

THE LESSONS APPOINTED FOR USE ON WEDNESDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Jonah 3:1–10

Luke 11:29–32

Psalm 51:11–18

Preface of Lent

THE COLLECT

Bless us, O God, in this holy season, in which our hearts seek your help and healing; and so purify us by your discipline that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

OLD TESTAMENT

JONAH 3:1–10

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the

king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish."

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

THE PSALM: PSALM 51:11–18

11. Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
12. Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
13. Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
14. I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
15. Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.
16. Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
17. Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

18. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 11:29–32

When the crowds were increasing, Jesus began to say, “This generation is an evil generation; it asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here! The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!”

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