

Readings

First Testament:	Genesis 9:8-15
Psalm:	Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (cf. 10)
Epistle:	1 Peter 3:18-22
Verse before the Gospel	Matthew 4:4b
Gospel:	Mark 1:12-15

Commentary

Lent is a time to reconsider that God keeps everything in existence. We sin when we desecrate the order God establishes. God brings order out of chaos. That explains why repentance and faith can go together, as two linked nouns, rather than as an adjective modifying a noun. Faith enables the Faithful to repent. Repentance, in turn, is a sign of Faith that God is love and truth.

In human terms, sin makes God angry. For this reason, after the flood Noah survived and God placed his bow in the sky, as a reminder, not for the Faithful, but for himself. The reminder is that God will not destroy the earth with a flood, no matter how angry (in human terms) he may become. *I will recall the Covenant.* A covenant is a solemn pledge or agreement. The 25th Psalm links love and truth for those who keep the Covenant. The truth that God is love is sometimes hard to fathom.

These Notes are being composed on the day before the Inauguration of Barack Obama as the forty-fourth President of the United States. In that context, I like the idea of moving back from discerning what is true, despite human political realities, to finding love throughout reality. In this way, even the politically humble and downtrodden can pierce through the difficulties of life, to find God.

The most humble and downtrodden are full of sin. 1 Peter is interesting, because there God saves sinners, not the Faithful. In other words, God saves the Faithful even while the Faithful are still in sin. 1 Peter refers to *the days of Noah*. This reference causes problems, because it sets the context for preaching *to the spirits in prison*. Scholars bandy about who such spirits may be. They like to look to extra canonical writing, especially that which is only now being discovered, in the last two centuries. From these books, Satan takes on the cast of pagan evil spirits.

In the Gospel, the Faithful meet *the Spirit*, again, in the person of Satan. Jesus preaches, *repent and believe in the gospel*, that is, the good news that *the kingdom of God is at hand*. Repent and believe will make a good theme for this Lenten Season.

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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 prayer-provoking information.

Genesis 9:8-15

Genesis 2—11

Andrei A. Orlov, "The Flooded Arboretums: The Garden Traditions in the Slavonic Version of *3 Baruch* and the *Book of Giants*"¹

Orlov argues that the non-canonical *3 Baruch* and the *Book of Giants* can help the Faithful discern the full meaning of the canonical Book of Genesis. *Canonical* means whether the book belongs in the Bible or not.

Gen 9:9

Adrian M. Leske, review of Clay Alan Ham, *The Coming King and the Rejected Shepherd: Matthew's Reading of Zechariah's Messianic Hope*²

Leske argues, against Clay Alan Ham, that establishing the Covenant with the descendants of Noah is a revision, meaning that the Covenant is transferred from the monarchy of David to the Faithful. I do not understand, however, the basis of the argument Leske makes, because Leske refers to the word *afflicted* in verse 9, that I do not find in the Lectio. In other words, the review does not make sense.

Gen 9:15

Robert S. Kawashima, "The Jubilee Year and the Return of Cosmic Purity"³

Kawashima argues that God recalling the Covenant is a way of expressing forgiveness of sins. Kawashima uses quotation marks to indicate that God "sets up the 'sign' that will cause him to 'remember' his covenant with Noah and with all flesh not to destroy the earth again with the flood (9:15 [used here], 16)."

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (cf. 10)

Psalm 25: 9, 10

Codex Sinaiticus⁴

The Codex Sinaiticus is a book-long manuscript containing the whole of Christian Sacred Scripture, hand-written in Greek. Dating from the mid-Fourth Century (350) the Codex is the oldest complete copy of the New Testament. This is also the oldest substantial book to survive antiquity. The Codex, therefore, has secular importance for the history of the book as well as religious importance for the history of religion. We use the Codex this Sunday for the Psalm and Mark.

In verse 9, the Greek uses the same word for *humble*, twice. A problem is that the Greek word derives from meekness, mildness, forbearance, gentleness, kindness.

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 184.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (July 2006) 146.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 377.

⁴ <http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/> 090118.

William D. Mounce does not include the word *humble*.⁵ Another problem is that the end of verse 9 in the Greek, contains *on thee do I wait all the day*, omitted in the Lectionary.

In verse 10, the Greek word for *truth* is *truth*, something very dear to an old retired professor. Due to their ability to reason and use free will, humans are able to use truth to manipulate nature. The rationality and good will for what they do determines the level of morality for human behavior. Sin is irrational and evil in its purpose.

1 Peter 3:18-22

1 Peter 3:1

John H. Elliott, review of Kenneth J. Thomas and Margaret Orr Thomas, Structure and Orality in 1 Peter: A Guide for Translators⁶

Elliott does not recommend this book for much more than as a segue for someone who already knows the material.

1 Pet 3:18-22

Joel B. Green, review of Karen H. Jobes, 1 Peter⁷

Jobes regards 1 Peter as coming from Peter, written for Christians driven out of Rome. Green thinks the book is commendable. Green notes verses 18-22, "with its peculiar reference to Christ's proclamation to the spirits." Green approves, writing,

... we find J. at her best: carefully sifting through alternative interpretations and engaging in [sic] attentive analysis of the Greek text by way of supporting her conclusion that the Enoch-Noah tradition lies in the background of 1 Peter's affirmation of Christ's victory over the [Enoch] Watchers and the evil spirits and the evil they instigated on the earth.

