

An Order for Morning Prayer

Call to Prayer: (Psalm 96: 2 – 4)

L: Sing to the Lord and bless his Name,

P: proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

L: Declare his glory among the nations

P: and his wonders among all peoples.

L: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;

P: he is more to be feared than all gods.

The request for Presence (Psalm 90:14)

L: Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning,

P: So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

Blessing One: Creation. A Thanksgiving for Creation

(A prayer or scripture reading)

Blessing Two: Revelation (A Scripture Reading)

The Shema

All: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

(Silent reflection)

All: Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time.

The Morning Psalm

(Suggested Psalms: 145; 150; 18; 91; 81; 93; 100; 94; 95)

Response (Silent reflection, meditation, witness, song, or prayer)

Blessing Three: God alone is Eternal Redeemer

Who is like You, Lord, among all that is worshiped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, working wonders?

(Exodus 15:11)

The redeemed sang a new song for You. They sang in chorus at the shore of the sea, acclaiming Your sovereignty: "The Lord shall reign throughout all time." (Exodus 15:18)

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer for the Day

All: Lord God, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your almighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✚✚ **Itinerary:** Jericho, Qasr el Yehud Baptismal Site, Qumran, Masada

We begin this day with the prayer that Jesus himself would have said:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time. Amen

Jericho – Joshua 6:1-21 (The Battle of Jericho); Luke 19:1-10 (Jesus and Zacchaeus)

During the days of Jesus, the ancient site of Jericho was largely abandoned and there was a newer settlement to the south, which had been built by King Herod.

In Jericho Jesus performed the healing of a blind man named Bartimaeus and encountered Zacchaeus. Jericho is believed to be the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world. In ancient times, Joshua sent two spies into the walled city, where they were aided by Rahab, the prostitute. Because of her assistance, she and her family were spared when the Israelites attacked the city.

After seven days of circling the city with the Ark, the Israelite army shouted and the walls of the city came down. Jericho was the first major conquest by the Israelites after they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land. Jericho appears in 58 Bible verses

Jericho Road – Psalm 23

Qasr el Yehud Baptismal site – Mark 1:4-13; Matthew 3:13-17 (Jesus is baptized by John)

According to tradition, this spot at the Jordan River, is both where the Israelites, led by Joshua, crossed the river to enter the Promised Land following the Exodus from Egypt; and where approximately 300 years later, the Prophet Elijah crossed the river in the opposite direction, to be taken into heaven by 'fiery chariots', witnessed by his disciple Elisha.

This is also believed to be the place where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. The exact location for these events cannot be identified but they occurred in the proximity of Jericho. However, since the Dead Sea was a natural barrier between the land of Moab across the Jordan, when approaching from the south, the first option of crossing by land into the Promised Land was from where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea, just to the north of its northern shoreline.

Reflection: As Jesus stands in the river and John baptizes, water pouring over his head and body, Jesus sees heaven rip open, and through that opening came the flutter of wings, the Spirit of the Living God coming down on him like a dove, as if he was being anointed with spirit.

Then Jesus hears a voice, a voice he may never have heard so distinctly before. The voice speaks a message that combines two pieces of Hebrew scripture. First, Psalm 2:7, which was understood to refer to the divine king to come: “This is my beloved son.” Second, Isaiah 42:1, which was understood to refer to a mysterious unnamed figure, the Suffering Servant: With you I am well pleased.” Putting these two images together was the defining moment in Jesus’ life. The voice expressed both who he was and how he was to be who he was. “Yes, you are the Messiah, but the way you will bring about the divine kingdom is through the power of suffering love.”

Jesus may have gone to the Jordan feeling the weight of the task ahead, uncertain of the future, doubting who he was or what he was to do. What Jesus received at the Jordan was the greatest gift God could give, the only thing Jesus lacked to accomplish his work, the one thing Jesus needed to empower the rest of his ministry – affirmation. God baptized him with affirmation: “You are my cherished, loved child, I am extremely proud of you.”

Jesus’ baptism was an experience of God’s claim on his life and an affirmation that invigorated the rest of his life and work. Can remembering and celebrating our baptisms hold such possibility?

God has affirmed your value and called you by name and our world needs you to be the Body of Christ for the world today – giving God’s affirmation, love, hope, and life. Listen for God’s Voice. God is claiming you even now.

Qumran – Isaiah 6:1-8 (God Calls Isaiah)

Qumran is a deserted area at the northwest corner of the Dead Sea. Its cliffs are dotted with caves. In 1947 a young Bedouin boy discovered ancient scrolls, in one of the caves, that became known as the “Dead Sea Scrolls.” The scrolls included a variety of writings, including some copies of Old Testament Biblical texts. The scrolls do not include any Christian or New Testament texts.

Excavations of the area have uncovered remains from 5 periods when Qumran was inhabited. At one time, the Essenes lived there, transcribing texts from the Bible. Some of these texts date back to 200 BC. Also, a continued search of the caves in the area found scrolls of almost every book in the Old Testament.

When Titus and his Roman legions arrived at Jericho, the Essenes hid the scrolls in nearby caves and fled. The dry desert air kept their secret for almost 2000 years.

Reflection: Can you hear your Savior calling? God’s voice has been calling for longer than most of us can imagine. The Dead Sea Scrolls are usually thought to have been produced by a group known as the Essenes. The Essenes were a group who are believed to have literally abandoned Jerusalem in protest against the way the Temple was being run. So, this group went out in the desert to prepare the way of the Lord, following the commands, as they saw it, of the prophet Isaiah. They went to the desert to get away from what they saw to be the worldliness of Jerusalem and the worldliness of the Temple.

