

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Cycle C RCL

Acts 16:9-15

After chapter 15, the language of Acts smooths out from its sometimes awkward Greek that imitated the language of the Septuagint. Semitisms—structures in Greek that remind us more of Hebrew or Aramaic than of Greek—come to be confined to actual quotations of the Septuagint from Acts 16:1 until the end of the book. C. C. Torrey in 1936 proposed that Luke translated an Aramaic document for his readers. Others have held that Acts 1-15 imitate the Septuagint to lend an air of sanctity to it by making it read like the Septuagint. Acts 16:10-17 is the first of four “we” passages in which the narration shifts from the third person singular to the first person plural. See Acts 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16 for the others. The “we” sections have been variously explained as first-person accounts of events experienced by the author of Acts in the company of Paul; the inclusion of a travel diary from some other companion of Paul; or a stylistic device. Interpreting his vision of the Macedonian as a call to go to Europe instead of to northern Turkey (Acts 16:9-10), Paul and his company travel by boat to Macedonia. The almost immediate baptism of Lydia in Philippi shows the rightness of Paul's interpretation.

Psalm 67

This *hymn* contains in verses 1-3 a reflection of the ancient benediction of Aaron (Numbers 6:26). Verse 6 suggests that the occasion for the hymn is a thanksgiving liturgy at the time of harvest..

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

The most remarkable thing about the heavenly Jerusalem is that it has no temple (21:22). The reason for this is that God will no longer need to hide within the confines of the Holy of Holies. In the new Jerusalem the saints will be able to stand the sight of God's face unveiled, and both the temple and its cultus will be unnecessary. The rest of the description of the holy city is an idealization based on hints from Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14.

John 14:23-29

In 1 John 2:1 Christ himself is the Advocate (Greek: *parakletos*), but in the Gospel it is the Holy Spirit who acts for Christ to teach his students after he has departed from them (14:26). The disciples will continue in their relationship to Jesus even after he leaves them physically. They will continue in his love and commandments (14:23) and will continue to receive instruction from him through the Spirit (14:26). The suggestion in verse 31 that the party should now leave the supper room is contradicted by the new discourse in chapter 15. The hand of the editor rests heavily upon this juncture.

or

John 5:1-9

Woops! What happened to verse 4? Those of us raised on the King James' Version remember that an angel was supposed to come down from time to time and stir up the waters of the pool, and the first person into the pool then got the prize of complete healing. To read this verse in English now requires eyesight good enough to read the fine print in the RSV or NRSV at the bottom of the page that tells us that some manuscripts include in whole or in part what the KJV called verse 4. The textual tradition also calls the pool in question Bethzatha or Bethesda or Bethsaida. All of the names are referring to the “sheep pools” north of the temple in the Beth Zetha Valley now on the grounds of St. Anne's church. Jesus' command to the paralyzed man in verse 8 is similar in Greek wording to the command in Mark 2:9, 11 and is part of the modern debate over whether the author of John knew the Synoptic Gospels. In context, however, the story picks up the major Johannine theme that Jesus is the “word become flesh” (John 1:14), able to heal the paralytic with a word only and quite without the aid of the “Amazing Race” to the pool.

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