

Easter 3

Home Up

April 14, 2002

Prayer of the Day

O God, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world, rescuing us from the hopelessness of death. Grant your faithful people a share in the joys that are eternal; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

{14a} But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them...., {36} Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." {37} Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" {38} Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." {40} And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." {41} So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

14: See the notes on 2:14a last week.

36: The conclusion and climax of Peter's sermon.

both Lord and Messiah: "...Jesus in his risen status has been made the equal of Yahweh of the OT, for 'Lord' was used by Palestinian Jews in the last pre-Christian centuries as a title for Yahweh.... Jewish Christians took over a title used of Yahweh by contemporary Jews of Judea and applied it to the risen Christ at an early date.... The second title means that God has made Jesus in his risen status the anointed agent (Hebrew *mashshiah* = Greek *christos*).... For the first Christians of Jerusalem this title was taken over from Jewish usage and applied to Jesus, who has thus become in a Christian sense 'the Messiah.'" [1]

this Jesus whom you crucified: "You" refers to the Jews of Jerusalem, not to the Diaspora who were visiting Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

37. *what should we do:* This is repeated also in connection with the preaching of John the Baptist in Luke 3:10, 12, 14.

38. *Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ:* Repentance is a consistent part of Peter's message, as well as Paul's. See Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20 (a summary of Paul's preaching). With respect to baptism see also Acts 10:48; 11:16; 16:15; 16:31-33; 18:8; 19:3-5.

41. *were baptized:* The response to Peter's preaching is that people were baptized. See also Acts 8:12.

about 3000 persons: This is one of the numerical summaries in Acts: 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31; 11:21, 24; 14:1. In some cases specific numbers are mentioned (Acts 2:41, 4:4) but usually it is an unspecified, "great" number.

Psalms 116:1-4, 12-19

{1} I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. {2} Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. {3} The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. {4} Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray, save my life!".... {12} What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me? {13} I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. {14} I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. {15} Precious in the sight of the LORD

is the death of his faithful ones. {16} O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. {17} I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD. {18} I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, {19} in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

3: The psalmist describes his/her distress in general terms as life-threatening.

14, 18: Both verses follow promises to do certain things to show ones gratitude for Yahweh's intervention, in verse 13, lifting up the cup of salvation and calling on the name of Yahweh; in verse 17, singing a song of thanksgiving and calling on the name of Yahweh. They announce that the acts have been done.

16. *I am...the child of your serving girl*: "'Son of the maid' (cf. also Ps. 86:16; Exod. 23:12) is in the legal terminology the slave born in the household, who had neither claim nor prospect of emancipation (F. Nötscher). This relation the psalmist transfers to his/her relation to Yahweh in order to show that (s)he is the lowliest servant and slave." [2]

You have loosed my bonds: Though the singer was a lowly slave, Yahweh has set him/her free from his/her distress (verse 3).

17. *a thanksgiving sacrifice*: Hebrew *todah*. This is a thanksgiving song, in fact, this very Psalm which the psalmist sings in fulfillment of his/her promise.

18-19: The singer indicates that (s)he will present the *todah* publicly in the Temple in Jerusalem.

1 Peter 1:17-23

{17} If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. {18} You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, {19} but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. {20} He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. {21} Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. {22} Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. {23} You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

17. *invoke as Father*: The practice of calling God "Father" is based on Jesus' practice and sayings (Matthew 6:9; 7:11; 11:27; 23:9; John 20:17). It was a regular part of the church's vocabulary (the Lord's Prayer, Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 1:2-3).

the one who judges all people impartially: God's impartiality in dealing with his people is noted in Deuteronomy 10:17-18. Judging with respect to one's acts is the task of the Son of Man when he comes in his glory (Matthew 25:31ff.).

18-19. *ransomed*: This probably refers to the practice of redeeming a family member who was a prisoner of war or a slave. Jesus has purchased the freedom of the person with his own blood.

19. *a lamb without defect or blemish*: A reference to the passover lamb (Exodus 12:5), or to the unblemished animals that were required for the sacrificial cultus in the Temple (Leviticus; Numbers; Ezekiel). According to Hebrews 9:14 Christ offered himself without blemish for our purification.

20. *destined before the foundation of the world...revealed at the end of the ages*: The divine plan for salvation was in place before the creation, and has been revealed now, at the end of the ages. The "last days," the "end of the ages" is not defined so much temporally as the time when God acts to save his people (Joel 2:28ff, quoted by Peter in his Pentecost sermon, Acts 2:17ff; Hebrews 1:2; 9:26).

