

Annunciation Parish - Scripture Study 3/2/21

—Greeting and Opening Prayer

Any thoughts or questions from scripture passages you have read?

- Other faith questions?

READINGS:

Ex 20:1-17

19:8, 9, 10, 11 (Lord, you have the words of everlasting life)

1 Cor 1:22-25

Jn 2:13-25

GOSPEL:

- Jesus goes up to the Temple - passover near, good observant Jew.
- Sellers of items in temple and money changers were normal to be there - why did he get so upset?
 - His own parents probably bought doves to sacrifice for him there, but he tells them to take them out. What is going on? What might he be trying to say?
- The disciples recalled scripture (see Ps 69: 6-13)
 - What context does this passage of scripture add to the understanding of the scene?
- They ask for a sign - he gives them a future event ... which is?
- The resurrection is a proof that caused the disciples to believe *the Scripture* and *the words of Jesus* (which later also become scripture). Actually he was the subject of scripture and its fulfillment before all of this.
- Many believe in him due to his works - but “he does not trust himself to them” - because he knew human nature. What’s this about? What does he know of human nature that is at play here?

FIRST READING:

- The delivery of the 10 Commandments
- God first announces who God is - statement of the authority to give the commandments
 - God is the savior, so in Jesus, God gives commandments due to the authority possessed as God, Jesus does what he does due to the same authority ... because HE IS GOD. Therefore he can later expand and interpret the commandments (telling them how they didn’t get it right).
- The commandments relating to duties to neighbor are more palatable to us ... why ... the laws uphold some of them (in their own way), but downplay the first three (maybe this too is Human nature). We seem of follow suit - but God first establishes sovereignty and then commands those things due God first.
- What are the commandments for? How does giving them relate to the mission of Jesus? How are they also a means of salvation?

SECOND READING:

- Our human tendency is to demand proof and for things to make sense to us.
- The cross doesn’t quite make sense
 - But Paul says it expresses the wisdom of God. Which is accessible to all.
- This supposed foolishness is grater than human wisdom, and stronger than human strength.

—Closing Prayer

GOSPEL:

* [2:13–22] This episode indicates the post-resurrectional replacement of the temple by the person of Jesus.

* [2:13] Passover: this is the first Passover mentioned in John; a second is mentioned in Jn 6:4; a third in Jn 13:1. Taken literally, they point to a ministry of at least two years.

* [2:14–22] The other gospels place the cleansing of the temple in the last days of Jesus' life (Matthew, on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem; Mark, on the next day). The order of events in the gospel narratives is often determined by theological motives rather than by chronological data.

* [2:14] Oxen, sheep, and doves: intended for sacrifice. The doves were the offerings of the poor (Lv 5:7). Money-changers: for a temple tax paid by every male Jew more than nineteen years of age, with a half-shekel coin (Ex 30:11–16), in Syrian currency. See note on Mt 17:24.

* [2:17] Ps 69:10, changed to future tense to apply to Jesus.

* [2:19] This saying about the destruction of the temple occurs in various forms (Mt 24:2; 27:40; Mk 13:2; 15:29; Lk 21:6; cf. Acts 6:14). Mt 26:61 has: "I can destroy the temple of God..."; see note there. In Mk 14:58, there is a metaphorical contrast with a new temple: "I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." Here it is symbolic of Jesus' resurrection and the resulting community (see Jn 2:21 and Rev 21:2). In three days: an Old Testament expression for a short, indefinite period of time; cf. Hos 6:2.

* [2:20] Forty-six years: based on references in Josephus (Jewish Wars 1, 21, 1 #401; Antiquities 15, 11, 1 #380), possibly the spring of A.D. 28. Cf. note on Lk 3:1.

FIRST:

* [20:1–17] The precise numbering and division of these precepts into "ten commandments" is somewhat uncertain. Traditionally among Catholics and Lutherans vv. 1–6 are considered as only one commandment, and v. 17 as two. The Anglican, Greek Orthodox, and Reformed churches count vv. 1–6 as two, and v. 17 as one. Cf. Dt 5:6–21. The traditional designation as "ten" is not found here but in 34:28 (and also Dt 4:13 and 10:4), where these precepts are alluded to literally as "the ten words." That they were originally written on two tablets appears in Ex 32:15–16; 34:28–29; Dt 4:13; 10:2–4.

