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## Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

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## Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

### Seventh Sunday after Trinity

1 Kings 17:1-16

Dark days are affecting the people of our country. In spite of the wisdom of men, in spite of international food conferences, things look gloomy for the future, for the days of war, for the days of postwar reconstruction.

Our text of today gives us a dark picture of drought, crop failure, and famine, but it also gives us the bright picture of God's wonderful care for His people. It speaks to us of

#### The Wonderful Providence of God

1. *God wonderfully provides for the body*
2. *God also provides for the soul*

#### 1

A. V. 1. Israel had forsaken God and was practicing idolatry. Now God would withdraw His dew and His rain, and the consequence could only be famine. Lev. 26:19, 20; Deut. 11:16, 17. What Elijah prophesied came true. Soon famine struck the land, but God took care of His Prophet.

B. Vv. 2-6. A description of the wonderful providence of God.

C. It is well to bear in mind that, though God provided well for His prophet, He provided not the luxuries of life but the essentials: water, bread, meat. God still does this today. When we pray the Fourth Petition, God still hears our prayer. Ordinarily He provides for us through the regular means, through hard work and the forces of nature. He provides for little children through the activities of their parents. But surely the story of Elijah should teach us that God's arm is not shortened. In days of need God may not send ravens, but He may send a special gift from an unknown source, a new job with higher wages, new health and strength to enable us to go back to work. It may not be my way, it may not be thy way, and yet in His own way the Lord will provide.

D. Vv. 7-16 present two evidences of God's providing care. God supplied not only the necessary food for His prophet, but also for the hospitable widow and her son.

E. It is well to remember that God at times sends us where we had not planned to go. Text, vv. 3, 9; Jonah 1:2, 3. Our soldiers and sailors at the present time are scattered over the length

and breadth of the land, yea, of the world, sent by their government, the arm of God. They are in the hand of God. He will provide for them, not merely food for the body, but also shelter. It is well for us to remind ourselves of the wonderful care of God in these trying days.

2

A. Our text does not emphasize the spiritual care of God as much as the care of the body. Yet sufficient evidence of such care can be found in the text. Elijah was a child of God, a Prophet who had bravely brought the wicked king a prophecy of doom. V. 1. He may have wondered what the future held in store for him. The glorious promises of God, vv. 4 and 9, cheered him. Faith was made stronger through these promises. When God kept promise, Elijah was strengthened in his trust in the almighty power of Jehovah. God thus provided for Prophet also spiritually. God does the same thing for Christians today. Through promises of Word, through fulfillment of these promises, faith is increased, trust grows.

B. God provided for soul of Prophet also through tests of faith. Severe tests of faith: (a) when brook dried up; (b) to be sent to a widow, for widows ordinarily are poor, (c) to find that the widow had only handful of flour, little oil in cruse. These tests were the means of God to strengthen his faith. Thus God again provided spiritually for Elijah. The trials of our times, the stress of wartime economy, are sent by God today to test us and help us grow stronger spiritually.

C. By sending the Prophet to house of the widow God also provided food for her soul. The prophet broke the bread of life to them. When the Prophet had restored the dead son (1 Kings 17:17, 21, 22) she exclaimed: 1 Kings 17:24. This is clear evidence that God had also provided for the widow in spiritual matters.

D. God does this today. Food may become scarcer, but He still gives us Bread of Life in abundance. Many of our soldiers and sailors have more of the Word today than in civilian life. Many civilians have learned much from the Word in these days of war. Yes, God still provides, provides in a wonderful way for body and soul. Praises for such a wonderful God should daily fill our soul. Ps. 103:1-3. E. L. ROSCHKE

### Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Jer. 23:21-32

Men applaud the "broad-minded" spirit which ignores doctrinal differences in an attempt to unite all churches. The term

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**"false prophets" has been removed from the unionist's vocabulary. God's Word, however, censures false prophets in unmistakable language. See today's Gospel.**

