

Psalm and Readings Tuesday 22nd October 2024

Psalm 8

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your
foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your
fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have
established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of
them,
mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of
your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Judith 5:1 – 6:4

It was reported to Holofernes, the general of the Assyrian army, that the people of Israel had prepared for war and had closed the mountain passes and fortified all the high hilltops and set up barricades in the plains. In great anger he called together all the princes of Moab and the commanders of Ammon and all the governors of the coastland, and said to them, 'Tell me, you Canaanites, what people is this that lives in the hill country? What towns do they inhabit? How large is their army, and in what does their power and strength consist? Who rules over them as king and leads their army? And why have they alone, of all who live in the west, refused to come out and meet me?'

Then Achior, the leader of all the Ammonites, said to him, 'May my lord please listen to a report from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth about this people that lives in the mountain district near you. No falsehood shall come from your servant's mouth. These people are descended from the Chaldeans. At one time they lived in Mesopotamia, because they did not wish to follow the gods of their ancestors who were in Chaldea. Since they had abandoned the ways of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know, their ancestors drove them out from the presence of their gods. So they fled to Mesopotamia, and lived there for a long time. Then their God commanded them to leave the place where they were living and go to the land of Canaan. There they settled, and grew very prosperous in gold and silver and very much livestock. When a famine spread over the land of Canaan they went down to Egypt and lived there as long as they had food. There they became so great a multitude that their race could not be counted. So the king of Egypt became hostile to them; he exploited them and forced them to make bricks. They cried out to their God, and he afflicted the whole land of Egypt with incurable plagues. So the Egyptians drove them out of their sight. Then God dried up the Red Sea before them, and he led them by the way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. They drove out all the people of the desert, and took up residence in the land of the Amorites, and by their might destroyed all the inhabitants of Heshbon; and crossing over the Jordan they took possession of all the hill country. They drove out before them the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Shechemites, and all the Gergesites, and lived there a long time.

'As long as they did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them. But when they departed from the way he had prescribed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captive to a foreign land. The temple of their God was razed to the ground, and their towns were occupied by their enemies. But now they have returned to their God, and have come back from the places where they were scattered, and have

occupied Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and have settled in the hill country, because it was uninhabited.

‘So now, my master and lord, if there is any oversight in this people and they sin against their God and we find out their offence, then we can go up and defeat them. But if they are not a guilty nation, then let my lord pass them by; for their Lord and God will defend them, and we shall become the laughing-stock of the whole world.’

When Achior had finished saying these things, all the people standing around the tent began to complain; Holofernes’ officers and all the inhabitants of the sea coast and Moab insisted that he should be cut to pieces. They said, ‘We are not afraid of the Israelites; they are a people with no strength or power for making war. Therefore let us go ahead, Lord Holofernes, and your vast army will swallow them up.’

When the disturbance made by the people outside the council had died down, Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, said to Achior in the presence of all the foreign contingents:

‘Who are you, Achior and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today and tell us not to make war against the people of Israel because their God will defend them? What god is there except Nebuchadnezzar? He will send his forces and destroy them from the face of the earth. Their God will not save them; we the king’s servants will destroy them as one man. They cannot resist the might of our cavalry. We will overwhelm them; their mountains will be drunk with their blood, and their fields will be full of their dead. Not even their footprints will survive our attack; they will utterly perish. So says King Nebuchadnezzar, lord of the whole earth. For he has spoken; none of his words shall be in vain.

1 Timothy 6:11-end

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.

Grace be with you.

The Collect of the Day

Grant, we beseech you, merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.