The present form of the commands is a product of a long development, as is clear from the fact that the individual precepts vary considerably in length

and from the slightly different formulation of Dt 5:6–21 (see especially vv. 12–15 and 21). Indeed they represent a mature formulation of a traditional morality. Why this specific selection of commands should be set apart is not entirely clear. None of them is unique in the Old Testament and all of the laws which follow are also from God and equally binding on the Israelites. Even so, this collection represents a privileged expression of God’s moral demands on Israel and is here set apart from the others as a direct, unmediated communication of God to the Israelites and the basis of the covenant being concluded on Sinai.

* [20:3] *Beside me*: this commandment is traditionally understood as an outright denial of the existence of other gods except the God of Israel; however, in the context of the more general prohibitions in vv. 4–5, v. 3 is, more precisely, God’s demand for Israel’s exclusive worship and allegiance. The Hebrew phrase underlying the translation “beside me” is, nonetheless, problematic and has been variously translated, e.g., “except me,” “in addition to me,” “in preference to me,” “in defiance of me,” and “in front of me” or “before my face.” The latter translation, with its concrete, spatial nuances, has suggested to some that the prohibition once sought to exclude from the Lord’s sanctuary the cult images or idols of other gods, such as the asherah, or stylized sacred tree of life, associated with the Canaanite goddess Asherah (34:13). Over the course of time, as vv. 4–5 suggest, the original scope of v. 3 was expanded.

* [20:4] *Or a likeness of anything*: compare this formulation to that found in Dt 5:8, which understands this phrase and the following phrases as specifications of the prohibited idol (Hebrew *pesel*), which usually refers to an image that is carved or hewn rather than cast.

* [20:5] *Jealous: demanding exclusive allegiance. Inflicting punishment...the third and fourth generation*: the intended emphasis is on God’s mercy by the contrast between punishment and mercy (“to the thousandth generation”—v. 6). Other Old Testament texts repudiate the idea of punishment devolving on later generations (cf. Dt 24:16; Jer 31:29–30; Ez 18:2–4). Yet it is known that later generations may suffer the punishing effects of sins of earlier generations, but not the guilt.

* [20:7] *In vain*: i.e., to no good purpose, a general framing of the prohibition which includes swearing falsely, especially in the context of a legal proceeding, but also goes beyond it (cf. Lv 24:16; Prv 30:8–9).

* [20:8] *Keep it holy*: i.e., to set it apart from the other days of the week, in part, as the following verse explains, by not doing work that is ordinarily done in the course of a week. The special importance of this command can be

seen in the fact that, together with vv. 9–11, it represents the longest of the Decalogue's precepts.

* [20:11] Here, in a formulation which reflects Priestly theology, the veneration of the sabbath is grounded in God's own hallowing of the sabbath in creation. Compare 31:13; Dt 5:15.

* [20:12–17] The Decalogue falls into two parts: the preceding precepts refer to God, the following refer primarily to one's fellow Israelites.

* [20:13] Kill: as frequent instances of killing in the context of war or certain crimes (see vv. 12–18) demonstrate in the Old Testament, not all killing comes within the scope of the commandment. For this reason, the Hebrew verb translated here as "kill" is often understood as "murder," although it is in fact used in the Old Testament at times for unintentional acts of killing (e.g., Dt 4:41; Jos 20:3) and for legally sanctioned killing (Nm 35:30). The term may originally have designated any killing of another Israelite, including acts of manslaughter, for which the victim's kin could exact vengeance. In the present context, it denotes the killing of one Israelite by another, motivated by hatred or the like (Nm 35:20; cf. Hos 6:9).

SECOND:

* [1:21–25] True wisdom and power are to be found paradoxically where one would least expect them, in the place of their apparent negation. To human eyes the crucified Christ symbolizes impotence and absurdity.