

Commitment to Faith hides the meaning of these readings. What is faith? Faith is the acceptance of something on the word of another. Sometimes the Faithful refer to the Holy Spirit as *The Word*. Since The Word is very gentle, God leaves to each of the Faithful the picking apart and discernment of the human from the Divine. The reality is that God demands an effort from the Faithful to discover what to believe.

Contrary to many Fathers of the Church,¹ Luke is focusing on Faith, rather than gratitude.² In the readings from 2 Kings, Elisha is living in Samaria, about 850 B.C.³ The Samaritan break away only occurred five hundred years later, about the time of the sieges of Tyre and Gaza by Alexander the Great, during a nine-month period about 331 B.C.⁴

John Hyrcanus, nephew of the Maccabees, destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in 186 B.C. Among the ruins of that temple, Samaritans continue to worship the Lord to the present day. Putting it mildly, by the time of Jesus, the Samaritans and Jews did not get along.⁵ The point is that not only Elisha but also Naaman the leper was serious about commitment to Faith.

Saint Bede (672-735), Priest and Doctor, points to the need for a serious commitment to Faith. Ten were cured, nine, evidently accepting the cure without the commitment. When only the Samaritan returned, Jesus asked one of the 152 questions in Luke,⁶ "Where are the other nine?" Because the Samaritan was

¹ "Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost," [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: A Manual of Preaching, Spiritual Reading and Meditation: Volume Four: From the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost to the Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost](#), tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 72-86.

² Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 274.

³ <http://www.keyway.ca/html2002/elisha.htm> September 7, 2004 uses 892-832 as the dates of the ministry of Elisha.

⁴ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 278.

⁵ <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/John%20Hyrcanus> September 7, 2004.

⁶ Paul Elbert, "An Observation on Luke's Composition and Narrative Style of Questions," [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 101 and 100.

committed to Faith, his Faith saved him. Jesus told the Samaritan, not to follow Jesus, but to get up and do whatever he wanted. *Stand up and go* (verse 19). Saint Bede explains, "... clearly we are shown by actual happenings, that it is not only confession of faith, but also the doing of the works that follow faith, which makes *whole* those who believe, and give glory to the Father Who is in heaven."⁷

2 Kings 5:14-17

Elisha, the man of God, lived in poverty.⁸ His poverty and rags is part of the reversal of fortunes theme in Luke. In Elisha, the power of Faith is hidden, except from those committed.

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 (cf. 2b)

The Lectionary uses Psalm 98 at three Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used		Particular Sunday
56B	422	1, 2-3, 3-4	(cf. 2b)	Easter 6
144C	901	1, 2-3, 3-4	(cf. 2b)	Ordinary 28
158B	969-970	5-6, 7-8, 9	(cf. 9)	Ordinary 33

The antiphon, *The Lord has revealed* is about the activity of the Lord revealing, not about the activity of the nations receiving the revelation. Saint Jerome translates *nations* in a sense of people, rather than the political constructs of modern and early modern times or the empires of the ancient worlds. The point of the readings is that Faithfulness requires more than observation, but also commitment.

Verse 1 is parallel to the Prophet Isaiah 12:5, giving thanks to God for deliverance.⁹ Deliverance here would apply to the Exodus. Deliverance in the new dispensation requires Faith that the exodus from this life into the next carries the promises of the Covenant with it.

⁷ V. The Venerable Bede, Priest and Doctor, *Exposition of the Gospel*, PL 92. *Expos. In Lucam*, col. 542. V. C. 17. in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: A Manual of Preaching, Spiritual Reading and Meditation: Volume Four: From the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost to the Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 86.

⁸ John R. Levison, "Prophecy in Ancient Israel: The Case of the Ecstatic Elders," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 511.

⁹ Sue Gillingham, "From Liturgy to Prophecy: The Use of Psalmody in Second Temple Judaism," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 3 (July 2002) 472.

Verse 3, Saint Jerome translates *faithfulness* as *veritatis* or *truth*, something dear to college professors.

