

Christmas Day II Tuesday, December 25, 2018

The Collect: Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born [this day] of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 62:6-12 read from the King James Version Bible

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,

And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:

But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 97 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The Lord is King; let the earth rejoice; * let the multitude of the isles be glad.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, * righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

3 A fire goes before him * and burns up his enemies on every side.

4 His lightnings light up the world; * the earth sees it and is afraid.

5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, * at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 The heavens declare his righteousness, * and all the peoples see his glory.

7 Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! * Bow down before him, all you gods.

8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, * because of your judgments, O Lord.

9 For you are the Lord, most high over all the earth; * you are exalted far above all gods.

10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; * he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, * and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, * and give thanks to his holy Name.

Epistle: Titus 3:4-7 read from the Lexham English Bible

But when the kindness and love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not by deeds of righteousness that we have done, but because of his mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20 read from the Message Bible

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her

firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On December 27th we remember John, Apostle and Evangelist

John, son of Zebedee, was one of the twelve apostles of Our Lord. Together with his brother James and with Simon Peter, he formed a kind of inner circle of Three among the Twelve, in that those three were privileged to behold the miracle of the Great Catch of Fish, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the Transfiguration, and the Agony in Gethsemane. He expressed a willingness to undergo martyrdom -- as did the other

apostles -- and is accordingly called a martyr in intention. However, we have ancient testimony that, although imprisoned and exiled for his testimony to the Gospel, he was eventually released and died a natural death in Ephesus: "a martyr in will but not in deed."

John is credited with the authorship of three epistles and one Gospel, although many scholars believe that the final editing of the Gospel was done by others shortly after his death. He is also supposed by many to be the author of the book of Revelation, also called the Apocalypse, although this identification is less certain.

Let us pray: Shed upon your Church, O Lord, the brightness of your light; that we, being illumined by the teaching of your apostle and evangelist John, may so walk in the light of your truth, that at length we may attain to the fullness of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**