

DEVOTION FOR THE FOURTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 120

In my distress I called to the Lord, and He answered me.

Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.

What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue?

A warrior's sharp arrows, with glowing coals of a broom tree!

Woe to me that I sojourn in Meshech that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!

I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 5:1-33 *The Commandments*

New Testament Reading: Acts 19:1-41 *Paul's ministry in Ephesus*

“GREATER THAN ARTEMIS OF THE EPHESIANS”

You know your message is getting across when opposition rises against it. The remarkable effect of the gospel in the first century was accentuated by fear it instilled in the adherents of Paganism and the violent means by which it was opposed. The first organized demonstration against the Christian message was held in Ephesus. In a few short years, the gospel had drawn so many people away from the worship of Artemis that the men who made images in her honour, suffered a noticeable loss of revenue. There was a danger she would lose her divine honour and they would lose their business.

The silversmiths found other ways to ply their trade, but they were right about Artemis. A well-known, outspoken atheist mockingly asked, ‘which god he should worship? There are so many to choose from, in the past and the present.’ Why should he worship the Christian God and not rather Zeus, or Thor or even Artemis, I suppose? Why not worship Artemis? The reason people no longer worship Zeus, Thor or Artemis is because the progress, effect and success of the gospel showed that they were no gods at all. The success of the gospel shows there is only one God; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He declared that to the ancient world through Moses and the prophets. He demonstrated that most clearly in giving Jesus as the fullest expression of His being and of His nature as love.

Jesus is greater than Artemis of the Ephesians in His nature and in His being. He is the image of the invisible God, in whom all the fullness of God dwells in bodily form. He did what none of the ancients imagined their gods doing. He loved human beings and showed that love to its fullest by laying down His life for the sin of the world. Paul proclaimed the love of God in Christ Jesus to the Ephesians and now Artemis rests in the pages of history. There is only one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God we should worship is the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!

“JESUS SHALL REIGN” (Public Domain)

Jesus shall reign where ‘er the sun, does its successive journeys run;

His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and want no more.

To him shall endless prayer be made, And praises throng to crown his head;

His name like sweet perfume shall rise, with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue, dwell on his love with sweetest song;

And infant voices shall proclaim, their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns: The prisoners leap to lose their chains,

The weary find eternal rest, And all who suffer want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring, honours peculiar to our King;

Angels descend with songs again, And earth repeat the loud amen.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we praise your holy name, you are the fullest expression of the Father, showing your love in forgiveness through the sacrifice of your cross. The gods of the world demand and wait to receive. You are the loving Saviour. You give without demand. we receive your grace as a gift. Bless us always to worship you as our only God and see you as our highest good. Bless us with your Holy Spirit that we may join Paul and the apostles and share in the work of the church in proclaiming you as Saviour and Lord. In you Name. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,

Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION

Isaiah 40:28-29

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.”