1 Pet 3:18-22

John H. Elliott, review of Joel B. Green, 1 Peter⁸

Elliott likes this book. Elliott, nonetheless observes,

⁵ 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) 388.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 596.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 335.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 4 (October 2008) 832.

Nor can I find any reference in 1 Pet 3:18-22 to Christ's "conquering of Death and Hades," which G. claims to see (p. 213). In fact, the proposed chiasmic arrangement of the complex passages of 3:18-22 and 4:1-6 is unconvincing, and it results in some questionable choices: connecting 3:19 with 4:6 and equating "disobedient spirits" (3:19) with deceased humans of Noah's generation in hell (4:6), who, according to G., have the good news of salvation offered to them by Christ in hell (taking *poreuthesis* (3:19, 22)) to refer to a *descent* rather than *ascent* accompanying the resurrection. This familiar but fatal interpretation fits neither the Enoch-flood tradition on which 1 Peter draws nor the letter's context, with which it is at odds. It is one of the less successful units of the commentary.

Unlike Cahill below, Elliott does not draw in the Apostles Creed.

1 Pet 3:18-20

Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Quaestio Disputata: The Atonement Paradigm: Does it Still Have Explanatory Value?"⁹

Cahill approaches 1 Peter 3:18-20 as problematic in its meaning. Cahill has particular difficulty with Jesus preaching to spirits in prison. Cahill takes 1 Peter 3:18-20 [used here] and 4:6 as the basis for the "descent into hell" of the Apostles Creed. Cahill goes on, "This 'descent' indicates his [Christ's] ... sharing of our most hopeless guilt and despair, as well as his saving presence among the lost and corrupt, even among the dead."

1 Peter 3:18

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History¹⁰

Surprisingly, for a geography book, Lawrence offers some exegesis not based in his discipline. Lawrence points out that the Gospels tend to offer what happened, where New Testament letters offer the theology of what happened. Jesus died for sinners, not the righteous.

1 Pet 3:19

John Gillman, review of Jaime Clark-Soles, Death and the Afterlife in the New Testament¹¹

⁹ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 2 (June 2007) 427.

¹⁰ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 146.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 814.

Gillman reports that Clark-Soles "... explains that the perplexing language in 3:19 refers to `Jesus proclaiming to spirits as he ascends to heaven, rather than a `harrowing of hell' scenario (p. 206)."

It looks as if we have a problem with the Apostles Creed.

Matthew 4:4b

Mark 1:12-15

Mark 1:12-15

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.¹²

The Alands call attention to the fact that the Sinaitic Syriac version preserves this section of Mark. The Syriac is analogous to the Latin Vulgate. The West discovered various parts of the Syriac at various times in the Nineteenth Century. This version dates from the Fifth Century. It existed in the heart of China in the Seventh Century.¹³

Mark 1:1-15

Alicia Batten, review of Jean Delorme, Parole et récit évangéliques: Études sur l'évangile de Marc¹⁴

Batten reports that Delorme agrees "The entire Gospel [of Mark] must be read and studied, however, before one can go back to the beginning and appreciate how Mark 1:1-15 reflects, in condensed form, this orientation of the Gospel as a whole." Such an approach is like Herrero, below,

Mark 1:1-15

Elliott C. Maloney, O.S.B., review of Salvador Villota Herrero, Palabras sin ocaso: Función interpretiva de Mc 13,28-37 en el discursó escatológica de Marcos¹⁵

Maloney agrees that Herrero makes two good points. First concerns Mark 13:28-37. The Lectionary uses Mark 13:28-37 in reading 2B, the First Sunday of Advent, already seen November 30, 2008. Mark 13:28-37 contains the core of the Gospel, including the first part, used this Sunday. The second point is that in order to understand the first point, one must be deeply familiar with the Gospel of Mark. The key passage, which the Lectionary does not use, is *heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away*. This means the Gospel is important.

¹² Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 250.

¹³ <http://www.bible-researcher.com/syriac-isbe.html> (accessed January 19, 2009).

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (July 2007) 820.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 175.

Personal Notes
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Mark 1:12-13

John Clabeaux, "The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke's Apology for Paul"¹⁶

Clabeaux argues, "Beasts are associated with Satan in the Marcan version of the Temptation (Mark 1:12-13), but they do not appear in Luke's temptation narrative. Luke's temptation scene (4:1-13 [unused in the Sunday Lectionary]) however, has connections with the Lucan passion; thus Luke 4:1-13 has only a distant connection to Acts 28:1-6." The point is that Luke does not see in the confrontation of Luke with the Viper in Acts the confrontation of Jesus with Satan in Mark. Jesus did confront Satan in his temptation.

Mark 1:13

John Paul Heil, "Jesus with the Wild Animals in Mark 1:13"¹⁷

The wild animals represent chaos to which Jesus does not surrender.

Mark 1:14

The eclectic Greek has a problem with *after John had been arrested*. It may be that *when* is what was originally meant.

Mark 1:15

Dino Dozzi, "'Thus Says the Lord' The Gospel in the Writings of Saint Francis"¹⁸

Dozzi argues that Saint Bonaventure was one of those linking repentance with Faith.

Mark 1:16-20

Mary Ann Beavis, review of Ira Brent Driggers, Following God through Mark: Theological Tension in the Second Gospel.¹⁹

Beavis agrees with the argument by Driggers that the Gospel of Mark is about God in tension with his created humanity.

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

¹⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (July 2005) 608.

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (July 2006) 63-78.

¹⁸ Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, Supplement (2004) 98.

¹⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2008) 597-598.