**The Lord's Indictment of False Prophets**

**1**

***They place themselves above God.***

**1. False prophets are arrogant. (a) They usurp divine authority, v. 21. Presume to be God's messenger, vv. 27, 28. Such people as Joseph Smith, of the Mormons; Ann Lee, of the Shakers (who claimed to be an incarnate revelation of God); Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, "mother" of Christian Science; E. Swedenborg, forerunner of modern Spiritism; Mrs. Ellen White, prophetess of the Adventists; the "infallible" Pope; all types of mystics;—are dreamers, v. 25. A more subtle type of dreamers are the Modernists, who say that God has not revealed Himself, that divine revelation is not necessary because man can find God in his own experience. Thus every individual becomes a "dreamer." What arrogance! God says: John 1:18; man says: I am fully competent to determine God's being and work. (b) They seem to have strong credentials: their visions, the "scientific" method. But examine the results! Vv. 23, 24. They do not comprehend the very elementary knowledge of God's being, His omnipresence and omniscience. Examine some of the dreams! The heathen: a god in the likeness of a beast; the Mormons: God a glorified man with phallic powers; Christian Science: God is only Divine Mind; Modernism: a God who is limited in wisdom and power, a full-grown human being; the Papacy: a God who can be reconciled by humanly devised works of penance. In short, human reason is unable to rise above its own level, dreams of God, of the plan of salvation, of heaven in carnal concepts. And yet false prophets exclaim arrogantly: We know all about God, for we have carefully examined our visions, our "scientific" data.**

**2. To make matters worse, the dreamers pretend to speak for God. They cover their arrogance by deception, v. 28. "Falsehood mingled with truth is a powerful error, and the beauty of truth serves as an ornamental covering to its deformity." (Lange-Schaff Commentary.) The pure-food laws do not forbid sale of strychnine, but its sale as Vitamin B-1. False prophets are true prophets. God did use dreams to reveal Himself. But when false prophets arose, God warned against "dreamers," Deut. 13:1 ff. The indictment is: The dreamers are dishonest, vv. 30, 31. They are impostors. They deceive by God's name, v. 25, and commit a double sin. Luther's explanation of the Second Commandment.**

2

*They cause irreparable harm to immortal souls.*

Prophets are sent to preach salvation. Israel was at the brink of ruin, nationally, morally, spiritually. Why? v. 22.— A prophet has been defined as one who is able to crystallize the vague ideas and desires of the masses. This definition applies to false prophets who preach what people want to hear, 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

1. False prophets cause the hearers to forget God's name, v. 27. Cp. Judg. 3:7. Idolatry results: (a) Man fixes his own standard of morality, which is relatively low; (b) man devises his own plan of salvation, which is legalistic, *i. e.*, work-righteousness through man-made commandments, or rationalistic, *i. e.*, an attempt to harmonize mysteries in Scripture, *e. g.*, personal union of Christ, conversion, predestination.

2. A mingling of truth and error results in the loss of the truth, v. 30 b. (a) Man's dreams are chaff, God's Word is wheat, vv. 28 b, 29.— God's Word a power to break the stony heart of man and to purge it from sin. The only means to save. And this priceless treasure is at stake! A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. An incipient error may lead to the loss of the whole truth. (b) False pophets substitute their vain dreams for eternal verities and thus cause their hearers to err and to be lost.

God's severe indictment, v. 32. In His grace He preserves a remnant, which is not misled. The Lord is zealous for His honor and for the welfare of His Church. Are we? F. E. MAYER

### Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Ex. 32:1-14

A certain missionary went to a heathen land and tried to persuade the natives that there is a God. They laughed and told him that they had known it long before he came. This knowledge is something universal. Rom. 1:19, 20. Therefore also some form of worship is found wherever one goes in the world.

The mere knowledge that there is a God is not enough. God wants to be known of men not as they *imagine* Him to be but as He is and as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. The first of the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." All worship of other gods is condemned in the Bible as idolatry.

#### The Sin of Idolatry

1. Who commits it
2. How it degrades man
3. What wrath it brings upon him
4. How he can be cleansed from it

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1

When we think of idolatry, we think of India, China, darkest Africa. But in our text Israel, the chosen people of God, who had witnessed the miracles of God in Egypt, had passed miraculously through the Red Sea, were being fed daily with manna from heaven, had witnessed the giving of the Law amid mighty manifestations of Jehovah on Sinai—Israel makes the demand "Up, make us gods," etc., v. 1.

