

COLLECT: (*Remain Standing*)

We give you thanks, O Lord our God, for your goodness in bestowing upon this church the gift of the episcopate; and we pray that, joined together in unity with our bishops and nourished by your holy sacraments, we may proclaim the Gospel of redemption with apostolic zeal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Nehemiah 9:26-38 (*Please be seated*)

Reader: A reading from the book of Nehemiah.

‘Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. Therefore you gave them into the hands of their enemies, who made them suffer. Then in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviours who saved them from the hands of their enemies. But after they had rest, they again did evil before you, and you abandoned them to the hands of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you rescued them according to your mercies. And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your ordinances, by the observance of which a person shall live. They turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. For many years you were patient with them, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets; yet they would not listen. Therefore you handed them over to the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

‘Now therefore, our God—the great and mighty and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love—do not treat lightly all the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until today. You have been just in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; our kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and the warnings that you gave them. Even in their own kingdom, and in the great goodness you bestowed on them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you and did not turn from their wicked works. Here we are, slaves to this day—slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts. Its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.’

Because of all this we make a firm agreement in writing, and on that sealed document are inscribed the names of our officials, our Levites, and our priests.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

Psalm

Reader: Let us pray together the words of Psalm 78.

1 Hear my teaching, O my people; *
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; *
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

3 That which we have heard and known,
and what our forefathers have told us, *
we will not hide from their children.

4 We will recount to generations to come
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, *
and the wonderful works he has done.

5 He gave his decrees to Jacob
and established a law for Israel, *
which he commanded them to teach their children;

6 That the generations to come might know,
and the children yet unborn; *
that they in their turn might tell it to their children;

7 So that they might put their trust in God, *
and not forget the deeds of God,
but keep his commandments;

8 And not be like their forefathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation, *
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The people of Ephraim, armed with the bow, *
turned back in the day of battle;

10 They did not keep the covenant of God, *
and refused to walk in his law;

11 They forgot what he had done, *
and the wonders he had shown them.

12 He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, *
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He split open the sea and let them pass through; *
he made the waters stand up like walls.

14 He led them with a cloud by day, *
and all the night through with a glow of fire.

15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness *
and gave them drink as from the great deep.

16 He brought streams out of the cliff, *
and the waters gushed out like rivers.

17 But they went on sinning against him, *
rebellious in the desert against the Most High.

18 They tested God in their hearts, *
demanding food for their craving.

19 They railed against God and said, *
"Can God set a table in the wilderness?"

20 True, he struck the rock, the waters gushed out, and
the gullies overflowed; *
but is he able to give bread
or to provide meat for his people?"

21 When the Lord heard this, he was full of wrath; *
a fire was kindled against Jacob,
and his anger mounted against Israel;

22 For they had no faith in God, *
nor did they put their trust in his saving power.

23 So he commanded the clouds above *
and opened the doors of heaven.

24 He rained down manna upon them to eat *
and gave them grain from heaven.

25 So mortals ate the bread of angels; *
he provided for them food enough.

26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens *
and led out the south wind by his might.

27 He rained down flesh upon them like dust *
and winged birds like the sand of the sea.

28 He let it fall in the midst of their camp *
and round about their dwellings.

29 So they ate and were well filled, *
for he gave them what they craved.

30 But they did not stop their craving, *
though the food was still in their mouths.

31 So God's anger mounted against them; *
he slew their strongest men
and laid low the youth of Israel.

32 In spite of all this, they went on sinning *
and had no faith in his wonderful works.

33 So he brought their days to an end like a breath *
and their years in sudden terror.

34 Whenever he slew them, they would seek him, *
and repent, and diligently search for God.

35 They would remember that God was their rock, *
and the Most High God their redeemer.

36 But they flattered him with their mouths *
and lied to him with their tongues.

37 Their heart was not steadfast toward him, *
and they were not faithful to his covenant.

38 But he was so merciful that he forgave their sins
and did not destroy them; *
many times he held back his anger
and did not permit his wrath to be roused.

39 For he remembered that they were but flesh, *
a breath that goes forth and does not return.

Revelation 18:9-20 *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the book of Revelation.

And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning; they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

‘Alas, alas, the great city,
 Babylon, the mighty city!
For in one hour your judgement has come.’

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo any more, cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and human lives.

‘The fruit for which your soul longed
 has gone from you,
and all your dainties and your splendour
 are lost to you,
 never to be found again!’

The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

‘Alas, alas, the great city,
 clothed in fine linen,
 in purple and scarlet,
 adorned with gold,
 with jewels, and with pearls!

For in one hour all this wealth has been laid waste!’

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,
'What city was like the great city?'
And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out,
'Alas, alas, the great city,
where all who had ships at sea
grew rich by her wealth!
For in one hour she has been laid waste.'

Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgement for you against her.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Matthew 15:21-28 *(Please stand as you are able)*

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

Deacon or Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Christ