

Jerome Biblical Commentary on Readings for the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent C

Reading 1

[Jer 33:14-16](#)

The days are coming, says the LORD,  
when I will fulfill the promise  
I made to the house of Israel and Judah.  
In those days, in that time,  
I will raise up for David a just shoot ;  
he shall do what is right and just in the land.  
In those days Judah shall be safe  
and Jerusalem shall dwell secure;  
this is what they shall call her:  
“The LORD our justice.”

(b) MORE ON THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM AND JUDAH (33:1-26). The date of the present oracles is 587, as in 32:1. At the beginning of this century, critics rejected the entire chapter as unauthentic; we argue for an original nucleus behind its two sections.

(i) *Jerusalem and Judah restored* (33:1-13). The style of this hopeful passage is extremely repetitious and gives signs of the apocalyptic style (Rudolph; cf. v. 3: “revelation of mysteries”); if most of the ideas are Jeremiah’s, their form is hardly his. Hence, we see here a disciple’s reflections on the master’s message.**6-9**. The historical context is the period of the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the exile.**10**. A quotation from 32:43.**11**. *the cry of joy...*: This enumeration of joyful manifestations is properly Jeremian (7:34; 16:9; 25:10). *give thanks to the Lord...*: This praise comes from the liturgical thanksgiving hymns (Pss 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; its last part is the refrain of Ps 136).**13**. This geography of the restoration comes from 17:26 (see also 32:44).

**94** (ii) *An anthology on messianism* (33:14-26). This new section, missing in the LXX, is a small collection of Jeremiah’s messianic oracles, mostly transformed. It is now accepted as being the work of a later redactor.**15-16**. The redactor reuses the Prophet’s oracle on the future king (cf. 23:5-6); Jerusalem replaces Israel and is called by this king’s new name.

1

---

LXX Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

<sup>1</sup>Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14](#)

R. (1b) **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;  
teach me your paths,  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my savior,  
and for you I wait all the day.

R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Good and upright is the LORD;  
thus he shows sinners the way.  
He guides the humble to justice,  
and teaches the humble his way.

R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy  
toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.  
The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him,  
and his covenant, for their instruction.

R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

**Ps 25.** An individual lament in acrostic style. The psalmist is a sinner (7) who is hated by enemies; he prays for deliverance and guidance. Structure: 1-7, a series of requests, with themes to induce Yahweh to intervene (3, 6-7); 8-15, a teaching about the “way” (8) and fear of the Lord (12); 16-21, another series of requests for help, followed in 22 by an apparent addition referring to the community.**4.** Although the poem is a complaint, the key idea is “your ways,” which the author asks to know and to observe; this concept is taken up again in 8-15, in which a strong wisdom influence can be seen, especially 12-14.**10.** *kindness and constancy:* *esed w<sup>e</sup> met* are the characteristics of the covenant relationship (cf. 14).**12.** Lit., “Who is the man who fears the Lord?” This type of question is found in the entrance torah of Pss 15:1; 24:3.**16-21.** There is found here an unusual mixture of request and expressions of trust.**22.** This verse is certainly an addition because it introduces a prayer for Israel and because it is outside the alphabetical sequence that structures the Ps. When a poem goes beyond 22 (the number of letters in the Hebr alphabet), the standard practice is to begin the next (and last) line with **Pe** (as here, and cf. Ps 34:23 and the observations of P. W. Skehan in *CBQ* 23 [1961] 127).

---

Hebr Hebrew

CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

---

<sup>2</sup>Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

## Reading II

### [1 Thes 3:12-4:2](#)

Brothers and sisters:

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love  
for one another and for all,  
just as we have for you,  
so as to strengthen your hearts,  
to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. Amen.

Finally, brothers and sisters,  
we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that,  
as you received from us  
how you should conduct yourselves to please God  
and as you are conducting yourselves  
you do so even more.  
For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

**11-13.** An invocation, embodying the petition of v. 10, concludes the first part of the letter. A sing. verb (*kateuthynai*, “may he direct”) treats the Father and Jesus as one source of action. In v. 12, Christ alone is the immediate source of growth in love. Three requests are made: (1) the opportunity of returning to Thessalonica; (2) an increase of love for the Thessalonians; (3) the achievement of the goal of the Christian life.**13. holiness:** Likeness to God. *with all his saints:* If Paul has Zech 14:5 in mind, the reference is to the angels (Mk 8:38; 13:27; Mt 25:31). The formula, however, is stereotyped, and Paul probably has the whole scene of the parousia in mind, as described in 4:13-18. The reference would then be to all Christians, living and dead, who will be with the Lord on that day (4:17).

**(II) Instructions and Exhortations (4:1-5:24).** The *hyster mata*, or “what is lacking in your faith,” of 3:10 are now supplied by Paul. Teaching is always an occasion for exhortation in Paul’s letters.

