

## Readings

First Testament:	Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
Psalms:	Psalms 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 (9)
Epistle:	Romans 8:31b-34
Verse before the Gospel	cf. Matthew 17:5
Gospel:	Mark 9:2-10

## Commentary

The Transfiguration is the Gospel for the liturgy this Sunday. It occurred in an area remote from Jerusalem. The ultimate purpose of the Transfiguration was to explain what would happen in Jerusalem, namely the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The first disciples then moved from the small town area of Galilee into the urban area of Jerusalem. As an urban historian, I like to find God there, especially among the African-American people in the United States.

The gospel of Mark is about discipleship. Abraham was the very first disciple of God. What was Abraham thinking, when he did not complain about having to kill Isaac, although he did complain about God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah? What was God thinking through all of this? Unlike the more detailed and explicit Greek literature, such as in Homer, Hebrew literature is ambiguous and brief, leaving it up to the reader to fill in the missing emotions.

This is fortunate for the liturgy. If the Lectionary used Homer, the liturgy would never end. As it is, the Hebrew readings are brief. That means much more time is required to prepare to read Biblical literature, than either Greek or English. Sometimes I find myself spending an hour preparing to read the weekday epistles from the Letter to the Hebrews, trying to get the nuances into the inflections and cadences of my voice.

As we move on to consider Psalm 116 in the liturgy, the usual puzzle occurs again. Psalm 116 is Psalm 114 and 115 in the Masoretic or Hebrew text. Discipleship means trying to figure out the meaning of the differences in numbering. That is still beyond me. At this stage of my development, I am barely able to figure out that that happened.

With the Psalms, the surface problem is only numbering. With Saint Paul, the surface problem is basic understanding what he means. In Romans, Saint Paul sounds like the fanatic he is. *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Paul never met Jesus, until after the Resurrection. The Resurrection, however, without the passion and death, is not enough.

Paul knew the resurrected Jesus, but the resurrection without the passion and death remains incomprehensible. Explaining the full meaning of the life of Jesus is the reason for the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Mark. Discipleship requires entering and going through the portals of earthly death. That is why Jesus told the disciples to tell no one, until after the Resurrection. Until the Resurrection, the disciples would not understand the passion and death.

This is like what I would tell my students, when I used to teach lifeguarding. I would tell them not to attempt a swimming rescue, until they first pulled me out, as a

struggling victim, because until that happened, all of their preparation was inadequate. I often said that I would accept the moral responsibility if someone drowned because one of my lifeguarding students would not attempt a swimming rescue, because of my admonition. That type of reasoning helps to explain why Judas committed suicide, after the Resurrection. At that time, Judas realized the enormity of what he had done.

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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 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18**

Gen 22:1-19

Jennifer A. Glancy, review of Barbara Miller, [Tell It on the Mountain: The Daughter of Jephthah in Judges 11](#)<sup>1</sup>

I wonder whether the reason why the Lectionary omits Judges is because the liturgists are afraid of the historical-critical method examining Sacred Scripture. The book of Judges contains some of the earliest Hebrew scripture that concerns the early history of Israel. Miller argues that the covenant with Abraham extended to all of the Faithful.

Gen 22:1, 2, 16-18

Bradley C. Gregory, "Abraham as the Jewish Ideal: Exegetical Traditions in Sirach 44:19-21"<sup>2</sup>

Gregory argues that parallel passages in Genesis and the Book of Sirach means that the Sirach looked to Abraham for the meaning of true wisdom. In Genesis God swears by himself to be faithful to all earthly life.

Gen 22:2-13

Paul Lawrence, [The IVP Atlas of Bible History](#)<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence does not even index Moriah (Genesis 22:2). Lawrence asserts that the Second Temple consecrated the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac.

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<sup>1</sup> [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 739.

<sup>2</sup> [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 73, 77, 79.

<sup>3</sup> Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 133.

Gen 22:11

Tod Linafelt, "Prolegomena to Meaning, or, What is 'Literary' about the Torah?"<sup>4</sup>  
Linafelt argues that there is a literary style to Sacred Scripture that he characterizes as "economy of style." This article influences the comments above the double line.

Gen 22:16-18

C. Clifton Black, review of George Keerankeri, S.J., The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 12, 28-34<sup>5</sup>

Keerankeri argues that God never intended that Abraham kill Isaac. Such an argument helps explain how God both loved Abraham and Isaac and tested them with making a holocaust of Isaac.

