

Proper 29
Cycle A RCL
Christ the King Sunday
Revised

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 [*Same for both sets of readings.*]

From his exile in the Babylonian city of Nippur, the prophet Ezekiel meditated on the causes of Israel's destruction in 722 BCE and Judah's defeat in 597 BCE. In Ezekiel 34:1-10 the writer has used the familiar Near Eastern figure of the king as shepherd to conclude that the "shepherds" (kings) of Israel and Judah through their misrule had brought about these disasters. Our passage (verses 11-17) announces God's promise to be the good shepherd/king of Israel and to restore the "flock" to its own good land.

Psalm 100

This is an *entrance liturgy* for pilgrims to Jerusalem's Temple. It celebrates God's creation of the pilgrims, and God's faithfulness to the covenant (*xesed*, mistranslated "mercy" in verse 4).

OR

Psalm 95:1-7a

This *hymn* was part of an *entrance liturgy* for pilgrims to Jerusalem, perhaps on the occasion of the Festival of Booths. Following the general praises in verses 1-7a, verse 7b warns the worshipers to obey God's voice; and this warning leads in verses 8-11 to a description of the sad events at Meribah/Massah in which Israel put the Lord to the test over lack of water in the wilderness (Exodus 17:1-7).

Ephesians 1:15-23

This epistle was thought by Professor John Knox to have been crafted as an introduction to a second volume of Paul's letters. Because of Ephesians' heavy dependence upon Colossians, few investigators believe that Paul is the actual author and assign authorship to an unknown student of Paul. Since the words "in Ephesus" (1:1) do not occur in many important Greek manuscripts, there is even doubt about its destination. (The heretic Marcion thought that it was an epistle to the Laodiceans.) In many respects, however, this work is a faithful representation of Paul's thought as revealed in the indisputably genuine letters of the apostle.

Matthew 25:31-46

This saying sums up the series of parables and apocalyptic sayings Jesus gave to his students on their exit from the temple (Matthew 24:1-25:46). Surprisingly, this summary has to do with the mutual care members of the Christian community are to show one another. Like the Jewish sectarians at the Dead Sea, the earliest Christians prized highly what the Qumran sectarians called in Hebrew *yaxad ha-`edah* ("the unity of the community") as a sign of God's special favor. The terms by which Christians may expect to be judged at the last day will be their loyalty to and care for the other members of the community of Jesus.

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