

Personal Notes  
071021 Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time 147C  
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The story in Exodus about Amalek in battle is one of more than six texts about the Amalekites. Hans Andreas Tanner wrote a doctoral dissertation about the situation. Contemporary scholars, like Tanner, warn that genocide is the problem with the Amalekites.

The several versions of what happened with the Amalekites make sense by showing how to deal with violence and genocide. That way is to realize that judgment belongs only to God, who commands humans to treat one another with love. Some of the other versions of the Amalekite situation are not as violent as what appears here in Exodus.

What comes to mind is the somewhat similar situation with Michael Vick torturing and killing his dogs. When people do that to one another, the label is *child abuse*. When one suffers child abuse, the ramifications can sink into the unconscious and then resurface as revenge in the form of violence.

In that spirit, Psalm 121 reminds the Faithful that it is “the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Since the Lord made it, the Faithful are not to destroy it. Two Timothy 3:16 reminds the Faithful that *all Scripture is inspired by God*. Since the New Testament had not yet been written, *all Scripture* refers to the First Testament. In other words, the variety of Malecite stories in Sacred Scripture, held in tension with one another, can help the Faithful deal with their various situations.

That parable is about the widow and the judge, both. In the story, the widow is going to slap the judge around, in other words, become violent. What Jesus is trying to say through her eyes is to persist in prayer as an answer if not to violence, then at least to unanswered prayer. The widow is a stand-in for the Faithful.

The judge is a stand-in for God. When it appears that God is not responding, the answer is to keep pestering God in prayer. God cares and, eventually, will relent. With my own abrasive personality, I frequently experience people not taking vengeance on me, when well they might. I do try be Faithful and frequently ask people to pray for me, with that in mind.

The JustFaith program points the way to embracing change with its 2007 fall topics: Immigration, Climate change, The UN Millennium Development Goals, Federal Budget Priorities, and Prison Reform.<sup>1</sup> All of the topics, but especially Immigration and Prison Reform include violence as a subtopic.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.justfaith.org/JM125.html](http://www.justfaith.org/JM125.html) 070903.

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### Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the fun stuff scholars are digging up.

#### First Reading: Exodus 17:8-13

Exod 17:8-16

Richard D. Nelson, review of Hans Andreas Tanner, Amalek: Der Feind Israels und der Feind Jahwes: Eine Studie zu den Amalektexten im Alten Testament<sup>2</sup>

The various Amalekite texts are: Exod 17:8-16 [8-13 is used here]; Num 14:39-45 (abortive invasion); Deut 2:17-19 (command to annihilate); references in Judges; 1 Samuel 15 (Saul); and 30 (David), and 2 Sam 1:1-16 (report of Saul's death). Nelson explains, "A contemporary reading should emphasize the importance of overcoming obstacles in the quest for social or individual freedom." Nelson concludes, "These texts reflect the conceptual environment of the period of exile and return, calling forth courage, perseverance, and trust in the LORD's help, while discouraging overconfident disobedience." JustFaith works with the same problems.

#### Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 (cf. 2)

Psalm 121:1-2

Joel S. Burnett, "The Question of Divine Absence in Israelite and West Semitic Religion"<sup>3</sup>

Burnett argues that the question in verse 1 of the psalm, *whence shall help come to me*, is a cultic question, anticipating a direct and explicit answer.

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy<sup>4</sup>

Barker observes, "the old title for El was simply altered and taken over in some Psalms: 'Yahweh ... maker, 'sh of heaven and earth' (Psalms 115:15, 121:2; 124:8; 134:3)." El was the name for God during the time of the first temple.

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<sup>2</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 744.

<sup>3</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 229.

<sup>4</sup> London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003 282, 286.

Psalm 121

The Bishops exhibit inadvertent scholarship between the ways they translate Psalm 121 in their Catechism<sup>5</sup> and in their Lectionary. European Vatican censors are probably not hovering over the Catechism with the same intensity as the Lectionary. Not every verse is different; all of the verses will be heard at Mass. The Catechism translation is from Chapter 35, "God Calls us to Pray."

Lectionary: I **lift up** my eyes toward the mountains;  
Catechism I **raise** my eyes toward the mountains

Lectionary: **whence shall** help come to me?  
Catechism **From where will my** help come?