21-22: The believers' trust and hope are in God who raised Jesus from the dead. They have acquired "genuine mutual love," and are admonished to "love one another from the heart." Jesus made mutual love the primary characteristic of those who followed him (John 13:35).

23. *You have been born anew...through the living and enduring word of God*: God's word is defined in verse 25 as the "good news which was announced to you," that is, the word which was preached.

Luke 24:13-35

{13} Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, {14} and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. {15} While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, {16} but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. {17} And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. {18} Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" {19} He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, {20} and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. {21} But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. {22} Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, {23} and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. {24} Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." {25} Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! {26} Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" {27} Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. {28} As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. {29} But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. {30} When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. {31} Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. {32} They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" {33} That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. {34} They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" {35} Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

13. that same day: The first day of the week (24:1), the day of the resurrection.

two of them: Two of those mentioned in verse 11, but not two of the apostles, cf. Verse 33, *they found the eleven.* One of the two was named Cleopas (verse 18). "Two Christians travel from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Easter Sunday. One is named and male; his companion, unnamed, is presumably female, given the protocols of Mediterranean patriarchy." [3]

16. their eyes were kept from recognizing him: See also John 21:14, Mary Magdalene "did not know that it was Jesus;" Mark 16:12, "...he appeared in another form to two of them..." Verse 31: *their eyes were opened, and they recognized him:* Verses 16 and 31 form an *inclusio* enclosing the conversation between Jesus and the two. The two recount *the things about Jesus of Nazareth:* a) Jesus, a prophet was condemned and crucified (19b-20) b) their expectations were disappointed (21) c) the empty tomb (22-24). Jesus responded: a) indictment of the disciples foolishness (25) b) redefinition of Messiahship in terms of suffering (26). This redefinition "had not been envisioned in any previous form of Messianic expectation. Yet this is the primitive Christian understanding of the Messiah on which Luke builds, and for primitive Christianity it opened up the Scriptures in a new way. For Luke this disclosure was understood and accepted as a gift of the risen Lord. As distinct from Mt., Lk. presents the story of Jesus between His birth and His crucifixion and resurrection as prophetic rather than messianic action. Only the way through the cross to glory actualizes the Messiahship proclaimed at the outset." [4] c) Jesus interprets the Scriptures (27).

18. Cleopas: The name is an abbreviation of *Kleopatros*, probably used as an equivalent of the Semitic form *Klopas*. Two Cl[e]opases are known; one was the husband of a Mary (John 19:25), the other, a uncle of Jesus (Eusebius, *Ecc. History*, 3:11, 32; 4:22).

19ff. "Cleopas and his friend, in the last analysis, do not know what had happened, although they were eyewitnesses of the so-called *bruta facta*; on the other hand, it is the wanderer, who in the course of the narrative, will reveal what really happened." [5]

23. they did not find his body: "...neither the empty tomb nor the story of an angelic message provide conclusive support that Jesus is alive, but simply heighten the tragedy."

[6] For Luke the resurrection does not lead to faith (Luke 16:31).

27. *beginning with Moses and all the prophets*: An allusion to the Old Testament, the *Tanak*, Torah, Nebiim (prophets) and Ketubim (writings). See verse 44

30. *he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them*: The phrase "breaking of bread" (verse 35) is one of the titles, perhaps the oldest, for the new liturgical meal of fellowship in primitive Christianity, the Lord's Supper. [7] "The presence of the resurrected Jesus is hereby clearly defined: He is present in the act of the Christian interpretation of the Scriptures and in the act of the Lord's Supper." [8] "...the basis of faith is not the experience gained through fellowship with the historical Jesus [Were you there...?], nor religious concepts inherited from Judaism, nor apocalyptic-eschatological expectations which would project a fulfillment into the future. Rather, according to the Emmaus legend, it is the presence of the crucified Jesus which makes Christian faith possible. Accordingly, Christian faith is in principle to be understood as faith in the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth....The resurrected Jesus is present in the *word-event*." [9]

34. *The Lord...has appeared to Simon*: See 1 Corinthians 15:4f. In John 20:16 it is Mary Magdalene, and in Matthew 28:9-10, the women who see Jesus before anyone else. Frederick Danker translates "...the eleven and those who were with them were saying, 'Has the Lord really risen?' and 'Did he appear to Simon?'" and comments: "The RSV, together with other versions and commentators, makes the verse a declarative statement, but then the subsequent verses (esp. v. 41) are incoherent, and vv. 11-12 are left suspended." [10]