Psalm 98 is probably one of the early monarchical psalms, thereby suitable for intoning a remembrance of Naaman. Psalm 98 is an Enthronement Psalm whereby *all you lands* are commended to breaking into song.¹⁰

2 Timothy 2:8-13

This reading is available for Funerals for Adults.¹¹

Saint Paul points to the hidden nature of Faith as he notes his imprisonment for preaching the truth about the Resurrection. When Paul writes of *those who are chosen* (verse 10), his implicit reference is to those committed to their own Faith. Verses 11-13, "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him ..." looks like an early Christian hymn.¹² Living through death is the hidden nature of commitment to Faith.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In all circumstances, give thanks, means "Alleluia, anyway."

Luke 17:11-19

¹⁰ 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, 681.

¹¹ 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) Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture 13 Funerals for Adults page 220.

¹² See John Kloppenborg, "An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b-5 In Light of Some Recent Literature," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3 (July 1978) 363.

Verse 11, the *journey to Jerusalem* is better understood as a hidden Faith commitment to the Faithful.¹³ The hidden aspect resides in the likelihood that Jerusalem is more a symbol than a place in Luke. Were Jerusalem really a place in Luke, the journey seems to be going nowhere fast. The journey began more than seven chapters earlier at 9:51.¹⁴ Geographically, the journey might pass along the border of Samaria and Galilee, but not through both places. The Greek here is tricky. The journey is about salvation rather than moving from place to place.

Jerusalem represents two realities, the reality of the souls of the Faithful, and the reality of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus demonstrates commitment as he makes his way to his fate in Jerusalem. More than observation is required of the Faithful. Faithfulness also requires commitment.

In verse 12, the African, Saint Augustine (354-430), observes, "Leprosy is a blemish of color."¹⁵ The *have pity on us* language is the relatively common language of the Kyrie Eleison.¹⁶

In verse 15, *returned, glorifying God*, is a reminder of *the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God* (Luke 2:20) of the Infant Narrative. The healed leper returns in response to what he has seen.¹⁷ Outside observation is not enough, without a Faith commitment in act to love the Lord.

¹³ Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April 1981) 221-222.

¹⁴ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 273-274, 282.

¹⁵ Augustine, "Exposition from the Catena Aurea," The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: A Manual of Preaching, Spiritual Reading and Meditation: Volume Four: From the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost to the Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 74.

¹⁶ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke's Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 224.

¹⁷ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 283.

Verse 18, *this foreigner*. The Greek for *this foreigner* only appears here in the New Testament and is found nowhere outside of Jewish literature. This question is one of thirty-four exclusively Lucan questions.¹⁸ The term is associated with the Jewish Temple, appearing on the balustrade delineating the sacred area accessible only to Jews and the Court of the Gentiles. Death was the penalty for Gentiles, among whom the Jews included Samaritans, entering the sacred area.¹⁹

This Gospel from Luke is on a “trajectory” toward the Gospel of John where Jesus replaces the temple.²⁰ Knowing who Jesus is, is not enough. Faith in the loving nature of God is also required.

2 Kings 17:29 is the single First Testament use of *Samaritans* as residents. As the Assyrian conquerors colonized the Northern Samaritan Kingdom, the Samaritans made gods, and then placed them in shrines meant for the Lord. 2 Kings 17:7-23 goes on to berate this lack of Faith in the Northern Kingdom as the cause of the fall of Israel to the Assyrians a second time.²¹

These readings are about the relationship between Faith as a result of the wonderful works of God and Faith as a commitment to finding and loving that same God. Naaman begins the readings illustrating such a Faith commitment. Psalm 98 enthrones God and the Lord of All, an act of Faith. 2 Timothy juxtaposes death and resurrection therefrom as the core of Christian dogma. Finally, the Gospel by Luke is about the commitment to Faith found in the Samaritan leper.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

¹⁸ Paul Elbert, “An Observation on Luke’s Composition and Narrative Style of Questions,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 101 and 102, 106.

¹⁹ Dennis Hamm, S.J., “What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 284-285.

²⁰ Dennis Hamm, S.J., “What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 286-287.

²¹ Dennis Hamm, S.J., “What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 277.