

Proper 8



Pentecost 6 June 30, 2002

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jeremiah 28:5-9

{5} Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; {6} and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD fulfil the words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. {7} But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. {8} The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. {9} As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet."

6: Hananiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 28:2-4, declares that Yahweh has broken the yoke of Babylon and will restore the Temple furnishings to the Temple. Jeremiah prays that Hananiah's prophecy would come true, he is dubious. In verses 13-17 Jeremiah brings the word of Yahweh to Hananiah to tell him that he is not God's prophet, and that he will die within the year (verse 16). Two months later Hananiah died (verse 17).

9: See Deuteronomy 18:21: The general principle is: "If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it." In the case of Hananiah, contrary to the prophets who "prophesied war, famine, and pestilence," Hananiah is prophesying peace, which puts his words in question.

Psalms 89:1-4, 15-18

{1} I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. {2} I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. {3} You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: {4} 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah.... {15} Happy are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your countenance; {16} they exult in your name all day long, and extol your righteousness. {17} For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted. {18} For our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

3-4: The singer remembers the covenant that Yahweh made with David, an eternal covenant. That covenant or the memory of it is still an example of the faithfulness and steadfast love of the Lord (verses 1-2).

4. *I will establish your descendants forever:* 2 Samuel 7:11b-16.

Selah: The word appears 71 times in 39 psalms. It is a performance cue: a pause, repetition, or refrain; a rising pitch or volume; or a posture, such as bowing.

15. *Happy are the people who know the festal shout:* Psalm 47:5, "God has gone up with a

shout...." The "shout" is probably something like, "Yahweh is king." The psalmist blesses them.

16. *they exalt in your name*: God's name is holy, not to be taken in vain. God's name is his reputation, what he is remembered for, his honor.

17. *our horn is exalted*: The horn is a metaphor for strength, and refers to the king who embodies the vitality and force of the people.

18. *our shield...our king*: The parallelism makes it clear that the king is also the shield of his people.

19. *the Holy One of Israel*: "The king, already mentioned in vv. 2-4 and now again in vv 17-18, is the chosen one of this incomparable and glorious God; he belongs to him. All that is said about the chosen king in Psalm 89 is therefore based on the background of the world-encompassing might of Yahweh, the [*qadosh yisrael* Holy One of Israel] (Cf. Pss. 71:22; 78:41; 99:3, 5, 9: Isa. 6:3; 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17; and often). [1]

"H. Gunkel separates Psalm 89 into two parts: (1) A hymn on Yahweh's powers is discovered in vv. 1, 2, 5-18; (2) the second part consists of the citation of a wide-ranging prophecy about David's dynasty (3, 4, 19-37), to which is appended a song of lamentation about the decline of the kingdom in vv. 38-51. The hymn (in the first part) Gunkel considers an older (very likely northern Israelite) piece which in post-exilic times was enlarged by the second part that deals with David's kingdom." [2]

Romans 6:12-23

{12} Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. {13} No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. {14} For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. {15} What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! {16} Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? {17} But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, {18} and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. {19} I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. {20} When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. {21} So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. {22} But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. {23} For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"The following verses, 12-23, are not well integrated into the letter and seem to be a résumé of a baptismal exhortation that Paul may at times have preached, but that he now incorporates into the letter in order to draw out practical conclusions from the preceding exposition on baptism.... They answer the question, In what sense are Christians to consider themselves slaves who owe obedience?.... Are baptized Christians slaves to sin or to uprightness? In what sense can Christians be slaves to God who acquits?" [3]

"The paragraph may be subdivided into three parts: (1) 6:12-14: Paul exhorts Christians to become aware of their status: having died to sin, they are no longer to let it hold sway over them; (2) 6:15-19: under the reign of grace Christians cannot be unconcerned about their conduct, because they are in bondage to uprightness and sanctification; and (3) 6:20-23; freed from sin and death, Christians have become slaves to uprightness and to God himself. Whereas sin leads only to death, the grace of God leads to life eternal." [4]

15. *we are not under the law but under grace*: There is no excuse for engaging in sin. We show whose slaves we are by our obedience. We are God's slaves, and we have received his grace.

