

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

That night of our liberation was made known beforehand to our fathers,

so that they might rejoice in sure knowledge of the oaths in which they trusted.

The deliverance of the righteous and the destruction of their enemies were expected by your people.

For by the same means by which you punished our enemies you called us to yourself and glorified us.

For in secret the holy children of good people offered sacrifices

and with one accord agreed to the divine law, that the saints would share alike the same things, both blessings and dangers;

and already they were singing the praises of the fathers.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS:

Blessed the people the LORD has chosen as his heritage.

Ring out your joy to the LORD, O you just;
for praise is fitting from the upright.

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen as his heritage.

Blessed the people the LORD has chosen as his heritage.

Yes, the LORD'S eyes are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love,
to rescue their soul from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

Blessed the people the LORD has chosen as his heritage.

Our soul is waiting for the LORD.

He is our help and our shield.

May your merciful love be upon us,
as we hope in you, O LORD.

Blessed the people the LORD has chosen as his heritage.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE HEBREWS

Brothers and Sisters:

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Stay awake and be ready,
for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO LUKE

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,

‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ‘Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service, and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into.

You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.’

THE REFLECTION

When we think of heaven we might think 'me as me' in heaven but have little idea of how God might want us to be or to do. A willingness to grow and grow closer to God in our faith is a challenge But St John Henry Newman once wrote

“Heaven would be hell to an irreligious man.”

Jesus asks us to be aware of our options and responsibilities. As believers we should be more aware as we have the gift of faith and a lot will be expected of us.

This gospel is like Jesus' parable of the sheep who notice and do loving things and the goats who do not see or care to help. This gospel reading is more personal; the individual has responsibility to respond to God's invitation.

Our God is always concerned about us. The 19th century poem 'Hound of heaven' an optimistic Anglican poem is a metaphor for God's grace like a hound following us with

“unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace”

And continuing with:

“Lest having him I must have naught beside”

Revealing the anxiety and reluctance we feel which holds us back from growth and change. The gospel reminds us that God will serve us if we are ready to meet him. He follows us with grace and mercy to strengthen us.

The gospel continues to remind us of our responsibility that we have been given with the knowledge of God's plan for us. It is rather bleak and a warning of a loss if not taken seriously. It is a Christian duty to act as a Christian at all times and to be ready to encounter the Lord., placing our trust in God beyond our abilities to comprehend. St Paul's letter to the Ephesians tells us that hope is in things unseen, the letter to the Hebrews today gives the example of Abraham responding to the demand beyond all feeling and reason, but released from his worst fears.