

This is now the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Times (for Catholics). Ordinary Times simply means it is not part of ADVENT-XMAS or of LENT-EASTER.

Isaiah continues to be emphasized. Isaiah adds to the prophets who said that Yahweh is God not just for JEWS, His Chosen People, but for all GENTES. [*Gentes* (Latin) = Tribes or Nations. *Gentes* gives us the English word: *Gentiles*, which means the other tribes or Nations, besides us Jews.] So Yahweh is the God of ALL.

Isaiah is “quoted” often in the New Testament. He was so popular at the Time of Xt, because Isaiah talks about the Coming Messiah—which every Jew was waiting for, expecting SOON. Notice the following NT references to Isaiah which have Isaiah’s UNIVERSAL message.

[In LUKE 2, Simeon, an old man who stayed in the Temple, said: 29 “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation { =your saving action}, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” Coming Feb. 2!]

In the Acts of the Apostles: Paul and Barnabas said: v 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.’” Pretty clear, isn’t it?

The Psalm focuses on what God wants from us: NO pretending! “**Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not**”; this idea is repeated again and again, by Amos and Hosea in particular. {\$ in the collection won’t do it.} Instead: “**to do your will, O my God, is my delight**”, a good servant is intent on doing one thing only—pleasing his LORD.

CORINTHIANS Paul went to Corinth, the largest city of Roman Greece, a corrupt place. That would be like starting to be a missionary in Las Vegas or Amsterdam—SinCities of the World! Paul says to the Corinthians: YOU Greeks, and anyone **who accepts XT**, can be, can *become* God’s Children. That means HE is Father for you Greeks too.

John said the same idea in his Gospel: (Jn 1:14) [which was read at Xmas, if you remember]
...to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God.

GOSPEL This time John the Evangelist (also Jesus’ relative), in HIS Gospel, shows the Baptist ‘rinsing’ people in the Jordan. The Baptist’s followers would have seen it as a kind of MITZVAH—“washing in the raw with NATURE”—close to GOD. So why does the Baptist need to ‘rinse’ XT in the Jordan? The Baptist is preparing his cousin Jesus to become a fitting NEW CREATION. Jews washed themselves in the Mitzvah so they were clean before meeting God in the Temple. The GOD-made-MAN, the NEW TENT & TABERNACLE of God being Present with His People—**IS** the person of **XT**. [Yes, the Incarnation! Has set up a new “place” for Yahweh to be present for us. **XT IS the Temple of God.**] And we have present—AGAIN—the TRINITY! [Incarnation and Trinity] The **TWO great Mysteries** of our faith together.

When I taught NT, I would always say to my students: It is surprising that these JEWS, Apostles and Paul, who emphasized the ONENESS of God, could so soon come to realize and express the THREE-NESS of God as TRINITY. [But as I also said it still took 300+ years to figure out how to ‘express’ or ‘explain’ exactly how the TRINITY was **Three in One.**]

Behold, the *Lamb of God. . .

- 1 The Lamb pictured in Revelation, risen, who has save us? Washed us WHITE in his BLOOD?
- 2 The Lamb of Exodus, whose BLOOD saved the Israelites?
- 3 The Suffering Servant mentioned in Isaiah who is led *like a LAMB* to be slaughtered?

Remember the Worship of the Jews in the temple involved the ritual sacrifice of a LAMB! This recalls also the LAMB which Abraham substituted as he was going to sacrifice Isaac, **His ONLY Son**. And the **Lamb of Exodus**. Get it? John packs so much into his Gospel.

Again Isaiah and the Psalm tell us what **signs** to look for in the soon-to-come MESSIAH-XT. Messiah is the Hebrew word; Christus, Latin: XRISTOS/ **Χρῖστος** in Greek. Remember all the Signs told the people that the Messiah WAS coming soon. There was a fever of expectation. Remember all Signs told the people that the Messiah WAS coming soon. There was a fever of expectation. Isaiah was on everyone's mind and lips. This is shown in the Qumran Scrolls.

In Paul's letter to the people of Corinth, largest city in Greece, we have one of the oldest formulations of the divinity of XT; He is GOD equal to the Father. And remember Paul was a Rabbi. God is ONE and so Other to us His creatures, for a Jew. God is so utterly different from us humans. Can Jesus really be both God and Man? How quickly Paul changed! It took getting knocked off his horse and then two years with the Apostles in Antioch.

In the Gospel today we see, John the Evangelist's account of John Baptizing Jesus. I said before that this scene is told in all four Gospels. And not only is Jesus God, but the whole TRINITY is present. Again.

John the Evangelist, Jesus' cousin, always notes that he is an "eye witness" with these words: "*I have seen and testify.*" Or he usually adds ". . . the one who says this has seen and his testimony is true." If he refers to himself he says: *The one Jesus loved!* Why? **Johannes** means: *one who loves Jahweh* or *One loved by Jahweh*. [I used **J** for Jahweh to show the connection with **Johannes**]

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So John was there, he is not just repeating a tradition about Jesus which people passed down. He is a witness. *TESTIS* in Latin, *martyras/ Μάρτυρας* in Greek. *Testify* and *Martyr*, English words. What better *testimony*, than to be a *martyr*?

Our lesson is: The Jews had the job of bringing the LIGHT of Yahweh to the World, of being a light to the Gentiles; now it is our turn—yours and mine—to spread the Good-news, the *Godspel*, to the Pagans of the world. Is there still a need today? Are there still people today who 'worship false Gods'?