

Old Testament Lesson for All Saints Sunday Nov. 2, 2003 E. Werner Weinreich
also used XXI after Pentecost (A) and Easter (B)

Isaiah 25:6-9 add 10a

THE TEXT

6] On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a banquet of fat things,
a banquet of wines of rich quality, of rich foods and of wines well strained and clear. x

7] And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

8] He will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the humiliation of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the
Lord has spoken.

9] It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; in whom we hope that he might help us. x
This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

10] For the hand of the LORD rests on this mountain.

GENERAL COMMENT

Our text is part of the so called "little Apocalypse" of Isaiah (Ch. 24-27). It is quite late certainly post exilic and non Isaianic, and inserted into the two parts of Isaiah sometime in the (late fourth to mid second cent. BC.

From the content we can surmise that the author was familiar with both the Old Testament and the mythology regarding Ba'al.

Kaiser sees four stages in the development of these chapters

- I. 24:1-13, 26:1-18, 26:20-21 Judgment of the LORD and trust of the faithful
- II. 24:14-16, 25:1-5, 9-10a Songs of thanksgiving by the same author but added later
- III. 24:21-23, 25:6-7. 8bcd Apocalyptic speculation
- IV. 25:8a, 26:19 A later addition including belief in the resurrection of the dead.

BACKGROUND

The period of our text reflects a general upheaval between the time of the latter prophets and Macabees. Whatever particular difficulty he noticed our author turned into a universal judgment and longing for deliverance. The image he uses is the destruction of an unnamed city. It could be incorporated to mean a "world city" or all cities. In our time it could be seen to refer to a variety of human strengths including governmental power, armies, nuclear weapons, science and technology, social service systems, commerce and

banking, music and arts, and recreational and religious institutions. All these works will be thrown down. The judgment does not come for its own sake but in order that it may be seen that God blesses his people as he desires. (Universal doom can also be seen at 24:1-6, 16b-23, 26:20-27:1.

STYLE

The genre is poetry with the usual parallel of members in a sympathetic mode.

CONTEXT

The preceding verses, (25:1-5) are a hymnic song of thanksgiving which looks back on what happened and celebrates God's active rule after his victory over oppression and the deliverance of his people. With no names or dates indicated we can postulate a generic content going as far back as the Exodus experience (v. 1) Whether the city (Heb) or cities (LXX) the former oppressors will stand in awe of God. (Not conversion) The simile compares God with a house as protection against the Winter rains of the hot Summer droughts. (vv. 4-5)

VERSE BY VERSE

- 6] A description of a coronation banquet following the enthronement of God depicted at 24:23 as a prediction. This mountain = Zion (24:23) which always survives the destruction going on around it in the pre-exilic tradition. The poetry in Hebrew is very alliterative. *misteh shmanim - misteh sharim, shmanim memuchayim - shmarim mezuqaqim*
Unlike 2:2 it goes against the tradition that the foreign nations will come to serve Israel and her people (45:23, 61:5f, 66:12-19) they are here welcomed to the banquet table and YHWH sets before them the best food and wine. (References to a meal at an enthronement can be seen at I Sam. 11:15, I Kings 1:25, 8:62f, Neh. 8:10. So also Jesus' table fellowship would seem to indicate a proleptic participation in the Messianic banquet to come.
- 7] The destruction of the veil, covering, mask, indicates a new relationship to God in that suffering and mourning are removed. The Hebrew word (shroud) used twice in this verse is found nowhere else in the O.T. and could be interpreted as a pall since death is overcome. It makes possible the seeing of God and seeing God looking at them. Also it makes possible seeing each other as being part of the family of God.
- 8a] He- the LORD, will swallow up death forever. This is a reversal of the Canaanite myth in which Ba'al is swallowed up by death (Mot) Wildberger asserts that the Hebrew understanding of death includes all that circumscribes life, all that limits the life space of humanity, all that diminishes well being, or prevents community with other humans or with God. With this background, the hope of Christians for life after death should not be separated from the establishment of God's rule over all things here and now. God's action addresses both those who have died and those who mourn. NOTE.... The forever is changed by St. Paul (I Cor. 15:24) to the word victory. There will be no more dying, but in our text nothing is said about those already dead.
- 8bcd] The humiliation, reproach, rebuke, of God's people is removed. They are now in fellowship with those who had done the rebuking. It is God's powerful word that accomplishes it. For the concept of the removal of shame see also Jer. 24:9; 29:18; 51:51; Ezek. 5:15; 22:4; 36:30; Neh. 1:3; 3:36; Joel 2:17; Zech. 3:18. With war removed, its consequences, shame, death, tears, are done away with also as shalom arrives. This is a message of hope to a down trodden people. As the resurrection of

