

Psalm & Readings Thursday 21st January 2021

Psalm 76

In Judah God is known,
his name is great in Israel.
His abode has been established in Salem,
his dwelling-place in Zion.
There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war.
Glorious are you, more majestic
than the everlasting mountains.
The stout-hearted were stripped of their spoil;
they sank into sleep;
none of the troops
was able to lift a hand.
At your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both rider and horse lay stunned.
But you indeed are awesome!
Who can stand before you
when once your anger is roused?
From the heavens you uttered judgement;
the earth feared and was still
when God rose up to establish judgement,
to save all the oppressed of the earth.
Human wrath serves only to praise you,
when you bind the last bit of your wrath
around you.
Make vows to the Lord your God, and perform
them;
let all who are around him bring gifts
to the one who is awesome,
who cuts off the spirit of princes,
who inspires fear in the kings of the earth.

Amos 9

I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he
said:
Strike the capitals until the thresholds shake,
and shatter them on the heads of all the
people;
and those who are left I will kill with the sword;
not one of them shall flee away,
not one of them shall escape.

Though they dig into Sheol,
from there shall my hand take them;
though they climb up to heaven,
from there I will bring them down.
Though they hide themselves on the top of
Carmel,
from there I will search out and take them;
and though they hide from my sight at the
bottom of the sea,
there I will command the sea-serpent, and it
shall bite them.
And though they go into captivity in front of their
enemies,
there I will command the sword, and it shall kill
them;
and I will fix my eyes on them
for harm and not for good.
The Lord, God of hosts,
he who touches the earth and it melts,
and all who live in it mourn,
and all of it rises like the Nile,
and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt;
who builds his upper chambers in the heavens,
and founds his vault upon the earth;
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out upon the surface of the
earth—
the Lord is his name.
Are you not like the Ethiopians to me,
O people of Israel? says the Lord.
Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,
and the Philistines from Caphtor and the
Arameans from Kir?
The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful
kingdom,
and I will destroy it from the face of the earth
—except that I will not utterly destroy the
house of Jacob,
says the Lord.
For lo, I will command,
and shake the house of Israel among all the
nations
as one shakes with a sieve,
but no pebble shall fall to the ground.
All the sinners of my people shall die by the

sword,
who say, 'Evil shall not overtake or meet us.'
On that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen,
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins,
and rebuild it as in the days of old;
in order that they may possess the remnant of
Edom
and all the nations who are called by my name,
says the Lord who does this.
The time is surely coming, says the Lord,
when the one who ploughs shall overtake the
one who reaps,
and the treader of grapes the one who sows
the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and
inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be plucked up
out of the land that I have given them,
says the Lord your God.

1 Corinthians 7: 25-40

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no

possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly towards his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my judgement she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.