

27 August, Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

19) *I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station. 20) In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, 21) and I will clothe him with your robe and will bind your girdle on him and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22) And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. 23) And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. Isaiah 22.19-23*

Vs. 22 has the Lord placing the key belonging to the house of David on the shoulder of Eliakim, implying that while he may not become a king after the lineage of David, he will wield power for the good as steward under the current reign of King Hezekiah. His ability to open and shut is reminiscent of Peter's authority given by Jesus: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" [Mt 16.19]. The other symbol attributed to Eliakim is he being a peg (connotes a tent) and a throne of "honor" or *kavod*" (cf. 17.4). Once Eliakim has become a peg and throne, symbols of stability, vs. 24 recounts that people will hang on him the entire "weight" of his father's house, another use of the noun *kavod* in its original sense.

Note the three symbols of authority or *memshalah*, if you will: robe, girdle and key, the last being placed upon the shoulder of Eliakim. This corresponds, if you will, to the weighty honor or *kavod* noted above. On occasion and as demanded, he will take this key and open as well as close. Once each has been done, nothing can reverse the action. Again referring to the verse with regard to Peter: "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Surely Peter must have thought of the Isaiah passage at hand when hearing these words and later reflected upon them when he was making such decisions.

As for the peg which is sure, this intimates clearly the image of a tent which is set up, *taqah* being the verb to fasten as well as to drive as into the ground. Within this tent, if you will, Eliakim will become a throne of *kavod* to the house of his father. That is to say, future kings will sit upon it and govern Israel.

3 September, Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

7) *O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; every one mocks me. 8) For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. 9) If I say, "I will not mention*

him or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. Jeremiah 20.7-9

Here we have a personal lament by the prophet Jeremiah with a near-touch of blasphemy which reveals how angry he is against the Lord. Nevertheless the difference between him and for example, someone today, is that he addressed the Lord as present whereas a modern person simply would turn his back and walk away without looking back.

Patah is the verb for deceived which means to spread out, to open and can imply that the Lord took the initiative of opening up Jeremiah in the sense of making him vulnerable. It doesn't take long to realize that now he has become the object of scorn and derision. Immediately afterwards the prophet acknowledges that the Lord is stronger, enabling him to prevail in this *patah*, the verb being *yakal* which is indicative of being able or can. The result? Jeremiah becomes a laughingstock or *schoq* to the people which results in being mocked or *lahag*, the latter as to speak in a barbaric fashion which serves to intensify the situation. Note, too, that such derision isn't sporadic but continuous, that is, throughout the day.

So when Jeremiah does his thing as a prophet of the Lord, that is, crying out violence and destruction, the people mock him, hurling back his very words back which indeed sounds barbaric. He doesn't just proclaim violence and destruction but cries them out in full-throated fashion. Such *zahaq*, if you will, serves to make everyone spurn him all the more, so much that it seems he can't get a word in otherwise. Hence the prophecy Jeremiah is yelling out at the top of his lungs is to no avail. Actually the divine word or *davar* (word as expression) bounces back to him as both reproach and derision, *cherpah* and *qeles*. These words are indicative of scorn and contempt plus jeering, pretty much the same as that mocking mentioned in the last paragraph. Both *cherpah* and *qeles* are like being a laughingstock or *schoq* all the day long. This implies that the people didn't scorn Jeremiah on a given occasion but followed him around, even to his home.

It's natural for Jeremiah to call it quits which indeed he gives serious thought, the reason for proposing not to mention the Lord ever again, this being put as a rhetorical statement. Interestingly the verb *zakar* is used for "speak" which fundamentally means to recall or to remember. And to blot out remembrance of the Lord from one's memory is the ultimate act of defiance. Nevertheless, there remains within Jeremiah...in his heart...a fire which continues to burn. It's more than within him, if you will...present in his very bones. The verb has *hatsar* meaning to shut up or restrain and is similar in sound to *hetsem* or bone. Actually Jeremiah doesn't spell out the nature of this burning fire, *hahar* showing that it isn't a simply flame but akin to a raging conflagration that's inescapable. Thus heart and bones as deep within imply that despite the bitter complaint about being deceived,

Jeremiah can't escape his mission. He ends up by not renegeing but keeping alive memory of the Lord's summons to prophesy...that *zakar* or recollection of it...that will carry him through.

Finally Jeremiah admits that he can't restrain this fire. Despite being weary of attempts to do so, it bursts out. Such weariness is a sign of defeat in the human sense, especially as being scoffed continuously, yet he gives in and continuous with his prophetic mission. The verses that follow continue with threats from the people yet counters with acknowledging the Lord present with him as a warrior.

