



# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 99

[Worship]

1 The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! 2 The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples. 3 Let them praise your great and awesome name. Holy is he! 4 Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. 5 Extol the LORD our God; worship at his footstool. Holy is he! 6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name. They cried to the LORD, and he answered them. 7 He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; they kept his decrees, and the statutes that he gave them. 8 O LORD our God, you answered them; you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings. 9 Extol the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy.

---

### Consider:

[Words]

These texts witness to the overwhelming reality of God who refuses all of our explanatory categories and who meets us in awesome inscrutability. The Old Testament texts appeal to the two defining traditions of Israel's faith. The Exodus reading concerns the holy mountain (Sinai) where Moses is permitted to rendezvous with God, a tradition that evidences God's majesty, rule, and effective governance in the world.

The reading in 2 Peter brings this together with the Davidic tradition of the Psalms (Psalm 2 designates David as God's "son" who will be God's governing agent in the world). In verse 18 there is an appeal to the Mount of Transfiguration from the gospel reading, behind which is the experience of Moses in the cloud of Mt. Sinai. In verse 17, the Davidic designation of the psalm is reiterated with reference to Jesus.

Both Sinai and David are drawn to the wondrous authority of Jesus. These claims for the tradition are framed in verses 16 and 20 by reference to "cleverly devised myths" and "one's own interpretation."

The church faces the temptation of going astray, either by available ideologies or by subjective private reading. The church, in its interpretation and testimony, is under the Spirit's authority and cannot have the gospel on its own willful terms.

Mathew's gospel narrative exhibits Jesus as the one who commands and assuages fearfulness among his disciples. In the end it is "Jesus himself alone" who matters (Matthew 17:8). It is enough to have the rule of Christ "as a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19).

– Walter Bruggemann

---

[Scripture]

## Matthew 17.1-9

1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. 3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." 8 And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

---