

KSW17 to Apr 27

April 21 Su Reading 111 — Ezekiel 22:23-31 — Keeping Holy Things Holy

²³ *And the word of the LORD came to me:* ²⁴ *“Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation.* ²⁵ *The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst.* ²⁶ *Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.* ²⁷ *Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.* ²⁸ *And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD has not spoken.* ²⁹ *The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice.* ³⁰ *And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.* ³¹ *Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD.”*

Holy vs. Common — This passage describes the spiritual condition of the land of Judah before God sent destruction on them from the Babylonians. The prophets, priests, and princes, who were responsible for leadership, were taking advantage of the people for their own gain. The priests, who were to be the spiritual leaders “*profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean*” (v. 26). Keeping holy things holy was important to God. He had punished two of Aaron’s sons in the past when they offered “*unauthorized fire before the LORD ... And fire came out ... and consumed them*” (Lev. 10:1-2). After that, God ordered Aaron and his two remaining sons to be careful not to drink any alcohol before entering the tabernacle “*lest you die ... You shall distinguish between the holy and the common*” (vv. 9-10). Are we maintaining that kind of distinction today? What things or actions do we treat as holy in our times? Do we look at the content of the Bible as actual words from God that are binding? Do we come to the Lord’s Table periodically with minds focused with thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Jesus for us? Do we worship with other Christians in church with our minds concentrating on the words we sing? Do our “common” neighbors see something that is “holy” about us? There is a difference.

[Take My Life / Holiness - YouTube](#)

Holiness, holiness is what I long for;
Holiness is what I need.
Holiness, holiness is what You want from me.

— Scott Underwood (1994)

April 22 M Reading 112 — Zechariah 7:1-14 — The Word of Yahweh

¹ *In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev.* ² *Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favor of the LORD,* ³ *saying to the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, “Should I weep and abstain in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”*

⁴ Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: ⁵ “Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? ⁶ And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? ⁷ Were not these the words that the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?”

⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, ⁹ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, ¹⁰ do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” ¹¹ But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear.^[fn] ¹² They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts. ¹³ “As^[fn] I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear,” says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁴ “and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate.”

ESV Footnotes

(7:11) Hebrew *and made their ears too heavy to hear*

(7:13) Hebrew *he*

Words Through the Spirit — When God spoke to His prophets in the past, it was by means of the Holy Spirit, i.e., “...*the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets*” (v. 12). It had been two years since God spoke to Zechariah about rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, so God chose special times when He would speak to His prophets. When the Holy Spirit spoke to them, it was with specific words, whether audibly or in their minds, the statements often introduced with the word “*saying...*” (e.g., v. 8). The words from God on this occasion came in answer to the question about whether to continue celebrating a ritual fast commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem 70 years earlier. This was not a fast ordered by God, so in answering them He spoke to the core of fasting and feasting: “Do you do it for Me or for you?” (cf. v. 6). Evidence of sincerity is shown in righteous living, with “*true judgments ... kindness ... do not oppress ... none of you devise evil...*” (vv. 9-10). This was the problem 70 years earlier when people went through the superficial motions of worship without any indication of life-change. When the Spirit speaks to your heart as you read God’s Word every day, is it changing your life, or are you just checking a box of completion? We need to seek the Spirit as we read, opening ourselves to change through repentance and obedience.

[Change My Heart, Oh God - YouTube](#)

Change my heart, oh God, Make it ever true; Change my heart, oh God, May I be like You. — Eddie Espinoza (1982)

April 23 Tu Reading 113 — Zechariah 12:1-14 — Mourning for the Pierced One

¹ *The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him:* ² “Behold, I am about to

make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. ³ On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. ⁴ On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.'

⁶ "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.

⁷ "And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. ⁸ On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. ⁹ And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹ On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹² The land shall mourn, each family^[fn] by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹³ the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹⁴ and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.

