

Politics determining truth is one of the concerns permeating both these Personal Notes and my Western Civilization lectures at [www.western-civilization.com](http://www.western-civilization.com). God is in charge, even when humans do use politics to determine truth. That is what happened with Sacred Scripture during the Babylonian Exile in the mid-Sixth Century, B.C.

In 1943, Martin North, The Deuteronomistic History,<sup>1</sup> observed evidence that the Deuteronomist, Jeremiah perhaps, edited and revised Sacred Scripture during the Babylonian Exile.<sup>2</sup> The idea that the Chosen People could ignore the Commandments of their God with impunity was no longer viable. Where the Lectionary reads *Moses spoke ... saying: "A prophet like me will the LORD ... raise up for you*, Jeremiah may have had himself in mind, rather than some Jesus centuries later. Legitimacy required that the prophecies of Jeremiah be fulfilled during his lifetime.

The Lectionary passage from Deuteronomy is relevant to the time of Jesus and the Transfiguration, where Jesus, Elijah, and Moses engage in conversation, without Jeremiah. Elijah and Moses are qualified to speak with Jesus about his forthcoming departure from the earth. Elijah and Moses also ascended into heaven.

Within Christianity, Jesus overrides Jeremiah, Elijah, Moses, and everyone else in his encouragement of truth determining human politics, rather than human politics determining truth. What Jesus means to Western Civilization and the Faithful as Messiah and God is both profound and complex.<sup>3</sup> Background helps. In the development of Christianity, Western Civilization takes much from Israel in the Middle East.

Where the king of Israel had been the direct mouthpiece of God, now the prophet took on that role.<sup>4</sup> The well-known phrase in the English language deriving from the King James Bible translation of Deuteronomy 18:18, *to put words in his mouth* exemplifies the correlation between Western Civilization and ancient Jewish history.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/deuteronomist?method=8> 1/8/2006

<sup>2</sup> William L. Holladay, "Elusive Deuteronomists, Jeremiah, and Proto-Deuteronomy," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 66, 76.

<sup>3</sup> Brendan Byrne, S.J., "Jesus as Messiah in the Gospel of Luke: Discerning a Pattern of correction," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003) 87.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher T. Begg, "2 Kings 20:12-19 as an Element of the Deuteronomistic History," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 1 (July 1986) 34.

Personal Notes  
060129 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time 71B  
© 2014  
Raymond J. Jirran

The Lectionary reads *put my [God's] words into his mouth*. Exodus 4:15, 2 Samuel 14:3, 2 Samuel 14:19, and Jeremiah 1:9 also use this phrase.<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 18:18 is the strongest of many passages in the First Testament in which the words of Yahweh are associated with the "mouth" of a spokesman.<sup>6</sup>

The papacy takes unto itself the notion of being a spokesman for God. Papal infallibility, therefore, is a correlative issue. The doctrine of papal infallibility would have more credibility if the pope gave more evidence of faith in the doctrine. So far, the only doctrines defined infallibly are that the pope is infallible, when the pope says he is, and that the body of Mary is assumed into heaven.

Especially with people laying their lives on the line to live up to the birth control teaching of the Magisterium, backing that teaching with infallibility seems like a pittance price to pay. There are other, similar, biological issues, such as stem cell research and abortion, for another time.

Before the Deuteronomist revision, the king ruled as a sort of god. With Deuteronomy, even the king had to obey the law. The only information that the Book of Deuteronomy offers about the king is that he is to have a copy of Deuteronomy at hand at all times (Deut. 17:18-20).<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy begins with the Ten Commandments, omitting everything that came before.

Benedict T. Viviano, O.P. attributes "final redactor" to the composition of Deuteronomy 15-18.<sup>8</sup> Christians see the prophet of this final editing of Sacred Scripture as Jesus, who surpasses even Moses. An historical problem exists because of how the New Testament reinterprets the prophecies of the First Testament.

---

<sup>5</sup> Alister McGrath, In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture (New York: Anchor Books: A Division of Random House, Inc., 2001) 263.

<sup>6</sup> William L. Holladay, "Had Ezekiel Known Jeremiah Personally?," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 32.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Barker, the Great high Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A Continuum imprint, 2003) 134.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict T. Viviano, O.P., "The Least in the Kingdom: Matthew 11:11, Its Parallel in Luke 7:28 (Q), and Daniel 4:14," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 48.

