

manifestation of the sons of God, a manifestation in which the whole creation shares, even as Isaiah predicted in his famous vision of universal peace, even among animals. Those promises still await fulfillment. But through patience and comfort of the scriptures we have hope.

God's record is impeccable. So let us pray the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent which, as a result, is sometimes called "Bible Sunday":

"Blessed Lord who has 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 Savior Jesus Christ. Amen."

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St. David's Anglican Catholic Church  
Charlottesville, Virginia

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<sup>1</sup> This sermon was originally written for Holy Communion on the Second Sunday in Advent.

<sup>2</sup> *An Alternative Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised in 1928)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, WITH THE ADDITIONS AND DEVIATIONS PROPOSED IN 1928 40 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxiv (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxii (CIPBC 1963).

<sup>3</sup> II Samuel 1:1-end (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> *Wisdom* 3:1-9 (KJV).

<sup>5</sup> Romans 14:1--15:7 (KJV).

<sup>6</sup> Romans 15:4 (KJV).

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 11:10 (RSV).

<sup>8</sup> Romans 15:8-9a (KJV).

## SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER The Sixth Sunday after Trinity<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Warren E. Shaw, Priest-in-Charge

### The Lessons:<sup>2</sup>

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the first Chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings.<sup>3</sup>

"Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites [**AMM-uh-leck-ights**], and David had abode two days in Ziklag [**ZICK-lagg**]; It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa [**gill-BOW-uh**], behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite [**AMM-uh-leck-ight**]. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him: And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for

Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

“And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite [**AMM-uh-leck-ight**]. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD’s anointed.

“And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher [**DGAY-shurr**].) The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon [**ASS-kah-lahn**]; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa [**gill-BOW-uh**], let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

*Or,*  
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The prophet Isaiah said, “There shall be a root of Jesse that shall stand as an ensign to the people: him shall the Gentiles seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.”<sup>7</sup> The prophet never saw that promise fulfilled, but we see it fulfilled every Sunday right here.

It was not until after the death and resurrection of Jesus, however, that the Apostles carried the Gospel to the ends of the earth and brought the Gentiles into the family of Abraham. We are the fruit of their labors, and the work is not complete, but “through patience and comfort of the scriptures we have hope.”

Are you beginning to see a pattern here?

St. Paul says, immediately after the Second Lesson for today, “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy....”<sup>8</sup>

Now think about that. It was circumcision that brought Jews into the covenant with Abraham. It is Christ who brings us into that covenant, not by circumcision but by baptism; not by obedience to the law but by the free gift of grace mediated through Himself. He did that so that we might join with our Jewish brothers and sisters in glorifying God. They glorify Him for the gift of the law. We glorify Him for the gift of mercy. But the God that we glorify is one and the same, and the hope we share, which is the hope of all the children of Abraham, is supported by our shared history. God fulfills His promises.

God has promised some things that He has yet to deliver. The book of Revelation speaks of a new heaven and a new earth “where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing but life everlasting.” It speaks of a new Jerusalem where no evil thing may enter. The Gospel of John promises a home with many rooms eternal in the heavens for the faithful. The Epistles speak of the

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One of the things we learn from a serious reading of the Old Testament is that God fulfills His promises. That is the basis of the hope we have for the future. But the basis for our patience is the realization that it is in God's own time and God's own way that His promises are fulfilled. Let's look, for example, at a few of those promises.

In the Garden of Eden, God says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel." That promised was fulfilled thousands of years later when Jesus was born of a woman and was bruised by the forces of evil in His day and then rose from the dead to crush the power of sin and death.

In the calling of Abraham, God promised three things: that Abraham would have countless descendants; that his descendants would occupy the Promised Land; and that all the families of the Earth would be blessed in him.

None of those promises was fulfilled in Abraham's lifetime, but look where we are today. The spiritual descendants of Abraham, by which I mean Christians, Jews, and Muslims, are more than can be counted, especially if you consider those who lived before us.

The Jews conquered the Promised Land under Joshua a thousand years after Abraham lived, and, although they were driven out and brought back more than once, they occupy the land today along with the Arabs, who are also descendants of Abraham.

The third promise to Abraham is the one that really took a long time to be fulfilled, and is still not completely fulfilled: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light," says the psalmist, "and kings to the brightness of thy rising." St Matthew points to the fulfillment of that promise in the visit of the Magi, long after the psalmist was dead.

Here beginneth the third Chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon.<sup>4</sup>

"But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, And their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth: and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him: for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect."

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the fourteenth Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Romans.<sup>5</sup>

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to

himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith [SETH] the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind

and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

**Text:**

From the Second Lesson: “[W]hatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”<sup>6</sup> In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Homily:**

Since the gospels were not written until after St. Paul had completed his work, and since it never occurred to the Apostle that the letters he was writing would one day become Holy Scripture, it is clear that the “Scriptures” referred to are the Jewish Bible, or what we call The Old Testament. It is from those Scriptures that we derive the patience and comfort that we need in the difficult times in which we live.

But that patience and that comfort are only given to those who, as the Collect says, “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them”. You can't just pass over these books with a cursory reading and expect to get anything out of them. You can't dismiss them as outdated or as superseded by the New Testament. They are the foundation on which the New Testament is based, and you can't understand the New apart from the Old.

All of the Apostles knew that and used quotations from the Jewish Scriptures to buttress their arguments and proclamations. Jesus knew it too, and said that these books which the Jews call Holy Scripture are the very books that testify of Him.