

Recessional Worksheet

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1

God of our fathers, known of old —
Lord of our far-flung battle line —
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

2

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The Captains and the Kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

3

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

4

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe —
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

5

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard —
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
Amen.

Vocabulary In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

- 1: far-flung, awful, dominion, Hosts, lest
- 2: tumult, depart, Thine, contrite
- 3: Lo, pomp, Nineveh, Tyre
- 4: Thee, boastings, Gentiles
- 5: heathen, reeking tube, iron shard, valiant, frantic, Thy, mercy, Amen

Word Pictures Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

- 1: far-flung battle line, awful hand, palm and pine
- 2: shouting dies, Kings depart, humble and contrite heart
- 3: navies melt, dune and headland, pomp of yesterday, Judge of Nations
- 4: drunk ... with power
- 5: reeking tube, iron shard

Mechanics Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker?

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

1: To whom is the author appealing to? What is the author concerned about in the last line?

2: What do you think the author is referring to in the first two lines, "The tumult and the shouting dies, The Captains and the Kings depart"? Did you notice the term "Thine" and to Whom is it referring? What is the ancient sacrifice according to the author? Do you agree? Again, what is the author concerned about in the last line?

3: Did the first two lines remind you of anything else? Explain and discuss "all our pomp of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre." What happened to Nineveh and Tyre? Where were they located? Explain Judge of the Nations. Compare and contrast to Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" and Job 41:11, "Who hath prevented Me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine." Check out Exodus 9:29. Again, what is the author concerned about in the last line?

4: The phrase "drunk with sight of power" is very interesting. Can you think of specific individuals, past or present, in history that have been drunk with power? (e.g., Attila the Hun?, Nero?, etc.) Explain and discuss "Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe." Who uses boastings? Do you think the author is approving or disapproving of boastings? What do you think "the Law" is? Again, what is the author concerned about in the last line?

5: What is meant by "heathen heart"? A "reeking tube" and "iron shard" refer to cannon. Why do you think the author used these terms? What did the author refer to as valiant? According to the author, who is to call? Compare / contrast the use of the term guard to Isaiah 56:10, "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." What does the author request in the last line?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

What Does the Bible Say?

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the five stanzas.

What does the Bible have to say about Nineveh and Tyre? What is meant by divine judgment? What is its purpose? Read about what happened to Jehoram in 2 Chronicles 21:12-20. Discuss Jeremiah 7:30-34 in light of this poem. Site other Biblical examples of divine judgment.

The author mentioned “guarding calls not Thee to guard.” What does the Bible have to say about guards and watchmen? Who(m) are to be the watchmen or guards of society? Discuss this in light of Isaiah 56:10, “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.” Should we have the same concerns that the author mentions in this poem? Why?

The Author/Poet

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author’s name for this poem is Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). He was born in Bombay, India, on 30 December 1865, and died in London 17 January 1936. Kipling was educated in England and, in 1882, went out to India to join the *Civil and Military Gazette*. In 1889, he left India and travelled. By 1892, Mr. Kipling married Miss Caroline Balestier, an American. The couple lived in Vermont for 4 years and then settled in Rottingham-near-the-sea. In 1907, Mr. Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and was honored by Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Paris, and Strasbourg. He was a prolific and versatile writer of fiction, poetry, and journalism. His best known works are *Plain Tales from the Hills* (Calcutta 1888), *The Light that Failed* (Calcutta 1890), *Barrack Room Ballads* (1892), *Captains Courageous*, and *Kim* (1901).

The ***Recessional*** (*A Victorian Ode*) is from ***The Five Nations*** (1903) and was originally published in *The Times*, 17 July 1897.

Geography

Locate Bombay, India, London, England, Vermont, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburg, Paris, and the United States of America on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Rottingham-near-the-sea and Strasbourg on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast the weather of India, Britain, and/or Vermont with your own for one week.

Make a meal from India, Britain, and/or Vermont for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each stanza. (Note: that will be five different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the poem and the author’s name which will be your book’s cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, “interview” various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., Queen Victoria, Nineveh/Tyre citizens, British soldier, the centurian in the newer testament , etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents’ permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author’s view of the impact of *The Recessional*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Rudyard Kipling and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.