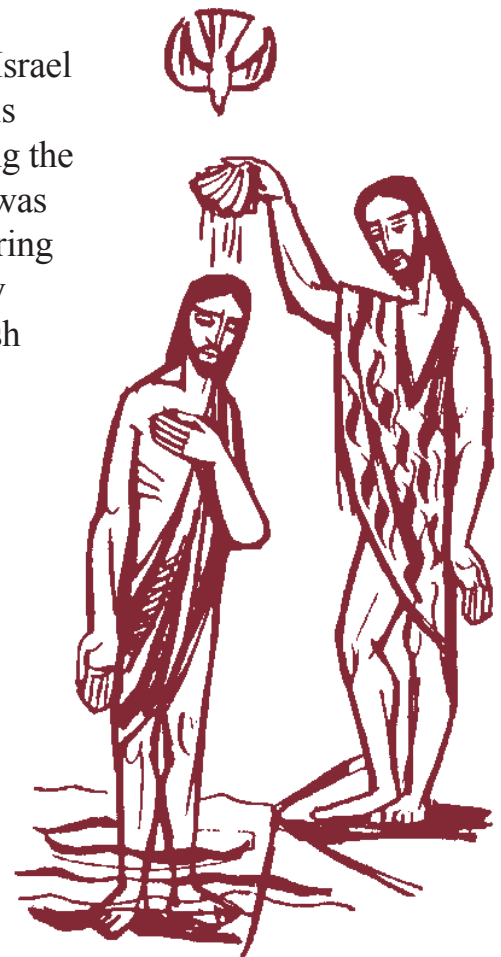
The Essenes were not a new group in Jesus’ day. They been around for a hundred years. But it would appear that the reign of Herod, and the reign of his sons and the Roman Procurators, probably stimulated a new phase of life of the Essene community...and in Jesus’ time it seems that there was a growing protest against Roman rule and worldliness.

The Essene Community at Qumran brings us back to calling. Most calls are not as dramatic as those of Isaiah. Often a call is simply what is called for in a specific season, time, and/or context. Calls are formed and reformed over time as we are formed and transformed by God’s Spirit.

Remember, our God is continuously making all things new...even us and what we are called to do and be in God’s Will. So, let yourself be open to God’s guidance. Repeat a prayer phrase that has been used by God’s servants in scripture: “Here am I, Lord” – then listen deeply and if you choose to act on what you hear from God. End your prayer with “Send Me!”

Masada

Masada is an ancient fortification in the Southern District of Israel situated on top of an isolated rock plateau, akin to a mesa. It is located on the eastern edge of the Judaeen Desert, overlooking the Dead Sea 20 km (12 mi) east of Arad. The siege of **Masada** was one of the final events in the First Jewish–Roman War, occurring from 73 to 74 CE on and around a large hilltop in current-day Israel. The siege was chronicled by Flavius Josephus, a Jewish rebel leader captured by the Romans, in whose service he became a historian.



Call to Prayer:

L: God is a faithful King.

P: Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

All: Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time.

A Reading: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. And these words which I command you this day you shall take to heart. You shall diligently teach them to your children. You shall recite them at home and away, morning and night. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, they shall be a symbol above your eyes, and you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your homes and upon your gates. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*)

Prayer: Help us, our dear Lord, as we come to the end of this day, to lie down in peace; and awaken us to life again. Spread over us Your shelter of peace, guide us with Your good counsel. Save us because of Your mercy. Shield us from enemies and pestilence, from starvation, sword and sorrow. Remove the evil forces that surround us, shelter us in the shadow of Your wings. You, O God, guard us and deliver us. You are a gracious and merciful King. Guard our coming and our going, grant us life and peace, now and always. Praised is the Lord by day and praised by night, praised when we lie down and praised when we rise up. In Your hand are the souls of the living and the dead, the life of every creature, the breath of all flesh. Into Your hand I entrust my spirit: You will redeem me, Lord God of truth. Our God in Heaven, assert the unity of Your rule; affirm Your sovereignty, and reign over us forever. Amen

Biblical Verses (These biblical verses recall God's blessings and protection in ancient times:)

Then Jacob said: "May the angel who has redeemed me from all harm bless the lads. May they carry on my name and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. May they become teeming multitudes upon the earth." And God said: "If you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, doing what is right in His sight, heeding His mitzvot and keeping all His laws, then I will not inflict upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the Lord am your healer."

The angel of the Lord said to Satan: "The Lord rebuke you, Satan. May the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is not this man a brand snatched from the fire?" Behold Solomon carried in his litter — sixty of Israel's heroes are its escort. All of them are skilled swordsmen, all trained at war, each with his sword at the ready to ward off any danger of the night. May the Lord bless you and guard you. May the Lord show you favor and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you kindness and grant you peace.

The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Blessing and Thanksgiving

This is the day that the Lord has made! Thank you for your blessings throughout this day. Thank you for walking with us, Jesus, as we seek to walk more closely with you. Bless us now as we rest and fill us with your spirit this evening in ways that renew our mind, body, soul, and spirit so that we may awaken to your fullness of life ready to learn, and grow as disciples who multiply your transforming love and grace!

*** Adapted from various resources*