

Personal Notes
Christmas, 014ABC, December 25, 2011
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Today, the Faithful think of the Messiah as saving their souls, without realizing what a strange idea this would have been at the time of Jesus. The definition of the Messiah changes over time. For example, that definition moves around from First, to Second, to Third Isaiah—though not in the Christmas liturgical readings. Before Jesus redefined Messiah, Messiah was fundamentally militaristic.

At Christmas, the Faithful think of God coming helpless to Bethlehem and ignore that Jesus is on his way to Cavalry (the Roman name) or Golgotha (the Greek name), before the Easter Resurrection. The Epistle to Titus is about the fact that this human, Jesus, is also God. With Luke the Faithful pray, *today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord*.

The changing definition of what Messiah means helps the Faithful understand the changing definition of what love of neighbor and life means. The Black Apostolate illustrates that the definition of love of neighbor does change.

Now to bring the Messiah into 2011 by working in the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) maneuvers. As someone who taught Western Civilization for thirty years, I recognize differences between civilizations and cultures in the various approaches to love. But I want to stay focused on Western Civilization, which is what OWS is doing. I want to say that OWS is an expression of Judeo-Christian love of neighbor. May God reward those involved with OWS.

Readings

First Reading:	Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm:	Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 (Luke 2:11)
Second Reading:	Titus 2:11-14
Alleluia:	Luke 2:10-11
Gospel:	Luke 2:1-14

Annotated Bibliography

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

Isaiah 9:1-6

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE.

Verse	<u>Lectionary</u>	NABRE
1	dwelt	lived
2	make merry	exult
6	from [sic] David's throne	Upon David's throne

Isaiah 9:1-2

Philip Comfort, "The Significance of the Papyri in Revising the New Testament Greek Text and English Translations," in Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.)¹

Comfort identifies Isaiah 9:1 with what the NABRE identifies as the last verse of Isaiah 8, namely verse 23. Yet, many Bibles do identify the NABRE Isaiah 8:23 as Isaiah 9:1.² I do not know what to make of it.

Isa 9:1-7

Matthew J. Lynch, "Zion's Warrior and the Nations: Isaiah 59:15b—63:6 in Isaiah's Zion Traditions"³

Lynch points out, "Yhwh's deep concern with injustice, a concern consistently attributed to Zion's ideal ruler (Isa 9:1-7 used here) . . . "In other words, this reading is about dissolving such aspects of culture as racial prejudice.

Isa 9:1-6

Reed Lessing, review of Randall Heskett, Messianism within the Scriptural Scrolls of Isaiah⁴

Lessing concludes that Heskett "offers a valuable contribution to the study of Isaiah." In other words, while Heskett is not entirely convincing, Heskett does offer something to think about, such as,

In chap. 2, H. discusses the role of Cyrus in Isaiah. The irony is that, whereas H. maintains that royal oracles such as 9:1-6 [used here] and 11:1-9 were reinterpreted as messianic, Cyrus, the only "messiah" in

¹ Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, 79, 84 .

² <http://bible.cc/isaiah/9-1.htm> (accessed October 2, 2011).

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008) 251.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 139.

the book (45:1), is de-messianized. H. explains, "Therefore, just as later editors may reinterpret non-messianic texts messianically, they could just as well have reinterpreted messianic texts as non-messianic, showing that this shift can move in both directions as a result of the changing meaning of 'messiah'" (p. 36).

Heskett next studies the three messianic texts 7:14; 9:1-6 [used here]; and 11:1-9. He contends that Isaiah 7—11 represents a level of tradition that has been "rehistoricized" by the final editors of Isaiah. For example, 9:1-6 [used here] was an enthronement song describing an ideal king, but post-exile editors placed the text after the "former things" of 8:23 to make it messianic. H. uses terms such as "progressive dehistoricization" and "gradual opaqueness" to describe the changes editors made after the exile to texts such as 7:14; 9:1-6 [used here]; and 11:1-9.

Isa 9:1-2

Virgilio Elizondo, "Jesus the Galilean Jew in Mestizo Theology"⁵

Elizondo writes, "In one of the few references found in the Hebrew Bible, the Prophet Isaiah (9:1-2) refers to 'Galilee of the Gentiles.'" In a footnote, Elizondo adds, "Whether this was the case or not, as argued by contemporary scholars, this certainly seems to be how Galilee was perceived by Isaiah and later on framed in Matthew's Gospel."

