

First Reading: Deuteronomy 7:6-9

⁶{Moses said to the Israelites,} “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but it is

because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations”

The book of Deuteronomy is Moses’ message of God's love and commitment to Israel. God will be faithful!

1. What does it mean to be "holy to the Lord" or a "treasured possession"?
2. What has God done for these treasured people?
3. Why does Moses write "know the Lord your God is God"?
4. What are the people to do? What are the six parts of a covenant?

Second Reading: Romans 8:28-39

²⁸We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus

is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's word is clear, definitive, and powerful! Here Paul gives the assurance of God's love and care despite whatever happens!

1. How do we understand verse 28 and what does it mean "all things work together for good"?
2. Why does Paul use the word predestined?

3. Is there a meaning to the order of "those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called, he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified"?
4. Why does God allow suffering for those whom he loves?
5. What does it mean to be more than a conqueror?
6. What great powers try to separate us from God?

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:44-52

⁴⁴{Jesus said to the disciples,} "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the

good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Jesus speaks of the kingdom in terms of fulfillment, a "treasure that overwhelms us" or a "pearl that is unbelievable" or at the end of all things "a net that saves all of God's people". Jesus came as one inviting people into God's kingdom, and Jesus himself is the gate keeper to the kingdom. No one comes into the kingdom outside of him.

1. What is the surprise in the parable of the treasure in the field?
2. Which came to him first, joy or faith?
3. Is this man who found the treasure honest about buying the field? Does he earn the treasure? What is Jesus point in your mind?
4. How does verse 45 compare to Matthew 6:33?
5. What messages do we find in verses 47-50?
6. What does Jesus mean by saying a wise scribe brings out the new and the old?