

TEACHER, DO YOU NOT CARE THAT WE ARE PERISHING?

The Vulgate's smoother words read: "Glory [belongs] to God among the most high and peace among men of good will on earth".

Again, in the Lord's Prayer, the Old Latin says, *quotidianum panem*, "daily bread", a phrase that still colors English and Latin versions of the prayer. In the Vulgate it became *supersubstantialem panem*, "super-substantial bread".

Finding our Way with Chapter and Verse

There was one last great Bible problem to address: How can a person find a desired passage in a book with hundreds of pages? The Hebrew Bible has pause marks resembling colons inserted into the text. The Hebrew reader there stopped his chanting. Another then read from Aramaic *targums* (interpretations) that usually explained the meaning of the dead Hebrew language. Around 1227 Archbishop Stephen Langdon, took a tack from these Hebrew pauses ² and inserted chapter divisions into the Bible. His system, often arbitrary in its chapters and admittedly imperfect, is still in use. Then, in 1551 Robert Stephanus, a Parisian book printer, followed a suggestion first made by his son: While riding a horse from Paris to Lyons he versified the Bible. His verses have prevailed to the present despite the fact that there is no consistent method at work in his system. The verses sometimes coincide with a single sentence and sometimes they include several sentences; sometimes a single sentence is divided into two verses. The result is that the reader is led to consider the second verse while forgetting the point of view of the first verse. Especially objectionable is the way in which words introducing a direct quotation sometimes belong to the preceding verse and sometimes to the verse in which the quotation is found. ³ Despite all these difficulties Stephanus' versification of the entire Bible found its way into the first versified English Bible, the *Geneva*, in 1660. In 1665 Theodor Beza used Stephanus' verse and chapter divisions in his edition of the New Testament, the *textus receptus* (a scholarly edition of the Greek Bible) Stephanus' system had entered the Hebrew Bible even earlier, in 1571.

Please prepare Saint Mark 5:21-43 for next Sunday.

² Langdon had been a professor at the University of Paris and later the very effective and scholarly Archbishop of Canterbury.

³ There is a humorous legend that Stephanus numbered a new chapter every time his horse stumbled!

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



The Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Genneseret, Lake Kinneret or Lake Tiberias, is the Holy Land's largest freshwater lake, being approximately 53

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km (33 miles) in circumference, about 21 km (13 miles) long, and 13 km (8 miles) wide. The lake has a total area of 166 km², and a maximum depth of approximately 43 m. At 209 meters below sea level, it is the lowest freshwater lake on Earth and the second-lowest lake in the world (after the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake nearly 31% salt). The Dead Sea receives the water of the Kinneret via the continuation of the Jordan River.

The Kinneret is set deep in the Jordan Great Rift Valley, the valley caused by the separation of the African and Arabian Tectonic Plates. The area is subject to earthquakes and, in the past, volcanic activity which is evidenced by the abundant basalt and other igneous rocks that define the geology of the Galilee region. The lake is partly fed by underground springs but its main source is the Jordan River that flows through it from north to south.

Today's Gospel Saint Mark 4:35 - 41 [Year B, Proper 7]

✠ WHEN EVENING HAD COME, JESUS SAID TO THE DISCIPLES, "LET US GO across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. **But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"** He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" [© NRSV]

Windstorms on the Lake

But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

Anyone who's spent any time by any our five great lakes knows well how the weather seems to come out of nowhere. A calm day can give way to a storm in a matter of minutes. Lake Michigan has hundreds of wrecks, Superior holds even more. Ships founder and sailors die.

So too with the Sea of Galilee. We have several Biblical accounts of Galilean storms whose deadly waves Christ walked

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over and whose winds and waves he calmed.

Today we get a vignette of actual sailor life. The fixed tiller as we know it, and its successor, the helmsman's wheel, are yet to be invented. The helmsman held a large steering oar, and, so that he could see his way, he was stationed on a raised up cushion in the stern. (Perhaps this cushion might be the remote ancestor of the ship's bridge.) Jesus has decided to have a nap. His head is on the cushion.

There is a symbol here: The true man of God was supposed to be calm and trusting in the Father no matter what the circumstance. The Apostles are like us. They are filled with fear and judgmental in their cries to the Master. Jesus is the true man of God. He is calm, even asleep, trusting in the Father in the midst of danger.

Bible History, Chapter and Verse

Last of three articles. (The Entire Series will be repeated in August)

Synopsis: The New Testament was written in Greek. Most early Christians spoke and worshiped in that language. When Latin became the more prominent language Latin Bibles were needed. There was no consistent Latin translation. The many versions of the *Vetus Latina* [Old Latin] Bible disagreed wildly. In 382 Pope Damasius ordered his former secretary, St. Jerome, to make a uniform translation, *The Vulgate*. Jerome worked from the original Greek and Hebrew. The project took nearly 20 years. The Old Latin survived several places in the Latin liturgy, most especially in the psalms recited at Mass and in the Daily Office simply because many people knew the psalms by heart.¹

Here are some familiar words from a typical Old Latin version as compared to same passage in The Vulgate.

Old Latin:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

We sing these words in familiar hymns and see them on our Christmas cards, but in fact they are barbarous Latin and come not from St. Jerome's Vulgate but from an Old Latin text.

And the Translation? Strictly speaking, the barbarous Latin reads: "Glory [belongs] to God among the high, and peace [belongs] to men of good will on earth". On the other hand, St Jerome writes:

Vulgate:

Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax in hominibus bonae voluntatis.

¹ For similar reasons our Prayer Book psalms until 1979 were those from Myles Coverdale's Great Bible of 1539, not those from the 1611 King James Version.