Gen 22:17

John Paul Heil, "From Remnant to Seed of Hope for Israel: Romans 9:27-29"<sup>6</sup>  
Heil writes,

The strong statement of assurance about the future in Isa 10:22a, based on God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous "as the sand on the seashore" (Gen 22:17), thus bolsters the expression of hope represented by a returning remnant in the immediately preceding verses, 10:20-21 ..."

This assurance is properly associated with the assurance the love of God in Romans and, ultimately, the Transfiguration.

### **Psalm 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 (9)**

The Church uses Psalm 116 both at Funerals<sup>7</sup> and in Pastoral Care of the Sick.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2008) 75, 76.

<sup>5</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 2005) 716.

<sup>6</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 709.

<sup>7</sup> N.a., 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) 227, 274.

Codex Sinaiticus<sup>9</sup>

Psalm 116 is Psalm 114-115 in the Codex

I think Psalm 115:7 in the Codex is 116:16 in the Lectionary. This will keep coming up and I will keep examining it. I wonder if anyone else is doing so.

Psalm 116

Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., "Ἐπιστευσα, διο ελαλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13): Paul's Christological Reading of Psalm 115:1a LXX"<sup>10</sup>

In a footnote, Stegman notes, "Psalms 114—115 LXX [= the Lectionary] appear in the MT (and thus in English translations) as Ps 116: Psalm 114 LXX = Ps 116:1-9, and Psalm 115 LXX = Ps 116:10-19 MT." This footnote helps explain the Codex. I am still confused about numbering the verses. My reason for bringing up confusion is tempering self-righteousness.

## **Romans 8:31b-34**

The Church uses Romans 8:31b-34 both at Funerals<sup>11</sup> and in Pastoral Care of the Sick<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: 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: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 327.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/manuscript.aspx?book=26&chapter=114&imageType=raking&imageType=standard&inputControl=420&lid=en&manuscript=true&phd=true&side=r&transcription=true&transcriptionType=page&transcriptionType=verse&translation=true&zoomSlider=0#> 090124 Psalm 116 in the Lectionary is Psalm 114-115 in the Codex Sinaiticus

<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 731, fn. 27.

<sup>11</sup> N.a., 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) 227, 274.

<sup>12</sup> The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of

The eclectic Greek does have a problem with verse 34, a problem related to the Codex, which does not yet have Romans on the internet. The problem presented in the apparatus is in the middle of the verse and I am going to wait for the Codex to catch up.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults<sup>13</sup>

In their chapter on praying, the Bishops cite *if God is for us, who is against us* as part of delivering us from evil in the Our Father. The relationship seems far-fetched to me. It almost seems as if the Bishops are trying to avoid a guilt complex over evil, but we will save that for some other day.

Romans 8:31

Richard Clifford, S.J. and Khaled Anatolois, "Christian Salvation: Biblical and Theological Perspectives"<sup>14</sup>

The argument where Biblical and theological perspectives meet is that *if God is for us, who can be against us?* Clifford explains, "In Christ, however, we learn that God loves us even in our sinfulness (see Romans 8:31) and this knowledge provides us with a saving antidote to both pride and despair."

Romans 8:31

Michael J. McClymond, "Through a Glass Darkly: Biblical Annotations and Theological interpretation in Modern Catholic and Protestant English-language Bibles"<sup>15</sup>

After mentioning the 1967 edition of *The Scofield Bible*, McClymond notes "The later editors altered or added notes to underscore that faithful believers will not in any way suffer divine wrath or judgment in the future tribulation period." The basic idea of the article is that, depending on current interests, the footnotes change from generation to generation.

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Anointing and Viaticum: 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: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 327.

<sup>13</sup> Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 489.

<sup>14</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2005) 765.

<sup>15</sup> Theological Studies 67 # 3 (September 2006) 494.

Rom 8:31-39

Patricia M. McDonald, review of Hendrikus Boers, Christ in the Letters of Paul: In Place of a Christology<sup>16</sup>

Boers assumes a proficiency in Greek and modern languages. Boers argues that in Romans one finds “the basis of Paul’s very Jewish reassurance that confidence in God (whose purpose Christ accomplishes) is not misplaced. Paul has no christology because he is not a Christian but ‘a Jew who believed in Christ’ (p. 310) ...” McDonald goes on to describe the book as “a serious attempt at redirecting attention to the specifics of the primary text, as we struggle to understand Paul’s expression of what God has done in and through Christ.”

