

READINGS FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

A reading from Daniel 3

Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, 'Ah, Lord, great and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, and for your own sake, Lord, let your face shine upon your desolated sanctuary. Incline your ear, O my God, and hear. Open your eyes and look at our desolation and the city that bears your name. We do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and act and do not delay! For your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people bear your name!'

Psalms 51

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, So that you are justified in your sentence and righteous in your judgement.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

I have been wicked even from my birth, a sinner when my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire truth deep within me and shall make me understand wisdom in the depths of my heart. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

Turn your face from my sins and blot out all my misdeeds. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy spirit from me. Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your gracious spirit; then shall I teach your ways to the wicked and sinners shall return to you.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

Deliver me from my guilt, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it; you take no delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

O be favourable and gracious to Zion; build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will accept sacrifices offered in righteousness, the burnt offerings and oblations; then shall they offer up bulls on your altar.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

A reading from John 8:1-11

While Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground.

When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

She said, 'No one, sir.'

And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'



To CONGREE is to agree together.
To CONGRESCE is to grow together.
To CONJURATE is to swear an oath together.
To COLLACHRYMATE is to cry together.
To CONFABULATE is to talk together.
To CONFEDERATE is to unite together.