

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

The Third Sunday in Lent (C)

Exodus 3.1-15

Psalm 63.1-8

1 Corinthians 10.1-13

Luke 13.1-9

Exodus 3.1-15

- 1) The story of the call of Moses comes after chs.1 & 2, in which Pharaoh behaved toward the Hebrews as if he were a god.
 - a) He has tried to annul to promise of posterity (Gen. 15.5) by imposing harsh labor, and ordering the killing of first-born males. He has tried to annul the promise of land.
 - i) God now acts to fulfill His promises.
- 2) God appears to Moses on the mountain of God, here called Horeb, and elsewhere called Mt. Sinai.
 - a) God appears as a burning bush (“*sēneh*”), which is a play on “Sinai”.
- 3) Moses asks who it is that sends him, and receives the response, “I AM WHO I AM.”
 - a) This follows self identifications by God as I AM, in v. 6.
 - b) The Name given by God is His Holy Name rendered in the first person.
 - i) The Hebrew word transliterated as YHWH (never pronounced by a devout Jew) is rendered most often in the Bible as “the LORD” (all capitals).
 - (1) This Name is a “qal imperfect” Hebrew *verb*, which implies ongoing action beginning in the past: “I was; I am; I will be.”
 - (a) The name “Jehovah” in *not* a version of YHWH.
 - (i) “Jehovah” is a sixteenth century construction, first made in Germany, which uses the consonants from YHWH (this four letter Name is known as the “tetragrammaton”) and the vowels from the Hebrew word for “lord” (*adonai*).
 - (2) *Compare* other self-disclosures: Exod. 33.19; *cf.* Ezek. 12.25a: “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”
 - c) Jesus quotes Exodus 3.6 at Mark 12.26. God is the God of the living as the God of “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.
 - i) The verbal nature of the Name is here emphasized by Jesus.
 - 4) Uniquely, Moses is told that the sign of God’s identity will come *after* his miracles. Moses and the Israelites will worship God on the holy mountain.
 - a) Speaking properly, while in Egypt the people are called “Hebrews;” “Israelites” in the wilderness; and “Jews” only after settlement.

Psalm 63.1-8

- 1) Classified as a psalm of trust, but with obscure elements. The parallel elements in vv. 3-5 of lips responding to God indicates a formal prayer.
- 2) The Israelites prized life above anything else. Thus, the v. 3 reference to God’s love being better than life itself, is both powerful and unique in the Old Testament.
- 3) This insight foreshadows the understanding of God’s love being extended beyond death (*cf.* Rom. 8.38-39).

1 Corinthians 10.1-13

- 1) Paul uses the Old Testament to warn the Corinthians of the dangers they face in over-confidence.
 - a) He establishes parallels between the Corinthians and the Israelites in the wilderness.
- 2) Paul is using the technique of “typology”.
 - a) The term “type” (from the Greek *typoi*, “examples” or “figures”) refers to a foreshadowing of the Christian dispensation in the persons and events of the Old Testament. Just as Jesus Himself could refer to Jonah as the symbol of His resurrection (Mt. 12.39-40; 16.4; Lk. 11.32), so St. Paul found in the Israelites crossing the Red Sea the “type” of baptism (1 Cor. 10.1-6), and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews found a type of Christ in Melchizedek (Heb. 7).
 - i) However, a type is not allegory, for the historical significance of the person or event is not lost sight of.
- 3) Note that Paul refers to Christ in the past tense, in Old Testament times.
 - a) Jesus was, of course, pre-existing as the Son (John 1.1). But He was not *incarnated* as the Christ (the Messiah) until He became flesh by the Virgin Mary.
 - i) To refer to Christ in the past tense, then, is an example of Paul both referring to the type (here, the rock) as a past, historical thing, and of the verbal self-disclosure of the Godhead: “I was; I am; I will be.”
 - (1) God is outside of time.
- 4) Paul warns in v. 12 not to be overconfident. God will always grant strength to overcome, but only to those who acknowledge who He is. This is demonstrated by action.
 - a) The vv. 7-8 connection between idolatry, eating and drinking, and play is complex.
 - i) Eating and drinking refers to the fact that some Corinthians, while not offering sacrifice to pagan gods, did participate in cult meals (8.10; 10.14-22)
 - ii) “play” here derives from an underlying Hebrew verb which refers to sexual immorality.
 - iii) An idol is *anything* less than God to which the honor and worship which are God’s due are paid. This includes self-indulgence.

Luke 13.1-9

- 1) This passage is unique to Luke, and emphasizes the need for all to repent.
 - a) Jesus is certainly compassionate, but not willing to let “anything go”. He demands that sinners repent before it is too late.
 - b) His dual injunction to repent (vv. 3 & 5) form the basis for the later question (13.23) of whom may be saved.
- 2) The incident of Pilate mingling the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices is not otherwise attested.
 - a) The Galileans, and those whom the tower fell on, were not prepared for death and judgment, which occurred independent from their sins.
 - b) Jesus emphasizes the need to repent and be ready for judgment.
- 3) The fig tree is a parable both of compassion (it will be tended) and of *crisis*.
 - a) If it does not bear fruit, “you can cut it down.”