Reflection

When Peter finished his sermon the people ask what they should do. He told them to "repent and be baptized." This is the means by which we received the "new birth" Peter speaks of in his letter. In the second lesson Peter calls on Gentile Christians in Asia Minor to conduct themselves so that no one can criticize their behavior. They have been saved by Christ who was sacrificed like a lamb. They have been born anew, and their love for each other testifies to their new birth. Our relationship with Christ is dependent on his presence among his people in the Word and sacraments. The Psalm reflects the assurance of the believer who in the face of affliction, and even death is confident in the protection of Yahweh. When we say or sing the Psalm we offer our thanksgiving sacrifice to the Lord for all his bounty. The Psalm could be used as a congregational response to the sermon.

Hymns [11]

With One Voice (eg. 762v), Hymnal Supplement 1991 (eg. 725s) and LBW (eg. 32).
E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, II=Psalm; II=Second Lesson;
G=Gospel

254 --E--Come, Let Us

140 --D--With High Delight

143 --D--Now All the

136 --I--Christ Is Arise

353 --II--May We Your

95 --II--Glory Be to

660v --G--I Want Jesus

209, 263, 801s/768v, 149

Prayers of the People [12]

P or A: Ransomed by the love of Christ and baptized for the sake of repentance let us come before God with the needs of all people, saying, "Host at our table," and responding, "Reveal your presence, Lord."

A: For your people gathered here and in every Sunday celebration, open our hearts to your Word. May all those who preside at your table, our pastor(s) _____, our bishop _____, and our national bishop Telmor, bring the presence of Christ to us. Host at our table, Reveal your presence, Lord.

A: For those who govern and have social responsibility, may they first care for the needs

of those who are most poor and vulnerable. Send us forth as servants who will share the invitation to join you at your feast. Host at our table, Reveal your presence, Lord.

A: For all who are called and sent as missionaries of your church, that they may find ways to share the good news of Christ in word and in service. Place the desire in our hearts to generously provide for their needs and the needs of those they serve. Host at our table, Reveal your presence, Lord.

A: For those who are sick, _____, especially those who are dying, encourage their faith as in their weakness they rely on your strength. Let your presence go with us to them and comfort them with the medicine of immortality in your Holy Sacrament. Host at our table, Reveal your presence, Lord.

A: For all who study and prepare for vocations in the church, may their hearts burn within them as you open for them the scriptures. For the ELCIC National Consultation on Internship to be held this week, for seminary interns and the congregations in which they learn, help them grow. Host at our table, Reveal your presence, Lord.

P: Grant our prayers according to your grace and as is best for us and for all of your creation. Reveal yourself in the breaking of bread as you did for your disciples at Emmaus, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Or [13]

Presider or deacon:

In the flesh of the risen Christ, the invisible God walks with us. Let us pray to God for our needs and the needs of all peoples.

Deacon or other leader:

For the holy churches in every place, and for the unity of all. For this holy assembly and for all who gather for breaking bread. For NN and all illumined by the light of Christ. For N our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

For all those in danger and need, the sick, the suffering, and the oppressed, and for all the dead. For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Remembering 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 opens our minds and hearts through the risen Christ. Hear our prayers which we offer in the hope of glory, and breathe upon us with your Holy Spirit. Glory to you for ever and ever.

Reflection

It is important to recognize that it is in the interpretation of the Scripture *and* the breaking of the bread (not one or the other) that Christ is known. Neither should be understood as simply an act to be performed. Both are openings into the reality of God in Christ.

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Notes

[1] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1998, pp. 260-261.

[2] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, p. 389.

[3] John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1999, p. xi.

[4] Grundmann, " ... [chrío]" *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (edited by

- Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Vol. 9, 1974, p. 534.
- [5] Hans Dieter Betz, "The Origin and Nature of Christian Faith According to the Emmaus Legend," *Interpretation* 23(1969)35.
- [6] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978, p.893.
- [7] *Op. Cit.*, p. 896.
- [8] Betz, *Op. Cit.*, pp 38ff.
- [9] Norman Perrin, *The Resurrection according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977, pp. 66f.
- [10] Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, p. 395.
- [11] <http://www.worship.ca/text/rcla0102.txt>
- [12] http://www.worship.ca/text/inter_a2.txt
- [13] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>