Rom 8:31-23

Stanley E. Porter, review of John D. Morres, Wrestling with Rationality in Paul: Romans 1—8 in a New Perspective<sup>17</sup>

*If God is for us, who can be against us?* Morres argues for understanding Paul as using concepts of “fuzzy logic.” Porter explains, “Fuzzy logic is an attempt to overcome the restrictions of formal logic by appeal to sets in which membership is graded rather than precise. For example, M. cites such categories as ‘beautiful women’ and ‘tall men’; it is difficult to be exact in determining the characteristics of these categories.” The Faithful should not expect to find Greek logic in Paul. Logic is a particularly Western phenomena that other cultures borrow in medieval and modern times, but not often, if at all, in ancient times.

Rom 8:32

Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., “Ἐπιστευσά, διό ελαλήσα (2 Corinthians 4:13): Paul’s Christological Reading of Psalm 115:1a LXX”<sup>18</sup>

Stegman argues “According to Paul, Jesus’ being handed over must be understood in light of *God’s plan of salvation, and hence in light of God’s agency and will.*”

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<sup>16</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 140.

<sup>17</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 4 (October 1997) 782.

<sup>18</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 729.

Rom 8:33

Kent L. Yinger, review of Paul A. Rainbow, The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification<sup>19</sup>

Rainbow argues that Romans 8:33, *intercedes*, is about a future expectation. Rainbow is a professor of New Testament at the North American Baptist Seminary. He searches for a way to include good works as well as faith as the means to salvation. Yinger assesses the book as good for discussions of the doctrine of justification.

## cf. Matthew 17:5

### Mark 9:2-10

Codex Sinaiticus<sup>20</sup>

The eclectic text has two difficulties. The Codex differs from the eclectic text in verses 2 and 8. The Codex uses no punctuation, which both the Lectionary and eclectic Greek do use. There seems to be a difficulty with the *high mountain*. The problem may simply be the sloppy scholarship, identified so often before, but the first part of verse 2 is omitted. The Lectionary only uses 2b, not all of verse 2. Maybe that is the original difficulty.

Mark 9:2

Lectionary (1998)

high mountain

The Vulgate (circa 410)

montem excelsum

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610)

high mountain is in verse 1, not 2.

King James (1611)

high mountain

Catholic RSV (1969)

high mountain

New American (NAB) (1970)

high mountain

New Jerusalem (1985)

high mountain

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<sup>19</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 372.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/manuscript.aspx?book=34&chapter=9&inputControl=420&lid=en&side=r&zoo mSlider=0# 090124>

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In verse 8, the difficulty seems to be the Codex omits the word *Jesus*, which the eclectic Greek keeps.

Mark 9:8 <u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	Jesus alone
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	iesum tantum
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	Jesus only is in verse 7, not 8.
<u>King James</u> (1611)	Jesus only
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	Jesus only
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	Jesus alone
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	only Jesus

Mark 9:2-10

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.<sup>21</sup>

Trinity College in Cambridge, England has a Ninth Century manuscript of these verses.

The continuing point of the exercise reaching into the original manuscripts is to shake confidence in which words belong in Sacred Scripture, thereby, bringing some humility into the self-righteousness required to lead a Christian life.

Mark 8:27—9:1

Karl A. Kuhn, review of Kevin W. Larsen, Seeing and Understanding Jesus: a Literary and Theological Commentary on Mark 8:22—9:13<sup>22</sup>

Larsen argues that the “primary problem in need of resolution is the disciples’ inadequate grasp of Jesus’ identity and mission.” Kuhn faults Larsen for, “instead of providing a detailed critique of the positions he challenges, L. often relies on sweeping and unsubstantiated generalizations.” I, nonetheless, like the approach.

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<sup>21</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 122.

<sup>22</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 337.



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Mark 9:2-10

David J. Norman, O.F.M., "Doubt and the Resurrection of Jesus"<sup>23</sup>

Norman observes, "Unlike the young man in white, who told the women to tell the disciples that Jesus has risen (16:6-7), Jesus expressly told the three to mention to no one what they had seen `until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead' (9:9)."

