



Daily Meditations **November 18-23, 2019**

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 1 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, PROPER 28:

*Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.***

Keep the Faith

Monday, November 18, 2019

Revelation 20:7-15

"When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog..." - Revelation 20:7-8a

Take a close look at the Collect for Proper 28 (above). It emphasizes that all holy Scriptures are written for our learning, even those we may be reluctant to study...like the Book of Revelation. Probably no other book in the Bible has created such a wide spectrum of reactions. It was so controversial that it was one of the last books to be accepted into the New Testament canon. The book is filled with symbolism involving numbers, strange beasts, and frightening visions of plagues, demons, and fire. It has been used and mis-used over the centuries for all kinds of weird predictions and has also been the basis of all kinds of horror movies...remember "Apocalypse Now," "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," "The Omen," and "The Late, Great Planet Earth," just to name a few.

It may help to know that Revelation was probably written during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian (86-90 AD), a time of great persecution of Christians. Domitian demanded that his subjects address him as "Lord and God" and worship his image, putting to death many who refused. So, the Book of Revelation is perhaps best understood as an "underground newspaper" written to urge Christians to keep the faith in the face of this persecution.

Heaven on Earth

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Revelation 21:1-8

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes." - Revelation 21:2-3

Today's reading is important. It emphasizes the Incarnation, that God has come to dwell with his people. He does not remain distant and remote, looking down from heaven. He takes the initiative to come down and live within his creation. Far too many of us have been looking for a movement upward, where we would go up to heaven in some golden future when we die. But Revelation makes it clear that the important movement has already taken place: God has already come down to dwell with us and within us.

Coming Down

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Revelation 21:9-21

"And in the spirit he carried me away to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God." - Revelation 21:10

This reading repeats the point about the new Jerusalem coming down from God. It seems to emphasize the message included in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Our job is to help God's plan to spread heaven on earth, now; not to just wait for God to lift us up to some vision of heaven in the future.

The Glory of God is the Light of the City

Thursday, November 21, 2019

Revelation 21:22-22:5

"I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb." - Revelation 21:22-23

The author of Revelation describes the new Jerusalem as having no temple, for the Lord God and the Lamb of God are the temple. This seems to echo John 2, after Jesus has driven the merchants and money-changers out of the temple. He then tells them that he will "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John then goes on to explain he was referring to the temple of his body, and he emphasized that Jesus' disciples remembered this remarkable assertion after his resurrection.

The author of Revelation explains that there is no need for sunlight or moonlight in the new Jerusalem because the glory of God and the Lamb will provide all the light we need. As Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." (John 8:12) Let it shine, Lord!

A Finger Pointing to the Moon

Friday, November 22, 2019

Revelation 22:6-13

And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angels who showed them to me; but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" - Revelation 8b-9

This reminds me of an ancient Buddhist saying: The teachings are like a finger pointing to the moon. Look at the moon, not at the finger! That's good advice when studying scripture. Don't stop with the literal words you are reading. Go deeper to where the words are pointing. As the Collect for this week says (see above), "Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ."

Come, Lord Jesus

Saturday, November 23, 2019

Revelation 22:14-21

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" - Revelation 22:20b

As the footnote in my study Bible says about this verse, "A fitting conclusion to this book and to the Bible."

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