

Personal Notes

First Sunday of Advent, Reading 001A, December 1, 2013

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The Advent Season is a time to anticipate the arrival of the Messiah. Different cultures grasp time differently. Jeff Cavins in his The Bible Timeline,¹ does not recognize a difference between how ancient Mediterranean people, like Jesus, experienced time and how modern people experience time. The difference in expectations helps understand the readings.

For Western Civilization in 2013, time focuses on the future. In Ancient History, Mediterranean time is to a present orientation, as Baltic time is to a past orientation. In the Mediterranean, Romans, who also looked to the past, were a Mediterranean exception. Middle Easterners, like Jesus, focused on the present.² Looking toward the past, expects things to remain the same. Looking toward the future, expects change.

Modern concepts of time look to the future, sometimes far away, for example a college degree, an interstate highway, or the space program. This future horizon risks misinterpreting the Lectionary readings.

For the ancients, time did not extend beyond the horizon of one's immediate outlook. To take Isaiah as looking centuries in the future, as Cavins does, is misleading to the point of immoral. Some prophecies, therefore, were not fulfilled according to the meaning of the prophet.

The meaning of the original prophet is what was inspired for the original prophet. The meaning of the later prophet is what was inspired for the later prophet. The inspiration of later prophets might give new meaning to an old, unfulfilled prophecy; but that does not mean the original prophecy was fulfilled.

Readings

First Reading	Isaiah 2:1-5
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (n/a)
Second Reading:	Romans 13:11-14
Alleluia:	cf. Psalm 85:8
Gospel:	Matthew 24:37-44

¹ Jeff Cavins, Tim Gray, and Sarah Christmyer, The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Ascension Press, 2004, 2011).

² The following three paragraphs draw from Bruce J. Malina, "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 1 (January 1989) 25 and throughout.

Annotated Bibliography

Musings above the solid line draw from material below. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah 2:2-5

Erik M. Heen, review of James P. Ware, Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context³

Heen approvingly reports that Ware finds that the happy inclusion of converts by Jews at the time of Jesus, “was interpreted in terms of an ‘eschatological pilgrimage’ tradition.” Heen goes on, that Ware “helpfully contributes to our knowledge of the tradition history of . . . the manner in which Paul thought through his calling to be an apostle to the gentiles (Rom 11:130).” While the Jews did not proselytize, Paul did and regarded proselytizing as part of Christian identity. Paul looked to the future and expected change.

Isaiah 2:2-4

H. G. M. Williamson, review of Rodrigo Franklin De Sousa, Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1—12⁴

Williamson reports that De Sousa includes Isaiah 2:2-4 as part of the three main messianic passages in Isaiah 1—12. De Sousa is concerned about changes translators made developing the LXX out of the original Hebrew. De Sousa is cautious. Williamson reports that such caution “reminds us, too, that even in translation without deliberate embellishment, the LXX was able to keep alive a form of the hopes to which the Hebrew text already pointed.” The point is that the Jews were not as anticipatory as later Christians would have been about the significance of the Messiah.

Isaiah 2:2-4

Michael B. Shepherd, review of Winfried Vogel, The Cultic Motif in the Book of Daniel⁵

Shepherd reports that Vogel links Isaiah with Daniel. The mountain mentioned twice in the reading today correlates with the stone/mountain in Daniel 2.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 75, No. 2 (April 2013) 383.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January 2011) 119.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 3 (July 2011) 601.

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Personal Notes cites members of the Protestant Revolt in the spirit of Gerald O'Collins, S.J., writing,⁶

In fact, by allowing the liturgy to be celebrated in the vernacular, by stressing “the table of God’s word” along with the importance of the homily (no. 52), and by granting to the laity—although restricted to certain circumstances—communion “under both kinds” (no. 55), Vatican II conceded the demands of Martin Luther and other 16th-century Protestant reformers, albeit in the 20th-century. In short, while SC [Sacrosanctum concilium [sic]] did not use explicitly the language of “reform” or “reformation,” what it enacted can and should be described in those terms. Isaiah 2:22

John Mayer (1583-1664), “Commentary upon All the Prophets”⁷

The Protestant revolutionary, Mayer, brings out, “Although Mount Zion were not the highest mountain, yet for the excellence in regard of the temples standing there and Christ’s preaching there it was the highest in esteem of all other mountains of the earth, and so it is likewise set forth (Is 2).”

Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (n/a)

Psalm 122 is one of the Funerals choices, Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture, 16.11 Antiphons and Psalms.⁸ The point of Psalm 122 is placing the love of God above all else, within an eternal sense of present time.

Psalm 122

Joseph M. Doyle, S.S.J., When Jesus Was Twelve⁹

⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2012) 772.

⁷ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament XII: Ezekiel, Daniel, (ed.) Carl L. Beckwith (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2012) 95.

⁸ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops’ Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 289.

⁹ Phoenix, Arizona: Tau Publishing, LLC, 2012, 47.

