



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2024 – Second Sunday before Advent

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 16

1 Preserve me, O God, for in you have I taken refuge; ♦
I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord,
all my good depends on you.'

2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, ♦
upon those who are noble in heart.

3 Though the idols are legion that many run after, ♦
their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,
neither make mention of their names upon my lips.

4 The Lord himself is my portion and my cup; ♦
in your hands alone is my fortune.

5 My share has fallen in a fair land; ♦
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

6 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel, ♦
and in the night watches he instructs my heart.

7 I have set the Lord always before me; ♦
he is at my right hand; I shall not fall.

8 Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices; ♦
my flesh also shall rest secure.

9 For you will not abandon my soul to Death, ♦
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.

10 You will show me the path of life;
in your presence is the fullness of joy ♦
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

A reading from the book of Daniel, chapter 12 verses 1-3.

Daniel 12.1-3

The Resurrection of the Dead

'At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Mark, chapter 13, verses 1-8.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, Chapter 13, verses 1-8.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 13.1-8

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

A reflection from Hannah...

After a very turbulent week for the Church of England, following another turbulent week for US politics, which followed deadly floods in Spain, all of which is happening in the context of multiple escalating global crises; we can all feel understandably unsteadied, and understandably full of big questions, understandably on the edge...

And as we journey towards Advent our Bible readings are deliberately uncomfortable too. With the end times in mind, we are invited to reconsider our assumptions about what is real, what is temporary and what is eternal.

In the conversations that Jesus is having with his friends in our Gospel reading, he makes clear that humans have a tendency to put their treasure in temporary places, wrongly labelling them 'eternal'. The temple is the example Jesus uses- something that we, today, *do* have to imagine, but something that would have seemed so solid, so enduring, so magnificent as he and the disciples stood in the sunshine and gazed at a breathtaking feat of human skill and ingenuity. But, Christ reminds us, even the most impressive building is only a fleeting thing. And more than that, there will be buildings, there will be struggles, there will be other ideas to entice us down empty roads; but they are all temporary.

So, the question hangs in the air- what *is* real? What will last? And if the temple can simply be destroyed, where then is God's home? God's home is in Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, in us. We are the stuff of eternity- and our heart, our treasure, belongs to God who is love, who will endure beyond all that the humans can muster and all that the world can throw at us. That is the truth we cling to when everything else is rocked and unanchored.