

***Journeying through the Revised Common Lectionary***  
Readings, Commentary, and Questions for Discussion for July 28, 2019  
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 12



**THE READINGS**

**First Reading: Hosea 1:2-10** *Alternate: Genesis 18:20-32*

<sup>2</sup> When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.”

<sup>3</sup> So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

<sup>4</sup> And the LORD said to him, “Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup> On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”

<sup>6</sup> She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the LORD said to him, “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. <sup>7</sup> But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.”

<sup>8</sup> When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said, “Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God.”

<sup>10</sup> Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.”

*Worth Noting: In the time of Hosea, Israelites had adopted fertility rites from the indigenous Canaanite religion and Gomer (from Hebrew gamar, “to complete”) was not a professional prostitute but a young woman who had participated in these rites. The LORD objected to this practice for, among other things, they relied on the gods Baal and Astarte for offspring rather than the promises of the LORD to Abraham and Sarah, to their offspring and to the Exodus generation that they would be fertile with descendants as numerous as the stars.*

**Psalm 85** *Alternate: Psalm 138*

- <sup>1</sup> LORD, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- <sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you pardoned all their sin.
- <sup>3</sup> You withdrew all your wrath;  
you turned from your hot anger.
- <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our salvation,  
and put away your indignation toward us.
- <sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
- <sup>6</sup> Will you not revive us again,  
so that your people may rejoice in you?
- <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
- <sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,  
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> The LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him,  
and will make a path for his steps.

*Worth Noting: After acknowledging the gifts God has given in the past and voicing petitions for the restoration of right relationship with God, the poet assures the people that God will provide in the future more abundantly than in the past.*

**Second Reading: Colossians 2:6-15, [16-19]**

<sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup> and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised

with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

[<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. <sup>17</sup> These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, <sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.]

### **Gospel: Luke 11:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

<sup>2</sup> He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

<sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ <sup>7</sup> And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ <sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>11</sup> Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

## **CONNECTING WITH THE SCRIPTURES**

### **Entering into the Scriptures**

The four prophets – Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea, spotlighted in first readings for six weeks – came close to spanning the history of the Kingdom of Israel. That Kingdom, it will be recalled, formed when the ten northern tribes of Israel rebelled against King Solomon’s son Rehoboam, around 930 B.C.E., leaving the lands of Judah and Benjamin to form the Kingdom of Judea.



As can be seen, both were surrounded by aggressive, powerful nations, in particular, Assyria to the north and Egypt to the south. While probably the more powerful nation at the time of its formation, Israel survived for 200 years while Israel – excepting the Babylonian exile – survived for another 1000 years after the dissolution of the united kingdom. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Old Testament Scriptures, while devoting much space to Israel, nevertheless tends to portray its period of independence in an unflattering light.

Elijah, Elisha, and Hosea were concerned principally with the blending of the worship of the LORD, the God of the patriarchs and Moses, with the worship of the indigenous Canaanite gods, particularly Baal and Astarte. All the prophets believed that the LORD God would turn his back on Israel were the people to forsake the worship of the LORD. Amos, the only prophet originally from the Kingdom of Judah, preached against economic injustice, excoriating those who took advantage of the poor (probably 80 percent of the population) and, again, threatening withdrawal of God’s favor unless they repented.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when first Amos and then Hosea prophesized, Israel was a vassal state of Assyria, alternately duly paying tribute, attempting to establish its independence, and succumbing to Assyrian power. Finally, in 722 B.C.E., the Assyrians, under Sargon II, captured the city of Samaria and deported the remaining people. The Kingdom of Israel thus became the ten lost tribes of Israel.

### **“For What Shall We Pray?”**

When our community gathers, often we ask “For what shall we pray?” It is the request of Jesus’ first disciples “How shall we pray?” The writer of Psalm 85 responded “We pray first that God will be God, that God will remember what it means to be God.” In the same way, Jesus prays that God’s name be hallowed, that it be revered, be authoritative, that God be God.

As Psalm 85 remembers the deliverance of the people, Jesus invites us to pray with others. Prayers are to “our” father, asking that “we” receive food sufficient. Even in solitude, we pray with, for, and in community.

What is the bread for which we pray? Jesus knows we need bodily nourishment and encourages petitions for “daily bread,” an amount that sustained the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). We need spiritual nourishment as well, enough to ask bravely for forgiveness of our sins as we have forgiven others. before we ask forgiveness of our sins and before we offer a qualifier on that forgiveness, that God forgive just as we forgive.

We ask, further, that we be delivered from the power of temptations – not that we will ever be free of temptations but that they not succumb to them. Would it not be presumptuous to expect to escape a season of temptations when Jesus did not (Mark 1:12-13 and parallels)?

### Questions to Prompt Conversation

Praying that God be God might feel dangerous, if you understand God to be the stern taskmaster and rigorous judge often portrayed. How has your image of God evolved over the years?

Jesus calls God “Father,” with all the patriarchal, hierarchical connotations that word had 2000 years ago and still can have today. Is there a form of address today that better carries connotations of family relationships, concern, wisdom, and power?

Proverbs 30:7-9 asked for just enough wealth so as not to be rich, and attribute it all to our own good selves, nor in poverty so as to become a thief. How much is your “daily bread”? Do you have it now? Will you ever have it?



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*Unless expressly stated otherwise, all quotations from Scripture are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*

*Map of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah courtesy Wikipedia.*

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