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Doyle imagines Jesus singing, *I rejoiced because they said to me, "We will go up to the house of the LORD."*

Psalm 122:5

Gianni Barbiero, "Psalm 132: A Prayer of `Solomon'"¹⁰

Barbiero argues, that Psalm 132:9 reflects

. . . not the components of a procession but the division of the postexilic community onto priests and laity. Unusually, the priests are assigned a social and not a liturgical role, which fits with the position of the priests in postexilic Judaism as both a political and a judicial power. Here the judicial aspect is being emphasized . . . in Ps 122:5. The inauguration of the divine kingdom in Zion, to which the reintroduction of the ark is an allusion, will facilitate "peace," the precondition of which is "justice."

Psalm 122:1-9

Clifford M. Yeary, Pilgrim People: A Scriptural Commentary¹¹

Yeary exclaims from what the Lectionary has as *And now we have set foot within your gates, O Jerusalem. Now* brings out the time element of the Scripture.

Romans 13:11-14

Romans 13:8, 9, 14

John David Ramsey, A Precarious Faith: The Tri-Une Dynamic of the Christian Life¹²

After referring to Romans 13:8, 9, 14, Father John David, my pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, in Newport News, Virginia, argues,

By making these and other remarks throughout these passages, Paul tightly ties his teachings with the Christian life itself, but in a dynamic, open-ended, rather than prescriptive, manner. Just as participation in Christ opens the individual and the community to fullness of life in Christ with the Father through the Spirit, so the very form of Paul's teachings opens people to the full dynamic of life lived in freeing conformity [sic] to God's will, engaging the minds, bodies and souls of the community in all

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 75, No. 2 (April 2013) 247, 250.

¹¹ Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010, 36.

¹² Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2002, 243.

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its diverse membership, with all its diverse gifts, unified in the polyphonic performance of the gospel.

Romans 13:12

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), "On the Freedom of the Will"¹³

Erasmus comments, "So in Romans 7:18: "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." Here Paul seems to confess that it is in the power of man to will what is good, and this willing good is itself a good work, since otherwise there would be no evil in evil will."

Romans 13:12

Andrew Willet (1562-1622), "Sixfold Commentary upon Daniel"¹⁴

The Protestant revolutionary, Willet, observes, "It is the light of the gospel that chases away darkness, as the apostle says: "The night is past, the day is come" (Rom 13:12). And Christ only has the words of the [sic] eternal life (Jn 6:68)."

Romans 13:14

Thomas Thorowgood (1595-1669), "Moderation Justified"¹⁵

The Protestant revolutionary Thorowgood preaches, "What shall I do, when God rises up, and when he visits, what shall I answer him? (Job 31:14). To which no better answer can be given than that of Saint Paul (Rom 13:14): Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." I am beginning to notice a change through time in the Protestant Revolution. In the beginning, Protestants optimistically looked right to God, bypassing the human institution of the Roman Catholic Church. As time went on, however, the revolutionaries seemed to develop a depressing sense toward what they were doing, dismantling the Roman Catholic Church.

¹³ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI: Philipians, Colossians, Graham Tomlin (ed.) in collaboration with Gregory B. Graybill, general editor, Timothy George, associate General editor, Scott M. Manetsch, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic: An imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2013) 219.

¹⁴ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament XII: Ezekiel, Daniel, (ed.) Carl L. Beckwith (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2012) 412.

¹⁵ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI: Philipians, Colossians, Graham Tomlin (ed.) in collaboration with Gregory B. Graybill, general editor, Timothy George, associate General editor, Scott M. Manetsch, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic: An imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2013) 108.

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Romans 13:14

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament¹⁶

Wallace finds ambiguity at *put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh*. The ambiguity rests between *the Lord Jesus Christ* and *make no provision for the desires of the flesh*. Are *the Lord Jesus Christ* and *make no provision for the desires of the flesh* the same or does the one describe the other in parallel fashion? It seems to me that Saint Paul is saying either that that Jesus Christ is as strong as or is stronger than the sex drive.

cf. Psalm 85:8

Matthew 24:37-4

For more on sources see the Appendix file. A complete set of Personal Notes, dating from the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 14, 2002 to the present, is on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

The Responsorial Antiphon for this Sunday is *Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord*.¹⁷

In the gobbledygook prayer at Sunday Mass immediately following mention of forgiven sins, the Faithful hearing the 2011 Roman Missal can listen for “righteous deeds at his coming.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 183, 199.

¹⁷ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988) 6. Personal Notes refers to this book as the Lectionary.

¹⁸ n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See

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This is a call for grace that some Black Baptists call to mind with *And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS* (Luke 1:31).¹⁹

(Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 139. Personal Notes refers to this book as the Missal.

¹⁹ UMI Annual Sunday School Lesson Commentary: Precepts for Living ®: 2013-2014: International Sunday School Lessons: Volume 165: UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), a. Okechuku Ogbonnaya, Ph.D., (ed.) (Chicago, IL 60643: UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), 2013) 158-159.