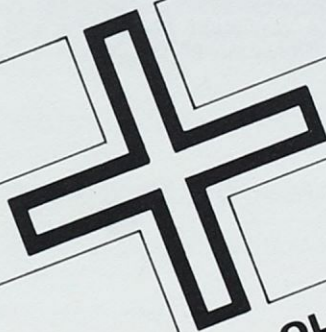


SERMONS ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS
FROM THE NEW
LECTIONARY AND CALENDAR

AUGSBURG sermons



OLD TESTAMENT
LESSONS

SERIES A

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PREFACE

"Do I dare to preach a whole year's sermons on the Old Testament lessons?" That might seem an appropriate first question for a pastor making plans for an approaching church year. But there is another question which deserves priority, "Do I dare not to?" Theoretically, we confess that the Old Testament is authoritative for Christian faith and life; when it comes to choosing the text for Sunday's sermon, however, it becomes a decidedly second-class citizen all too often. Only you know how it is with your people and with your own heart, but it has often been observed that each generation must do battle against the temptation to demote the Old Testament from any functional place in the canon.

Since 1958 the current generation of Lutherans has made tremendous strides overcoming the dubious heritage of its immediate predecessors which had denied the Old Testament its appropriate place. It was in 1958 that the *Service Book and Hymnal* made the reading of an Old Testament lesson common practice for Lutheranism in America. With the coming of the new three-year lectionary in 1973 an even wider range of Old Testament material became standard diet for our congregations. And now that large numbers of pastors have rejoiced in and profited from working their way through the Gospel and Epistle pericopes, the time is ripe to commit ourselves to preaching on the Old Testament lessons. (In order that Old Testament texts might be provided for the entire year, the Psalms for the Sundays of Easter have been used as sermon texts to replace the lessons from the book of Acts prescribed for that season.)

There will be the same joy and profit to be found here. Actually, both joy and profit will likely be greater! The fact that by and large both pastor and people are less familiar with most Old Testament texts is a powerful advantage. We are all curious about the unfamiliar—and curiosity means enjoyable learning and attentive listening! And, as each of us knows well, when we ourselves genuinely rejoice at new insights which have broadened our faith, that joy as well as the insight has a stimulating effect on what we say—and even the way we say it! To make the hearts