

A reading from the first book of Kings.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God,  
he came to a cave, and spent the night there.  
Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,  
“Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord,  
for the Lord is about to pass by.”  
Now there was a great wind,  
so strong that it was splitting mountains  
and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord,  
but the Lord was not in the wind;  
and after the wind an earthquake,  
but the Lord was not in the earthquake;  
and after the earthquake a fire,  
but the Lord was not in the fire;  
and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.  
When Elijah heard it,  
he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out  
and stood at the entrance of the cave.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## SECOND READING – A 19

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:  
I am speaking the truth in Christ  
I am not lying;  
my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit.  
I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.  
For I could wish that I myself were accursed  
and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people,  
my kindred according to the flesh.  
They are children of Israel,  
and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants,  
the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;  
to them belong the patriarchs,  
and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Christ,  
who is over all,  
God be blessed forever. Amen.



Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – A 19

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

*Glory to you, O Lord*

Immediately after feeding the crowd  
with the five loaves and two fish,  
Jesus made the disciples get into the boat  
and go on ahead to the other side,  
while he dismissed the crowds.  
And after he had dismissed the crowds,  
he went up the mountain by himself to pray.  
When evening came, he was there alone,  
but by this time the boat, battered by the waves,  
was far from the land,  
for the wind was against them.  
And early in the morning  
Jesus came walking toward them on the sea.  
But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea,  
they were terrified, saying,  
“It is a ghost!”  
And they cried out in fear.  
But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said,  
“Take heart, it is I;  
do not be afraid.”  
Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you,  
command me to come to you on the water.”  
Jesus said, “Come.”  
So Peter got out of the boat,  
started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus,  
but when he noticed the strong wind,  
he became frightened, and beginning to sink,  
he cried out, “Lord, save me!”  
Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him,  
saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”  
When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.  
And those in the boat worshipped him, saying,  
“Truly you are the Son of God.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### Reading I: I Kings 19:9, 11-13

This passage has obviously been chosen to match the gospel story of the appearance of Jesus to his disciples on the lake. In each story an encounter with God/Christ takes place after the stilling of a storm.

Elijah has slain the prophets of Baal, and Jezebel has threatened his life in revenge. He retreats to Mount Horeb to commune with God, as Moses had done before him (there are distinct parallels in the narrative—the forty days and the lodging in the cave).

Y(HWH) is not in the storm, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the gentle breeze after the storm. The place of encounter with God is not in the awesome events of nature but in the word of revelation.

At the same time, however, after the encounter of revelation has occurred, the storm, earthquake, and fire can be seen as the harbingers of God's revelation.

### Responsorial Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

The use of this psalm as a response to the passage about Elijah is evidently suggested by the first two lines of the first stanza: "Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people."

The origin of this psalm is in dispute, and its original reference is uncertain. Its affinities (see its soteriological vocabulary) seem to be with Second Isaiah, and a reasonable assumption would be that it refers to the impending return from exile. In the Christian liturgy it is used most frequently in Advent and at Christmas.

### Reading II: Romans 9:1-5

In our readings in course from Romans, we now reach the section in which Paul wrestles with the problem of the place of Israel in salvation history (Rom 9:9-11). Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah has been a great shock to Paul, and he uses very strong language in praying for their salvation (Rom 9:3).

From Rom 9:4 on, Paul lists the great prerogatives of Israel in salvation history—eight of them, culminating in the Messiah himself and ending in a doxology. The reading of the NRSV margin is followed here.

The RSV text inserts a period after "Christ" and relegates the doxology to a separate sentence, thus: "God who is over all be blessed for ever." Both renderings are possible renderings of the Greek, but it is unlikely that Paul would have called Christ "God" without qualifications, as in the NRSV reading.

The whole subject has been well discussed by Bultmann in his essay “The Confession of the World Council of Churches.” [Webmaster note: The NRSV and current NAB lectionary employ a similar rendering.]

In his attitude toward his fellow Jews, Paul strikes a mean between two diametrically opposite attitudes that have characterized Christian thought at different periods—anti-Semitism and a complete “ecumenical” acceptance of Judaism as a valid religion and an abandonment of any hope for their conversion to faith in Jesus Christ.

Both attitudes are seemingly a betrayal of the gospel as Paul understands it. His attitude is in continuity with both Moses (Exodus 32:32) and Elijah (see the sequel to the first reading in 1 Kings 19:14-18).

### **Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33**

Since Matthew has taken over the walking on the water from Mark, we must pay special attention to Matthew’s alterations. Two major changes may be noted: (1) the addition of the dialogue between Peter and Jesus, and the walking of Peter on the water; (2) instead of ending with the disciples’ misunderstanding of Jesus, the story now ends in a confession of faith: “Truly you are the Son of God.”

It is reasonable to suppose, with G. D. Kilpatrick, that Matthew is drawing upon a special Petrine tradition, akin to the material he has added in Mt 16:17-19. In that case, the Peter episode may be another part of a story of Jesus’ resurrection appearance to Peter.

The effect of these changes is to alter completely the thrust of the pericope. In Mark it was an element in the evangelist’s theme of the disciples’ misunderstanding, designed to play down the interpretation of Jesus’ miracles as epiphanies in opposition to a “divine man” christology.

This is no longer an acute problem for Matthew, so he has altered the interpretation of the scene.

It becomes a paradigm of discipleship. The boat represents the Church; the storm, the persecution through which Matthew’s community is passing. Jesus appears and challenges Peter, the disciple par excellence, to trust him. Peter is afraid and cries out, “Lord, save me.”

Jesus, half rebuking, half encouraging him, says: “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” The Lord brings Peter to safety, and all the disciples make the adoring confession “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Reginald H. Fuller