My problems continue. While the Lectionary documents Isaiah 9:1-2 without mentioning Galilee, so does the NABRE, which places the verse in question at Isaiah 8:23. The NABRE translation is *Galilee of the Nations*. The Elizondo translation is *Galilee of the Gentiles*.

Isaiah 9:5-6

H. G. M. Williamson, review of Rodrigo Franklin de Sousa, Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1—12⁶

Williamson reports that de Sousa is not thorough in his research. The results that de Sousa offers, nevertheless, "remind 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."

⁵ Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 271.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January 2011) 119.

Isa 9:5(6)

John Goldingay, "The Compound Name in Isaiah 9:5(6)"⁷

Goldingay argues that Wonder-Counselor, *God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace* of the Lectionary is not the name of the Messiah, but is the name of the God, after whom the Messiah is named. A better translation would be "One who plans a wonder is the warrior God; the father forever is a commander who brings peace."

Isa 9:6-7

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History⁸

Lawrence explains,

Isaiah looks ahead to a new, messianic age. A king descended from David will reign in righteousness. The Lord's righteous servant will be smitten by God and afflicted [Lawrence offers a footnote to Isaiah 9:6-7] but 'After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light (of life) and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities' (Isaiah 53:11).

Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 (Luke 2:11)

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE. The focus is on five verses: 1, 2, 3, 12, and 13. The comparison is from one column to the next.

Verse	<u>Lectionary</u>	NABRE
1	you lands	the earth
2	Announce	proclaim [<u>sic</u>]
3	wondrous	marvelous
12	exult	rejoice
13	rule . . . constancy	govern . . . faithfulness

The prayer book of the Church, the Psalms, twist and turn, much in the holy spirit of prayer, after all.

Psalm 96

William P. Brown, review of Theodore Mascarenhas, The Missionary Function of Israel in Psalms 67, 96, and 117⁹

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1999) 243.

⁸ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 105.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 518.

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Brown reports, "Psalm 96, 'a torchbearer of the central theme of Book Four,' designates Israel as the 'proclaimer' to the nations of God's universal sovereignty, which knows no bounds. It is just this emphasis that makes the psalm a 'new song.'" But, then Roberts concludes, "'But such an explanation—or any explanation for that matter—ultimately serves to undermine the mystery of election."

Psalm 96:1b-13a

William Doan and Terry Giles, "The Song of Asaph: A Performance-Critical Analysis of 1 Chronicles 16:8-36"¹⁰

Doan and Giles argue, "The Song of Asaph derives its name from the account of its commissioning. The song, commissioned by David and performed by Asaph and his brothers (1 Chr 16:7), is a composite drawn from Ps 105:1-15 (vv. 8-22); Ps 96:1b-13a [used here] (v. 23-33); and Ps 106:1, 47-48 (vv. 34-36)." Doan and Giles use the method of historical-criticism to develop how the Jews reworked Sacred Scripture through the ages.

Titus 2:11-14

Titus 1:11-14

Frank J. Matera, review of Gordon D. Fee, Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study¹¹

Matera reports, that Fee, ". . . although he shows that there is a high Christology in the Pauline letters, he argues that in Romans 9:5 and Titus 2:11-14 [used here] *theos* does not refer to Christ but to the Father." *The appearance of our great God and savior Jesus Christ*. Matera concludes, "F.'s work is the most complete and thorough presentation of Pauline Christology presently available."

Titus 2:14

Mark F. Whitters, "Taxo and His Seven Sons in the Cave (*Assumption of Moses* 9-10)"¹²

Taxo and his seven sons is an apocryphal story about seven sons who refuse to surrender their faith. From the Testament of Moses, this story influences Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faith. Whitters points to Titus 2:14, *who gave himself for us*, as an example of such influence.

Titus 2:14

Elizabeth T. Groppe, "Revisiting Vatican II's Theology of the People of God after Forty-five years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue"¹³

There is a Poor Clare nun at the Barhamsville Monastery in New Kent County, Virginia who is devoting her life to the Jews. A gentle soul, I listened to her petitions at

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 31, 38.

¹¹ Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2008) 193.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 731.

¹³ Theological Studies, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2011) 594, 603.