ESV Footnote

(12:12) Or *clan*; throughout verses 12–14

Poured Out Grace and Mercy — Seven times in this chapter, the expression "*on that day*" is used to indicate that the prophesied events were far in the future. We may see some of that happening already in our times, with Islamic nations being supported by other nations to militarily oppose Israel. Twice in this prophecy, a God-given "*spirit*" is mentioned. The first one clearly refers to the human spirit, when the Creator "*formed the spirit of man within him*" (v. 1). The second appearance of the word is not as clear. The ESV says, "*I will pour out ... a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy...*" (v. 10), while other translations capitalize "*Spirit*" (NKJV, NASB, LSB). I lean toward the interpretation of this referring to the Holy Spirit. In 10 of the other 11 places in Scripture where it says that God "*pours ... spirit,*" it clearly refers to God's own Spirit. Isa. 29:10 is the exception, where a negative "*deep sleep*" is being poured out, but in Zechariah, it is positive "*grace*" and "*mercy*" that is being given. This shows that both repentance ("*pleas for mercy*") and forgiveness ("*grace*") are provided by the Holy Spirit. When will this future prophesied event happen? It is certainly still in the future because this repentance and forgiveness by the Jewish people will look back in time "*on him whom they have pierced*" (v. 10b), which clearly refers to Jesus' sacrifice (John 19:37). Perhaps it will be at a future time when, after "*the fullness of the Gentiles has come in ... all Israel will be saved...*" (Rom. 11:25-26).

[God of Mercy, God of Grace - YouTube](#)

God of mercy, God of grace,
show the brightness of Your face.
Shine upon us, Savior, shine;
fill Your Church with light divine,
And Your saving health extend
to the earth's remotest end.

— Henry Lyte (b. 1793)

April 24 W Reading 114 — Malachi 2:10-16 — The Covenant of Marriage

¹⁰ *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?* ¹¹ *Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.* ¹² *May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant^[fn] of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!*

¹³ *And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.* ¹⁴ *But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.* ¹⁵ *Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union?^[fn] And what was the one God^[fn] seeking?^[fn] Godly offspring. So guard yourselves^[fn] in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.* ¹⁶ *"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her,^[fn] says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers^[fn] his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."*

ESV Footnotes

(2:12) Hebrew *any who wakes and answers*

(2:15) Hebrew *in it*

(2:15) Hebrew *the one*

(2:15) Or *And not one has done this who has a portion of the Spirit. And what was that one seeking?*

(2:15) Or *So take care*; also verse 16

(2:16) Hebrew *who hates and divorces*

(2:16) Probable meaning (compare Septuagint and Deuteronomy 24:1–4); or *"The LORD, the God of Israel, says that he hates divorce, and him who covers*

God's Spirit in Marriage — Both Israel and Judah had been guilty of spiritual adultery against God by incorporating the worship of foreign gods (v. 11). As a result, God rejected their worship of Him (v. 12). They had broken the covenant given to them through Abraham and Moses. This parallels divorce, the broken covenant of the marriage relationship between a husband and wife. A similar rejection of worship results here, where God *"no longer regards the offering..."* (v. 13). This marriage covenant was holy because it included God who made them one *"with a portion of the Spirit in their union"* (v. 15). The Holy Spirit might be seen as a "spiritual glue" in the matrimonial union. Twice in this passage God warned to *"guard yourselves"* against the unfaithfulness of divorce (vv. 15-16). He is deeply involved in the marriage relationship, as Jesus taught: *"What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matt. 19:6). We are to be faithful spiritually in our relationship to God as well as emotionally and sexually faithful in our relationship to our mate.

[Find Us Faithful - YouTube](#)

O may all who come behind us find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave,
Lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.