**23 (A) Holiness and Chastity (4:1-8).** **1. in the Lord Jesus:** Such instruction is handed down (2:13) from Christ himself through the apostles. Christ is the norm and authority of all Paul’s teaching and exhortation.**2.** Paul recalls past instructions and announces the following.**3.** Christian morality is not viewed as natural law, but as the will of God (Mt 6:10). *sanctification:* This connotes a progress toward holiness, a likeness to God (3:13).

---

<sup>3</sup>Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Gospel

[Lk 21:25-28, 34-36](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,  
and on earth nations will be in dismay,  
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.  
People will die of fright  
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,  
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
And then they will see the Son of Man  
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.  
But when these signs begin to happen,  
stand erect and raise your heads  
because your redemption is at hand.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy  
from carousing and drunkenness  
and the anxieties of daily life,  
and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.  
For that day will assault everyone  
who lives on the face of the earth.  
Be vigilant at all times  
and pray that you have the strength  
to escape the tribulations that are imminent  
and to stand before the Son of Man.”

(iv) *The coming of the Son of Man* (21:25-28). See Mk 13:24-27; Mt 24:29-31. Luke takes up the idea of “signs” and cosmic upheavels from v. 11. By now he has made it clear that these eschatological details are not to be associated with the fall of Jerusalem nor with any contemporary or near future moment; but faith in the eschatological victory offers strong support to suffering, persecuted Christians of every age. The language here is deeply prophetic. **25-26**. Cf. Jer 4:23-26; Am 8:9; Mi 1:3f.; and especially Is 13:9f.; 34:4. **25b-26**. The psychological observations are proper to Lk. **27**. *coming upon a cloud*: Symbolical language from Dn 7:13f. **28b**. *your redemption is near*: The last part of this verse is found only in Lk. Only after the cosmic upheavels will the final achievement of Jesus’ mission—world redemption—“be near.” The Gk word for redemption, *apolytrōsis*, occurs only here in the Gospels; it is found seven times in Paul (Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14). Although the Gk word literally means “a buying back,” it is rooted in the OT idea of redemption, God’s powerful acts of liberating his chosen people in need.

---

Gk Greek

OT Old Testament

**148** (v) *The parable of the fig tree* (21:29-33). See Mk 13:28-32; Mt 24:32-35. An inclusion occurs here, uniting vv. 29-31. The conclusion of v. 28 stated that “redemption is near” (*eggizei*); v. 31 ends with another form of the same word, “the kingdom of God is near” (*eggys*). This short parable of the fig tree exemplifies and clarifies the meaning of v. 28. No tree of Palestine seems so dead during winter as the fig tree; but with the annual return of sap through the bare spiky twigs, the tree bursts with new life out of death (see J. Jeremias, *Parables*, 120). The figure fits neatly into Luke’s theology. Only after Christianity has weathered the storms of winter and experienced the agony of apparent death (vv. 9-11, 25-28) will “the kingdom be near.” J1 2:22 uses the image of the fig tree’s blossoming to signify divine blessing.**30.** *you know by yourselves*: No one else needs to tell you that it is here or there (v. 8).**32f.** Luke drops the word “these” in the phrase “till all things have been accomplished,” and thereby gives this logion a much more extensive meaning than Mk; it thus refers to the entire process of salvation history.**33.** According to Semitic idiom, Jesus was understood to say: “Even if the sky and earth...still my words.”

**149** **34-36.** In these verses Luke concludes the discourse with an exhortation to vigilance. They are written in Hellenistic style without parallelism. Bultmann notes that we have here “a quite late Hellenistic formulation with a terminology so characteristic and akin to Paul’s that one could hazard a guess that Luke was here using a fragment from some lost epistle written by Paul or one of his disciples” (*HST* 119). For v. 34, see 1 Thes 5:1-3; for v. 34a, see 1 Thes 5:7; for v. 36, see 1 Thes 5:8-10, 18.

Even the rare Gk word *agrypne* (be watchful) occurs.**36.** *praying at all times*: A typical Lucan idea. It is clear from this short section that Luke (different from 1 Thes) eliminated the idea of an immediate parousia. Sudden trials will strike everyone, and so there is need of continual vigilance. Everyone, however, will eventually take part in the parousia. How a person lives now, determines how he will “stand before the Son of Man.” In these final public words of Jesus we hear some of his first words resounding again: cf. 6:20-23; 8:14; 9:23-27.**37-38.** With these verses Luke ends the public ministry of Jesus; he is surrounded by a spirit of prayer, uniting him with his Father, and with a spirit of compassion, attracting all the people to himself. Because of the similarity of v. 38 with Jn 8:1f., it is sometimes thought that the whole section about the adulterous woman (Jn 7:53-8:11) was composed by Luke or is dependent on him. Indeed, it occurs here in the Freer family of minuscule mss.

4

---

mss. Manuscripts

<sup>4</sup>Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