

¹In the past

God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets
at many times
and in various ways,

²but in these last days

he has spoken to us by his Son,
whom he appointed heir of all things,
and through whom he made the universe.

³The Son is

the radiance of God's glory
and the exact representation of his being,
sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After he had provided purification for sins,

he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

⁴So he became as much superior

to the angels

as the name he has inherited is superior
to theirs.

¹Adam lay with his wife Eve,
and she became pregnant
and gave birth to Cain.

She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.”

²Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks,
and Cain worked the soil.

³In the course of time

Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.

⁴But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering,

⁵but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.

So Cain was very angry,
and his face was downcast.

⁶Then the Lord said to Cain,

“Why are you angry?

Why is your face downcast?

⁷If you do what is right,
will you not be accepted?

But if you do not do what is right,
sin is crouching at your door;
it desires to have you,
but you must master it.”

³First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

⁴They will say,

“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

⁵But they deliberately forget that long ago

by God’s word

the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

⁷By the same word

the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends:

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?

You ought to live holy and godly lives

¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

¹³But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

⁹Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil;
cling to what is good.

¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

¹¹Never be lacking in zeal,

but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

¹³Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

¹⁶Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be proud,

but be willing to associate with people of low position.

Do not be conceited.

¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,

live at peace with everyone.

¹⁹Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written:

"It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

²⁰On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹Do not be overcome by evil,

but overcome evil with good.

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran.

¹¹When he reached a certain place,
he stopped for the night because the sun had set.
Taking one of the stones there,
he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.

¹²He had a dream in which he saw
a stairway
resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven,
and the angels of God
were ascending and descending on it.

¹³There above it stood the Lord, and he said:

“I am the Lord,
the God of your father Abraham and
the God of Isaac.

I will give you and your descendants the land on which
you are lying.

¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth,
and you will spread out
to the west and to the east,
to the north and to the south.

All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and
your offspring.

¹⁵I am with you
and will watch over you wherever you go,
and I will bring you back to this land.
I will not leave you
until I have done what I have promised you.”

¹⁶At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help.

¹⁷The Edomites had again come and attacked Judah and carried away prisoners, ¹⁸ while the Philistines had raided towns in the foothills and in the Negev of Judah. They captured and occupied Beth Shemesh, Aijalon and Gederoth, as well as Soco, Timnah and Gimzo, with their surrounding villages.

¹⁹The Lord had humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had promoted wickedness in Judah and had been most unfaithful to the Lord.

²⁰Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him trouble instead of help.

²¹Ahaz took some of the things from the temple of the Lord and from the royal palace and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him.

²²In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord.

²³He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me." But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel.

²⁴Ahaz gathered together the furnishings from the temple of God and took them away. He shut the doors of the Lord's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem.

²⁵In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods and provoked the Lord, the God of his fathers, to anger.

²⁶The other events of his reign and all his ways, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but he was not placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

⁴You must not worship the Lord your God in their way.

⁵But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes

to put his Name there for his dwelling.

To that place you must go;

⁶there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

⁷ There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.

⁸You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, ⁹since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you.

¹⁰But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety.

¹¹Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—

there you are to bring everything I command you:

your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord.

¹²And there rejoice before the Lord your God, you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns, who have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

¹³Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please.

¹⁴Offer them only at the place the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you.

⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him:

⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.”

¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath.

When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked,

“Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?”

¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called,

“And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

¹² She replied,

“As surely as the Lord your God lives,”

I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her,

“Don’t be afraid.

Go home and do as you have said.

But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me,

and then make something for yourself and your son.

¹⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says:

‘The jar of flour will not be used up

and the jug of oil will not run dry

until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’ ”

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her.

So there was food every day

for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up

and the jug of oil did not run dry,

in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

⁴¹Jesus sat down

opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.

Many rich people

threw in large amounts.

⁴²But a poor widow came

and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

⁴³Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth,

this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.

⁴⁴They all gave out of their wealth;

but she, out of her poverty,

put in everything—

all she had to live on.”

¹Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

²With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself,

but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³Then Peter said,

"Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing?

You have not lied to men but to God."

⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.

And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

⁶Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

⁸Peter asked her,

"Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

She said,

"Yes, that is the price."

⁹Peter said to her,

"How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

¹⁰At that moment she fell down at his feet and died.

Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

¹¹Great fear

seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

¹⁶Now a man came up to Jesus and asked,
“Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

¹⁷Jesus replied,
“Why do you ask me about what is good?
There is only One who is good.
If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”

¹⁸The man inquired,
“Which ones?”

Jesus replied,
“ ‘Do not murder,
do not commit adultery,
do not steal, do not give false testimony,
¹⁹honor your father and mother,’
and
‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

²⁰The young man said
“All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”

²¹Jesus answered,
“If you want to be perfect,
go, sell your possessions
and give to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow me.”

²²When the young man heard this,
he went away sad,
because he had great wealth.