20-23: There is no advantage in sin. In fact the wages of sin is death. The advantage of righteousness is sanctification which leads to the free gift of God, eternal life in Christ.

Matthew 10:40-42

{40} Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. {41} Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; {42} and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

40. Whoever welcomes you...: "Welcome" is a hospitality word. Whoever shows hospitality to a slave shows respect to the slave's patron and creates a relationship of reciprocity with the patron. When a prophet brings a message from God and we receive the prophet and the prophet's message, we receive God.

41. a prophet: an itinerant teacher. Who welcomes a prophet will share the prophet's reward on the last day.

a righteous person: Jesus came to call sinners, not the righteous in 9:13. Here the righteous person is viewed positively.

42. these little ones: Within this pericope the reference is to Jesus' disciples, "you" in verse 40. Elsewhere Matthew calls the weak, the poor and oppressed "little ones." See Matthew 18:6, 10, 14. Those who have resources, even "a cup of cold water," will be rewarded if they provide for those who have no resources.

their reward: "The reward is God's gratuitous gift to those who do God's will (see the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, 20:1-16). In the light of the immediately preceding pericope [the Gospel for last Sunday], there can be little doubt that the reward of which the evangelist writes is the gift of eternal life (10:39)." [5]

Reflection

God provides for the needs of his people. At times he acts directly, but frequently he acts through those who believe in him and serve him. We are either slaves of sin, or slaves of God. Death is the wages of sin; God's free gift to his own is eternal life. In the Gospel Jesus is speaking to his disciples. Whoever shows them hospitality shows respect to Jesus, and will be blessed. This principle provides the structure for Matthew 25:31-46. Insiders and outsiders are identified by how they treated certain kinds of people, the hungry, the sick, the helpless, the prisoner for the faith. Whatever we do for them we do for Jesus. If we treat them with hospitality, we are treating Jesus with hospitality and respect, and we will be blessed in turn by his reciprocal hospitality.

Hymns [6]

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

364 E--Son of God,

822s E--O Christ the

429 D--Where Cross the

369 P--The Church's One

490 II--Let Me Be Yours

122, 492, 433, 259, 511

Prayers of the People [7]

P or A: Pray brothers and sisters that the needs of our neighbors in all the world as well as our own needs will be provided for, saying, "we put our trust in your mercy," and responding, "because of your saving help."

A: We have been freed from sin and enslaved to God. May our daily work as well as our worship and praise show others to whom we belong. We dare to serve others because our God is strong. We put our trust in your mercy, because of your saving help.

A: When we fail to be all you have created us to be, when we are hard-hearted, lead us to repentance and amendment of life. We put our trust in your mercy, because of your saving help.

A: That those who govern us and all nations may receive your help to eliminate injustice and evil.

We place those who are chosen to lead in your hands. We put our trust in your mercy, because of your saving help.

A: With all whose lives bear witness to Christ; with all who minister in the church, with those who live with the poor and defenseless, with refugees and the oppressed, with the sick, particularly those who have asked for our prayers _____. We put our trust in your mercy, because of your saving help.

P: Open our eyes and arms in welcome whenever you come to us Lord, in whoever you come to us. Answer our prayers as you judge best for us and for all. Amen.

Or [8]

Presider or deacon

Through baptism we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let us offer prayers for new life among all peoples in every place.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering and for the people of God in every place.

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.

For mercy, peace, and justice in the world, and for our armed forces everywhere.

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, the poor and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, and for little children.

For the dying and the dead.

For ourselves, our families, our companions, and all those we love.

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

God of eternal life, whom we love more than life itself, receive our prayers for the needs of your church and your world and give us the strength to follow you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Notes

[1] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*: Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, p. 207.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[3] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 444.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 445.

[5] Raymond F. Collins, "Early Summer Reading: Reflections on the Gospel Lections for Propers 6-11," *Quarterly Review* 19(1999)105.

[6] <http://www.worship.ca/text/rcla0102.txt>

[7] http://www.worship.ca/text/int_a2.txt

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