Christ cleared away his reproach as the crucified so Israel's reproach is removed as the nations recognize its faithfulness as they now also come to acknowledge YHWH.

9] A little psalm of praise, seen by Kaiser as the oldest portion of our pericope, perhaps originally from the time of the return from exile. It expresses joy and gratitude for what god will have done "in that day"

10a] The ^hand of the LORD rests on this mountain. (God with us) He is enthroned for all people to see. He will guard and guide its people with his deliverance as he promised of old. x

THEOLOGY

God asks our faith not as adherence to a moral code or as holding on to remain in control but rather as an act of yielding in the present to the promises given for God's future with us.

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All Saints Sunday

November 7, 2021



Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-6a

Here is a vision of the new heaven and new earth in which God resides fully with God's people so that mourning, despair, and pain have been eradicated. These renewing words from the God who spans all of time are trustworthy and true.

¹I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ^{6a}Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

Background

Revelation (no “s”) also known as The Apocalypse (which means “revelation” or uncovering). The writing could have referred to a persecution under Nero (54-68 CE) or later under Domitian (81-96 CE). In view of conflicting textual evidence, it seems likely that the book was composed and assembled in stages, but only in its present form by late 1st or early 2nd century. It is clearly addressed to Christians undergoing persecution for their faith, to give them hope. Although it has been the subject of many and varied interpretations, one theme is clear. To quote Pr. Nancy Milleville, “The Lamb wins.”

Verse by Verse

¹**I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.** *Replacing the original and sin-scarred creation. In Judaism, the renewal of creation is the final eschatological event. Isaiah 65:17 For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

Isaiah 66:22 - ²²For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain.

²**And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** *Belief in a heavenly counterpart to the earthly Jerusalem was common in early Christianity. The bride image is used in the synoptics with the Christ as the bridegroom. In Revelation Christ is the bridegroom and the Church is the bride:*

Revelation 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready;

Revelation 21:2 Verse above

Revelation 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come."
And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift."

³**And I heard a loud voice from the throne** (20:11 *the judgment seat of God*). Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them.

saying, **"See, the home** (*Gk. skene – tent, tabernacle*) **of God is among mortals. He will dwell** (*Gk. skenosei – as above*) **with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;** *Cf. Ezekiel 37:26-27*

²⁶I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. ²⁷My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

⁴**he will wipe every tear from their eyes.** (*also 7:17* ¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

"Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." *These were part of the first and broken creation – they will be no more in God's new creation.*

⁵**And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new."** *Isaiah 43:19* I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Also he said, "Write (*Gk. grapson – a command, imperative*) **this, for these words are trustworthy and true."** (*Gk. pistoi kai alethinoi – faithful and true*)

^{6a}**Then he said to me, "It is done! I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."** *Note the definite article "the." Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Encompassing everything, and emphasizing God's sovereignty.*

Theology: These are words of hope on this All Saints Sunday.

Even though in this old and broken creation we mourn our dead and there is pain and sorrow, in God's new creation (v. 4) Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

TEXT: JOHN 11:32-44

- 32] Then Mary, when she came to where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him,
 33] "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit
 34] and troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him,
 35] 36] "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved
 37] him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"
- 38] Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay
 39] against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench for he has been dead four
 40] days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would
 41] see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes
 42] and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you hear me
 43] always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe
 44] that you sent me. When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped with cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go."

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Our text is a portion of the events and teaching around the raising of Lazarus which is the last of the signs in the "Book of Signs" of the fourth gospel. The dialogue with the disciples and with Martha which come before it and the effect of the miracle are omitted from this days reading.

