

Romans 1:7, *grace to you and peace from God our Father*, combines the Greek *grace* with the Hebrew *peace*. In Greek, *peace* has a variety of meanings, the most pertinent of which is *an emotion correspondent to what is pleasing or kindly*. At Romans 1:7 the more precise meaning is *gracious dealing from God*.¹ This Sunday, the Lectioary readings give a sense of a pleasing emotion from God and sets the stage for this Sunday before Christmas.

To develop a pleasing and kindly emotion, Isaiah prophecies about the coming Messiah. Psalm 24 is about the mightiness of the Lord, gracious even at Bethlehem. Romans directly brings up the matter of grace. Matthew is about how Jesus, in his graciousness, is able to construct the meaning of *messiah*, which, at the time, was not well defined. Matthew will constitute the main Gospel readings for this Liturgical Year, Cycle A.

Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the fun stuff scholars are digging up.

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Isaiah 7:14

Steven L. Bridge, review of Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (eds.), Isaiah in the New Testament²

The book points out that the New Testament writers had different textual traditions, between Hebrew and Greek renditions of the First Testament. It has always bothered me that Sacred Scripture never quotes itself exactly. As a professional historian, whenever I quote anyone, I always strive to get the exact words.

¹ William D. Mounce, Zondervan Greek Reference Series: The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House: A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 480.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 190.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

Psalm 24

J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms"³

Psalm 24 is one of the early Royal Psalms, proclaiming that the Lord is the gracious Lord of everything. One of the first discoveries of the very ancient Jews was that their God was not only special, but just as royal as any other god and any other ruler other gods supported.

Psalm 24:10

Joel S. Burnett, "The Question of Divine Absence in Israelite and West Semitic Religion"⁴

Burnett develops the problem, not of whether God exists, but whether God is currently present among his people. Burnett focuses on the time of the ancient Jews, but Burnett carries the desire for divine presence through ages. I want my spouse to be with me always and even the anticipation of permanent earthly separation leaves a terrible sense of void. That seems to be the void that Burnett is applying to the relationship between ancient peoples and their gods.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Rom 1:1

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"⁵

Although Paul never describes his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, Romans 1:1, *called to be an apostle*, alludes to that conversion. Continuing to describe Christ in the theology of Paul, Matera goes on, "It was the exaltation of Christ into resurrection glory that revealed the power of his saving death and presented him as the one whom God had 'established as Son of God in power' (Rom 1:4)."

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 4 677, 679, 680, 681.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 229.

⁵ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 240, 245.

Rom 1:1

Brittany E. Wilson, "Pugnacious Precursors and the Bearer of Peace: Jael, Judith, and Mary in Luke 1:42"⁶

Wilson contrasts Mary with Jael and Judith, "the only named women in the entirety of Israel's writings, both canonical and noncanonical, who kill a person with their own hands and are then exalted for assisting the people of Israel." The Blessed Virgin, Mary, is more gracious. Romans 1:1, is one of many places where Paul "identifies himself as a slave and says that he serves God through compulsion ..." The violence of the First Testament, however, gives way to, as Wilson puts it, "from now on, those who are called blessed follow not the way of violence but the way of peace."

Rom 1:3-4

Richard J. Dillon, "The Benedictus in Micro- and Macrocontext"⁷
Dillon explains,

Luke is ... reticent about Jesus' status as the son of David until he reaches the Acts of the Apostles, where it is quite clear that he attributes this status [as the Son of David] primarily to the risen Christ—a perspective interestingly the reverse of Paul's Jewish-Christian credo in Rom 1:3-4 [where in today's Lectionary reading, Romans presents Jesus at the Son of David].

Romans is making the point that the New Testament does not do away with the First Testament, but rather fulfills the First Testament.

Rom 1:3-4

Pheme Perkins, review of Martin Hengel und Anna Maria Schwemer, Der Messianische Anspruch Jesu und die Anfänge der Christologie: Vier Studien⁸

Citing the scholars, Perkins writes, "Jesus was able to define what it meant to be God's anointed because there was no well-defined concept 'messiah' ..."

