

**1. Read (Seek)** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate (Find)** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray (Ask)** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate (Taste)** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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# Quick Connect

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**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## **Gospel Reading – Matthew 5:38-48 – Roman Missal**

Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand over your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow. “You have heard that it was said, *You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy*. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

## **Spiritual Reading**

*From St John of Damascus on Islam by Kevin P. Edgecomb[1]*

**Please Note:** *St. John of Damascus was born in 676AD, 44 years after the dead of Muhammad.*

And there is also the up until now strong and people-deceiving superstition of the Ishmaelites, being the forerunner of Antichrist. And it is born from Ishmael, who was born from Hagar to Abraham, from which they are called Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. And they call them Saracens, as from Σαρραξ κενοι (those empty of Sarah), because of what was said by Hagar to the angel: “Sarah has sent me away empty.” So then, these were idolaters and revered the morning star and Aphrodite, who they indeed named Khabar in their own language, which means great. Therefore, until the time of Heraclius, they were plainly idolaters. From that time and until now came up among them a false prophet called Mamed, who, having encountered the Old and New Testament, as it seems, having conversed with an Arian monk, he put together his own heresy. And under the pretext of seeming pious, attracting (?) people, he reported that a book was sent down to him from heaven by God. Therefore some of the compositions written by him in a book, worthy of laughter, which he handed down to them as an object of reverence. He says there is one God, the Maker of all things, neither having been begotten nor having begotten. He says Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, only a creation and servant, and that he

was born without seed from Mary the sister of Moses and Aaron. For he says the Word of God and the Spirit went into Mary and she bore Jesus who was a prophet and servant of God. And that the Jews, acting against the law, wanted to crucify him and having seized (him), they crucified his shadow. For Christ himself, they say, was not crucified nor did he die, for God took him to himself into heaven because he loved him. And he says this, that when Christ went up into the heavens, God questioned him, saying, "O Jesus, did you say that 'I am the Son of God and God?'" And Jesus, they say, answered, "Have mercy on me, O Lord; you know that I did not say (that), nor am I too proud to be your servant, but men who have turned aside wrote that I said this word and lied about me, and are wandering." And God, they say, answered him, "I know that you did not say this word." And many other astonishing sayings in this same writing, worthy of laughter, he boasts God sent down to him. But we say, "And who is the witness that God gave the writing to him, or which of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise?" And they are at a loss, as Moses received on Mount Sinai, in the sight of all the people, the Law of God who appeared in cloud and fire and darkness and storm. And that all the prophets, from Moses and onward, foretold the coming of Christ, and that Christ is God, and the Son of God, being flesh, will come, and will be crucified, and will die, and will rise again, and he will be the judge of the living and the dead. And we say, "Why did your prophet not come in this way, with others witnessing about him, nor coming among you as God gave the Law to Moses on a smoking mountain with all the people watching, and, as you claim, provide this book, so you also might have certainty?" They answer that God does as he wills. We know this too, we say. But, we ask, how did the writing come down to your prophet? And they answer that while he was asleep the writing came upon him. And we jokingly say to them that since he received the writing while sleeping, and did not sense the activity, in him is fulfilled the popular proverb ("You are spinning me dreams"). Again we ask, "Why, when he commanded us in your writing not to do or to receive anything without witnesses, did you not ask him that 'First you show through witnesses whether you are a prophet, and that you came from God, and which Scripture witnesses about you?'" They are silent, ashamed. To whom we say, "For good reason! Since it is not allowed for you to marry a woman without witnesses, nor to buy, nor acquire property (?), nor do you allow yourselves to have a donkey or an animal unwitnessed. For you indeed also have wives, and properties, and donkeys, and all the rest through witnesses, and you have only a faith and a writing unwitnessed. For he who handed this down to you has in no way an assurance, nor is any previous witness of him known, but he received this also while sleeping." And they call us *Associators*, because, they say, we introduce an associate to God by saying Christ is the Son of God and God. To whom we say that this is what the Prophets and Scripture have handed down. And you, as you insist, accept the Prophets. If, therefore, we are wrong saying Christ is the Son of God, they also are who taught and handed it down to us. And some of them indeed say that we have allegorized the Prophets, imputing (sayings) to them. Others say that the Hebrews, hating (us), have deceived us, having written as from the Prophets, so that we might be destroyed.

And again we say to them, "You say that Christ is the Word of God and the Spirit. How then do you rebuke us as 'Associators'? For the Word and the Spirit are each of them unseparated from Him in Whom they have been born. If, therefore, in God is His Word, it is obvious he is also God. But if he is outside of God, as according to you, God is irrational ( $\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ) and lifeless ( $\alpha\rho\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ). Therefore, in avoiding to associate with God, you have mutilated him. But it would be better for you to say that he has an associate than to mutilate him, and represent him like a stone, or wood, or any of those insensible things. Thus, indeed, falsely accusing us, you call us 'Associators.' But we call you '*Mutilators of God.*'" They also accuse us as idolaters for reverencing the Cross, which they despise. And we say to them, "Why, therefore, do you rub yourselves against the stone by your Khabathan, and love kissing the stone?" And some of them say Abraham had relations with Hagar upon it, and others that he tied up the camel around it when about to sacrifice Isaac. And we respond to them, "The Scripture says that there was a mountain like a grove, and wood from which also Abraham cut for the whole burnt offering on which he laid Isaac, and that he left the donkeys with the servants. Therefore, from what source is your foolish saying? For there is no wood of a forest lying in that place, nor travelling by donkeys." They are indeed ashamed. Nevertheless, they say the stone is of Abraham. Then we say, "If it is of Abraham, as you foolishly say, therefore are you not ashamed, kissing this thing only because Abraham had relations with a woman upon it, or that he tied up a camel? But you censure us because we show reverence to the Cross of Christ through which the strength of the demons and the deceit of the Accuser is destroyed?" And this thing which they say is a stone is the head of Aphrodite which they revered, who they also called Khabar, upon which also even up to now the shadow of an inscription appears to careful observers. As we have said, this Mamed composed many foolish sayings, and he laid upon each of them a title, like the writing "The Women," in which also he plainly legislates (for a man) to take four wives and one thousand concubines if he is able, however many he might put under his hand, aside from the four wives. And he legislated to divorce whichever one he wishes, or if he wishes, also to take care of another, for this very reason: Mamed had a companion named Zeïd. This one had a beautiful wife, whom Mamed loved. Therefore, when they were sitting together, Mamed said, "Oh, by the way, God has ordered me to take your wife." And he answered, "You are the Apostle; do as God has said to you. Take my wife." Or rather, so we might tell it from the beginning, he said to him, "God has ordered me, that you divorce your wife" And he divorced. And after several days, he says, "But God has ordered that I will also take her." Then he took (her) and committed adultery with her (and) made this law: "He who wills may divorce his wife, but if after divorcing, he would return to her, another must marry her; for it is not allowed to take (her back) if she has not been married by another. And even if a brother divorces, let his brother marry her, if he is willing." And in the same writing, he transmits this message: "Plough the land which God has given to you, and beautify it" and do this, and in this way—so I might not say all the obscene things as he did.