

Personal Notes
070128 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time 72C
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These readings are about Jesus changing the direction of the involvement of God in human history. Change of direction assumes a journey. Since the end of last summer, the diamond industry designed a promotional piece called "Love's Journey," ranging in cost from expensive at places like Tiffany's to inexpensive at places like Kohl's. Love's Journey is a seven diamond in the shape of a curved path, moving into the distance. The pendant begins with larger diamonds and tapers off into the presumed horizon with smaller diamonds.¹ The quotation from Pope Benedict XVI uses the word *journey* at least nine times.

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Jer 1:4-10

William A. Holladay, "Elusive Deuteronomists, Jeremiah, and Proto-Deuteronomy"²

Like Jeremiah, Jesus starts to form a new covenant. Jeremiah was only about five years old in 622 B.C., when Josiah initiated the Deuteronomic reform. Holladay develops part VI, "The Narrative of Jeremiah's Call (Jer 1:4-10): The Prophet Like Moses," in this section of his argument. He argues that, though Jeremiah and Deuteronomy were written at the same time, the writers were relatively independent of one another.

Jer 1:5

Benedict T. Viviano, O.P., "The Least in the Kingdom: Matthew 11:11, Its Parallel in Luke 7:28 (Q) and Daniel 4:14"³

This section lists the various Biblical calls to prophecy. The movement is from Abraham, to Moses, to David, who is more important, because he accomplished the more extraordinary miracles. Jesus turns the tables, to proclaim the wonder of being the least in the Kingdom of God. Jesus, then, must be this "least" and the Faithful are to follow, likewise. History is taking a new direction.

Jer 1:5

Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah"⁴

¹ Documentation for this consists of the memory of Bette Mae K. Jirran from The Wall Street Journal at the end of last summer and Kohl's advertisement with prices for Friday, December 29 and Saturday, December 30, 2006. The advertisement was an insert to the Newport News Daily Press, December 29, 2006. Also see Vanessa O'Connell, "Gem War," The Wall Street Journal, Saturday/Sunday, January 13-14, 2007, picture and text insert, page P 4. The best view is located at the following web site: http://www.whitehalljewellers.com/Shop_Online/valentines3.html 070204.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 59, 66-69.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January 2000) 48, 53

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 231, 239.

Jesus follows in the footsteps of Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations. Jesus also followed Jeremiah in his treatment of Jerusalem, its people, and its protection. Just as when Jeremiah left Jerusalem, the Babylonian invaders triumphed, so when Jesus left Jerusalem, the Roman invaders triumphed.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 71:1-5, 3-4, 5-6, 15, 17 (cf. 15 a)

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. offers seven principles for reading the Psalms. The First Principle is presented September 22, 2002, the Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Lectionary Reading 133A. The Second and Seventh Principles are presented September 8, 2002, the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Lectionary reading 127A. The Third Principle is presented January 21, 2007, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, last Sunday, Lectionary reading 69C. The Fourth Principle is presented December 1, 2002, the First Sunday in Advent, Lectionary reading 2B. The Fifth Principle is presented this Sunday, the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 28, 2007, Lectionary reading 72C. The Sixth Principle will be presented July 8, 2007, Lectionary reading 102C.

Chapter Two

Methods for Studying and Praying the Psalms
First Principle “Today” Has Its Own Grace

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Second Principle Read the Text of the Psalm

...

Third Principle: Read the Text with Imagination

...

Fourth Principle: Read the Psalms According to Its Key Words

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Fifth Principle: Read the Psalm with Other Parallel Passages⁵

Key or identical words also show up in another way, namely, when phrases or lines of a psalm are quoted elsewhere in the Bible. Often this is a matter of New

⁵ Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, 18-20.

