

Readings

First Testament: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
Psalm: Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 (Isaiah 61:10b)
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Commentary

While John the Baptist announced the presence of the Messiah, the Baptist also denounced the fact that Herod had married his brother's wife. Such a denunciation, prioritizing truth over politics, brought down the wrath of Herod's wife upon the Baptist. Similarly, those Faithful who do not regard Obama as a murderer, confront the possibility of the religious wrath of the Roman Catholic hierarchy concerned with procured abortions. Civil wrath killed the Baptist; religious wrath killed Jesus. There is no easy "prudent" way out.

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Annotated Bibliography

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

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

Isaiah 61:1-9

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy¹

In Luke, Jesus proclaims that he is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 61. Barker explains, "the concept of Jubilee gives hope to the dispossessed who had been deprived of their rights and their inheritance when the exiles returned from Babylon to establish the second temple." The Lectionary includes the part about the day of the LORD's favor, but leaves out the part about that day also being the day of the LORD's vengeance.

¹ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 31. 36 (the quotation), 38, 39, 51, 76.

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Isaiah 61:1-2

Richard Clifford, S.J. and Khaled Anatolois, "Christian Salvation: Biblical and Theological Perspectives" ²

Isaiah 61:1-2 (LXX) portray salvation according to the "prophetic" model, in which human instruments effect salvation within history. Clifford and Anatolois observe, "Strikingly, Jesus speaks no word of his own, proclaiming instead a lengthy passage from Isaiah 61:1-2 (LXX), and declaring, 'Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.'"

Isaiah 61:1-2

Charles H. Talbert, review of Michael E. Fuller, The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts ³

Talbert disagrees with Fuller and argues,

... when the Lucan Jesus uses Isa 61:1-2 [which the Lectionary presents] and 58:6 in Luke 4:18-19 to announce his mission, the image of proclaiming release to the captives in this context is understood as casting out demons (4:31-37), setting at liberty those who are oppressed is viewed as healing (4:38-39; 5:12-15; 5:17-26); and preaching good news to the poor is taken to be the good news of the kingdom breaking in in [sic] Jesus' ministry (4:43-44). The divergences are so great that one is left to wonder if a description of the restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts should be linked at all with an exile return pattern.

Isa 61:1-2a, 10-11

Matthew J. Lynch, "Zion's Warrior and the Nations: Isaiah 59:15b—63:6 in Isaiah's Zion Traditions" ⁴

Lynch divides his article into five parts:

- I. Salient Features of Israel's Zion Traditions
- II. The First Warrior Panel (Isaiah 59:15b-21)
- III. The Second Warrior Panel (Isaiah 63:1-6)
- IV. Yhwh's Kingship and Royal Decrees in Isaiah 60-62
- V. Conclusions

Lynch concludes,

² Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2005) 746.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 580.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (July 2008) 244-263.

Personal Notes
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These traditions are employed by Trito-Isaiah to counter the increasing darkness of Israel's exilic rebellion, failed dreams, and foreign domination, and to illuminate the surprising glories of Zion's future—a future made secure only by the intervention and return of Zion's warrior and king.

Isa 61:1

Susan R. Garrett, "Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24"⁵
Garrett argues,

The most important and obvious instance of this Lucan tendency [to draw from Isaiah] is the depiction of the sermon in Nazareth (4:16-20), where Luke has Jesus quote Isa 61:1 and 58:6 to describe the "release" that he will bring: release from poverty, imprisonment, sin, sickness, and death (Luke 4:16-20).

Isaiah 61:1

Steven L. Bridge, review of Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (eds.), Isaiah in the New Testament⁶
As mentioned last week, Bridge writes,

Isaiah's considerable influence is demonstrated by the ways in which the NT authors repeatedly draw upon his prophecies to validate, shape and infuse content into their writings. In the Gospels, Isaiah's oracles appear at crucial moments of Jesus' life. They validate and explain his virgin birth (Isa 7:14, his forerunner (40:3-5 [used here]) ...

Isaiah 61:1

John J. Collins, review of Alex P. Jassen, Mediating the Divine: Prophecy and Revelation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism⁷

Jassen argues that the Dead Sea Scrolls are innovative in "the use of the term 'anointed ones' to refer to prophets. The new usage is grounded in an interpretation of Isa 61:1." The reviewer, Collins, concludes, "We [still] need terminology that does justice to the transformation and variety as well as to the continuity" from ancient texts to the Dead Sea Scrolls."

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 4 (July 1990) 661.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (July 2007) 190.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2008) 573.

Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 (Isaiah 61:10b)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

These Notes said enough about the Greek in 2005.

1 Thess 5:16-24

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.⁸

Part of Thessalonians, dating from about 200, is at the University of Michigan.

1 Thess 5:17

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults⁹

The Bishops use this verse in Chapter 35, "God Calls Us To Pray." The Bishops quote, *pray without ceasing* to assure the Faithful that, "The Holy Spirit guides the Church at prayer through her reading of Scripture, her celebration of the liturgy, and the practice of faith, hope, and love." I would add that reading Scripture requires study, such as these Notes, to find the meaning needed to read it well. In addition, the Bishops devote a whole page and a half section to "Pray Always (1 Thes 5:17)."

