

Readings

First Testament:	2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
Psalm:	Psalm 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6 (6a b)
Second Reading	Ephesians 2:4-10
Verse before the Gospel	John 3:16
Gospel:	John 3:14-21

Commentary

I am struck by how in the Gospel of John, Jesus reveals God the Father and how in the Synoptics, Jesus reveals that he is God. Paul, with his interest in the Cross, is also struck by the fact that Jesus is God. These readings are about the wonders of the mercies of God.

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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.

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

1-2 Kings

Nancy R. Bowen, "The Quest for the Historical *Gébîra*"¹

Bowen is a feminist wondering where all the women are in Sacred Scripture. She looks for women in 2 Chronicles, where she thinks they belong.

2 Chronicles 36

Christine Mitchell, "The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles"²

Mitchell concludes, "From 2 Chronicles 36, then, we can see that in the Chronicler's ideology, rebellion against a (legitimate) overlord should be followed by punishment." Mitchell is concerned about reinterpreting 2 Chronicles from the Yahwist, rather than the Deuteronomist point of view, as is usually the case.

The Yahwist is interested in the levitical priesthood; the Deuteronomist the monarchy.

This is the only Reading in the Sunday Lectionary where this article is indexed.

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 598, 601, 606.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 426.

2 Chr 36:22-23

Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah"³

Whitters regards the Gospel as looking for and utilizing parallels for the life of Jesus in the lives of the prophets. Whitters regards 2 Chronicles 36 as a turning point in Sacred Scripture. Chapter 36 is the end of the book, where Israel is getting ready for something new. Whitters explains, "The presupposition is that the Jews existed as a people even though they had no land and no temple during the whole time of their exile. In other words, there was some sense here of a 'spiritualized Israel' that Cyrus now commissions for a mission."

Some would say that the United States cannot be a nation for much the same reasons, land excepted. The United States has land, but no common worship. I maintain that the way in which people in the United States worship God is by offering equitable opportunities to people who, otherwise, would not have such opportunities. I do not mean that this worship happens all the time; but I do mean that that is the effort.

2 Chr 36:22-23 LXX

Daniel W. Ulrich, "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew"⁴

Ulrich sees a parallel between the mission challenge of Matthew and the mission challenge of 2 Chronicles, to go and evangelize everyone.

Ulrich observes, "Many sayings attributed to Jesus seem more relevant for the audience *of* the story than for the audience *within* the story." Ulrich then muses over how much a written text meant to the first Christians.

... first-century Christians would not have used *εὐαγγέλιον* with reference to a written text. In Mark and the letters of Paul, *εὐαγγέλιον* refers to oral proclamation. In all four Matthean uses, it appears with the verb *κηρυσσω* [*sic*] (proclaim), suggesting that oral proclamation is still in view. Nevertheless, these terms do not preclude a reference to the oral performance of a scripted narrative. For example, in 2 Chr 36:22-23 LXX [used here], Cyrus commands that an edict be proclaimed (*κηρυξαι*) throughout the Persian Empire both in speech and in writing.

³ [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 241, 242.

⁴ [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 68.

2 Chr 36:23

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History⁵

Lawrence locates Babylon, which looks about five hundred miles from Jerusalem, in a straight line.

Psalm 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6 (6a b)

Codex Sinaiticus⁶

The Greek and the English seem intact.

Ephesians 2:4-10

Ephesians 2:4-5

Christopher Grasso, A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut⁷

Grasso cites a sermon on Ephesians 2:4-5 preached in 1722 in Hartford, Connecticut as evidence that Solomon Williams was an evangelical Calvinist. That sermon was about sovereign grace. Catholics, then, are not the only ones to preach the Good Word with historical significance.

Eph 2:4-5

Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Quaestio Disputata: The Atonement Paradigm: Does it Still Have Explanatory Value?"⁸

Ephesians regards penance and sorrow for sin as all that is required for God to forgive sin. Cahill argues, "In Jesus Christ, God enters all of the human condition, save sin—and human beings enter completely, if eschatologically, into God. 'God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loves us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ' (Eph 2:4-5)." The Lectionary uses *transgressions* for *trespasses*; and *brought us to life with Christ* for *made us alive together with Christ*. It seems to me that the Lectionary is stressing the need for the instrumentality of the institutional Church.

⁵ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity* Press, 2006) 110-111.

⁶ <http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/manuscript.aspx?book=26&chapter=137&inputControl=420&lid=en&side=r&zoomSlider=0> 090207. Psalm 137 in the Lectionary is Psalm 136 in the Codex Sinaiticus.

⁷ Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, 46-47, fn. 29.

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 2 (June 2007) 429.