Testament writers using an Old Testament passage, but not always. [The Fourth Principle is to read the psalms according to its key words.] Job 7:17 seems to be alluding to Ps 8:4; another link occurs between Jer 1:5 and Ps 22:9-10 [The Lectionary uses verse 9 Palm Sunday.] as well as between Ps 51:3-4 and Isa 59:12-13. In fact, some psalms, like Psalm 143, are filigrees of biblical passages. As already noted in Chapter 1 of this book, more psalms are repeated in part or in their entirety elsewhere in the book of psalms: Psalms 14 and 53 are almost identical; Psalm 70 is repeated at the end of Psalm 40; Psalm 108 consists of Pss 57:7-10 and 60:6-12. This is not a matter of repetition, however, as a new setting is always provided. Another word for this phenomenon, instead of repetition is “parallel places.” That phrase provides readers and listeners with the rubric in this study of the fifth principle for interpreting psalms.

Most English translations of the Bible supply cross-references to other parts of the Bible—as the *New Jerusalem Bible* does handily in the margins or the *New American Bible* does toward the bottom of each page. These citations draw attention to the way that the Bible interprets the Bible.

In quoting an earlier part of the Bible, the new inspired author is not a literalist or a modern scholar of critical-historical bent. In fact, when Eph 4:8 reads a passage from Ps 68:18, the author goes so far as to reverse the meaning, as the following lines manifest.

Ps 68:18	Eph 4:8
You ascended the high mount,	When he ascended on high he made
Leading captives in your train,	captivity itself a captive;
And receiving gifts from people.	He gave gifts to his people.

While the author of Ps 68:18 was most probably referring to King David who, returning victoriously to Jerusalem after subduing a revolt somewhere in his extensive empire (cf. 2 Sam 12:26-31), assigned some of the captives as temple slaves (cf. Josh 9:23, 27; Neh 7:22), such a situation gradually became religiously intolerable for later rabbis. Their problem was not so much over slavery, unfortunately taken for granted as also in the New Testament, but over the bold and blunt statement that men and women gave gifts to God. As Psalm 50 declared in God’s name:

If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and all that is in it is mine.
Do I eat the flesh of bull,
or drink the blood of goats?
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and pay your vows to the Most High (Ps 50:12-14).

In the ancient Israelite worldview, God was seen as being supremely independent. Lest the sovereignty of God be misunderstood and compromised, teachers of a later age read the psalm similarly to the New Testament—only with a different interpretation. The rabbis explained that Moses was the one who “ascended on high,” namely Mount Sinai, where God gave him the gift of the Law and covenant. The epistle to the Ephesians

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develops the application still further, this time about Jesus who died, was buried, rose to God, and sent the gift of the Holy Spirit. This same Holy Spirit lavished upon the Church the many ministries for service:

([Christ] who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all with things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:10-12).

The Bible, even when written down, never remained a dead letter but lived with the growing religious sense and the pastoral needs of the people of God. It was being interpreted within a living tradition. This brief study of Ps 68:18 and Eph 4:8 exemplifies what Christians mean in stating that the Bible is to be interpreted within the believing community. It is not that the community members declare the Bible to be incorrect and so change it. Rather, like the rabbis of pre-Christian times, there is a recognition that a text can give a wrong meaning or be misinterpreted in the new setting of a later age. The Bible is always in need of elucidation through prayer, research, study, and teaching. This short diversion with Psalm 68, with its radical change of meaning in the rabbis and in the New Testament, helps illustrate the principle of interpretation being discussed.

Returning now to Psalm 95, one discovers that verses 7b-11 enrich the epistle to the Hebrews. The author of this heavily theological document—also a liturgical work of art—draws upon many Old Testament passages to show how Jesus, like ancient Israel, followed a long journey. Jesus, the eternal word, came from heaven to earth and returned to heaven in magnificent glory (ch. 1). Jesus came on earth as a compassionate high priest, and calls us to be with him and so enter with him into our eternal rest (chs. 2—4). Jesus, priest according to the eternal order of Melchizedek, enters the heavenly sanctuary to bring about the perfection of the old in the glory of the new covenant and to purify all people by his blood in a new feast of Yom Kippur or Atonement (chs. 5—10). The epistle ends with a journey across the Old Testament in the company of its saints and heroes (chs. 11—12), ending with the final journey of Jesus whom God brought from death into glory (ch. 13).

