

Night IV: December 4, 2009
Hermeneutics and Biblical Interpretation
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VIII. Christ's sonship remains the Heart of the Hermeneutic of faith and essentially all of Christology. The one overarching truth of the gospel is Christ's communion with his Father. All of his words and deeds flowed directly from the result of his constant communication with his Father. God was his "agent, realtor, financial advisor, consultant, etc..." his "withdrawal" to dialogue with his father was constant.

1. Only by participating in what was most personal to Christ do we achieve the proper axiom of interpretation to all things concerning Christianity. Christian personalism is participating in the prayer of Christ. This is the point where man gains insight, an unyielding penetration into Truth.
 - a. The word "Abba" has more power in it than any one political regime, sword, or dollar. We still talk about the men who have used that word than any other word!
 - b. Death and what matters most. Christ was praying a prayer of sonship. Like a child he was crying out to be heard...Ps.22.
2. The meaning of all Christian hermeneutics rests on the nature of the word Christian. Just as understanding mathematics means you stick with math, medicine sticks with medicine, religion with religion. To remove divinity from Christ is to remove Christ all together.
 - a. A sound hermeneutic respects the humanity of Christ and the time from which he lived but goes beyond it to understand the language of the Spirit...Tradition.
 - b. The hermeneutic of faith needs reason just as reason needs faith. The divine needs the human side, just as the human side needs the divine...to fully understand Christ.
3. **Go to Thesis 7 of your read from Benedict for historical summary of where it all went wrong...outside of a proper hermeneutic we are left with a disfigured portrait of Christ.**

IX. The Mystery of Jesus: Pope Benedict offers a reflection where he focuses in on Christ as a new Moses in light of the prophecy of Deut.34:10. Christ is able to achieve what every other great patriarch could not because of his sonship! Christ just does not fulfill—he transforms through the power of his sonship!

1. Genesis and the call to worship. Why does God create in 6 days what he could have created in a moment? Along with that, why does the 7th day constitute a commandment? We are so busy asking how long as opposed to why!
 - A. God creates man as the crown of creation and creates the 7th day as the climax of creation... "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (Hb. menuha, meaning "silence, holy") (Gen.2:3). This would be the only time holy is seen in Genesis.
 1. God gives us a pattern to follow. Labor for 6 days to rest on the seventh (God needing a siesta from sweating-no). God rests not for his sake, but for ours. Our work must be ordered to worship! He offers us liturgy to understand labor. He calls us to worship that we might understand work. In the words of John Paul II. "In our work we do not make more we become more."
 - B. God has forged a relationship not with Creator to creature but with Father to son. We are to busy bringing our work into prayer as opposed to our prayer into work!
2. The Place of Liturgy in Reality: Understanding the roots of Exodus. Israel departs from Egypt and slavery not to be like all the other people, but to venture into the unknown Sinai, to be at the service of God...not just the conquest of land.
 - A. The land is given to the people as a place for worship of the one true God. Mere national autonomy and possession of land would reduce Israel to the status quo of every other nation. In this vein of thinking, there is nothing distinct about the call of Israel to be his "chosen people." Exodus must be interpreted in light of the call to worship.
 1. Worship: Abodaw (Hb.): meaning "slavery; servitude". What

took place in Egypt was called out on Sinai...from slavery to slavery? Yes, to man, degradation, to God, glorification!

a. Note that this Hebrew word can also mean to “till”, “ministry”, “rite”. This speaks to the Israelites as a people that belong to God in and through the ministry of the priesthood.

2. Land becomes only a true good if it is a place where “God reigns” with man entering into the practice of liturgy and worship.

Ultimately, the land given to the people of God must also be an oasis of obedience and adherence to God’s will.

a. In turn, worship only becomes authentic worship when we live righteously and we gaze heavenward looking up to seek definitive Truth. Cult and worship exists for this very reason, that we might “*communicate this vision and to give life in such a way that glory is given to God*”- PBXVI.

B. The covenant at Sinai gives form to three distinct aspects that are intertwined: worship, law and ethics. Sinai was not a “pit stop for refreshment” in their wanderings in the desert, as much as it was declaration of law and rule for righteous living, offering Israel its ethic, the interior dimension of the covenant that constitutes them that they belong to God.

1. “*The foundation of existence in the Promised Land must be the necessary condition for life in community and freedom. It is this: steadfast adherence to the law of God, which orders human affairs rightly, that is, by organizing them as realities that come from God and are meant to return to God.*”--PBXVI

a. What does this interconnection mean, essentially that cult goes beyond just rite into the way to rightly practice our faith. Cult defines every aspect of our life and that it is here where we can appreciate anew the words of JP II: “*The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith*”...worship of God who is relationship orders all other relationships.

