

The Lord assures Abraham of his faithful care, made evident both in abundant descendants and in a land for the Israelites.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS [15:1-12, 17-18]

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 27 [1-6] (*8am in unison, 10am sung*)

- ¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear? *
the LORD is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?
- ² When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, *
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.
- ³ Though an army should encamp against me, *
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
- ⁴ And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.
- ⁵ One thing have I asked of the LORD;
one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;
- ⁶ To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.

Paul urges Christians to avoid idolatry of our earthly bodies, which will be transformed into resurrected life because of Christ's resurrection.

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS [3:17-4:1]

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

The Word of the Lord.