

DEVOTION for PENTECOST 19 (Thanksgiving)

PSALM 65

Praise awaits you O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.

O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.

When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.

Blessed is the man you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Saviour, the hope of the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

Who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,

Who stilled the roaring seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations,

Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.

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

Deuteronomy 30:1-20

Chose Life

What does God promise to do when and if, Israel returns to the Lord?

What will make it possible for Israel to keep God's command? (Verse 14)

What did Israel need to do to "choose life"?

Romans 14:1-23

Fruit of the kingdom of God

Why should we not judge each other according to food and drink?

In what way will we give God an account of ourselves?

What is the difference between the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God?

"YOU CROWN the YEAR with YOUR BOUNTY"

PSALM 65:11

"You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance."

The psalmist began this song saying: "*Praise is due to you O God.*" We give thanks and praise God for the many blessings that come to us through the fruitfulness of the earth. This psalm is a beautiful word picture showing God caring for and tending to His garden, the earth; "*You visit the earth and water it.*" In your mind's eye you can see God standing over the earth holding a big water jug. The earth responds to God's ministrations by clothing itself in its finest garments, "*the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.*" The earth is giving thanks to God for the many kindnesses He bestows upon it.

This beautiful image stands in contrast to the sad scene in Genesis, when the Lord God said to the man, "*the ground is cursed because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.*" Left to our own there would be little else but thistles and thorns. That's the wages of sin. But with God there is also forgiveness. The psalmist sang, "*When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.*" There are no thorns or thistles in this psalm, because with God there is forgiveness. For the sake of His steadfast love, the Lord God continues to express His love for human beings through the good gifts of the earth.

At Thanksgiving, we reflect upon the many good and gracious gifts God gives us each and every day. Out of the bounty of His steadfast love, God provides us with food, clothing, family, and friends. Another psalmist sang, "*The eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*" God gives us many good and gracious gifts. Most importantly, He blesses us with the gift

of His friendship for the sake of Jesus, our Saviour. The psalmist sang of this foundational gift of divine love saying, “*When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.*” St. John would later write of Jesus saying, “*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” We give thanks, God has atoned for our sins and in Christ, He draws near to us that we may draw near to Him in prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

Hymn: “NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD” (Public Domain)

**Now thank we all our God, With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother’s arms has blessed us on our way,
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God, through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts, And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace, And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills, In this world and the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God, The Father now be given,
The Son and Him who reigns, with them in highest heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was is now, And shall be ever more!**

PRAYER

Lord God, when waters of the flood receded and the earth dried, you promised Noah, “*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.*” You sealed your promise with the sign of the rainbow in the sky. We thank you for the fruitfulness of the earth and the cycle of the seasons. Humans live, not only in body, but also in spirit; and to that end you gave Jesus that we would be nourished in our souls with forgiveness and given the promise of resurrection to life everlasting. You sealed your promise with the blood of His cross. We thank you for your blessings in body and in spirit, especially for the blessing of forgiveness. In Jesus you fulfilled the words of the psalmist who sang, “*When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.*” In Jesus’ 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

Psalm 68:35

“Awesome is God in His sanctuary; the God of Israel, He is the One who gives power and strength to His people. Blessed be God!”

Bible Knowledge Quiz (Answers next week)

Who succeeded Moses after his death?

What were the names of Abraham and Sarah before God called them?

The name Jesus means, "The Lord saves." What Old Testament figure has a similar name? (A book is named after him)

Answers to last weeks quiz

1) Sunday the first day. Genesis 1:1

2) Gopher (RSV) Cypress (NIV) The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. Genesis 6:14 see footnote.

3) The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Rev 21:22

