narrative, Matthew closely follows Mark.
    - i. Matthew adds details *re.* the guard at the tomb, perhaps to defend the Christian witness to the resurrection against claims made at the time of the writing of Matthew that disciples of Jesus had stolen His body.
  - b. Matthew closes His gospel with a unique commissioning scene, which includes the Great Commission (Mtt. 28.19-20) and the explicit naming of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

## Mark

- 1. Mark is considered to be the Gospel first written (perhaps as early as *A.D.* 60; 68–73 likely).
  - a. In Church Tradition, Mark is thought to have relied upon the personal recollections of Peter.
  - b. Mark is often identified with the John Mark of Acts (*e.g.* 12.25) and with the young man who flees naked when Jesus is arrested (Mk. 14.51-52).
  - c. The gospel is considered to be older than Matthew. Much of Matthew and Luke is based on Mark. The latter two were probably not written until *ca. A.D.* 80-90.
- 2. Mark focuses on action. There is no genealogy, no birth narrative. The gospel begins with the proclamation of the kingdom by John the Baptist, and proceeds immediately into Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness and His ministry in Galilee.
  - a. Mark reads, in effect, like a screenplay connected by the word *euthus* (“immediately”).
    - i. It is perhaps useful to think of the compressed nature of Mark’s text as resulting from the intention that it be read aloud all at one session.
      - 1. This understanding goes a long way to explain the suddenness of the ending of the gospel (which most agree originally ended at 16.8).
        - a. The hearer is left hanging. It is now up to the hearer to complete the story in his/her own life!
- 3. The gospel opens with a prologue (1.1-15) in which John proclaims the kingdom, Jesus appears, and He is baptized. He appears as an adult.
  - a. In Mark it is Jesus who hears the Father’s voice at His baptism. It is not heard by others.
    - i. This sets the stage for the so-called “Marcan secret”. Throughout the gospel Jesus enjoins those around Him not to reveal who He is.
- 4. *Immediately*, following the prologue, Jesus’ authority is revealed. The balance of chs. 1 and 2 involve the revelations of His authority in calling disciples, in teaching and in healing.