1. “*Worship offers us a share in heavens mode of existence...and it contains the character of anticipation...giving the present proper measure*”—PBXVI

2. God initiates all revelation and unveiling. Revelation of God must come from God. Pope Benedict XVI offers us a most notable reflection to ponder. “*Man himself cannot simply make worship. If God does not reveal himself, man is clutching empty space.*” This leads one to wonder about man’s innate need for worship.

a. Consider the worship of the Golden Calf and how it illustrates man’s need to bring the invisible into the visible, unseen into the seen. The Golden calf is self-generated worship, not one revealed by God. It is the slippery slope of man’s need to worship outside of authentic faith.

1. The 12 Tribes of Israel created an alternative world, one manufactured from one’s own resources (PBXVI). Again, this demands our attentiveness to adherence to the gift of freedom as it relates to law, ethics, and the proper ordering of our worship.

2. Consult word of the week on **freedom**.

3. Christ as logos is more than just an impersonal force, but relationship. Moses is synonymous with the law, but this was exterior. With Christ, there is a new law...and this dimension is interior. Moses was unable to see the face of God, but only his back (cf. Ex.33:23).

A. The promise of a “prophet like me” from Deuteronomy was deep within the consciousness of the Israelite, the greater expectation is that they would receive what Moses could not give: a vision of the face of God.

1. What was fulfilled in Jesus was only seen in a fragmented way in Moses. Not just a prophet, but a prophet, priest, and king. Not just a friend, but a Son.

4. The portrait of Christ in the New Testament is a portrait of a Son: Christ is in constant dialogue with his father to gather himself and to gain insight into his Father's way. Consult word of the week *withdrew*.

A. The mystery of the Son is the fact that he reveals the love of the Father—the crucifix!!! Hence, the disciple that prays as Christ prays walks in communion with God.

X. The Baptism of Jesus (This solemnity falls on January 10). The Kingdom of God is at hand...so repent and believe the good news. The kingdom of David is being established as a living organic structure, and has at its foundation the chief sacrament of Baptism.

1. Historical situation: Tiberius Caesar succeeded Augustus as emperor in A.D. 14 and reigned until A.D. 37. The 15th year of his reign would have fallen between A.D. 27 and 29. Pontius Pilate was prefect of Judea from A.D. 26 until 36. The Jewish historian Josephus describes him as a greedy and ruthless prefect who had little regard for the local Jewish population and their religious practices (Luke 13:1). The Herod who is mentioned is Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great who ruled over Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.

A. Luke not only situates the call of John the Baptist in terms of the civil rulers of that period, but he also mentions the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the religious leadership of Palestine. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6-15. After being deposed by the Romans in A.D. 15, he was succeeded by various members of his family and eventually by his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was high priest from A.D. 18-36.

1. Against the backdrop of this sweeping history, the word of God came to John in the Judean desert. Luke is alone among the New Testament writers in associating the preaching of John with a call from God. The evangelist thereby identifies John with the prophets whose ministries began with similar calls.

Later on, Luke separates the ministry of John the Baptist from that of Jesus by reporting the imprisonment of John before the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21-22).

2. Luke uses this literary device to serve his understanding of the periods of salvation history. With John the Baptist, the time of promise, the period of Israel, comes to an end; with the baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit upon him, the time of fulfillment, the period of Jesus, begins.

2. John's Baptism was a Baptism of repentance. See word of the week on *repentance*. John's whole mission is tied to the mysterious other, a personage he does not know, yet immediately recognizes.

A. John the Baptist is a figure that teaches us the crowning expression of detachment and austerity: "May he increase as I decrease".

3. The Baptism of Jesus: Jesus wants to be baptized to blend into the gray mass of sinners (water was just not seen as symbolic of life, but also death—Flood...the paradox of the Christian life).

Consult word of the week on *righteousness*.

A. Righteousness was always understood as an unrestricted yes to God's will. The acceptance of the whole of God's will, an obedient yes to God's hand in your life.

1. Christ inaugurates his public ministry with this event, an event that is tied to the cross.

B. Recall that Christ was announced to the world as the lamb of God (Jn.1;19; 36). The Lamb of God was the sacrificial centerpiece to the Passover, which lies at the heart of new life. John, with one sweeping stroke, ties together the mission of the Lamb of God to be slaughtered with that of Baptism.

1. Just as the lamb had his blood spilled for the liberation of the people of Israel, so Christ has his blood spilled for the sake of the new Israel...water and blood came from the side of Christ.

C. The Trinity emerges for the first time here to communicate the reality of the inheritance we claim as sharing in the life of the Trinity. Transformation in the desert takes place when we claim this inheritance and begin to reshape ourselves and in turn humanity by a grace filled life.