

**FIRST READING Deuteronomy 6.10-end**

*A reading from Deuteronomy, Chapter 6.*

When the LORD your God has brought you into the land that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you – a land with fine, large cities that you did not build, houses filled with all sorts of goods that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant – and when you have eaten your fill, take care that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

The LORD your God you shall fear;  
him you shall serve,  
and by his name alone you shall swear.

Do not follow other gods,  
any of the gods of the peoples who are all around you,  
because the LORD your God,  
who is present with you,  
is a jealous God.

The anger of the LORD your God would be kindled against you  
and he would destroy you from the face of the earth.

Do not put the LORD your God to the test,  
as you tested him at Massah.

You must diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God,  
and his decrees, and his statutes that he has commanded you.

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Do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD,  
so that it may go well with you,  
and so that you may go in and occupy the good land that the LORD  
swore to your ancestors to give you,  
thrusting out all your enemies from before you,  
as the LORD has promised.

When your children ask you in time to come,  
"What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances  
that the LORD our God has commanded you?"

then you shall say to your children,

"We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt,  
but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

The LORD displayed before our eyes  
great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt,  
against Pharaoh and all his household.

He brought us out from there in order to bring us in,  
to give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors.

Then the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes,  
to fear the LORD our God, for our lasting good,  
so as to keep us alive, as is now the case.

If we diligently observe this entire commandment  
before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us,  
we will be in the right."

*For the Word of the LORD.*

**SECOND READING**                      **Acts 22.22 – 23.11**

*A reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 22 & 23.*

Up to this point they listened to him [Paul], but then they shouted,

"Away with such a fellow from the earth!

For he should not be allowed to live."

And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks,  
and tossing dust into the air,

the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks,  
and ordered him to be examined by flogging,  
to find out the reason for this outcry against him.

But when they had tied him up with thongs,

Paul said to the centurion who was standing by,

"Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who is uncondemned?"

When the centurion heard that,

he went to the tribune and said to him,

"What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen."

The tribune came and asked Paul,

"Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

And he said, "Yes."

The tribune answered,

"It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship."

Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

Immediately those who were about to examine him drew back from him;  
and the tribune also was afraid,

for he realised that Paul was a Roman citizen  
and that he had bound him.

Since he wanted to find out what Paul was being accused of by the Jews,  
the next day he released him

and ordered the chief priests and the entire council to meet.

He brought Paul down and had him stand before them.

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While Paul was looking intently at the council he said,  
"Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God."  
Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth.

At this Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!

Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law,  
and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?"

Those standing nearby said, "Do you dare to insult God's high priest?"

And Paul said, "I did not realise, brothers, that he was high priest;  
for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.'"

When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees,  
he called out in the council,

"Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees.

I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead."

When he said this,

a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees,  
and the assembly was divided.

(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit;  
but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.)

Then a great clamour arose,

and certain scribes of the Pharisees' group stood up and contended,

"We find nothing wrong with this man.

What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

When the dissension became violent,

the tribune, fearing that they would tear Paul to pieces,

ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force, and bring him into the barracks.

That night the Lord stood near him and said,

"Keep up your courage!

For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem,

so you must bear witness also in Rome."

*For the Word of the LORD.*