- 32] Mary comes to Jesus and falls at his feet. The Greek construction of "Came to Jesus" may indicate coming to faith.
 fell at his feet - not knelt - It is a position of respect and supplication not necessarily worship. cf. Mk. 5:22 Jairus & Mk. 7:22 the Syro-Phoenician woman.
 Mary echoes Martha's words about her brother would not have died if Jesus had been there, without stating the traditional Jewish belief in a final resurrection on the last day. She weeps - showing more emotion than Martha had but she makes no request. Is the evangelist sharing with the reader an assumption that the presence of the Lord and death are incompatible?
 Note that in every place where Mary of Bethany is mentioned in the gospels she is at Jesus feet. (Lk. 10:39; Jn. 12:3)
- 33] Deeply moved - ἐμπερίμασθαι is hard to translate and interpret. The word is used at Mt. 9:30 where Jesus sternly admonishes the blind man who had been given sight to say nothing about it to anyone. Also at Mk. 14:5 where some of the crowd are indignant at the woman who anointed Jesus with the ointment. The term has an overtone of sternness if not anger connected to it. The translation could be "Jesus moved to anger in his spirit" which raises the question of why anger? There is no indication in the text of hypocrisy of grief of the Jews as some commentators would suggest. Nor can their lack of faith in his power to do something come into play. In Greek thought it would be unimaginable that a god could feel emotion since no one could bring joy or sorrow to God. In Jesus emotion of sadness and love as the evangelist portrays it learn of a God who cares. In v. 35 it will be seen as grief. Note, however that Jesus is troubled also at

Jn 11:32-44

his own approaching death at 12:27 and 13:21.

Weeping - κλαίοντες - is a strong term usually referring to wailing as performed by professional mourners on the day of burial.

in spirit - the outward sense of indignation or anger is internalized by the evangelist. Yet the verb ταρασσω which refers to violent disturbance is added. (See 12:27; 13:21; 14:1, 27) Could it refer to Jesus' knowledge that the raising of Lazarus will precipitate a final clash with the authorities? Could Jesus anger be at death itself?

- 34] Where have you laid him? - Jesus question is another link to his own death for they are the same words Mary uses to the supposed gardener at 20:2,13,15. Laid is a technical term for buried. so no mention of a grave is necessary. The question heightens the suspense for the reader about what Jesus might now do. It is not a statement of ignorance. (See also Mt. 27:60; Mk. 6:29; 15:46ff.)

Come and see - this answer is given in the words of Jesus at 1:29. There the implication is that they will enter the realm of the light of life,(8:12) whereas he is now to enter the realm of darkness and death which his presence will change. Jesus knows what he is going to do. (see 11:4, 7, 11)

- 35] Jesus wept! - ἔδακρυσεν - shed tears, not extravagant wailing. For Greeks the idea that the Son of God could be brought to tears is beyond belief. (cf. Heb. 5:7)
tears and κρᾶνξίς - crying or Lk. 19 ἔκλαισεν over Jerusalem. The Lord who holds the power to lift humans from death, nevertheless shares the pain of bereavement and loss. Physical death is not to be minimized.

- 36] loved - ἐφίλει the Jews say more than they know. (Like Caiaphas at the end of the chapter for Jesus will both raise Lazarus and lay down his own life for his friend. (see 15:13 where it is said that there is no greater love than this. See also 11:3 where he is the brother that Jesus loved.)

- 37] As usual in the fourth gospel Jesus' action has not only a positive response v.36 but also a negative one. The cynicism here questions Jesus' ability to do something. The implication is that he has come to the end of his rope as a wonder worker. Jesus is the light of the world but this is not yet understood by the Jews so their question heightens the suspense of the narrative. All of the signs of which this one will be the climax are linked together as one work. (11:47)

- 38] Jesus is again deeply disturbed. Is it because of the comment questioning his ability to do something? Or is it because he comes in sight of death represented by the tomb? The enigma of v. 33 resurfaces. ✓

in himself- is parallel to "in spirit"

cave- grotto - either natural or carved out of the limestone as is typical in Palestine with a stone placed against the entrance to keep out wild animals. Unlike the stone at the tomb of Jesus this one must be removed by human hands.

