

LENT: IN FAITH WE JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Second Sunday in Lent

March 4, 2007

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17—4:1

Luke 13:31-35

A Fox and a Mother Hen

This week's gospel text is often referred to as the "lament over Jerusalem." The text is couched within a larger segment of Luke's Gospel known as the travel narrative (9:51—19:27). Jesus' Galilean ministry has drawn to a close, and he has now "made up his mind to go to Jerusalem" (9:51, *CEV*), where God's purpose will be accomplished.

Jesus receives a warning that Herod wants to kill him. Herod's reputation as a tyrant has been referenced earlier in Luke's Gospel (3:19, 9:7-9). Jesus responds to the threat by calling Herod a fox and proclaiming his commitment to continue his ministry of healing (13:32). The reference to the three days signals Jesus' impending death and resurrection.

The "fox" cannot deter Jesus from his mission, which will culminate in Jerusalem with his death on a cross. It is in Jerusalem that Jesus will meet his fate – a fate linked to that of the prophets (13:33). The juxtaposition of Herod as "fox" and Jesus as "mother hen" protecting her chicks foreshadows the mounting tension and diabolical confrontation that awaits Jesus as he approaches Jerusalem and the fulfillment of his destiny.

Here, Jesus laments over Jerusalem. Upon his arrival in the Holy City, he will once again weep (19:41-44). Throughout this Lenten season we will journey with Jesus to Jerusalem and follow him to the cross. And we, too, will weep.

But evil will be defeated. Hope will be rekindled. Jesus is the one whom the faithful recognize as God's Messiah, and he will come again in glory and triumph (Luke 21:27). And like those who shouted the words from Psalm 118:26 upon Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem (19:38), we, too, will call out, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

Until that day, we live with the assurance of God's gracious love. As a mother hen protects her young under her wings, we are sheltered by the wings of the Holy One who keeps us secure (Psalm 91:4).

This week's Reflection was prepared by Barbara Bernstengel, who serves on the staff of the American Bible Society as Director of the Education Unit in the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Canada – With prayers for the forthcoming nationwide “Year of the Bible” and for success in partnership initiatives aimed at young people, the homeless, adult non-readers, the visually and hearing impaired, First Nations people, and other ethnic communities, and with prayers for Bible work in Bermuda, a vital partner; **United States** – With thanks to God for the visionary mandate to take God’s Word to everyone on earth by 2016, and with prayers for enlightening people about the role of faith and the Bible through the television series, *American Bible Society Presents*, with prayers for God’s help in building a base of 50,000 volunteers by 2016 and to reach urban youth through the Elementz of Life program, and with prayers for the Gullah Old Testament translation work and the Yu’pik and Inupiat Alaska projects; **Mexico** – With thanks to God for the ability to make the Scriptures available in the mother tongue of some 15 million Tzeltal: Bachajon speakers and 25 million Purepecha, with prayers for translators working on other indigenous translations, and with prayers for projects aimed at street children, abused women, and blind and illiterate people.

Activity Corner: “Eggstra Protection”

Supplies needed: Bible; construction paper (assorted colors); markers, pens or pencils; scissors; basket or bowl.

Read together Psalm 27, a prayer of praise for God’s protection. Identify all the ways God’s protection is described. Invite members of your household to cut out eggs (approximately 4” long) from construction paper and to copy words from the psalm, describing God’s protection, on each of the eggs. Gather all the eggs in a basket, and incorporate these assurances of God’s protection into a closing prayer.