Christians are not concerned about when in history prophecies are fulfilled; but the prophets were. Jeremiah is “the archetype of the true prophet around whom the Deuteronomist develops his formula’ (Deut 18:21-22),<sup>9</sup> fulfillment within the prophet’s lifetime constitutes the predominant criterion of legitimate authority.”<sup>10</sup> Religious politics do influence the development of Sacred Scripture. Prophets, in their own time, required that legitimating which comes from prophecies fulfilled. Apart from New Testament reinterpretation, Jesus was no fulfillment for any prophecy made by Jeremiah.

In changing history, the Deuteronomist also changed the national identity. Deuteronomy 18, used in the Lectionary, is part of Deuteronomy 12—26 that incorporates welfare state injunctions on Israel. Deuteronomy 18 is part of a concern for “socially weak, vulnerable human beings [like some African-Americans] and that these [newly incorporated Deuteronomist] laws affected the predicament of this social subgrouping in ancient Israel.”<sup>11</sup>

Deuteronomy 18:20, *if a prophet presumes to speak ... he shall die* is about intentional, arrogant, sinful actions, rather than an unintentional transgression. All are accountable before the law, especially for their intentional actions. There are no exceptions, prophets, people, or kings and, in the New Testament, popes.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> C. Schneider, Krisis des Glaubens: Zur Frage der sogenannten falschen Prophetie im AT (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988) 86-87 as cited in E. Otto, “The Prophets and Their Perspective,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2001), 226, fn. 29.

<sup>10</sup> S. J. DeVries. Prophet Against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (1 Kings 22) in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) as cited in E. Otto, “The Prophets and Their Perspective,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2001), 226, fn. 30. The whole quote is found on page 226.

<sup>11</sup> Harold V. Bennett, “Triennial Tithes and the Underdog: A Revisionist Reading of Deuteronomy 14:22-29 and 26:12-15” in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 7, 7-11.

<sup>12</sup> J. Ross Wagner, “From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1999) 259.

An Amsterdam scholar, who finished his dissertation in 1996, Cornelis den Hertog, at the end of his the Catholic Biblical Quarterly article on the God of the prophets, wondered:<sup>13</sup>

After these observations, one may wonder what the historical background of the text [Exodus 3:14a, "I am who I am"] is. Was there a need to ground the prophetic function in a great predecessor, Moses (cf. Hos 12:14)? Or was the text part of the process leading to the subordination of the prophets or the prophetic texts to the Torah of Moses (cf. Deut 18:15, 18; Jer 26:4-5; also Exod 7:1-2)? The relativizing of the name Yhwh in relation to Ehyeh may even suggest that the former's use had become less self-evident; and then this text would belong to the historical process that led to the avoidance of the name Yhwh. These are, however, issues for a more extensive study.

Turning from Deuteronomy to the Lectionary Psalm, the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm dates from the monarchial period, before the Exile.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing the king as both the representative of the people as well as the representative of God, the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm tells the king to listen to God. Psalm 95:1 mentions, "the *rock* of our salvation."

In Hebrew, rock can also mean *presence*. The Greek Septuagint does not use the word *rock* here.<sup>15</sup> Rock implies stability; presence implies flexibility. Both combine in the new Deuteronomistic concept of God in the history of Israel.

Psalm 95 is one of two classic enthronement Psalms, the other is Psalm 99. Psalm 99:8 explicitly mentions the need to listen to the voice of God in order to avoid his judgment.<sup>16</sup> The responsorial antiphon for the Faithful, Psalm 95:8, makes the point.

---

<sup>13</sup> Cornelis Den Hertog, "The Prophetic Dimension of the Divine Name: On Exodus 3:14a and Its Context," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 228.

<sup>14</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 677.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Barker, The Great high Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A Continuum imprint, 2003) 191, 184.

<sup>16</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 681.

Personal Notes  
060129 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time 71B  
© 2014  
Raymond J. Jirran

*If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Voice means preaching and tradition, rather than the written Word alone.*

Psalm 95:8 mentions Meribah and Psalm 95:9 mentions Massah, where the people quarreled with Moses and Aaron, because there was no water. Moses was a prophet, like Jeremiah, and not a king. The point is that, when God speaks, the Faithful are to accept the spoken word, especially when God speaks to their hearts.<sup>17</sup>

Shifting from the Psalm to the Epistle: only a king can be carefree and that only when he is in full control. 1 Corinthians has such in mind when Saint Paul writes; *I should like you to be free of anxieties.* Anxiety is a result of the human tension arising from the effort to insist that truth determines politics, rather than politics truth.

