

All Saints

November 2, 2003

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whose people are knit together in one holy church, the body of Christ our Lord: Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you; through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one god, now and forever.

Isaiah 25:6-9

{6} On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. {7} And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. {8} Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. {9} It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

6: Yahweh will provide a banquet to celebrate his victory over the enemies of his people.

7. *rich food filled with marrow...well-aged wines strained clear*: Perhaps not the ideal dietary expectations in our time, but an image of the splendid arrangements God makes for the well-being of his people.

7. *this mountain*: The Holy Mountain which encompasses both Sinai and Zion.

the shroud...the sheet...he will swallow up death forever: The universal quality of human life is characterized by the specter of death. As his part of the rich banquet Yahweh offers his people, he will swallow up death, forever. Paul cites this verse in 1 Corinthians 15:54. Death became a part of human experience as a consequence of human disobedience. Now it is abolished as evidence of the salvation Yahweh as prepared for his people.

8. *tears...disgrace*: With the annihilation of death, "the doom pronounced in Deut. xxviii. 37" will be reversed. [1]

9. *we have waited for him*: The people waited in exile for Yahweh to act and restore them. Now the rejoice in his salvation.

Or Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9

{1} But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. {2} In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, {3} and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. {4} For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. {5} Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; {6} like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. {7} In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. {8} They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. {9} Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

1. the souls of the righteous: The soul is understood as the part of a human being which survives death, that is immortal. This is contrary to the biblical view of human nature which is unitary, and in which death is absolute, absent the intervention of Yahweh.

in the hand of God: "death is not the extinction of the soul but its separation and detachment from the body and its return to the place whence it came; and it came, as was shown in the story of creation, from God." Philo, *Abr.* 258. [2]

2-6: A series of comparisons and contrasts between the external appearance of death as the end, and the reality that the dead are safe with God. *They seemed to have died...but they are at peace.... They were punished...full of immortality.... Disciplined...worthy....*

7-8: In time they will be seen to be vindicated.

9: God watches over the elect. The faithful know and understand.

Psalm 24:7-10

{1} The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; {2} for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. {3} Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? {4} Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. {5} They will receive blessing from the LORD, and vindication from the God of their salvation. {6} Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah {7} Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. {8} Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle. {9} Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. {10} Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah

3. who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place: Who can come into God' s presence in his Temple, the earthly model of his heavenly court. Entrance into the Temple is a prelude to entrance into God' s eternal presence.

5. They will receive blessing...and vindication: Those who have clean hands and pure hearts will be received by Yahweh and allowed to stand in his holy place.

Revelation 21:1-6a

{1} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. {2} And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. {3} And I heard a loud voice from the throne

saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; {4} he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." {5} And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." {6} Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

1. a new heaven and a new earth: The created order had been swept away, and now it is not just renewed but "new," and different.

3. the home of God is among mortals: God is no longer separated from his people, but he lives with them.

He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them: The covenant formula from the Old Testament is used to indicate that the covenant relationship that was intended has now been, but which failed repeatedly, will now become real.

4. Death will be no more...the first things have passed away:: The effects of the sin of Adam and Eve will be undone. Death will be uncreated. And the accompaniments of death, pain, mourning and tears will also be ended.

5. See, I am making all things new: This is the fulfillment of the promises of newness that have been made for a long time: a new covenant, new tongues, a new commandment, new life, a new creation, new humanity.

6. It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end: It is finished! All that needs to be done has been done, and all that remains is to enter the new creation. The Alpha and the Omega is the Lord God (Revelation 1:8).

John 11:32-44

{32} When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." {33} When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. {34} He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." {35} Jesus began to weep. {36} So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" {37} But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" {38} Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. {39} Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." {40} Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" {41} So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. {42} I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." {43} When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" {44} The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

32. Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died: This is a gentle rebuke for one who is known to be Lazarus' friend, and who yet delayed coming.

33. *he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved*: "...the Greek term here usually refers to a 'display of indignation.'" [3] Jesus had dismissed the message from Mary that Lazarus was ill and delayed two days before going to Bethany (verses 4-5). When he was ready to go he told his disciples that Lazarus was dead, and that he was glad he had not been there (verses 14-15). Now he apparently reacts to Mary's suggestion that he should have come sooner. "It is likely that Jesus displays indignation and chagrin because Mary has publicly challenged him.. by questioning whether his actions have been those of a true friend." [4] Another interpretation is that Jesus "indignation" was a part of his preparation as a miracle worker. [5] Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. Even if Jesus had left two or three days earlier he still would have arrived after Lazarus died. Jesus stalling has a threefold purpose: "to underscore Jesus ability to overcome death after three days (he arrives on the fourth day), to bring honor to God, and to gain honor for Jesus. The three-day wait is especially important since it points ahead to Jesus' three-days in the tomb (20:1ff.; previously alluded to in 2:19-20). [6]

35. *Jesus began to weep*: Jesus' tears produce the response by some, "See how he loved him!"