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 442, 448, 451.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 475.

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 2 (June 2005) 446.

Rom 1:3-4

Bernardin Schneider, O.F.M., "The Corporate Meaning and Background of 1 Cor 15,45b—`O *Eschatos Adam eis Pneuma Zoiopoioun*"⁹

Sister Schneider writes, "Constituted Son of God in power, he [Jesus] first received from the Father the promise of the Spirit and now pours it out on all flesh, which thereby becomes now in him, as his own flesh was, the seed of future life and glory." Paul, therefore, writes both of humanity ascending to God and God descending to humanity.

Rom 1:5

Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology"¹⁰

McDonnell writes, "Every free response to a divine invitation is a faith response, involving `the obedience of faith' (Romans 1:5 [used in the Lectionary] 16:26), that is a faith manifesting itself in obedience." McDonnell is concerned about exchanging obedience to God for obedience to humans. She is concerned about the difference between persuasion and command. One of the necessary functions of parenting is surrendering the ability to command children as children for the need to persuade children as adults. I cringe at the pastoral approach of the hierarchy striving to command, rather than persuade, the Faithful adults, including priests outside the hierarchy.

Rom 1:5

Charles H. Cosgrove, "Did Paul Value Ethnicity?"¹¹

Cosgrove contends that *Among all the Gentiles* in Romans 1:5 in the Lectionary refers to Paul going to different places, such as Rome, Antioch, and Corinth, rather than bringing everyone into Christianity in the city of Jerusalem. To answer the question in the title, "Did Paul value ethnicity," in the final analysis, Paul does not.

Alleluia: Matthew 1:23

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 3 (July 1967) 460 as found at http://63.136.1.22/pls/eli/ashow?ishid=n0008-7912_029_03&lcookie=2792486&npage=450-467 070115.

¹⁰ Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 534.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 284, 285.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

Matt 1:19

Daniel W. Ulrich, "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew"¹²

Ulrich writes that "Jesus describes future emissaries [i.e. the Faithful] as 'prophets' and emphasizes their continuity with the righteous prophets [like Saint Joseph] of the past ..."

Matt 1:18-23

Edward P. Hahnenberg, "The Ministerial Priesthood and Liturgical Anamnesis in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J."¹³

Anamnesis means *recalling to mind*. Hahnenberg writes, "For Kilmartin, the ascending Christology of the Synoptic Gospels [including Matthew] can be fully integrated with the descending Christology of John." In ascending Christology, Jesus goes to the Father. In descending Christology, the Father goes to the Faithful.

Matt 1:21

Boris Repschinski, "'For He Will Save His People from Their Sins' (Matthew 1:21): A Christology for Christian Jews"¹⁴

In 2006, Repschinski pointed out "Direct evidence of contemporary Jewish reactions to Matthew's Gospel, however, is lacking." Repschinski struggled with what sins and which people are meant in Matthew 1:21, *he will save his people from their sins*.

Matt 1:21-23

Boris Repschinski, review of Peter Fiedler, [Das Matthäusevangelium](#)¹⁵

A year later, in 2007, Repschinski wrote that Fiedler "wished to read Matthew as much as possible without the encumbrance of its later reception history, which appropriated the Gospel for a Gentile Christian world." Fiedler also wrote that Matthew tones "down Marcan claims for the superiority of Christology."

¹² [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 78.

¹³ [Theological Studies](#), Vol. 66, No. 2 (June 2005), 260.

¹⁴ [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 68, No. 2 (July 2006) 248-267.

¹⁵ [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 578.

Personal Notes
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Raymond J. Jirran

Matt 1:21
Douglas R. A. Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?"¹⁶
Hare writes that "Matthew presents Jesus as a person replacing the temple as the place where sin is removed (1:21; 9:6; 12:6; 20:28; 26:28),"

For more on sources see the Appendix file, included with the hard copy.
Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

After-action Report

¹⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 274 ff.