Anxiety permeates these Personal Notes as they work to clear away human political correctness in favor of Divine political correctness. Like clear praying, clear thinking requires adhering to human truth in the midst of human politics. If God wants to reveal his mighty self, believing him is no problem, in the sense that “there are no atheists in a foxhole,” as the editor of Early Protestant Spirituality puts it.<sup>18</sup> The problem arises because God informs humans with both free will and intelligence, the successful use of which causes anxiety over the issue of recognizing and loving truth in tension with loving power. What follows recognizes and describes some of these tensions, enveloped in the struggle between truth and politics.

In the modern feminist world of political correctness, Saint Paul is troublesome. 1 Corinthians turns the world upside down when Saint Paul writes further that an unmarried woman or a virgin has more authority than a married woman does. In the ancient world, no daughter could be accorded a freedom denied her mother. The distinction in 1 Corinthians 7:32-35, between single and married women is, somehow, anachronistic.<sup>19</sup>

The Lectionary uses the same word, *anxious*, at 1 Corinthians 7:32, 33, 34, and 34, whereas Saint Jerome uses *sollicitudine*, *sollicitus*, *sollicitus*, *cogitat* [*thinks about*], and *cogitat*, respectively. The Greek has ἀμεριμνους, μεριμνα, μεριμνα, μεριμνα, and μεριμνα. μεριμνα means care,

---

<sup>17</sup> Alan C. Mitchell, S.J., “The Use of *πρῆπειν* and Rhetorical Propriety in Hebrews 2:10,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4 (October 1992) 691.

<sup>18</sup> Scott H. Hendrix, ed. and trans., Early Protestant Spirituality (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2009) 202.

<sup>19</sup> Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P., “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January 1986) 91.

anxiety, anxious interest<sup>20</sup> and concern oneself with, be solicitous about.<sup>21</sup> In this case, the Lectionary is closer to the Greek than the Vulgate of Saint Jerome. Anxiety is an unpleasant condition, whereas thinking about something is not value laden. Here, disrupting a mother-daughter relationship, the New Testament is unfriendly toward family values. A certain amount of anxiety is appropriate for Christian humility.

Saint Jerome, mixing in thinking with anxiety, adds a dimension to the determination of Saint Paul to combat sexual immorality in all of its manifestations. The Greek for *sexual immorality* is a root word for pornography. Saint Paul combats the symbolism of pornography with his own symbolism opposed not only to pornography, but also to such other symbols as circumcision and slavery.<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians has numerous passages using the belly as a symbol of slavery to sexual appetite.<sup>23</sup>

Saint Paul accepts a tension between the way things are and the way they will be in the Kingdom of God. The new creation, symbolized by Baptism, is in tension with the old creation, symbolized by circumcision.<sup>24</sup> There is also a tension in determining the original words of the Lectionary reading, 1 Corinthians 7:32-35. The Greek apparatus for 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 identifies ten variations among the existing ancient manuscripts, at least one of which appears to be a typographical error, omitting the letter epsilon in the word for *I wish*, resulting in another word, *God*.

---

<sup>20</sup> 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) 314-315.

<sup>21</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 511.

<sup>22</sup> Brad Ronnell Braxton, "The Role of Ethnicity in the Social Location of 1 Corinthians 7:17-24," in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 12619-30.

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey R. Asher, review of Karl Olav Sandnes, Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 480-481.

<sup>24</sup> Demetrius K. Williams, "The Bible and Models of Liberation in the African American Experience," in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 48.

Personal Notes  
060129 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time 71B  
© 2014  
Raymond J. Jirran

Moving from a consideration of the written authority of Sacred Scripture to the authority of Jesus, Mark 1:22 specifically mentions authority, writing of Jesus *as one having authority*.<sup>25</sup> Psalm 95:9, *they tested me though they had seen my works*, regards those tempters as like those not accepting Jesus. Mark 1:27 reemphasizes authority, *a new teaching with authority*. Jesus and his disciples, while not rewriting the First Testament, do change the way the Faithful understand it. In the Gospel of Mark, his disciples take on the very authority of Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, both the politics of Jesus and his disciples and the politics of the Deuteronomist are the same in that they emanate from the power of God. The Book of Deuteronomy marks a major revision of Israelite history. Psalm 95 reaches back to the way things were before the Exile. 1 Corinthians looks forward to pleasing God. Mark explains that the reason is the authority that informs the teaching of Jesus, an authority that overrides all other authorities, before, after, and during the lifetime of Jesus. God is in charge, even when humans do use politics to determine truth.

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

---

<sup>25</sup> Michael Winger, "Word and Deed," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2004) 681.

<sup>26</sup> Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., "Mark 6:6b-30: Mission, the Baptist, and Failure," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 651.