

Isaiah Bible Study

Introduction

The Eunuch and Saint Philip

Acts of the Apostles 8:26-38

But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert road. And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless some one guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this: “As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth.” And the eunuch said to Philip, “Please, about who does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news of Jesus. And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Using the Old Testament to Unveil the New Testament

Luke 24:25-27

“O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on Joshua*, 9.8

Jesus reads the law to us when he reveals the mysteries of the law. For we who belong to the Catholic Church do not reject the Law of Moses, we embrace it, on the condition that Jesus read it to us. For we are not able to understand the law rightly if Jesus does not read it to us, for when he reads it to us we grasp his mind and meaning.

Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 3, 6

Indeed, everything that we read in the holy scriptures that was written before the coming of the Lord was written for the sole purpose of drawing attention to [Christ's] coming and of prefiguring the future Church.

Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 7, 11

Once the historical exposition is concluded, we should deeply impress upon our hearer the hope in the resurrection...

Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca noe morali*, 2.7

All of Divine Scripture is one book, and that one book is Christ, because all of Divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all of Divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ.

Frank Sheed, *Theology for Beginners*

The reading of this, and indeed of all theological books, should be accompanied by the reading of Scripture. Without [Scripture], it is possible to obtain accurate knowledge of the truths of revelation, but Scripture has a wonderful power of making the truths come alive in the soul; it is possible for a man to possess the truth, while yet the truth does not possess him.”

Humility and Actions

Ephesians 4:45

...tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine

Saint Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah-Prologue*

I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: *Search the Scriptures, and Seek and you shall find*. Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: *You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God*. For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then **ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ**.

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom should I send, and who will go to this people?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

Isaiah 6:5-7

“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.”

Blessing at the Chair before the Priest

May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well.

Priest Praying before the Gospel

Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.

Prophets

Deuteronomy 13:1-3

“If a prophet arises among you...and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet.”

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

“And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ - when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken.”

Conclusion

Frank Sheed, *Theology for Beginners*

I cannot say how often I have been told that some old Irishman saying his rosary is holier than I am, with all my study. I daresay he is. For his own sake, I hope he is. But if the only evidence is that he knows less theology than I, then it is evidence that would convince neither him nor me...because while it is obvious that an ignorant man can be virtuous, it is equally obvious that ignorance is not a virtue; men have been martyred who could not have stated a doctrine of the Church correctly, and martyrdom is the supreme proof of love. Yet with more knowledge of God they would have loved him more still.

Knowledge serves love...It serves love in one way by removing misunderstandings which are in the way of love, which at the best blunt love's edge a little...because each new thing learned and meditated about God is a new reason for loving him.

A Catholic might still feel that all this was convincing enough, but that none of it was for him all the same. The Church does not command him to go deep into theology; if his soul is not getting all the food it might, it suffers no hunger pangs; the half-dark seems pretty light to him; he knows he loves God; and anyhow it is his own business.

Now in so far as a Catholic is satisfied with what he is getting, there is no more to be said. It *is* his business; at least it's not mine. But life is not only getting; it must be giving as well, and a Catholic can hardly be so easily satisfied, or satisfied at all, with what he is giving. The most obvious fact of our day is that we are surrounded by millions who are starved of food that Christ Our Lord wanted them to have – they are getting too small a ration of truth, and of the Eucharist no ration at all. We regret their starvation, of course, but we do not lose any sleep over it, which raises the question of whether we really appreciate the food we ourselves get from the Church. We should not take it so calmly if their starvation were bodily, for we do know the value of the bread that perishes.

If spiritual starvation is to be relieved, it must be largely the work of the laity, who are in daily contact with starvation's victims. We must come to an understanding of the great dogmas, so that we know them in themselves and in their power to nourish; we must bend every effort to mastering their utterance. Only thus can we relieve the starvation that now lies all about us. Once we see it, we see that we must set about it – primarily and overwhelmingly for the sake of these others, since it is intolerable that men should be perishing for want of truth that we could bring them.