Lectionary: My help **is** from the LORD,  
Catechism My help **comes** from the LORD,

Lectionary: **who made** heaven and earth.  
Catechism **the maker of** heaven and earth.

Lectionary: **May he not suffer** your foot to slip;  
Catechism **God will not allow** your foot to slip;

Lectionary: **may he slumber not who guards you:**  
Catechism **your guardian does not sleep.**

Lectionary: **Indeed he** neither slumbers nor sleeps,  
Catechism **Truly, the guardian of Israel**

Lectionary: **the guardian of Israel.**  
Catechism **never slumbers nor sleeps.**

Lectionary: The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade;  
Catechism: The LORD is your guardian;

Lectionary: The LORD is your shade  
Catechism: The LORD is your shade

[I am having trouble unscrambling the above verses.]

Lectionary: **he is beside you** at your right hand.  
Catechism: at your right hand.

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<sup>5</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 480.

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Lectionary    The sun **shall** not harm you by day,  
Catechism    By day the sun **cannot** harm you,

Lectionary                    not the moon by night.  
Catechism                    nor the moon by night.

Lectionary    The LORD will guard you from all evil;  
Catechism    The LORD will guard you from all evil,

Lectionary                    **he** will guard your life.  
Catechism                    will always guard your life.

Lectionary    The LORD will guard your coming and **your** going,  
Catechism    The LORD will guard your coming and going

Lectionary                    both now and forever.  
Catechism                    both now and forever.

When the author of 2 Timothy wrote about God inspiring all Sacred Scripture, I wonder what he meant about various translations.

**Second Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14—4:2**

2 Timothy 3:16

Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek<sup>6</sup>

Zerwick writes, in "... 2 Tim 3:16 it is correct to insist on the absence of the article as showing that inspiration belongs to Scripture *as such* ("all Scripture. ...), whereas with the article ("all the Scripture ...) it would simply register the fact that the existing Scripture was inspired, without establishing a formal principle."

2 Tim 3:16

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., "The Structured Ministry of the Church in the Pastoral Epistles"<sup>7</sup>

Fitzmyer argues from 2 Timothy 3:16 that the First Testament is "profitable for the task of teaching."

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<sup>6</sup> Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994 61.

<sup>7</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 586.

2 Timothy 3:16

Frederick J. McGinness, review of Claire M. Waters, Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching, Performance, and Gender in the Later Middle Ages<sup>8</sup>

Claire M. Waters argues that women did preach during the Middle Ages, especially as related in Chaucer's Wife of Bath.

2 Timothy 3:17

Christopher Grasso, A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut<sup>9</sup>

In 1781 and 1787, President Ezra Styles of Yale used this text to preach that

the minister's vocation was primarily as pastor to his flock and preacher of the simple gospel message. Do not let favorite studies take time away from pastoral duties, he warned in a published 1787 ordination sermon. Treatises for the learned world on any subject ought to be considered a private pursuit.

From the sermons I regularly hear, contemporary preachers take this 1787 advice, about not being too studious, far too seriously.

### **Alleluia: Hebrews 4:12**

### **Gospel: Luke 18:1-8**

Luke 18:1-8

Craig L. Blomberg, "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?"<sup>10</sup>

Blomberg argues that neither the widow nor the judge requires emphasis, but that the parable is equally about both.

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)

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### **After-action Report**

Material below the solid line involves reactions from readers made after posting the material on the web. My intention is to leave this notice here for the next two presentations, before relegating the announcement to the Appendix. At that time, I will also redistribute the Appendix.

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<sup>8</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 460-461.

<sup>9</sup> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999 272, fn. 71.

<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 1 (January 1991) 74.

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In the first paragraph, last line, change *appears here in Exodus* to *appears in the Exodus Lectionary* readings for this Sunday.

In the fifth paragraph, change *What Jesus is trying to say, through her eyes, is to persist in prayer as an answer, if not to violence, then at least to unanswered prayer* to *What Jesus is trying to say, through her eyes, is to persist in unanswered prayer.*

In the second paragraph above the double line, *I do try be Faithful* should read, *I do try to be among the Faithful.*