

All Saints and All Souls 30th October 2005

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Readings:

- Job 14:1-14
- Psalm 29
- Romans 6:3-9
- John 5:19-29

text is available at <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/divinity/lectionary/APentecost/aProper20.htm>

Sunday 30th October 2005 - All Saints and All Souls

The longer I live, the less I want what is traditionally the image of resurrection —

- White robes [I wear them often enough now!]
- waving palm branches
- singing God's praise

what I'm looking for is rest.....

OR

Something which is new and unimaginable, light, joy, peace...

In the book Job, we hear his wish to go to Sheol (the place of the dead) as a way of avoiding ongoing suffering.

Sheol was, in the Old Testament, the underworld or the place of departed spirits. The word has two possible Hebrew derivations:

1. From a word meaning "to ask" And so, a place of inquiry or scrutiny.
2. From a word meaning "hollow" Giving rise to the idea of hell, the grave or a pit.

The idea of Sheol, which comes from Assyrian or Babylonian sources, indicates an undeveloped and shadowy belief in the future of life (some hundreds of years before Christ.)

The beliefs developed into a more defined form amongst later Jews and we find Jesus in debate with the Sadducees who did *not* believe in resurrection.

The Pharisees however, did believe in Resurrection and so Jesus, and later Paul, made much of it in their disputes with authority.

A couple of weeks ago, we omitted the story of Jesus' discussion with the Sadducees — it was in amongst those stories of his debates in the Temple in Matthew chapter 22.

The Sadducees come to Jesus "saying there is no resurrection" and ask about a man who dies childless, then his brother marries the wife and so on, and so on, until she had been married by all seven brothers.

They ask Jesus, "In the resurrection then, whose wife will she be? For all of them had married her."

Jesus answer "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven." And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

He is God not of the dead, but of the living."

The exact nature of Resurrection is wonderfully mysterious but according to Jesus it is NOT a reconstitution of earthly life.

Its guarantee is in the ongoing life of God.

For Paul, our resurrection and the resurrection of the faithful, is sharing in the resurrection of Christ — putting off the old in favour of the new — until the final death and rising.

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes in who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life. In the observance of All Saints we reflect on the faith and life of those many whose lives, although quite ordinary, revealed

the glory of god. In the observance of All Souls, we have the opportunity to reflect on the ordinary faithful folk in our own journey who showed the light of God to us.

Both, we believe, are part of God's eternal life — an eternal life we share as the communion of the faithful, bound up in the love of Christ and the grace of His Spirit. And so today we recall our unity with all God's people living and departed.

May the faithful departed rest in peace...