



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
SAINTS TRIUMPHANT — YEAR A**

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father
and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 84

**A: Let us go rejoicing
to the house of the Lord.**

L: How lovely is your dwelling place,

G: O LORD Almighty!

L: My soul yearns, even faints,

G: for the courts of the LORD.

L: Blessed are those who dwell in your house;

G: they are ever praising you.

L: Better is one day in your courts

G: than a thousand elsewhere;

L: I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of
my God

G: than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

L: O LORD Almighty,

G: blessed are they who trust in you.

**A: Let us go rejoicing
to the house of the Lord.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty God and Savior, you have set the final day and hour when we shall be delivered from this world of sin and death. Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION *see next page*

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**A: 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.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

**A: They are before the throne of God and
serve him day and night in his temple.
(Revelation 7:15a)**

BENEDICTION

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

A: Amen

READING AND MEDITATION:

Third Sunday of End Time—Saints

Triumphant: Lord, keep us watchful for our triumph! Today the Church hears strains of the distant triumph song and affirms, “Blessed are they who are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb.” Jesus wants us to be the waiting Church—the Church that watches for her Savior and cries, “Come, Lord Jesus!” As we journey through these latter days, however, our vigilance slips, and our hearts grow drowsy because the bridegroom seems to be taking so long. So while we wait, the Church prays, “Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven.” (Prayer of the Day)

As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther’s Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:1-13

Jesus pictures the time before his return as virgins waiting for a bridegroom and the start of a wedding feast. The parable divides all people (*ten* virgins) into two groups: foolish and wise. They weren’t described that way because of what they did in the parable, but their actions showed what they were. The foolish virgins acted utterly foolish, bearing empty lamps. The other virgins’ actions showed that they indeed were wise. The wise went into the joys of wedding banquet, but the foolish lost both invitation and even recognition. Jesus’ central instruction in this parable calls for the waiting Church to be the watchful Church. Keep watch for you do not know the day or the hour!

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 52:1-6

Isaiah prophesies to captive Israel who is sleepwalking through life, because they are lost in the stupor of grief over their afflictions. “Awake!” the prophet cries, and hear God’s promise of coming triumph that will give you strength to face your present problems. God would reveal his glory by redeeming his people and leading them safely home. Captive Israel here is a picture of the waiting Church, and one day God will fulfill this promise also in us. The Church of the End Times labors in a world held captive by sin, and is tempted to sleepwalk through these last days. So the prophet cries to us, “Awake!” for the day of triumph is coming when God will lay bare his arm and redeem us from sin, death, and the devil forever. He will lead us to the New Jerusalem where we will sit enthroned at the marriage feast of the Lamb. The day is coming—watch for it!

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

To the new Christians in Thessalonica, Paul explains the certain hope we have to be saints triumphant. His words are so simple, yet so profound! We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that all who die in Christ will go with him to heavenly triumph. And we will be with the Lord forever. This is the crown jewel of the Christian faith: blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Paul’s main point: encouragement. Encourage each other with the hope of saints triumphant so that there is neither ignorance nor hopeless grief, but rather faithful, expectant watching for the triumph we know is coming.

My takeaways:

**SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:
EZEKIEL 37:15-28**

This lesson immediately follows Ezekiel's prophecy about the dry bones. God had promised Israel that he would raise them up from their graves and settle them in the land. He promised to restore captive Israel to the land of Abraham. The rescue and return of the remnant provides a picture of what the Church waits and watches for. In this lesson God extends that prophecy beyond physical Israel to the Church and to the Messianic kingdom of his Son. Earthly troubles like the captivity or our struggle with sin are temporary. The triumph that's coming won't be. Notice that in the last four verse God uses מְלֶכֶת five times to talk about the unending nature of the kingdom waiting for us. It will be a kingdom without divisions caused by sin, but exemplified by oneness (one stick, one nation, one king, one shepherd—forever). How will this be? Look at how many times God says that he will act for us! We are purely passive in acquiring the triumph in store for us. God will act to save and to cleanse and to renew his covenant: I will be their God, and they will be my people. As Ezekiel held his bound sticks before the eyes of his countrymen, so the Church holds God's promises of pending triumph before us and continually cries, "Wait for it! Watch for it!"

My takeaways:

Blessed are they who are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb! Keep us watchful for our coming triumph!

My takeaways:

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:
REVELATION 19:1-9**

What kind of triumph are we watching and waiting for? For the persecuted Church, Jesus gave the Apocalypse of St. John, to let his people know: Jesus will win. Revelation 18 foretold the Fall of Babylon and the destruction of every enemy of the Church. "After this..." John heard the reaction of the saints and angels and all creation—they cried, "Hallelujah!" The word used so prevalently in the Old Testament was not heard in the New Testament until its final vision of the saints triumphant. George Handel tried to capture the glory of what John witnessed with his *Hallelujah Chorus*, but his work will certainly pale by comparison to that distant triumph song. John lets us see behind the shut door of the parable in our Gospel for the Sunday—he lets us see what we watch for: the consummation of the marriage of Christ and the Church.