

Proper 28



Prayer of the Day

Lord God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that, always keeping in mind the end of all things and the day of judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of life here and may live with you forever in the world to come, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Almighty and ever-living God, before the earth was formed and even after it ceases to be, you are God. Break into our short span of life and let us see the signs of your final will and purpose, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Malachi 4:1-2a

{1} See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. {2} But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

1. the day is coming: The Day of Yahweh's visitation bringing disaster and deliverance. *all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble:* In 3:15 Malachi has pointed out that *now* the arrogant and evildoers appear to prosper and escape God's judgment, but they will not escape. Note the change to the 2nd person ("you") in verse 2, to refer to those who "revere my name."

neither root nor branch: A metaphor of complete destruction. See Amos 2:9.

2. the sun of righteousness: The winged solar disk is a symbol of divine favor in Assyrian, Persian and Egyptian cultures. As the sun bestows warmth and light to the earth, so Yahweh will bestow his favor, healing the wounds of his people.

Psalm 98

{1} O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory. {2} The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. {3} He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. {4} Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. {5} Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. {6} With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD. {7} Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. {8} Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy {9} at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Psalm 98 is a Psalm that celebrates Yahweh as King, as are Psalms 47, 93, 96, and 97. There are many connections between the Psalm and Deutero-Isaiah: verse 1: Isaiah 42:10; 52:10; 59:16; 63:5. Verse 3: Isaiah 40:5; 51:10; 66:18. Verse 4: Isaiah 52:9;. Verse 5: Isaiah 51:3. Verse 7: Isaiah 55:12. The Psalm is composed of two parts, verses 1-3

and 4-9.

1. *a new song*: "...a song that transcends time and space, an eschatological song (cf. Isa. 42:10; Pss. 96:1; 149:1; Rev. 5:9)." [1]

marvelous things: The wonders are father indicated in verses 2-3, acts of covenant loyalty that are constitutive of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

4-6: Calls to praise Yahweh, the King, with songs and various instruments.

7-8: Earth and sea welcome Yahweh, as he comes to judge the world.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

{6} Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us.

{7} For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you,

{8} and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. {9} This was not because we do not have that

right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. {10} For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. {11} For we hear that some of

you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. {12} Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

{13} Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

"Unlike the exhortations in many of his other letters, that in 2 Thessalonians is mainly concerned with only one issue in the life of the community.... the economic responsibility of the individual members of the community to provide for themselves and presumably their own families." [2]

6. *the tradition they received from us*: See 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; also 1 Thessalonians 2:9, where Paul adduces his own behavior as an example, as he does in verses 7-9.

10. *Anyone unwilling to work should not eat*: The instruction is not a general principle to be applied to all; it is a condemnation of believers (verse 6) who burden other members of the community of faith, diverting them from the proper care of the needy. Christians should be alert to the needs of the helpless poor and ever ready to help.

11. *mere busybodies, not doing any work*: This is the real issue. Because some are not doing any work to provide for their own needs they have time to be busybodies. That is contrary to the unity of the community.

12: Paul's admonition to those who are living in idleness is that they should "do their work quietly and earn their own living"

13: In a situation of conflict created by lawless people, the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica are to continue to do what is "right," literally "good."

Luke 21:5-19

{5} When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, {6} "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down." {7} They asked him, "Teacher, when

will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" {8} And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!'

Do not go after them. {9} "When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." {10} Then he said to

them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; {11} there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and

great signs from heaven. {12} "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and

governors because of my name. {13} This will give you an opportunity to testify. {14} So make up

your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; {15} for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. {16} You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. {17} You will be hated by all because of my name. {18} But not a hair of your head will perish. {19} By your endurance you will gain your souls.

5-6: "By anticipating catastrophes and warning signs, Luke reassures his readers that things are not out of God's control even though that might appear to be the case." [3] *the temple...was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God*: Herod the Great began to refurbish the Temple built after the return from the Babylonian Captivity in 20-19 b.c.e. Work continued until 63 c.e. This reference to the adornment of the Temple probably refers to the renovation that was in progress at this time.

