

Monday 15th August

Psalm 98

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

² The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

³ He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

⁴ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,

⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn – shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

⁹ let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Acts 1;1-14

Jesus taken up into heaven

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

⁶Then they gathered round him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'

⁷He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken

from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Tuesday 16th August

Psalm 48

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

² Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.

³ God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.

⁴ When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together,

⁵ they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror.

⁶ Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labour.

⁷ You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.

⁸ As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure for ever.

⁹ Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

¹⁰ Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.

¹¹ Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments.

¹² Walk about Zion, go round her, count her towers,

¹³ consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation.

¹⁴ For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

Acts 1;15-end

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶and said, 'Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.'

¹⁸ (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰ ‘For,’ said Peter, ‘it is written in the Book of Psalms:

“‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,” and, “‘May another take his place of leadership.”

²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, ²² beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.’

²³ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.’ ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Wednesday 17th August

Psalm 119;57-80

You are my portion, LORD; I have promised to obey your words.

**⁵⁸ I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.**

⁵⁹ I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.

⁶⁰ I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands.

⁶¹ Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law.

⁶² At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.

⁶³ I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.

⁶⁴ The earth is filled with your love, LORD; teach me your decrees.

⁶⁵ Do good to your servant according to your word, LORD.

⁶⁶ Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands.

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

⁶⁸ You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

⁶⁹ Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,

I keep your precepts with all my heart.

⁷⁰ Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law.

⁷¹ It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

**⁷² The law from your mouth is more precious to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.**

⁷³ Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding to learn your commands.

**⁷⁴ May those who fear you rejoice when they see me,
for I have put my hope in your word.**

⁷⁵ I know, LORD, that your laws are righteous,
and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

**⁷⁶ May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.**

⁷⁷ Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.

**⁷⁸ May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause;
but I will meditate on your precepts.**

⁷⁹ May those who fear you turn to me, those who understand your statutes.

**⁸⁰ May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees,
that I may not be put to shame.**

Acts 2;1-21

The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost

² When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?’

⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’

Peter addresses the crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Thursday 18th August

Psalm 57

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

² I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me.

³ He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me –
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

**⁴ I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts –
men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.**

⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

⁶ They spread a net for my feet –I was bowed down in distress.

They dug a pit in my path –but they have fallen into it themselves.

⁷ My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.

⁸ Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! will awaken the dawn.

⁹ I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;

I will sing of you among the peoples.

**¹⁰ For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.**

¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

let your glory be over all the earth.

Acts 2:22-36

²² ‘Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.”

²⁹ ‘Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew

that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”

³⁶ ‘Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.’

Friday 19th August

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

**⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.**

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

**⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.**

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

**¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

**¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my
Saviour, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.**

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

**¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.**

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

**18 May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.**

19 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Acts 2;37-end

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’

38 Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.’

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ **41** Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The fellowship of the believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Saturday 20th August

Psalm 68

May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him.

2 May you blow them away like smoke – as wax melts before the fire,
may the wicked perish before God.

3 But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;
may they be happy and joyful.

4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds;
rejoice before him – his name is the LORD.

5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

7 When you, God, went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,

8 the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.

9 You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance.

10 Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor.

11 The Lord announces the word,
and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng:

12 ‘Kings and armies flee in haste; the women at home divide the plunder.

13 Even while you sleep among the sheepfolds, the wings of my dove are sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold.’

14 When the Almighty scattered the kings in the land,
it was like snow fallen on Mount Zalmon.

15 Mount Bashan, majestic mountain, Mount Bashan, rugged mountain,

16 why gaze in envy, you rugged mountain, at the mountain where God chooses to reign, where the LORD himself will dwell for ever?

17 The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands;
the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.

18 When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious – that you, LORD God, might dwell there.

19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens.

20 Our God is a God who saves;
from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.

21 Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies,
the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins.

22 The Lord says, ‘I will bring them from Bashan;
I will bring them from the depths of the sea,

23 that your feet may wade in the blood of your foes,
while the tongues of your dogs have their share.’

24 Your procession, God, has come into view,
the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary.

25 In front are the singers, after them the musicians;
with them are the young women playing the tambourines.

26 Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.

27 There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them, there the great throng of Judah’s princes, and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali.

28 Summon your power, God;
show us your strength, our God, as you have done before.

29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings will bring you gifts.

³⁰ Rebuke the beast among the reeds, the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations. Humbled, may the beast bring bars of silver. Scatter the nations who delight in war.

³¹ Envoys will come from Egypt; Cush will submit herself to God.

³² Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord,

³³ to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.

³⁴ Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.

³⁵ You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!

Acts 3:1-10

Peter heals a lame beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, ‘Look at us!’ ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognised him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.