

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAY – MAY 7, 2023 @ CAPC OAKLAND

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Isaiah was the great prophet before and during the time of Exile – when the nation of Israel was defeated, destroyed and deported by the imperial powers of Assyria & Babylon. The Hebrew Prophets spoke of God's future in the present – writing in poetry, with images and metaphors. Isaiah speaks twice of God's coming peace – which will be justice for all people – and all nations (conquered and conquering) with an image of a meal on a mountaintop. This image is also repeated in Micah 4:1-5.

The ancients conceived of mountaintops as holy places – hear the heavens where God lived. Also remember that Jerusalem (the city of peace) was on a mountain top and housed the Temple – the house of the Lord.

How are these visions part of the communion story and table practice?

Isaiah 2:1-5 NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹ The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
² In days to come
 the mountain of the Lord's house
 shall be established as the highest of the
 mountains
 and shall be raised above the hills;
 all the nations shall stream to it.
³ Many peoples shall come and say,
 “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the
 Lord,
 to the house of the God of Jacob,
 that he may teach us his ways
 and that we may walk in his paths.”
 For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
 and the word of the Lord from
 Jerusalem.
⁴ He shall judge between the nations
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
 they shall beat their swords into
 plowshares
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against
 nation;
 neither shall they learn war any more.
⁵ O house of Jacob,
 come, let us walk
 in the light of the Lord!

Isaiah 25:6-9 NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
 a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
 of rich food filled with marrow, of
 well-aged wines strained clear.
⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
 the shroud that is cast over all
 peoples,
 the covering that is spread over all
 nations;
⁸ he will swallow up death forever.
 Then the Lord God will wipe away the
 tears from all faces,
 and the disgrace of his people he will
 take away from all the earth,
 for the Lord has spoken.
⁹ It will be said on that day,
 “See, this is our God; we have waited
 for him, so that he might save us.
 This is the Lord for whom we have
 waited;
 let us be glad and rejoice in his
 salvation.”

Luke 9:10-17 NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹⁰ On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. Then, taking them along, he slipped quietly into a city called Bethsaida.
¹¹ When the crowds found out about it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed to be cured.
¹² The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to lodge and get provisions, for we are here in a deserted place.” ¹³ But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” ¹⁵ They did so and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And TAKING the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and BLESSED and BROKE them and GAVE them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And all ate and were filled, and what was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Luke 22:7-27
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹³ The disciples found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ After **TAKING** the cup, he **GAVE THANKS** and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

¹⁹ And he **TOOK** bread, **GAVE THANKS** and **BROKE** it, and **GAVE** it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹ But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²² The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" ²³ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Luke 24:13-35
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹³ Now on that same day two of the [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him." ²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

In the Second Testament, the word employed for communion, or the Lord's Supper is the word **Eucharist**. It originates from the Greek word *eucharistia*, meaning thanksgiving. It's an amalgamation of diverse cultural tables practices: the Passover, deipnon & symposium.

The Passover was and is the main ritual meal and experience for the Jewish people – telling of the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in ancient Egypt. IT's celebrated every year in a retelling of the story as if it's the story of those who tell and hear it.

The deipnon means the evening meal, usually the largest meal of the Ancient Greek day and most likely associated with the purification of the house where it was eaten.

A symposium was a social gathering in ancient Greece. At symposia, male citizens (*only*) would gather for dinner, drinking, conversation, music, and entertainment. This was the common gathering in the Roman Empire and included the pouring of a libation in honor of the gods.

TAKE | BLESS | BREAK | GIVE: these four verbs occur in all the stories associated with the eucharist.

have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he TOOK bread, BLESSED and BROKE it, and GAVE it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹⁷ Now in the following instructions I [the apostle Paul] do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹ For when the time comes to eat, each of you proceeds to eat your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. ²² What! Do you not have households to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed TOOK a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had GIVEN THANKS, he BROKE it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For all who eat and drink without discerning the body eat and drink judgment against themselves. ³⁰ For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in these texts?
- What connections do you see between them?
- Paul talks about eating the communion meal in an unworthy manner. What's he getting at?
- What's the difference between communion as a meal and all other meals?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – *or to us, as a church* – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?