Aaron, the brother of Moses, who had been reared in the house of God-fearing Amran and Jochebed, who had later been Moses' "prophet" before Pharaoh, who had been appointed to lead the people while Moses was in the Mount, Aaron demands: V. 2. The people obey, v. 3. Aaron fashions the golden calf, v. 4; proclaims the idol feast, v. 5.

Who commits the sin of idolatry? Not only people who have never heard of the true God, but millions in so-called Christian lands, yes, in the visible Church. Often leaders in the visible Church.

How? Not by fashioning with their hands gods of wood, stone, and metal, but (a) by teaching and believing perverted notions of God. Modernism with its denial of the deity of Christ. John 5:23. So lodge religion; (b) by the fine idolatry of mammon worship, belly service, idolatrous trust in science, education, etc. See Schwan, First Commandment.

This fine idolatry fearfully common. Have we ever yielded to it? Let us not rashly conclude that it could not happen. It does happen. Remember Israel. Remember Aaron.

2

Idolatry is a degrading sin. Aaron degraded himself and Israel mentally and physically. Mental degradation, v. 4b: "These be thy gods," etc. Mental and physical degradation at the feast the next day, vv. 5, 6. People gave themselves up to the foolish notion that in the calf they were worshiping Jehovah, who had expressly forbidden such worship. Ex. 20:4.

So idolatry today. Mental degradation, Rom. 1:21, 22. True also of the fine idolatry of so-called Christians.

3

All idolatry arouses the wrath of God and demands punishment, v. 7. "Thy people"—as though God had already disowned them. Vv. 8, 9, 10. "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them."

Throughout the history of Israel her troubles are traceable to her idolatry. Books of Judges and Kings.

God is no less angered by, and aroused to punish, fine idolatry. Eph. 5:5; Jer. 17:5.

4

Is there no escape for the idolater from his sin and from its dread consequences? Moses intercedes for Israel, vv. 11-13. Asks God to be merciful for His honor's sake and for the sake of His promises to the patriarchs. The heart and core of these promises is Christ. God was entreated and repented of the evil, etc., v. 14.

So today there is forgiveness even for the sin of idolatry. Christ, the very heart and core of prophecy, has appeared and has redeemed the world from all sins, also from the sin of idolatry.

*Conclusion:* Our hearts also by nature idolatrous. And often, in weakness, we also have fallen into fine idolatry. Let us come penitently to the Throne of Grace, imploring God for forgiveness for Jesus' sake. Then let us go and worship the Lord, our God, and serve Him only. Let us have no other gods before Him, but let us fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. FRED KRAMER

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**Tenth Sunday after Trinity**

Deut. 4:23-31

The traditional pericope for this Sunday presents our Savior as weeping over Jerusalem. Those sacred tears were tears of love. Jerusalem had rejected Him. Still Christ loved the reprobate city, though in His righteous wrath He had to mete out destructive punishment.—The world today walks in the footsteps of ancient, wicked Jerusalem. Nevertheless God's love toward it continues, showing itself in the proclamation of both the Law and the Gospel. A worthy, timely thought to consider!

**God's Wonderful Love**

revealed in the preaching of

1. *His condemning Law*    2. *His inviting, forgiving Gospel*

1

1. Our text is a portion of an address made by Moses to the children of Israel at Shittim, at the close of his life. It is hortatory and prophetic in nature, partly Law and partly Gospel—severe Law and sweet Gospel.

2. *The Law analyzed.* (a) A warning against carnal security, v. 23; cf. v. 9. (b) A warning against forgetting God's covenant of grace, demanding constant obedience and consecration of Israel, v. 23 b; Ex. 20:1 ff.; Deut. 6:1 ff.; Gen. 17:1 ff. (c) A warning against idolatry, v. 23 c; v. 25.

3. *The curse and condemnation of the Law.* (a) God's fierce wrath, vv. 24, 25. (b) Ejection from the Promised land, v. 26.

