



The Second Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The First Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be repeated every day, after the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Day.

Please read this entire chapter. Please ask yourself: **1)** the nature of the truth affirmed in verse 1; **2)** What thoughts are conveyed by the 'shadow' in verse 2? **3)** Can you decipher the meanings of verse 7 & 8? Continue with each verse that rings of a peculiar truths and try to draw out the gems of great beauty hidden in the covering vocabulary. They are so many such gems that I lack the talent, or understanding, to fully mine from the text, so allow your mind to fathom the depths for further knowledge and meaning. Then read my wanting attempts to describe the passages.

Job 7

King James Version (KJV)

1 Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

2 As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling

looketh for the reward of his work:

3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

7 O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.

8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

12 Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaints;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

16 I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

19 How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away

my iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling? There is a beginning, of a fuller truth, that is continued in the next few verses. The nature of our present pain and suffering began long before the suffering of JOB – these began long ago in the Garden eastward in Eden when our fleshly father was convinced to partake of that forbidden fruit from the tree that was home to Satan. So we now suffer in life, and that brief life results in death. Man labors for his bread by the sweat of his brow while under the sun. The reward of our carnal lives and labors is not a great reward, but only a temporary one. We are like hirelings in our labors. The field which we hoe does not belong to us, neither does the hoe itself, nor the bodies with which we labor. All is borrowed from the Master of the Vineyard. If we become good and faithful servants, our reward shall be more than this existence of pain, suffering, longing and only brief and passing joys. We shall receive our rewards for our worthwhile acts of faith only when the evening shadows lengthen and we are asleep in Christ.

As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. (7:2-3) The **shadow** referenced symbolizes the "end of our day" upon the earth. The righteous of Christ yearn for this day when the reward shall be paid beyond the veil of Heaven. In the period before these permanent shadows lengthen, we are made to suffer and to persevere. We all experience moments of vanity and fruitless toil, but the Keeper of the Book of Life shall read our names at length if we are faithful in this life to our Maker and Redeemer.

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. (7:4-6) Do we have any assurance that we shall return to the bed in evening from which we arose at morning? Should we thank our God at the first glimpse of morning light? These words from my favorite Psalm reveal the morning hope we must have in God: *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalms 63:1-2) We should thank God at our awakening, not only for another day of life, but for another day of service and learning from His Holy Word. If we are safe in His Haven of Rest, we shall not endure nights of tossing and turning and dreading the coming dawn of day. Our lives, even if we are blessed with old-age, is but a brief twinkling of the eye – a desert rose whose petals are blown by the wind, and grass that perishes in the heat of the sun, a vapor in the cool of day, or a fading star on the distant horizon. Our end in this body is all for the worms, but our end for the soul (if that soul belongs to God) is of great joy

and opulence.

O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. (7:7-10) Our lives are like the wind? Do we ever see the wind? Remember the words of Christ to Nicodemus: **The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.** (John 3:8) Please regard the importance of being "born of the Spirit". Are you? Though we may be famous and powerful in our brief tenure on earth, not only our countenance, but our names shall be forgotten among men. Those who knew us will, themselves, fade as names written upon the seashore. If our names are not written in a sure place – the Book of Life – they shall cease to be altogether. You may remember, too, Lazarus and the rich man – please observe the profound dispositions of these two at death: **And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried** (Luke 16:22) No name is given for the rich man because a name is of no benefit in the fires of Hell, but Lazarus retains his name because it is written in the Book of Life. Note that the rich man dies "**and was buried**," but Lazarus died and was given an angelic escort to the bosom of Abraham. Which ending would you prefer?

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity. (7:11-16) JOB seems, in this soliloquy, to lay the blame for all of his trouble upon God. He, at no point, attributes the blame for all suffering to that author of death and pain – Satan! The great lesson in all of this for you and me is this: If a man such as JOB, blameless before God, suffers so at the hands of Satan, how much more likely that those who claim Satan as master shall suffer!

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? (7:17-18) JOB wonders why he has been singled out for torments to fortify the faith of others. Blame not poor JOB for we are all subject to the same lapse of reason, and more, in times of grave troubles. In "**The Fiddler on the Roof**," Tavia (a Jewish peasant) says, just before another pogrom, "Lord, I KNOW that we are your chosen people, but, could you, at least SOMETIMES....choose someone else?" Though obedient to the cross, our Lord cried, rhetorically, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" We often wonder "Why me?" JOB finds no peace even in sleep, for the devil sends dreams and nightmares even then to annoy his rest. How much more those whose consciences are burdened by guilt and sin shall the devil of nightmares disturb? Man is the crowning glory of God's Creation. He has deigned to allow us to become His own sons and

daughters. In a totally different light, the Psalmist also wonders: *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* (Psalms 8:3-5) Can we imagine the high regard in which soul is set at value before the Lord?

How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? (7:19) JOB misidentifies again the source of his antagonism. If God truly departs from JOB, his soul **AND** body are lost. *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?* (7:20) JOB finally admits that of which his friends have accused him – that he is a sinner like unto every man born of woman – except our Lord Jesus Christ. We are considered 'blameless' before God – not because we have no sin – but because our sins have been redeemed and covered by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. JOB now resorts to the human inclination to judge that all pain and suffering comes as a direct result of sin. Truly, all pain, suffering, and death does inure from that first step in sin of father Adam; but that suffering came upon all mankind – blameless or not – from Adam's sin. Even though sin is forgiven and not remembered by our Lord, its scars often remain as a blemish to our legacies.

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be. (7:21) This is a mixture of misconception of a man in misery, and the burning truth whose light burst through the darkest cloud. First of all, God DOES forgive our transgressions, **and** the transgressions of JOB. Suffering in the flesh is not evidence of unforgiven sins. God DOES take away our iniquity if we have duly repented of them, but not always our suffering. JOB shall certainly sleep in the dust, in fact, sleeps now in the dust as we all shall do barring the sooner return of Christ. True, after the shadows have fallen on this life, God shall seek us in the morning, and He knows precisely where we shall be found. We shall be even MORE real in that resurrection morning than we are today. Heed the final testimony in Revelations: *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* (Rev 20:12-15) May all who read these words stand blameless beside our ancient brother, JOB. AMEN.