

Saint_Thomas_on_the_9th_Sunday_after_Pentecost

And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, And beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought. Saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple.

ORIGEN; All the blessings which Jesus pronounced in His Gospel He confirms by His own example, as having declared, Blessed are the meek; He afterwards sanctions it by saying, Learn of me, for I am meek; and because He had said, Blessed are they that weep, He Himself also wept over the city.

CYRIL; For Christ had compassion upon the Jews, who wills that all men should be saved. Which had not been plain to us, were it not revealed by a certain mark of His humanity. For tears poured forth are the tokens of sorrow.

GREG. The merciful Redeemer wept then over the fall of the false city, which that city itself knew not was about to come upon it. As it is added, saying, If you had known, even you (we may here understand) would weep. You who now rejoice, for you know not what is at hand. It follows, at least in this your day. For when she gave herself up to carnal pleasures, she had the things which in her day might be her peace. But why she had present goods for her peace, is explained by what follows, But now they are hidden from your eyes. For if the eyes of her heart had not been hidden from the future evils which were hanging over her, she would not have been joyful in the prosperity of the present.

Therefore He shortly added the punishment which was near at hand, saying, For the days shall come upon you.

CYRIL; If you had known, even you. The Jews were not worthy to receive the divinely inspired Scriptures, which relate the mystery of Christ. For as often as Moses is read, a veil overshadows their heart that they should not see what has been accomplished in Christ, who being the truth puts to flight the shadow. And because they regarded not the truth, they rendered themselves unworthy of the salvation which flows from Christ.

EUSEBIUS; He here declares that His coming was to bring peace to the whole world. For to this He came, that He should preach both to them that were near, and those that were afar off. But as they did not wish to receive the peace that was announced to them, it was hid from them. And therefore the siege which was shortly to come upon them He most expressly foretells, adding, For the days shall come upon you, &c.

GREG. By these words the Roman leaders are pointed out. For that overthrow of Jerusalem is described, which was made by the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus.

EUSEBIUS; But how these things were fulfilled we may gather from what is delivered to us by Josephus, who though he was a Jew, related each event as it took place, in exact accordance with Christ's prophecies.

GREG. This too which is added, namely, They shall not leave in you one stone upon another, is now witnessed in the altered situation of the same city, which is now built in that place where Christ was crucified without the gate, whereas the former Jerusalem, as it is called, was rooted up from the very foundation. And the crime for which this punishment of overthrow was inflicted is added, Because you knew not the time of your visitation.

THEOPHYL. That is, of my coming. For I came to visit and to save you, which if you had known and believed on Me, you might have been reconciled to the Romans, and exempted from all danger as did those who believed on Christ.

ORIGEN; I do not deny then that the former Jerusalem was destroyed because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, but I ask whether the weeping might not perhaps concern this your spiritual Jerusalem. For if a man has sinned after receiving the mysteries of truth, he will be wept over. Moreover, no Gentile is wept over, but he only who was of Jerusalem, and has ceased to be.

GREG. For our Redeemer does not cease to weep through His elect whenever he perceives any to have departed from a good life to follow evil ways. Who if they had known their own damnation, hanging over them, would together with the elect shed tears over themselves. But the corrupt soul here has its day, rejoicing in the passing time; to whom things present are its peace, seeing that it takes delight in that which is temporal. It shuns the foresight of the future which may disturb its present mirth; and hence it follows, But now are they hid from your eyes.

ORIGEN; But our Jerusalem is also wept over, because after sin enemies surround it, (that is, wicked spirits,) and cast a trench round it to besiege it, and leave not a stone behind; especially when a man after long continence, after years of chastity, is overcome, and enticed by the blandishments of the flesh, has lost his fortitude and his modesty, and has committed fornication, they will not leave on him one stone upon another, according to Ezekiel, His former righteousness I will not remember.

GREG. Or else; The evil spirits lay siege to the soul, as it goes forth from the body, for being seized with the love of the flesh, they caress it with delusive pleasures. They surround it with a trench, because bringing all its wickedness which it has committed before the eyes of its mind, they close confine it to the company of its own damnation, that being caught in the very extremity of life, it may see by what enemies it is blockaded, yet be unable to find any way of escape, because it can no longer do good works, since those which it might once have done it despised. On every side also they enclose the soul when its iniquities rise up before it, not only in deed but also in word and thought, that she who before in many ways greatly enlarged herself in wickedness, should now at the end be straitened every way in judgment. Then indeed the soul by the very condition of its guilt is laid prostrate on the ground, while its flesh which it believed to be its life is bid to return to

dust. Then its children fall in death, when all unlawful thoughts which only proceed from it, are in the last punishment of life scattered abroad. These may also be signified by the stones. For the corrupt mind when to a corrupt thought it adds one more corrupt, places one stone upon another. But when the soul is led to its doom, the whole structure of its thoughts is rent asunder. But the wicked soul God ceases not to visit with His teaching, sometimes with the scourge and sometimes with a miracle; that the truth which it knew not it may hear, and though still despising it, may return pricked to the heart in sorrow, or overcome with mercies may be ashamed at the evil which it has done. But because it knows not the time of its visitation, at the end of life it is given over to its enemies, that with them it may be joined together in the bond of everlasting damnation.