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(c) Dispersion among the nations, v. 27. (d) Their adoption of pagan idol worship, v. 28. Note the clarity, solemnity, and definiteness of these threats of the Law.

4. Israel did not obey the voice of God but forgot the covenant of the Lord. Judg. 6:1 ff.; 13:1 ff.; 1 Kings 11:1 ff.; 18:18 ff.; 2 Kings 21:1 ff.; Is. 39:1 ff. Israel's history thus is fraught with rank and gross idolatry. And the punishment? The kingdom of Israel destroyed 722 B. C.—Jerusalem destroyed 586 B. C.—After the return from the Babylonian Captivity the Jews (Pharisees) practiced "fine" idolatry, rejected Christ, their Savior, and Jerusalem was destroyed A. D. 70, as Christ in today's Gospel predicted. Ever since then vv. 27 and 28 have remained fulfilled. The Jews remained an unbelieving, hardened, idolatrous people, refusing to believe the divine Law proclaimed to them in saving love.

5. Are we better than they? (a) The world today is idolatrous beyond description, worshiping by gross and fine idolatry the creatures rather than the Creator. God still proclaims in true helping love His divine Law in all severity, at present especially through war and its destruction. But do men hear? (b) And how about the Christian Church? Trace the history of false doctrine through the first centuries and the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the following centuries to the present day, showing how there has been false doctrine at all times, also in the Lutheran Church. (c) And how about our own Church, which about a century ago our fathers founded upon the pure and unadulterated Word of God? Stress the evils of satiety, doctrinal indifferentism, carnal security, refusal to serve God with undivided loyalty, the spirit of unionism, of worldliness, and other evils in spite of God's constant proclamation of His divine Law. Is Christ weeping also over us? The present war with its many evils and sorrows is the result not only of the sins of the ungodly world but also of our own, 1 Pet. 4:17, 18. Let us therefore not despise the preaching of God's Law, but accept it in true repentance, since it is our loving God who tells us how serious sin is and how serious its results are. Gal. 6:7, 8; Ps. 143:2; Heb. 9:27.

2

1. God's wonderful love is revealed especially in His gracious proclamation of His inviting, forgiving Gospel. God earnestly desires all sinners to repent, vv. 29, 30: they should seek God, turn to Him, and be obedient to His voice. This we cannot do by our reason or strength. But through the divine Law, God reveals to us our sins, working in us contrition, or sorrow; and through the Gospel He works faith in us, so that we believe in Christ, our Savior, and through Him have forgiveness of sins and eternal life,



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and serve Him in newness of life. Rom. 3:19, 20; 1:16, 17; 12:1 ff. Oh, wondrous love! If we seek God, we shall find Him, even in the tribulation of the latter days. Dare we believe this?

2. God tells us this, v. 31. (a) He is merciful, kind, and gracious to those in trouble. Show God's mercies as revealed in Israel's history. (b) He does not forsake nor destroy us, V. 31 b. Compare Israel's history. Believers in Israel returned from the Babylonian Captivity, and even before Jerusalem's final destruction a period of repentance was granted the people, so that God's elect could be brought in. (c) He does not forget the covenant which He has made, v. 31 c. Cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; Rom. 11:1; Is. 54:10; Rom. 8:28. How precious is the Gospel of God's matchless love in Christ Jesus!

3. Jesus weeping over Jerusalem! What an earnest preaching of the divine Law! In those tears were reflected the sins of Israel — and our own. — But also what a comforting preaching of the divine Gospel! In those tears there is salvation for you and me. Jesus weeps, because He loves us; in His tears we have a guarantee of our salvation.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**

Micah 2:6-13

Micah was a wartime preacher. His writings are abstracts of sermons delivered during the turbulent reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah — a time of many wars including the invasions of Sennacherib and the rising threat of Babylonian imperialism. Amid the resultant moral and social chaos, aggravated by the subversive influence of many pseudoprophets, it was not easy to be a faithful preacher of God's truth.

Similar conditions prevail today. Pressure of war and prominence of false religionists make it more difficult for the preacher to be faithful. The liberal rather than the conservative type of preaching is popularly acclaimed. But here in the text of Micah both preachers and hearers have a Biblical example of

**Model Wartime Preaching**

1

*It is uncompromising.* V. 6, 7, 11.

