

About the Readings on Sept. 1, 2024

***Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

Sunday, August 28–September 3 Lectionary 22

We are back to Mark, and today hear a debate between him and James about evil: what bears most blame for sin? We take comfort in sharing together the good and clean food of holy communion.

[Deuteronomy 4:1-2, & 6-9](#)

The reading from Deuteronomy presents the traditional Jewish belief that God has given the law, which is to be obeyed faithfully. The authority behind the law is God’s gracious care in hearing the cries of the people.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

In response to the reading from Deuteronomy, we sing together [Psalm 15](#). Who is clean enough to enter the temple? Nobody. We look to Christ, who alone can never be overthrown.

[James 1:17-27](#)

This Sunday begins five weeks of semicontinuous reading of James, which seems in direct debate with Paul as to the role of Jewish, or any, law within the Christian community. Mark has claimed that sin comes from within: James says it comes from the outside world, which Christians need to avoid. Churches have taught that both are true.

[Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23](#)

This gospel reading exemplifies the dictum to avoid literalist interpretations: the point is not that Christians can eat with dirty hands and dishes. The passage leaves unanswered the question as to which parts of the Jewish ethical tradition remain valid for Christians. But the force of the reading is clear: it is the individual human heart that is to blame for sin, not outside sources or influences. The reading includes both what Lutherans call “law”—each of us is to blame—and what Lutherans call “gospel”—Jesus is eating with all of us disciples.