Journey, then, is the major motif in both Psalm 95 and the epistle to the Hebrews. Psalm 95 blends a liturgical journey (vv. 1-7a) with Israel’s journey through the wilderness as they murmur and dispute with God. The epistle to the Hebrews does the same. With many liturgical references, for instance that of the Jewish High Priest entering into the Holy of Holies on the feast of Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement (Heb 9:11-14) or Moses’ journey up Mount Sinai to solemnize the ritual of the covenant (Heb 9:15-22), the New Testament author is also continually calling for obedience, perseverance, and compassion. By these virtues one is led on a journey toward peace and holiness.

The epistle to the Hebrews is quite dense; it compresses rich biblical allusions in every single section. Typical too of a classical rabbinical style, the author of the book of Hebrews joins distant biblical passages because of a word like “today” and “rest”

(Hebrews 3—4). Just as God rested on the seventh day after creating the universe, all creation is being called to enter into a heavenly rest today. No previous moment of rest adequately fulfilled God's plans, not even, says Hebrews, when Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land (Josh 22:1-6). Joshua realized that Israel might sin and be driven off the land (Josh 23:14-16). The epistle focuses on our eternal rest with Jesus, in God:

... Again he sets a certain day—"today"—saying through David much later, in the words already quoted,
"Today, if you hear his voice,
Do not harden your hearts,"

So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs (Heb 4:7, 9-11).

The New Testament work, as the text suggests, dwelt long on two key words in Psalm 95, namely "today" and "rest." It drew listeners and readers far along in their journey with Jesus, the compassionate high priest, through the struggles of his life, even death, into our heavenly rest. One cannot absorb such teaching quickly. Just as the text of the psalm—according to our second principle—requires an attentive, prayerful reading, so does a New Testament work like the epistle to the Hebrews.

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Sixth Principle: Read the Psalms according to the Liturgy and Classic Spiritual Writers

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Seventh Principle: Consult Commentaries

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Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

1 Corinthians 12

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., "The Structured Ministry of the Church in the Pastoral Epistles"⁶

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 595.

Mentions the old German theological issue about whether charisms are offices.

1 Corinthians 13

Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13"⁷

Concludes that 1 Corinthians is Pauline. Corley divides his argument into six parts: I. Genre; II. Vocabulary; III. Content and Ideas; IV. Stylistic Features; V. Use in Christian Texts prior to A.D. 150; VI. Conclusion.

Alleluia: Luke 4:18

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

Luke 4:16-21

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy.⁸

In the temple at Nazareth, Jesus inaugurated the great year of the Jubilee, which came every ten years. This Jubilee fulfilled Isaiah 61, which was central to what Melchizedek expected.

Luke 4:22

Alexander Globe, "Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, and the Authority of the Neutral Text"⁹

Exegetes protect the virginity of Mary with the proposition that the neighbors at Nazareth could not be expected to know about the virgin-birth, yet.

Luke 4:22

Brendan Byrne, S.J., "Jesus as Messiah in the Gospel of Luke: Discerning a Pattern of Correction"¹⁰

Compares Luke 2:49 and 4:22, "Son of Joseph," with Luke 3:23, 'thought to be the son of Joseph.'

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 256-274.

⁸ (London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003) 31, 38.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 1980) 67.

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003) 85 ff.

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Luke 4:23-24, 27

Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19"¹¹

This Lucan passage is an implicit reference to Elisha healing Naaman, the Syrian, as an example of how no prophet is acceptable in his native place.

I would appreciate suggestions you may have for improving the changed format. Thank you. For more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 283.