Daily Mass and heard them as one not so gentle. After I privately said to her that her prayers sounded to me as if she were praying that God might help the God-damned Jews—I know that was never her prayer, she never offered such a prayer again. When I told Joe Frank of the good sister (not about my smart remark to her), he never acknowledged my good cheer for his Jewish community. Frank was Mayor of Newport News at the time and for many years, both before and after. All of that is why I offer the following quotation.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, the community to whom [Yves] Congar gave his address on Israel, have moved from their founding commitment to work for the conversion of the Jews to the position that “our vocation gives us a particular responsibility to promote understanding and justice for the Jewish community, and to keep alive in the Church the consciousness that in some mysterious way, Christianity is linked to Judaism from its origin to its final destiny.”

Titus 2:14 . . . *to cleanse for himself a people as his own . . .*

Luke 2:10-11

Luke 2:1-14

Luke 2:2

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament¹⁴

Wallace goes into some detail.

Τον μὲν **πρῶτον** λογον εποιηαμην εγενο ηγεμονευοντος της
Συριας Κυρηνιου
this was the **first** census (taken) when Quirinius was governor of
Syria

This text casts serious doubts on Luke’s accuracy for two reasons: (1) The earliest known Roman census in Palestine was taken in 6-7 CE, and (2) there is little, if any, evidence that Quirinius was governor of Syria before Herod’s death in 4 BCE. In light of this, many scholars believe that Luke was thinking about the census in 6-7 CE, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. At the same time, Luke demonstrates remarkable historical accuracy overall and even shows both an awareness of this later

¹⁴ Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 304-305.

census (cf. Acts 5:37) and an understanding that Jesus was not born this late (cf. Luke 1:5).

This issue cannot be resolved with certainty, though a couple of views are unlikely. First, it is doubtful that *πρωτη* here is used superlatively: “first of at least three.” Not only is the usage of *πρωτες* for a comparative well established in the NT, but it is unnecessary to compound the historical difficulty this text presents.

Second, it has sometimes been suggested that the text should be translated, this census was *before the census* which Quirinius, governor of Syria, made.” It is argued that other, comparative expressions sometimes have elided words (as in John 5:36 and 1 Cor 1:25) and, therefore, such is possible here. But this basis is insufficient, for the following reasons: (a) In both John 5:36 and 1 Cor 1:25, the gen. immediately follows the comparative adj., making the comparison explicit, while in this text *Κυρηνιου* is far removed from *πρωτη* and in fact, is gen. because it is part of a gen. absolute construction. Thus, what must necessarily be supplied in those texts is neither necessary nor natural in this one. (b) This view presupposes that *αυτη* *modifies* *απογραφη*. But since the construction is anarthrous, such a view is almost impossible (because when a demonstrative functions attributively to a noun, the noun is almost always articular), a far more natural translation would be “This is the first census . . .” rather than “this census is . . .”

Third, *πρωτη* is sometimes regarded as adverbial: “this census took place *before* Quirinius was governor of Syria.” The advantage of this approach is that it eludes the historical problem of Quirinius’ governorship overlapping the reign of Herod. However, like the previous view, it erroneously presupposes that *αυτη* *modifies* *απογραφη*. Further, it ignores the concord between *πρωτη* and *απογραφη*, making the adj. most likely to function adjectively, rather than adverbially.

In conclusion, facile solutions do not come naturally to Luke 2:21. This does not, of course, mean that Luke erred. In agreement with Schürmann, Marshall “warns against too easy acceptance of the conclusion that Luke has gone astray here; only the discovery of new historical evidence can lead to a solution of the problem. This is where we must leave the matter.

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In 2005, these Notes annotated Mark. D. Smith, "Of Jesus and Quirinius," which appeared in the year 2000. Wallace, published in 1996,¹⁵ does not refer to this article. Neither does Smith refer to Wallace.

Luke 2:14

Missal, fn. 13

The Missal and Lectionary agree, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:8

Richard Rohr, Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life¹⁶
Rohr explains,

There is no indication in the text that Jesus demanded ideal stable conditions; in fact, you could say that the specific mentioning of his birth in a "manger" is making the exact opposite point. Animals at least had room for him, while there was "no room for him in the inn" (Luke 2:8) where humans dwelled.

Rohr is making the point that the efforts to survive made during the first half of life, ultimately come to naught in the second half of life [because everyone eventually dies], when it is time to fill up whatever stabilization occurred in the first half of life.

Luke 2:1-5

Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees"¹⁷

Groody explains, "The sojourn of the *Verbum Dei* into this world is riddled with political and religious controversies, many of which are connected to narratives about migration. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus enters the world amid a drama involving documentation (Lk 2:1-5)."

