

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019

## Trinity 8

Green Proper 14



### Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

**Genesis 15:1-6.** English Standard Version (ESV)

### God's Covenant with Abram

15<sup>1</sup> After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue<sup>[a]</sup> childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."<sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son<sup>[b]</sup> shall be your heir."<sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."<sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

**Footnotes:** a. or *I shall die*. b. Hebrew *what will come out of your own loins*.

**COMMENT:** The stories of the patriarchs were more tribal sagas passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. When later generations developed their particular theological points of view about Israel's special relationship with the LORD, they saw this within the ancient sagas of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Those sagas took on an enhanced meaning and became an integral part of Israel's religious heritage, eventually becoming part of their scriptures. The problems Abram (he had not yet been given his longer name Abraham - see chapter 17) faced and took up with the LORD were those

of an appropriate heir and a territory in which to live permanently. These were tribal issues. In subsequent centuries when the story became part of a written document, it also became a national issue, and remains so to this day, religiously and politically. The account in the reading probably came into its final form after the Babylonian exile. The passage here deals with the promise of an heir. The following verses (not part of our readings) verses 8-21 deal the promise of land. The argument persists that temporary absence from the land did not abrogate the divine promise. Verse 6 contains a remarkable statement which the early Christian church, beginning with Paul adopted as the basis for the doctrine of justification by faith. (Romans 4:3, 9. 22; Gal. 3:6) The Old Testament text views this special relationship with God was obtained through obedience to the law (Deut. 6:25; 24:13).

### **Luke 12:32-40** English Standard Version (ESV)

#### **Do Not Fear**

12 <sup>32</sup>“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

#### **Be Dressed For Action**

<sup>35</sup>“Stay dressed for action<sup>[a]</sup> and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants<sup>[b]</sup> whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!

#### **You Must Be Ready**

<sup>39</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he<sup>[c]</sup> would not have left his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

**Footnotes:** a. Greek *Let your loins stay girded*; compare Exodus 12:11 b. Greek *bondservants*. c. some manuscripts add *would have stayed awake and*.

**COMMENT:** So was Jesus talking to his disciples about the here and now or eschatologically (the future age)? The eschaton in late Hebrew and early Christian thought was that moment when the arrival of the new age was imminent at any moment. It was not some far off future event when history would be wound up and everything set right with the world at the coming of Messiah? Was this interpretation of Jesus' words by Luke merely ethical counsel for the contemporary world or eschatological and apocalyptic? Scholars have been divided about the exact time references of these three parts of this passage. If they are all teachings of Jesus himself, they obviously come from different periods of his ministry and were gathered into their present context by Luke himself. Each of the three parts uses a different teaching method. Verses 32-34 contains an assurance peculiar to Luke, a radical but direct ethical instruction and a proverb: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." What follows is almost a corollary: "(Therefore) sell your possessions, and give alms." In other words, simplify your life; lighten your burden of material assets so that your spiritual journey will no longer be impaired by their weight. Verses 35-38, however, contains a warning that the coming Kingdom may be delayed. The third part (verses 39-40) returns to the typical form of a parable. An almost identical warning occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, one of Paul's earliest letters, suggesting that this is indeed be a dominical teaching.

### **Psalm 50** *Deus deorum* Grail Psalter

**℟ I will show God's salvation to the upright.**

<sup>1</sup> The God of gods, the Lord,  
has spoken and summoned the earth,  
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

<sup>2</sup> Out of Zion's perfect beauty he shines.

<sup>3</sup> (Our God comes, he keeps silence no longer.) **℟**

Before him fire devours,  
around him tempest rages.

<sup>4</sup> He calls on the heavens and the earth  
to witness his judgment of his people. **℟**

<sup>5</sup> “Summon before me my people  
who made covenant with me by sacrifice.”

<sup>6</sup> The heavens proclaim his justice,  
for he, God, is the judge.

**℟ I will show God’s salvation to the upright.**

<sup>7</sup> “Listen, my people, I will speak;  
Israel, I will testify against you,  
for I am God, your God. **℟**

<sup>8</sup> I find no fault with your sacrifices,  
your offerings are always before me. **℟**

<sup>22</sup> Mark this, you who never think of God,  
lest I seize you and you cannot escape;  
<sup>23</sup> a sacrifice of thanksgiving honours me  
and I will show God’s salvation to the upright.” **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** This psalm stands in the tradition of the great prophets like Isaiah. It even repeats some of the same phrases as Isaiah’s condemnation of unworthy rituals, but offers an antidote in sincere prayers of thanksgiving.

### **Post Communion**

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**