- 39] Jesus order to remove the stone is met with Martha's objection. The reader must assume

Jn 11: 32 - 44

she returned to Jesus with Mary though this is not said. There seems to me no contradiction here from what was said at vv. 20-27 in spite of Bultmann's allegation. Martha has clearly stated her belief that resurrection occurs at the last day. She sees no reason for opening the tomb now. She does have reason for it not being opened now, the stench of the decomposing corpse.

Four days - It was the Jewish belief that the spirit/soul of the dead hovered around the body for three or four days seeking re-entry. After that it left because the face of the decaying body was no longer recognized. The issue of ceremonial impurity through contact with the dead is not brought up. (See also the story of the widow of Nain's son) Her comment reinforces the fact that Lazarus is really dead and gives Jesus an opportunity to answer. Jesus will now take full command and there will be no further show of his emotional state.

- 40] To see the glory of God in the fourth gospel is to know the power of God's salvation in Christ by faith. (1:14) Note also 11:4, his illness is for the glory of God. God's glory is his action and can therefore be seen as a spiritual truth.

did I not tell you - no such explicit words are recorded. The deed about to take place is not of Jesus alone for the eyes of faith will see the manifestation of the glory of God. Signs evoke faith (2:11) but it is also said that a sign is seen only through the eyes of faith. Both are true. The wonder of a sign does bring about a kind of faith, but faith is required to see the sign in its fullest sense as an expression of the glory of God.

- 41] The stone is removed. We are not told how or by whom. We assume by the bystanders.

"lifted his eyes" - Ps. 123:1 to heaven, Ps. 121:1 to the hills. If not mentioned presupposed in the gospels (Mk. 6:41; Lk. 18:13) but explicit at 17:1ff. The address Father indicates that this is prayer but no request is made. It need not be since God always hears Jesus (42) Request turns immediately to thanks. Jesus need not rouse himself out of an attitude of prayerlessness (Godlessness) for he is always before the Father as asker and receiver. What is promised to his followers as an eschatological possibility is already realized in him. It is as though Lazarus were already restored to life.

thanks - $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ is not here the technical $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ of chapter six at the feeding of the 5000. It is a simple thanks.

- 42] The prayer is for the sake of the bystanders. The I is emphatic- $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ - and it becomes an indirect exhortation to faith. (cf. 17:21) The raising of the dead is God's prerogative to be shared with Jesus. (see 5:21, 25-29) The intent is to show that it God whose work is revealed here and not just the power of a wonder worker. Jesus is God's special agent.

Now that the real source of the miracle has been revealed the miracle can proceed. (It is the mission of Christ to do the Father's will in all things.)

- 43] a loud voice - See 5: 25 "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live". Only the fourth gospel has no loud cry from the cross. The loud cry here concerns life not death!

John 11:32-44

come out - $\epsilon\upsilon\pi\omicron$ is the imperfect of come here. It signals that the last day (time) is already here in the person of Jesus. Lazarus' own name is used (see 10:3) as in 20:16 to Mary that she recognize the risen Lord.

- 44] The early Fathers called this the little miracle inside the big one. Lazarus comes out still bound and foot in the linen strips and his face wrapped in a napkin - $\sigma\upsilon\delta\alpha\pi\iota\omega$ - sweat rag. The word for the linen strips is - $\kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\lambda\alpha$ - and is only here in the New Testament. The linen shroud of Jesus is called - $\sigma\theta\omicron\upsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. In the LXX of Prov. 7:16 the term is used for bed linen. Jesus command to unbind him and let him go is an indication that Lazarus is returned to ordinary life. Are these details also recorded so the reader can compare them to the resurrection of Jesus where no human help is required? (see 19:40) (Compare the command to let him go to the command at Mk. 5:43 where Jesus commands that Jairus' daughter be given something to eat. The text for our pericope is cut off at this point without recording the effects of Lazarus being raised.

THEOLOGY

Just as Lazarus is called forth from the grave by Jesus so those who believe will be called forth by name from death. Ours will not be a restoration to this life but a resurrection like that of Jesus in the fullness of time. ✓

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