

Psalm & Readings Wednesday 20th January 2021

Psalm 81

Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
Raise a song, sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our festal day.
For it is a statute for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
He made it a decree in Joseph,
when he went out over the land of Egypt.
I hear a voice I had not known:
'I relieved your shoulder of the burden;
your hands were freed from the basket.
In distress you called, and I rescued you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
Hear, O my people, while I admonish you;
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
There shall be no strange god among you;
you shall not bow down to a foreign god.
I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.
'But my people did not listen to my voice;
Israel would not submit to me.
So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts,
to follow their own counsels.
O that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!
Then I would quickly subdue their enemies,
and turn my hand against their foes.
Those who hate the Lord would cringe before
him,
and their doom would last for ever.
I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy
you.'

Amos 8

This is what the Lord God showed me—a basket
of summer fruit. He said, 'Amos, what do you
see?' And I said, 'A basket of summer fruit.' Then
the Lord said to me,
'The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will never again pass them by.
The songs of the temple shall become wailings on
that day,'
says the Lord God;
'the dead bodies shall be many,
cast out in every place. Be silent!
Hear this, you that trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
saying, 'When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain;
and the sabbath,
so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah small and the shekel
great,
and practise deceit with false balances,
buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.'
The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.
Shall not the land tremble on this account,
and everyone mourn who lives in it,
and all of it rise like the Nile,
and be tossed about and sink again, like the
Nile of Egypt?
On that day, says the Lord God,
I will make the sun go down at noon,
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
I will turn your feasts into mourning,
and all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on all loins,
and baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for an only son,
and the end of it like a bitter day.
The time is surely coming, says the Lord God,
when I will send a famine on the land;
not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;

they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord,

but they shall not find it.

In that day the beautiful young women and the young men

shall faint for thirst.

Those who swear by Ashimah of Samaria,

and say, 'As your god lives, O Dan',

and, 'As the way of Beer-sheba lives'—

they shall fall, and never rise again.

1 Corinthians 7:1-24

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: 'It is well for a man not to touch a woman.' But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. This I say by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practising self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she

should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife. However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.

Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.