6. *the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another, all will be thrown down*: A reference to the destruction of the Temple which took place in 70 c.e. "...the best solution to these problems [about the prophetic authority of the statement] is the recognition that the Lucan oracle may well go back to Jesus in some form, but that the reformulation of it in the pre-Lucan tradition was affected both by the destruction of the city itself in a.d. 70 and by allusions to that under Nebuchadrezzar in the OT." [4]

7-9. *when will this be*: It seems that to many people the only question of interest concerning the last days is, "when?" Here, as in other contexts when this question is posed, Jesus tells us that no definitive answer will be given.

When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately: For many contemporary "prophets" wars and insurrections are invoked to frighten us into preparing for the end. But "the end will not follow immediately," and those who say or imply that it will discredit themselves.

13. *This will give you an opportunity to testify*: The faithful should not be afraid of the end, for it will be an opportunity to testify to the power of God and the gospel of Christ.

14. *I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict*: According to Mark 13:11, the Holy Spirit will speak for them, but here Jesus himself will give the disciples, "words and a wisdom."

16. *You will be betrayed*: Those who have left their biological families and home communities for the "family" of Jesus will be betrayed by their relatives and friends who view their actions as dishonor.

17. *You will be hated by all because of my name*: This is not a happy thing to look forward to, but it is perhaps a warning to Christians not to seek the esteem of the world and those of the world.

Not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls: "When one considers such false prophets, portents, and ominous signs associated with the historic destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, it makes it plausible to think that 'the end' (v. 9) could well be in Luke's view that of Jerusalem and its Temple. For this reason we see no need to import reference to the end of the world at this point in the Lucan eschatological discourse—which is the custom of the majority of commentators upon it." [5]

Reflection

The theme of the day is the day of the Lord. Malachi promises it. The Psalm defines the Lord's action as judge. Paul cautions against idleness in anticipation of the end, and

encourages us not to be weary in doing what is good. The Gospel warns that the time of the end is indefinite. Signs and portents will precede it, but "the end will not follow at once." The faithful will have an opportunity to testify before kings and governors; they will speak the words of Christ.

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

478 --E--Come, Oh, Come
394 --D--Lost in the
809s --P--Surely it Is (635v)
772v --P--The Lord Is (793s)

361 --G--Do Not Despair, O
30 --G--Lord, Keep Us
421 --G--Lord Christ, When
725s, 318, 388, 321

Prayers of the People [7]

P or A: We are a new people in Christ Jesus who anticipate the coming kingdom in which we will know peace and joy everlasting. We pray "Come, Lord Jesus", and respond, "Amen."

A: That your name be praised by your church with one voice--a voice transcending denomination and faction, a voice ringing forth from every nationality and age--proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A: From wars between the nations to the terror of a single person suffering poverty and oppression, we pray that the violence of this world might cease. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A: That we may not be weary in doing what is right, working to feed your flock and to protect one another from the evils of this world. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A: That those who suffer ill health may be healed. We pray especially for _____. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A: That the lonely may find peace in your presence, and that we may be moved to extend a hand of friendship and an ear of compassion to those longing for human relationship. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A: That we may not fear the coming of our Lord, but trust in his love, mercy, and promise to lead us when we feel most helpless. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

P: In your reign, wolf and lamb will feed side by side, and your people will know everlasting joy. With thankfulness, we lift up our prayers to you, trusting in your deep love for the human family. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Or [8]

Presider or deacon

In these last days, let us offer prayers to God for the endurance of all who suffer.

Deacon or other leader

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

For all peoples and their leaders, and for justice and righteousness in the world.

For good weather, abundant fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times.

For the sick and the suffering, travelers and refugees, prisoners and their families, and

the dying and dead.

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

Lifting our voices with all creation, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

God of righteousness, rising and burning like the sun, heal all those for whom we pray and write our names in the book of remembrance, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notes

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[1] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, p264.

[2] Charles Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990, pp. 279-280.

[3] Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 400.

[4] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (x-xxiv): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985, p. 1255.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1330.

[6] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rclc0001.txt>

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

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