10 September, Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

8) *Owe no one anything except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.* 9) *The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet" and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* 10) *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* 11) *Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; 12) the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13) let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.* Romans 13.8-14

Three notes with regard to this passage: 1) The second reading (Romans) is posted instead of the assigned one from Ezekiel. This is because at present I am engaged in composing *Expansions on the Book of Ezekiel*. 2) Although the excerpt ends with vs. 11, along with it the next two verses comprise one full sentence. Vs. 14 is added because it's at the end of Chapter Thirteen. 3) The notations posed are from *Expansions on the Book of Romans*.

Paul makes a shift away from his controversial remarks to safer territory, perhaps realizing that while talking he had wandered off in a thorny matter. *Opheilo* is the verb meaning to owe in the sense of being in debt. "For a man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God" [1Cor 11.7]. However, the debt, if you will, consists in *agapao* for each other (cf. 9.25), for having *agape* is fulfillment of the Torah, the *pleroo* of it (cf. 8.4).

In vs. 9 Paul cites four of the Ten Commandments lifted from the Book of Exodus (20.14, 13, 15 and 17), but as can be seen by the enumeration, are not in their original order. The commandment against coveting is *epithumeo*, literally as to have a desire or *thumos* (cf.

2.8) upon, *epi-*. It's the translation for the Hebrew *chamad*, both pretty much meaning the same thing. Paul next sums up the remaining six commandments, "any other" possibly including other injunctions of the Torah, the verb *anakephalaioo* suggesting a direction upon (*ana-*) the head in the sense of being source. It has one other NT reference, Eph 1.10: "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." This bring-back-to-the-head is found in Lev 19.18 which reads in full as "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." The verbs here are *naqam* and *natar*, the latter meaning to keep which better situate the command to love, *agapao* (cf. vs. 8). Mt 19.19, of course, develops this in light of Jesus speaking with the young man who didn't follow Jesus because he had many possessions.

Vs. 10 speaks of fulfilling the Torah, the noun *pleroma* (cf. 11.25) being used which echos vs. 8. Such *pleroma* results from the fact that *agape* (cf. vs. 9) does no wrong or *kakos* (cf. vs. 4). This not doing of evil, of course, omits what is positive and seems to be the minimum requirement of *agape* as presented here.

Paul presumes that his listeners are familiar with the hour or *kairos* (cf. 11.5), this being more than chronological time, an occasion fraught with urgency and demanding action. Most likely the *kairos* at hand pertains to whether or not the Romans will accept Paul's message. The verb *eido* (cf. 8.27) suggests a perceiving or beholding which involves taking in what's seen as a whole. Paul fleshes out this *kairos* by calling it "full time" which reads literally as *hora* (hour) and also refers to a given period as during a year. Here *hora* is a more specified time in the sense of heightened awareness of the urgency at hand. That translates into whether to accept the Christian message or not. In other words, Paul is putting his listeners on the spot. "To the present hour we hunger and thirst" [1Cor 4.11]. So within this *kairos* the *hora* consists of waking from sleep, a way of saying that the Romans hadn't been aware of Jesus Christ.

The urgency of waking up is spelled out in the second sentence of vs. 11 where Paul says that salvation is closer than first imagined, again using the first person plural with the verb being *pisteuo* (cf. 10.9) connoting belief. This *pisteuo* came into existence early on ("when we first believed") or when the Romans first heard about Jesus Christ, possibly by missionaries who had arrived in the capitol before Paul.

Vs. 12 continues the temporal imagery though it's rooted in a *kairos* event. That is to say, Paul speaks of night's advancement, *prokopto* meaning to advanced (*pro-* before). "And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people" [Ga. 1.14]. This advancement is equivalent to the last night watch just prior to first light of day. That day is, of course *kairos*. During this twilight time a person is to start getting rid of what was

done at night, *ergon* (cf. vs. 3) and put on the armor of light. That intimates preparing oneself for a coming battle where the *ergon* of night still can advance with their attacks in the form of reveling, drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling and jealousy.

Paul equates putting this armor not just with Jesus Christ himself but as Lord, and like a conventional piece of armor, requires time and care that it may fit properly. Once done, a person is ready for battle which Paul puts in terms as not giving room to the flesh.

Pronoia is the noun for provision meaning forethought, *pro-* as before and suggests thinking about oneself instead of the amour as Jesus Christ. The noun *epithumia* (cf. 7.8) or desire-upon (*epi-*) is more or less equivalent to the six base practices Paul lists in vs. 13.