Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Joshua calls Israel to serve God

24:1Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

24:2And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors--Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor--lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.

24:3aThen I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

24:14"Now, therefore, revere the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the LORD.

24:15Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

24:16Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods,

24:17for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed,

24:18and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

24:19But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.

24:20If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good."

24:21And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!"

24:22Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

24:23He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

24:24The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey."

24:25So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Psalm 78:1-7

The power of God

78:1Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

78:2I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,

78:3things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

78:4We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD and his might and the wonders that he has done.

78:5He established a decree in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children,

78:6that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children,

78:7so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The promise of the resurrection

4:13But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

4:14For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.

4:15For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died.

4:16For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

4:17Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever.

4:18Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Matthew 25:1-13

Wise and foolish bridesmaids

25:1"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

25:2Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

25:3When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,

25:4but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

25:5As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.

25:6But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

25:7Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps.

25:8The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

25:9But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'

25:10And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

25:11Later the other young women came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'

25:12But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.'

25:13Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.