

Easter 7



June 1, 2003

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, your Son our Savior is with you in eternal glory. Give us faith to see that, true to his promise, he is among us still, and will be with us to the end of time; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Or

God, our creator and redeemer, your Son Jesus prayed that his followers might be one. Make all Christians one with him as he is one with you, so that in peace and concord we may carry to the world the message of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

{15} In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, {16} "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus {17} for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry" {21} So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, {22} beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us-- one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." {23} So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. {24} Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen {25} to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." {26} And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

16. Friends: Peter addresses the community as Jesus did (John 15:14 f.), as "friends."

David: A reference to the Psalms. Unfortunately, the passages in question have been omitted from the lection. They are in verse 20: "For it is written in the book of Psalms, ♦Let his homestead become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it♦; and ♦Let another take his position of overseer♦." Psalms 65:25; 109:8. The quotations provide the basis for the selection of Matthias to replace Judas in verses 21-26. When James was killed (Acts 12:2) it was not felt to be necessary to provide a replacement for him.

[18-19: These verses describe the field Judas purchased with the money he got for betraying Jesus, and what happened to Judas. This differs from the description in Matthew 27:3-10. Both passages agree that the field was known as the Field of Blood.]

21-22: The qualification for becoming Judas♦ replacement is that the individual have accompanied Jesus from the time of his baptism until the ascension, and thereby be a witness to the resurrection. Matthias was chosen. He is not mentioned either before or after this in the New Testament. [1]

Psalm 1

{1} Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; {2} but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. {3} They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. {4} The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. {5} Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; {6} for the LORD watches over the way

of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

The Psalm is used to comment on Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Like the chaff blown by the wind, so Judas, though he was one of Jesus's disciples, lost his place of honor. Those who delight in the law of the Lord are truly happy, and prosper in all that they do.

1 John 5:9-13

{9} If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. {10} Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. {11} And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. {12} Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. {13} I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

9. *human testimony*: Perhaps John the Baptist's witness: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."

the testimony of God: The three witnesses in the previous verses ("This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. There are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree"). This is a continuation of John's argument that Jesus's death was an essential part of his saving act.

10. *Those who believe*. *Those who do not believe*: These are the Johannine Christians who believe that Jesus acted for our salvation in his death, and those Christians who did not believe that God could suffer and die in Christ.

11. *this is the testimony*: The testimony of the Spirit, the water and the blood, are that God gave us eternal life in his Son.

eternal life: Eternal life is defined in John 17:3: "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." To know God and Jesus Christ is to be in relationship with them, a relationship of faith in what God has done, that is, God was incarnate in Jesus and in Jesus died for our salvation.

John 17:6-19

{6} "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. {7} Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; {8} for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. {9} I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. {10} All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. {11} And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. {12} While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. {13} But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. {14} I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. {15} I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. {16} They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. {17} Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. {18} As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. {19} And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

12. *the one destined to be lost*: Literally, "the son of perdition." Though Judas was a disciple, he was not a true believer, or he would not have betrayed Jesus. Cf. John 6:70;

13:2, 27, 30.

that the scripture might be fulfilled: If what happened to Jesus was a part of God's intent, then everything that happened must have been intended and could have been foretold in the Scripture. The betrayal by Judas was particularly troubling. There are several references to prophecies of his defection (Acts 1:16-20; Matthew 27:3-10). The reference here may be to Psalm 41:9, which is quoted in John 13:18 with reference to Judas.

Reflection

Of the disciples, Judas alone was lost, and that because it was destined. It is interesting that on the last Sunday before the festival of Pentecost the focus should be on Judas. In the first lesson his replacement is described. The Psalm reflects on the consequence of his faithfulness. In the second lesson believing in Jesus is necessary for God's gift of eternal life. The implication seems to be that the reason Judas was lost was that he did not believe properly in Jesus.

However, it was Judas's act of betrayal that led to the crucifixion, and it is through the death of Christ that we receive eternal life. If Judas's act was predetermined and necessary, then why should he be condemned? Perhaps to forestall others, whose trust in Jesus was not sufficient to prevent them from acts of betrayal, from appealing to Judas as an example.

Hymns [2]

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

369 --E--The Church's One
88 --D--Oh, Love, How
364 --D--Son of God,
177 --I--By All Your (st. 2)

464 --II--You Are the
395 --G--I Trust, O
300, 325, 476, 761s/700v

Prayers of the People [3]

A: We can be assailed by evil any time, and struggle constantly against sin. Jesus prayed for his disciples, and he does so for us. He asks on our behalf that, since we do not belong to the world, we may be protected, sanctified, and fully his. We pray, then "Most Holy One, hear us," and respond, C: Lord, sanctify us.

A: For those who serve on the councils, boards, and committees of the church in the world, we pray, keep them clear-minded, trustworthy, caring, and redemptive. Most Holy One, hear us. C: Lord, sanctify us. A: For those in management posts of global corporations, let them serve people first, profit second. Most Holy One, hear us. C: Lord, sanctify us.

A: For those being treated for emotional difficulties, that they may experience love that heals. Most Holy One, hear us. C: Lord, sanctify us.

A: For those under Christian instruction, that the gospel may inspire them to live and share it with others. Most Holy One, hear us. C: Lord, sanctify us.

When the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness is not used, the following may be said:

A: Too often we turn in upon ourselves and our needs, O Christ, and fail to relieve the distress of the poor, the hungry, the lonely, the helpless, and those hid away by guilt and remorse. Forgive and empower us to do what Christ has done and asks us to do. Most

Holy One, hear us. C: Lord, sanctify us.

P: Let our prayers become acts of healing for the wounded in our world. In Christ's name, we pray. C: Amen.

Or [4]

Presider or deacon

Not belonging to the world, we intercede for the world. Let us offer prayers to God for all persons everywhere, to protect them from the evil one.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering and all who enter our circle of faith.

For the newly baptized illumined by the light of Christ.

For our leaders, and all the holy people of God in every place.

For the leaders of the nations and peace in the world.

For this city and the community around us.

For all in any pain and all who sorrow.

For the dying and the dead.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Lifting our voices 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, who sent your Son into the world. Hear our prayers for all your creation and sanctify us in the truth of your word. Glory to you for ever and ever.

Notes

[1] According to tradition Matthias preached the Gospel in Ethiopia. His feast day is February 24 (Anglican, Lutheran), May 14 (Catholic), or August 9 (Greek).

[2] <http://www.worship.ca/text/wpch0203.txt>

[3] http://www.worship.ca/text/inter_b1.txt

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