— Jon Mohr (1987)

April 25 Th Reading 115 — Luke 1:8-17 — Angel Appears to Zechariah

⁸ Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

Spirit-powered Ministry — As we move into the New Testament, on the weekdays, we will progress chronologically, looking for evidence of the Holy Spirit and His work. We will also consider the letters of the NT in the order in which they were written. The first encounter of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels comes through the message of an angel that appeared before John the Baptist’s father, the priest Zechariah. This godly couple had prayed for many years for a child, but it had not happened. Although they likely stopped asking for a child after Elizabeth was long past childbearing age, the answer came in God’s timing and in His miraculous way. That should encourage us never to give up in praying for things that only God could do. The angel told Zechariah two unusual things about John. The first was that he was to live the life of a Nazarite, being separated to God and abstaining from alcohol (Num. 6:2-3). The second would be miraculous, i.e., being “*filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb*” (Lk. 1:15). It was a filling with power for ministry, similar to “*the spirit and power of Elijah*” (v. 17). John’s primary purpose would be to prepare the way for the Messiah by turning “*the hearts of fathers ... and the disobedient*” (v. 17). The Holy Spirit has a similar purpose in all Christians’ hearts today, that of being part of turning the hearts of other people to Jesus.

[Canticle of the Turning - YouTube](#)

My heart shall sing of the day You bring.
Let the fires of Your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears,
For the dawn draws near,
And the world is about to turn.

— Rory Cooney (1990)

²⁶ *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed^[fn] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"^[fn] ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

³⁴ *And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"^[fn]*

³⁵ *And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[fn] will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant^[fn] of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

ESV Footnotes

(1:27) That is, legally pledged to be married

(1:28) Some manuscripts add *Blessed are you among women!*

(1:34) Greek *since I do not know a man*

(1:35) Some manuscripts add *of you*

(1:38) Greek *bondservant*; also verse 48

The Spirit of Conception — This miraculous conception of Jesus was predicted in the OT (Isa. 7:14; cf. Matt. 1:22-23), but the means for the miracle was revealed here to be that of the Holy Spirit: "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you*" (Lk. 1:35). It was for this reason that "*the child ... will be called holy.*" With the Holy Spirit taking Joseph out of the picture, it became possible for Jesus to be born without the sinful nature shared by all people since Adam and Eve. Naturally, Mary was puzzled by this news, and she asked the angel, "*How will this be, since I am a virgin?*" (v. 34). It had never happened before. It seemed impossible, so the angel said, "*nothing will be impossible with God*" (v. 37). I love Mary's response: "*let it be to me according to your word*" (v. 38). That is how a true servant of the Lord thinks and speaks. We, too, are holy because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. When we see statements in God's Word that are promises to us, we should respond like Mary. For example, when we read that "*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*" (Gal. 5:22-23), we should pray, "*let it be to me according to your word.*" Nothing is impossible with God.

[Be It Unto Me - YouTube](#)

You promised Your Word will deliver;
Lord, we believe it's true.
You promised us joy like a river;
Lord, we receive it from You.
These things You have spoken,
And You're bringing to pass;
This world's disappearing
But Your Word will last.

— Don Moen (2011)

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Demons Fear Holiness — We jump ahead a bit in this weekend’s reading to think about the awesome holiness of Jesus. He met a man in the synagogue who had “*an unclean spirit*” (v. 23). That makes me wonder whether the man was in the synagogue to negatively influence others or to try to escape the demon’s influence. When the demon encountered Jesus, he was fearful because he knew he would be eventually destroyed by God for his rebellion. Why did he publicly cry out that Jesus was “*the Holy One of God*”? (v. 24). Perhaps it was an attempt to try to gain some control over Jesus. In any case, Jesus shut him up. The evil spirit had met its master. Much of the world around us also reacts negatively to holiness because it is so contrary to the unholy way they are living. Holiness is a threat to evil, but holiness is what God wants for us. Peter quoted from the Law when he wrote, “*You shall be holy, for I am holy*” (1 Pet. 1:16; cf. Lev. 11:44-45). God wants us to be like Jesus—a bright contrast to the evil world we live in.

[Take the World but Give Me Jesus - YouTube](#)

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
all its joys are but a name;
But His love abides forever,
through eternal years the same.

Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
Oh, the length and breadth of love!
Oh, the fullness of redemption,
pledge of endless life above!

— Fanny Crosby (b. 1820)