¹⁵

<http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=ti%3AGreek+Grammar+au%3ADaniel+B.+Wallace&qt=advanced&dblist=638> (accessed October 2, 2011).

¹⁶ San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 2011, 14.

¹⁷ Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 3 (September 2009) 649.

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Luke 2:2, 6-7, 11-12

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History¹⁸

Lawrence places the nativity story in the geography of time and place. He offers some excellent historical maps.

Luke 2:4

Richard J. Dillon, "The Benedictus in Micro- and Macrocontext"¹⁹

Dillon argues that Luke, in making the point that Joseph *was of the house and family of David* is making the larger point of the mission of Jesus as the messiah.

Luke 2:9

David M. Miller, "Seeing the Glory, Hearing the Son: The Function of the Wilderness Theophany Narratives in Luke 9:28-36"²⁰

Miller spells out,

But the heavenly glory experienced by Moses, Elijah, and Jesus is more precisely God's own glory (Acts 7:55); it is "the glory of the Lord" (δοξα κυρου) that shone around the shepherds at Jesus' birth (Luke 2:9), which is associated by extension with anything belonging to God's realm.

Wilderness loneliness is associated with being near to God. To be lonely is to be bereft of interest in the surroundings of life. When one tires of looking down to earth for companionship, one can begin to look up to heaven, for companionship with the ancestors, including God.

Luke 2:10

Jon Sobrino, S.J., "Jesus of Galilee from the Salvadoran Context: Compassion, Hope, and Following the Light of the Cross"²¹

Sobrino expresses hope as follows.

Hope is central to the text of the Gospels. Jesus says programmatically: "The kingdom of God is at hand." Leonardo Boff comments: "Jesus articulates a radical fact about human existence, about

¹⁸ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 136, 137.

¹⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 475.

²⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 3 (July 2010) 503.

²¹ Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 456.

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its principle of hope and its utopian dimension. He promises that *utopia* will no longer be an object of anxious expectation (Lk 3:43), but rather a *topía*, an object of hope for the entire people (Lk 2:10 [used here]).” In the time of Jesus the kingdom of God gave historical expression to the hope of a people in great material difficulties and immersed in a political and cultural identity crisis. For this reason Jesus provoked an exuberant response among the common people.

Luke 2:11

Robert C. Tannehill, review of Robert F. O’Toole, S.J., Luke’s Presentation of Jesus: A Christology²²

Recognizing that the Greek for Lord is a relatively minor title, that is not how Luke uses the title Lord. “The application of *kyrios* to a king fits Luke’s references to Jesus as royal “Messiah Lord” (cf. Luke 2:11 [used here, *who is Christ and Lord*] with Acts 2:29-36; 1 Kgdms 24:9, 11; 2 Kgdms 9:11).”

Luke 2:11

Sean Freyne, “The Galilean Jesus and a Contemporary Christology”²³

The angel is placing a messianic spin on the identity of Jesus, *Christ and Lord*.

Luke 2:11

Charles H. Talbert, review of Hans Jorg Sellner, Das Heil Gottes: Studien zur Soteriologie des lukanischen Doppelwerks²⁴

Talbert reports that Sellner has a chapter, at least, on Messiah as savior. The context is the salvation of Israel and the fulfillment of the ancestral promises of God.

Luke 2:14

Brittany E. Wilson, “Pugnacious Precursors and the Bearer of Peace: Jael, Judith, and Mary in Luke 1:42”²⁵

In contrast to Jael and Judith, women involved in killing the enemies of God, Mary arrives differently. Wilson explains, “. . . the angel of the Lord and the multitude of heavenly host announce the birth of Jesus, saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace (*εἰρήνη*) among those whom he favors!” (2:14).” The

²² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 772.

²³ Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 286.

²⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2008) 622.

²⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 454.

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Lectionary translation has “Glory to God in the highest [heaven is omitted] and on earth peace to [rather than *among*] those on whom his favor rests [with a period, rather than an exclamation point].”

Luke 2:14

Richard P. Thompson, review of Nils Neumann, Lukas und Menippos: Hoheit und Niedrigkeit in Lk 1, 1—2,40 und in der menippeischen Literatur²⁶

Thompson begins his review by stipulating that Luke 2:14, the proclamation of the angels, is poetic. Neumann goes on to search for other, less well-known poetic places in the first two chapters of Luke.

For my background and more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

²⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 834.