Eph 2:6

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"⁹

John finds God through Jesus; Paul finds Jesus is God. Matera writes,

It is interesting to note ... that whereas the Johannine letters begin to emphasize a future eschatology (1 John 2:18, 28:2), the Deuteropauline letters begin to move in the direction of a more realized eschatology, viewing the baptized as not only buried with Christ into death, as Paul writes in Rom 6:4 [cited below], but raised up with him (Col 2:12; 3:1) and even "seated with him in the heavens" (Eph 2:6 [used here]).

Eph 2:8

Robert C. Tannehill, review of Richard I. Pervo, Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists¹⁰

Pervo is not entirely convincing in explaining that Luke could not have written Acts before about 110, because the materials required were not yet available. Other scholars place the earliest date for the composition of Acts about 80.

John 3:16

John 3:14-21

John 3:18

The manuscripts have a difficulty with *but whoever does not believe has already been condemned*.

John 3:14-18

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

A papyrus manuscript from about 500 is in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin.

⁹ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 255.

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 827.

¹¹ Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 100.

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John 3:16, 17, 19 ff.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹²

In their first chapter, “My Soul Longs for You, O God,” the Bishops write: “The scandalous behavior of some believers frequently drives honest seekers away from religion. Sinful conduct weakens the ability of many to assume responsibility for their actions and causes them to hide from God (cf. Gn 3:8; Jon 3:19 ff [used here].” Sadly, with their sexual cover-up and distracting attacks on legislators trying to deal with birth control and abortion, the Bishops exemplify the problems of sinful behavior that John describes.

The bishops use John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life* as the explanation for “Why did the World become flesh?” Sports fans frequently use John 3:16 signage to praise God.

The Bishops used John 3:17 in Chapter 23, “Life in Christ—Part One.” The Bishops properly observe, “God’s mercy is greater than sin,” before they quote, *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.*

John 3:1-21

Todd E. Klutz, review of Richard L. Rohrbaugh, The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective¹³

Klutz makes an argument particularly interesting for African Americans.

In chap. 11 R. interprets the opaque register of the Johannine Jesus in John 3:1-21 [used today] not as an instance of irony (a stance often defended in literary readings) but rather as a case of what linguist Michael Halliday calls “anti-language,” understood by R. to be the product of an alienated group (an “anti-society”) who use old words in new ways that separate insiders from outsiders and nurture in-group solidarity.

¹² Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 5, 86, 313.

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 831.

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John 3:14-15

Tobias Hägerland, "The Power of Prophecy: A Septuagintal Echo in John 20:19-23."¹⁴

Hägerland regards John 3:14-15 as an example of typology used throughout John. "Typology is explicit in the comparison between Moses' serpent and Jesus (3:14-15), but is also likely to have played a decisive role in the formation of the entire "Book of Signs," [i.e., the Gospel of John] which seems to be permeated with Moses typology."

John 3:19

Robert Doran, "The Pharisee and the Tax Collector: An Agonistic Story"¹⁵

Doran cites "love of darkness versus love of the light" as an either/or choice, without taking into consideration the case of Nicodemus looking for Jesus in the night.

John 3:16

Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Quaestio Disputata: The Atonement Paradigm: Does it Still Have Explanatory Value?"¹⁶

Lisa Cahill writes, "As mothers' hearts rend with their children's suffering more readily than with their own, so God's unsurpassed love for humans is narrated scripturally as a love both that *is* and that *gives up* the beloved one who dies in compassion for us." Cahill assumes good mothering; even though not all mothering is good. Her idea, is understandable, however, even though I find the analogy suspect.

John 3:16

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History¹⁷

Lawrence observed that the Nicodemus of the first line of John was "a member of the Jewish ruling council." Nicodemus, therefore, sought out Jesus at night. What John says about the night, *everyone who does wicked things hates the light*, probably accounts for the fact that the Lectionary omits that Nicodemus approached Jesus in the night.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No 1 (2009) #1 85, 90, 95, 101, 102.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 262.

¹⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 2 (June 2007) 430.

¹⁷ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006) 139.

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John 3:16

Michael M. Winter, "Theological Alterations in the Syriac Translation of Ben Sira"¹⁸

Winter argues that the Syriac translation of Ben Sira reflects Christian biases. Winter explains, "There is a close connection between faith and life in the NT, especially in the Fourth Gospel. For example, John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son [sic], that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'"

John 3:17

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"¹⁹

Christ in Paul is God; Christ in John reveals God. Both are correct. Matera argues "Everything within the Gospel revolves about a single claim: that the Father sent the Son into the world (3:17)."

John 3:16

F. Scott Spencer, review of Richard A. Burrige, Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics²⁰

The reviewer points out that "a critical factor in ending South African apartheid was an ethic of *imitation* (of Jesus) and *inclusion* (of the marginalized)." That is the argument Burrige makes for New Testament ethics.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008) 306.

¹⁹ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 248, 249.

²⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 009) 1 159.