37. *Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying*: A reference to the healing in chapter 9. This response is the opposite of that in verse 36. It is a stronger rebuke than those of Martha and Mary. It is also an anticipation of the final resolution of the situation.

38. *Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb*: "Jesus indignation in v. 33 seems to have been well placed." [7] Neither Mary nor the Jews, nor also Martha who also mildly rebuked Jesus (verse 21-22), are aware that Jesus' purpose has been to "restore life to his dear friend." [8]

38-43: Jesus proceeds to raise Lazarus. He goes to the burial cave. He commands the stone to be removed. He responds to Martha's objection, because of the odor of decay, by reminding her that he had told her she "would see the glory of God" (verse 23-26). The stone is removed. Jesus prays aloud so the crowd would hear him and believe that God had sent him. Then he calls Lazarus to come out of the tomb. He does. Jesus orders that he be unbound. Though it is not expressly said, we can assume that he was unbound.

39. *he has been dead for four days*: A reference to verse 17, where we were told that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days when Jesus arrived.

John 11:1-51 is the Gospel for Lent 5 in year A. There it is an anticipation of Jesus' own death and resurrection. Here we are concerned simply with the certainty of the resurrection for those who love and are loved by Jesus.

Reflection

"All Saints' Day commemorates.. all the people of God, living and dead, who form the mystical body of Christ, as the Prayer of the Day makes clear." [9] The first lesson (both of them) seek to assure us that death will be overcome; the second lesson tells us that we will live with God; and the Gospel assures us that because Jesus loves us we shall share in the resurrection of the dead as the result of Jesus' death and resurrection.

At those times when the life of the saints is most difficult we can be certain that God has not forgotten us, that he loves us and will keep his promises. At those times when earthly life is easy and we seem to be in control, we are reminded that death is the end of earthly life, and apart from the love of God in Christ there is no release. So we pray that God will "Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you." We live with the promise of a new creation in which all sin and suffering and sorrow will be ended, and all things will be made new.

Hymns [\[10\]](#)

With One Voice (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

25 --E--Rejoice, Rejoice,

174 --D--For All the

689v --D--Rejoice in God's

516 --I--Arise, My Soul,

708v --I--Grains of Wheat

789v --I--Now the Feast

766v --I--We Come to

701v --I--What Feast

536 --P--O God of God,

631v--P--Lift Up Your

331 --II--Jerusalem, My Happy

689v--II--Alleluia! Jesus

727s, 330, 347, 348, 177 (v. 4),

764v/794s, 742v, 706v, 691v,

690v, 718v/778s

Prayers of the People [\[11\]](#)

Presider or deacon

As we recall the blessed ones who have gone before us, let us offer prayers to God who adorns the poor with victory.

Deacon or other leader

With the angels and archangels and the spirits of the blessed. With the Virgin Mary, mother of our Savior. With the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs. With all the saints, witnesses to the gospel.

For N our bishop and N our presbyter, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

For all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages.

For the sick and the suffering the hungry and the thirsty, the poor and the meek, and all who are persecuted.

For the dead and those who mourn.

For our city and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

For our ancestors and all who have gone before us in faith.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with the blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for the triumph of Christ in the lives of your saints. Receive the prayers we offer this day and help us to run our course with faith, that we may swiftly come to your eternal kingdom. Glory to you forever and ever.

Notes

1[1] J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah Chapters I-XXXIX*. Cambridge University Press, 1954, p. 202.

1[2] David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1979, p. 125.

1[3] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, p. 200.

1[4] *Loc. cit.*

1[5] Ernst Haenchen, *John 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 7-21*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 66.

1[6] Malina, *Ibid.*, p. 195.

1[7] *Ibid.*, p. 200

1[8] *Loc. cit.*

1[9] *The Church Year: Calendar and Lectionary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973, p. 148

1[10] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rc1b9900.txt>

1[11] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>