Text: No yielding to demand of masses "Prophesy not"; rather a warning that true prophets, if suppressed, would be taken away, v. 6. No conforming to the preaching of those who "walked . . . in falsehood . . . and prophesy . . . of strong drink," v. 11; rather denunciation of it. Above all, unflinching testimony to the om-

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nipotence of God's Spirit and Word, as in v. 7 "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Do not My words do good . . . ?" How uncompromising!

**APPLICATIONS.** — a) War tends to strengthen inclination to compromise on religion. Some claim national unity requires religious uniformity. Unionism, indifference to Christian doctrine and practice increase on the argument that the times demand it. But what the times really demand is Micah's type of preaching—unrestricted, unabridged proclaiming of God's Word.

b) Liberalistic preaching is deemed most patriotic. Actually it is unpatriotic; it does harm rather than good to individual and nation. But faithfully to proclaim the Word which "does good to them that walk uprightly" is the best patriotic service.

c) Preachers, use freedom of speech and religion, for which we are avowedly fighting, to "declare all the counsel of God!" Surrender nothing! Compromise is an attempt "to straiten the Spirit of God."

d) Hearers, scorn the vapid sentimentalities of Modernists! Encourage your preacher by demanding also in these war days preaching that does not compromise with error!

2

*It is remonstrating.* Vv. 8, 9, 10.

**Text.** Includes sharp rebukes of prevalent wartime sins—lovelessness toward each other, "as an enemy," v. 8 a; avarice, injustice, "pulling off robe from peaceable travelers," v. 8 b; devouring widows' houses, "women cast out," v. 9 a; enslavement and neglect of children, "deprived of their glory," v. 9 b. All accompanied with solemn threat of divine judgment, "no rest, departure into captivity, sore destruction," v. 10. How remonstrating!

**APPLICATIONS.** — a) Wars are not only caused by sin (James 4:1), but themselves cause an increase of sin. Note J. E. Hoover's recent reports on the shocking increase of vice and crime. The very sins mentioned by Micah, including the neglect of children, are prevalent in these war days. Never to reprove them is a crime against the state as well as individual souls; it is not model wartime preaching.

b) A recent religious writer says, "I cannot accept the 'judgment of God' view of this war." Many, like him, do not want to hear of sin and divine retribution. But whether they want it or not, is it not duty of preacher to rebuke, remonstrate? 2 Tim. 4:2.

c) Preacher, "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression!" Is. 58:1.

d) Hearers, be not offended at such preaching; it is needed by Church and country, especially in wartime.

3

*It is comforting. Vv. 12, 13.*

**Text.** At predictions of judgments some sincere hearts were troubled. What will become of the chosen race from whom the Messiah is to appear, they thought. To comfort them, Micah replied, "I will assemble . . . gather . . . remnant of Israel . . . like sheep of Bozrah," v. 12. And when people asked how, after so dreadful a dispersion and destruction, that could be accomplished, Micah pointed to the Lord, "the Breaker" of all opposition, "the King," "the Lord on the head of them," v. 13. How comforting!

**APPLICATIONS.** — a) Micah's comforting promise gloriously fulfilled, not only in return of Jews from Babylon but also by the appearance of the Messiah and His kingdom.

b) Amid terrifying judgments of our day troubled Christians ask, What will become of the Church? and some conscience-stricken souls will say, What hope is there for us? If, then, we are to have model wartime preaching, it must contain all the comforting answers of the Gospel.

c) Someone has said, It is not a question of how the Church can survive the present holocaust, but how the world can survive without the Church. But to those who in these war days still ask how the Church can survive, the model wartime preacher will joyously answer, like Micah, "It has the Breaker, who breaks down all obstructions to salvation; it has the King who passes before them; it has the Lord on the head of them, who has been made Head over all things to the Church."

Ask ye, Who is this?  
 Jesus Christ it is,  
 Of Saboath Lord.  
 And there's none other God;  
 He holds the field forever.

ALVIN E. WAGNER

