

rules on keeping the Sabbath holy and on ritual purity. The Samaritans, like the Jews, keep the more ancient holidays, such as Passover and Yom Kippur (the day of atonement). Samaritans do not observe other Jewish feasts which post-date the Jewish/Samaritan split. These include Purim and Hanukkah. Purim celebrates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, the royal vizier to the Persian king Xerxes I, who was planning to have all of Persia's Jewish subjects killed: see the Book of Esther, usually dated to the 5th century BC. Hannukah commemorates the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple from the Seleucid (a Greek state) Empire in the 2nd century BC. What happened to the Samaritans? It is impossible to compress two thousand years into one final paragraph. Notable events are that their temple was rebuilt at Gerizim about 135 AD. Under the Byzantine emperor Zeno (5th century) Samaritans and Jews were massacred and the Samaritan temple again destroyed. The emperor Justinian crushed a Samaritan revolt in the 6th century and they were then outlawed, their population dwindling from close to a million to near extinction. Nevertheless they survived, and continue to survive, in small numbers. They are estimated at about 650 people and still live on Mount Gerizim, their holy place for some three millennia, following the beliefs that they have held throughout that period.

**Stephen S**

**Entrance antiphon:** Within your will, O Lord, all things are established, and there is none that can resist your will. For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth, and all that is held within the circle of heaven; you are the Lord of all.

**First Reading:** Habakkuk 1: 2-3; 2-4

**Psalms 94: Response:** O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

**Second Reading:** 2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!

**Gospel:** Luke 17:5-10

**Memorial Acclamation:** Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

**Communion Antiphon:** The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him.



## Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C, 2022

### Weekly Reflection: Samaritans and Galileans (3): Samaritan religious beliefs

Last week I gave an overview of how, during the millennium before Christ, Jews and Samaritans had separated geographically after the reign of Solomon, the Jews in Judea to the south, centred on Jerusalem, and the Samaritans further north, up to but excluding Galilee. The differing effects of the Assyrian invasion of Samaria (8th century BC), the Babylonian exile and return of the Jews (6th century BC) and the greater cultural Hellenisation and Romanisation of the Samaritans, relative to the Jews (4th century BC onwards), all compounded certain religious divisions between the two societies. These had their origins in the Samaritan belief that Eli, who had been responsible for the anointing of the House of David, was a false priest. Samaritans did not accept David's Jerusalem as the holy city, their holy place being Mount Gerizim. A temple they had built there in the 4th century BC had been destroyed by the Jews in the 2nd century BC. In addition, the Samaritans did not accept the validity of any Old Testament books apart from the Torah (the first 5: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Each people considered that the other had been wrongly influenced by paganism: the Samaritans said to be by the Assyrian invaders and the Jews by their Babylonian exile. This history explains the tension, indeed enmity, between Jews and Samaritans at the time of Christ and why the few Samaritan references in the Gospels are so powerful. However, there was (and remains) much in common between Jews and Samaritans in matters of religion. Both accept the Torah, though the Samaritan Torah does differ in some respects from the Jewish Torah. Both are fervent monotheists, believing in the one God of Israel and holding Moses in high esteem. It is common ground between them that God made a covenant with the people of Israel based on the Law of Moses. The Samaritans, like the Jews at that time, had (and the Samaritans still have) a hereditary priesthood. Although they differ vehemently as to its situation, both believe in a single, central holy place. Both also circumcise male children and have strict