GREG. When He had related the evils that were to come upon the city, He straightway entered the temple, that He might cast out them that bought and sold in it. Showing that the destruction of the people arose chiefly from the guilt of the priests.

AMBROSE; For God wishes not His temple to be a house of traffic, but the dwelling-place of holiness, nor does He fix the priestly service in a salable performance of religion, but in a free and willing obedience.

CYRIL; Now there were in the temple a number of sellers who sold animals, by the custom of the law, for the sacrificial victims, but the time was now come for the shadows to pass away, and the truth of Christ to shine forth. Therefore Christ, who together with the Father was worshipped in the temple, commanded the customs of the law to be reformed, but the temple to become a house of prayer; as it is added, My house, &c.

GREG. For they who sat in the temple to receive money would doubtless sometimes make exaction to the injury of those who gave them none.

THEOPHYL. The same thing our Lord did also at the beginning of His preaching, as John relates; and now He did it a second time, because the crime of the Jews was much increased by their not having been chastened by the former warning.

AUG. Now mystically, you must understand by the temple; Christ Himself, as man in His human nature, or with His body united to Him, that is, the Church. Put inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, it was said, Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days. Inasmuch as the Church is joined to Him, is the temple understood, of which He seems to have spoken in the same place, Take these away from hence; signifying that there would be those in the Church who would rather be pursuing their own interest, or find a shelter therein to conceal their wickedness, than follow after the love of Christ, and by confession of their sins receiving pardon be restored.

GREG. But our Redeemer does not withdraw His word of preaching even from the unworthy and ungrateful. Accordingly after having by the ejection of the corrupt maintained the strictness of discipline, He now pours forth the gifts of grace. For it follows, And he was teaching daily in the temple.

CYRIL; Now from what Christ had said and done it was meet that men should worship Him as God, but far from doing this, they sought to slay Him; as it follows, But the chief priests and scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him.

BEDE; Either because He daily taught in the temple, or because He had cast the thieves therefrom, or that coming thereto as King and Lord, He was greeted with the honor of a heavenly hymn of praise.

CYRIL; But the people held Christ in far higher estimation than the Scribes and Pharisees, and chiefs of the Jews, who not receiving the faith of Christ themselves, rebuked others. Hence it follows, And they could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

BEDE; This may be taken in two ways; either that fearing; a tumult of the people they knew not what they should do with Jesus, whom they had settled to destroy; or they sought to destroy Him because they perceived their own authority set aside, and multitudes flocking to hear Him.

GREG. Mystically, such as the temple of God is in a city, such is the life of the religious in a faithful people. And there are frequently some who take upon themselves the religious habit, and while they are receiving the privilege of Holy Orders, are sinking the sacred office of religion into a bargain of worldly traffic. For the sellers in the temple are those who give at a certain price that which is the rightful possession of others. For to sell justice is to observe it on condition of receiving a reward. But the buyers in the temple are those, who whilst unwilling to discharge what is just to their neighbor, and disdaining to do what they are in duty bound to, by paying a price to their patrons, purchase sin.

ORIGEN; If any then sells, let him be cast out, and especially if he sells doves. For of those things which have been revealed and committed to me by the Holy Spirit, I either sell for money to the people, or do not teach without hire, what else do I but sell a dove, that is, the Holy Spirit?

AMBROSE; Therefore our Lord teaches generally that all worldly bargains should be far removed from the temple of God; but spiritually He drove away the money-changers, who seek gain from the Lord's money, that is, the divine Scripture, lest they should discern good and evil.

GREG. And these make the house of God a den of thieves, because when corrupt men hold religious offices, they slay with the sword of their wickedness their neighbors, whom they ought to raise to life by the intercession of their prayers. The temple also is the soul of the faithful, which if it put forth corrupt thoughts to the injury of a neighbor, then is it become as it were a lurking place of thieves. But when the soul of the faithful is wisely instructed to shun evil, truth teaches daily in the temple.

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