Mark 9:2

Gregory E. Sterling, "Jesus as Exorcist: An Analysis of Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-3a"<sup>24</sup>

In a footnote, Sterling outlines different presentations of the Transfiguration:

The most important of these [alternate oral traditions] are the reference to the altered appearance of Jesus' face which Mark lacks (Matt 17:2; Luke 9:29; vs. Mark 9:2 [used here]), the common omission of the Marcan simile of the fuller (Matt 17:2; Luke 9:29; vs. Mark 9:3), the agreement in the wording of Matt 17:3 and Luke 9:30 against Mark 9:4 (κλαι ιδου vs. και, Μωσης και Ηλιας vs. Ηλιας vs. Ηλιας συν Μωσει), the agreement that the cloud arrived while Jesus was speaking (Matt 17:5; Luke 9:34; vs. Mark 9:7), and the addition of the participle λεγουσα (Matt 17:5; Luke 9:35; vs. Mark 9:7).

While Sacred Scripture is all inspired, all Biblical inspiration is not consistent.

Mark 9:2-8

David L. Balch, review of Dieter Georgi, The City in the Valley: Biblical Interpretation and Urban Theology<sup>25</sup>

Georgi argues that urbanization is where Christianity belongs. This article influences the material above the double line. Balch, the reviewer, writes

Just as G. promotes a Pauline urban theology while criticizing one form of Hellenistic "divine man" urban christology, he also criticizes the modern quest of the historical Jesus, for the portentous individual oriented toward achievement, a medieval hero worship, a cult of the extraordinary, the bourgeois concept of "genius," which fits the religion of white people in the West, despite the fact that the

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<sup>23</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 4 (December 2008) 799.

<sup>24</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3 (January 1993) 487.

<sup>25</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 146.

majority of NT writings show little interest in the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth ...

A racial dimension is involved.

Mark 9:2-8

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History<sup>26</sup>

Lawrence demonstrates that the Transfiguration marks the beginning of the journey to Jerusalem.

Mark 9:4-5, 7

C. Clifton Black, review of George Keerankeri, S.J., The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 12, 28-34<sup>27</sup>

Black asserts that Keerankeri twists logic to make the christology of Mark equate with the christology of John, thereby identifying Jesus with God. Black mutters along,

The biggest question this monograph poses for me is whether so high a christology as K. attributes to Mark can be hung almost entirely from a single verse: the *bat-qol* at 9:7. (Curiously, its verbal resonance with Deut 18:15 is consigned to a footnote (p. 86); other correlations between Jesus and Moses in Mark 9:4-5 and elsewhere are left unexplored.

Mark 9:7

Mary Ann Beavis, "The Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65): Reader Response and Greco-Roman Readers"<sup>28</sup>

Citing L. W. Hurtado, Beavis argues, "... the high priest's cry of blasphemy is blasphemous itself, `for it amounts to a blatant rejection of the one the reader knows God has acknowledged (1:11; 9:7 [used here])!'" "*This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.*"

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<sup>26</sup> Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 144.

<sup>27</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 2005) 716-717.

<sup>28</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 4 (October 1987) 587.

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Mark 9:7

C. Clifton Black, "Mark as Historian of God's Kingdom"<sup>29</sup>

Black argues, "the one figure in the Second Gospel who, indisputably, is self-dependent, self-determining, and self-justifying is God, who privately, albeit infrequently, acclaims Jesus as his son (1:11; 9:7 [used here])." Black goes on, "In Mark's Gospel, however, Jesus' mighty works are of a piece with his teaching (1:25-27), which includes the Son of Man's death and resurrection (8:31; 9:9 [used here]) but comes repeatedly into focus on the kingdom of God (1:13-15; 9:1)."

Mark 9:9-13

Caryn A. Reeder, "Malachi 3:24 and the Eschatological Restoration of the `Family'"<sup>30</sup>

Reeder observes, "... Mark 9:9-13 [used here] and Matt 17:9-13 [used in Cycle A] record a `tradition of the scribes' that connects Elijah with the resurrection. In these texts, Jesus affirms this tradition, adding that Elijah comes to restore `all things.' Since Elijah has come and has been mistreated so also the Son of Man must suffer."

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

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<sup>29</sup> [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 78, 81.

<sup>30</sup> [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 705-706.