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LENT DEVOTIONAL

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 3, 2023

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 105

1 O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.

3 Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

4 Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually.

5 Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,

6 O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

7 He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

8 He is mindful of his covenant forever,
of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

9 the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,

10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,

11 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."

12 When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in it,

13 wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,

14 he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,

15 saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."

16 When he summoned famine against the land,
and broke every staff of bread,

17 he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

18 His feet were hurt with fetters,
his neck was put in a collar of iron;

19 until what he had said came to pass,
the word of the LORD kept testing him.

20 The king sent and released him;
the ruler of the peoples set him free.

21 He made him lord of his house,
and ruler of all his possessions,

22 to instruct his officials at his pleasure,
and to teach his elders wisdom.

23 Then Israel came to Egypt;
Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.

24 And the LORD made his people very fruitful,
and made them stronger than their foes,

25 whose hearts he then turned to hate his people,
to deal craftily with his servants.

26 He sent his servant Moses,
and Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 They performed his signs among them,
and miracles in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made the land dark;
they rebelled against his words.

29 He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.

30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in the chambers of their kings.

31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.

32 He gave them hail for rain,
and lightning that flashed through their land.

33 He struck their vines and fig trees,
and shattered the trees of their country.
34 He spoke, and the locusts came,
and young locusts without number;
35 they devoured all the vegetation in their land,
and ate up the fruit of their ground.
36 He struck down all the firstborn in their land,
the first issue of all their strength.
37 Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed,
for dread of them had fallen upon it.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
and fire to give light by night.
40 They asked, and he brought quails,
and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.
42 For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.
43 So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
44 He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,
45 that they might keep his statutes
and observe his laws.
Praise the LORD!

DEVOTIONAL

Mitchell Stecker, M.Div. student

Psalm 105 is an exhortation to thankfulness among the faithful, undergirded by a recounting of Israel's deliverance by God—the foundation for this spirit of gratitude. The psalmist notes, however, that the promised deliverance is not an action solely wrought on high; rather, in working through Moses and Aaron, God cooperates with humankind to bring God's chosen out of Egypt.

The *Imago Dei* is a beautiful reminder during this penitential season that, in spite of our shortcomings, we all are fashioned after this divine pattern, and thus are each worthy of love and imbued with an indelible dignity. It may, however, be tempting to think of the *Imago* as a one-way dynamic, overlooking the responsibilities of bearing such a character trait. As we live, move, and have our being in God, God likewise desires to live and move in, and share in creative, reparative “be-ing”, with us. If we are indeed members of Christ's own body, then we should naturally expect this invitation to actively participate in God's will in the here-and-now.

As we follow the cloud and fire through this pilgrim season of Lent, let us embrace this two-way understanding of the *Imago*, savoring the sublime likeness within ourselves; and moreover, letting it propel us into cooperation with the divine will, to “work God's signs and portents” in our day, like Moses and Aaron, and similarly participate in the Godly work of salving the wounds of oppression, hatred, and scarcity as we encounter them in our own contexts.

PRAYER

O God, be among us these forty days, just as you were with your people when you brought them out of Egypt. When we are wearied by the journey, bring us again to your tabernacle—not made with hands, but rather your Spirit, hidden and abiding within our heart—that we may be renewed for the continuation of our striving. Through Jesus, our deliverer, Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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