

‘LORD, TO WHOM CAN WE GO? YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

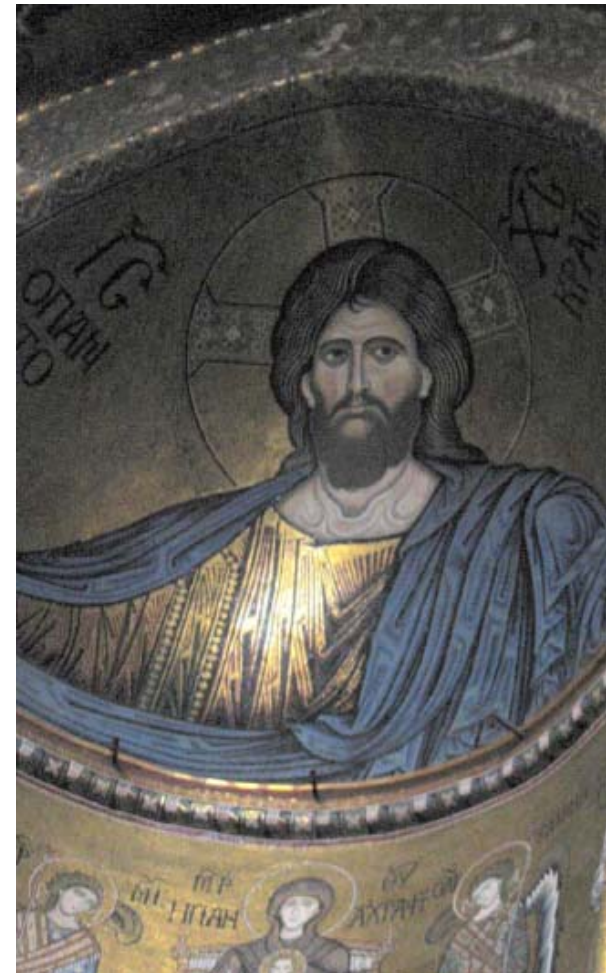
the text. The Hebrew reader there stopped his chanting. Another then read from Aramaic *targums* (interpretations) that usually explained the meaning of the dead Hebrew language. Around 1227 Archbishop Stephen Langdon, took a tack from these Hebrew pauses ² and inserted chapter divisions into the Bible. 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 7:1-8,14-15,21-23 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 verse every time his horse stumbled!

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Christ Pantocrator ("All-powerful.")

Mosaic
Monreale Duomo, Sicily

Arabo-Norman art and architecture reached the pinnacle of its beauty in this cathedral, launched in 1174 by William II. Like the grand Alhambra in Granada, Spain, the Duomo hides behind a relatively drab facade. William issued orders "to spare no expense" as he set about to out razzle-dazzle the glory of Palermo's royal chapel, (a few kilometers North) the *Cappella Palatina*, it being the crowning architectural achievement of his grandfather Roger II. The Monreale Duomo is the last and most stunning of the Norman churches of Sicily and is viewed as one of the architectural wonders of the Middle Ages. Bonanno Pisano, the sculptor and architect

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who created the Leaning Tower of Pisa, designed the cathedral's splendid bronze doors in 1185. He created 46 bas-reliefs of biblical scenes from both the Old and New Testaments. But it is the mosaics that overwhelm the eye. The entire walls and floors of the 100 meter long structure are covered with Biblical mosaics that are said to have taken 150 years to complete.

Christ Pantocrator dominates the middle apse with majestic splendor; this is the most imposing of all such figures in any church on the island. Overall, there are more than 2,000 mosaics here, even more than in St. Mark's in Venice. The mosaic cycle is the second largest on earth, topped only by Istanbul's Hagia Sofia. [Edited from *Frommer's Sicily.*]

Today's Gospel John 6:56-69

✠ JESUS SAID, THOSE WHO EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD ABIDE IN me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so *whoever eats me will live because of me.* This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.' [© NRSV]

Brief Commentary: Who is he?

It would be easy to follow a miracle worker who flaunts his healing powers or a military genius who says he'll expel the hated Romans, but what the Peter and the other disciples follow is a man who promises that *whoever eats me will live because of me.* It is Eucharistic worship that is the defining mark of Christians, the public and private confession that **Jesus is Lord, We make**

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Eucharist Sunday by Sunday to make him present. We believe that he is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Here traditional Biblical Christianity takes its stand.

Bible History, Chapter and Verse

Last of three articles. (The Entire Series was first printed in June)

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.

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

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.