The Bishops are confusing when first, under "Meditative prayer," they write, "Most prominent among these [methods of meditation] are the *Lectio Divina* of St. Benedict, the radical simplicity of Franciscan spirituality, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius." Then, two pages later, the Bishops add, "Within our Church, spirituality movements, including traditional schools of spirituality such as Benedictine, Carmelite, Franciscan, and Ignatian, stress the importance of liturgical and meditative prayer." Evidently, Carmelite spirituality, as found in my Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, is of a lesser order. Really?

Finally, the Bishops include *pray without ceasing* in the section of the chapter labeled "Doctrinal Statements." Since the Bishops do not cite the Council of Trent, I do not know quite what they mean by *Doctrinal*. In any event, it is nice to see Sacred Scripture quoted directly as something Doctrinal.

⁸ Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 99.

⁹ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 468, 474, 476, 479.

1 Thess 5:23

Alan C. Mitchell, review of Chris VanLandingham, Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul¹⁰

Mitchell does not find VanLandingham convincing.

VanLandingham believes that the topic of behavior in 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 5:23 [used here]; 1 Corinthians 1:8; and Philippians 1:10 and 2:15 regarding the Day of the Lord concerns what is moral and ethical rather than any forensic sense of a judicial pronouncement on God's part.

Isaiah 61:1 (cited in Luke 4:18)

John 1:6-8, 19-28

There are two difficult Greek words in the manuscripts for this Lectionary reading. If I understand the apparatus correctly, the first difficulty is in verse 21. Are they asking John the Baptizer *who* or *what* are you?

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	What are you?
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	Quid ergo?
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	Who are thou?
<u>King James</u> (1611)	Who are thou?
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	What then?
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	What are you then?
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	Who are you?

The different translations reflect the difficulty.

¹⁰ Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 3 (September 2008) 683.

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The second difficulty is in verse 26, whether the word *standing* belongs in the phrase, *there is one among you*.

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	there is one among you
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	medius vestrum stat
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	among you stands
<u>King James</u> (1611)	there standeth one among you
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	there hath stood one in the midst of you
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	there is one among you
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	standing among you

Again, the different translations reflect the difficulty with the original Greek. The Adoremus Bulletin for October 2008 observes that the Vatican is turning in a special way toward Sacred Scripture. That turn encourages these Notes.

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.¹¹

The Alands write that the Bodmer papyri, which became known only in the 1950s, contain fourteen of the twenty-one chapters of John, without almost any omissions. The Bodmer papyri date from the beginning of the Third Century. They are in Cologne, outside of Geneva, Switzerland.¹² Another manuscript dating from the Third Century is at the British Library in London.

The Sinaitic Syriac manuscripts preserve these verses in John. The Sinaitic New Testament may date from as early as 160-180.¹³ These Notes often refer to these manuscripts, which are currently being made available on the internet.

The Alands cite a verse identification system designed by Eusebius (263-339?), the Father of Church History. Eusebius used his system to develop his interest in textual criticism.¹⁴

¹¹ Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 57, 96, 100, 101, 120, 126, 250, 252.

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodmer_Papyri 081026.

¹³ <http://www.bible-researcher.com/syriac-isbe.html> 081026.

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John 1:19—2:12

Alice L. Laffey, review of Maurizio Marcheselli, "Avete qualcosa da mangiare?"
Un pasto, il Risorto, la comunità¹⁵
Laffey writes,

John 21, designed to resonate with 1:19—2:12, contains both verbal and structural similarities; a parallelism emerges between the person and role of John the Baptist in the context of the Messiah's manifestation to Israel and the figure and role of the Beloved Disciple. Both are individuals who carry out a function for the group.

Laffey finds Marcheselli convincing and helpful.

John 1:1-17

Craig R. Koester, review of Francisco Lozada, Jr., and Tom Thatcher (eds.), New Currents through John: A Global Perspective¹⁶

One of the contributors to this collection, Yak-hwee Tan, "explores the way the image of the vine and branches develops a sense of Christian identity (John 1:1-17) in relation to a hostile world (15:18-27)." Koester concludes that the contributors "invite readers to a conversation in progress, with the Fourth Gospel at the center of attention." The conversation is about "rethinking the Gospel's [of John] relationship; to Judaism and the Roman imperial system, as well as the need to take up some of the book's less-visited theological themes."

John 1:19-34

Craig R. Koester, review of Andreas J. Kostenberger, John¹⁷

This time Koester writes, "I have not been persuaded that the chronologies of the Gospels can be reconciled in this way." Koester illustrates what Kostenberger argues, "For example, the ministry of John the Baptist in 1:19-34 occurs in the summer or fall of 29 C.E. and the cleansing of the temple in 2:13-22 occurs on April 7, 30 C.E."

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius_081026.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 160.

¹⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 203.

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (July 2006) 150.