

‘GO; YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL.’

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.

We noted that that the chapter/verse divisions need revision but have never been revised. Today we have reached one of the divisions that continues to color our understanding of Scripture. Here, at what he called the end of the 10th chapter, Archbishop Langdon ended a chapter where the context demands there be no division. In Langdon’s Chapter 10, Jesus and his followers have come down to Jericho³. Going south from Jericho the group would then have literally ascended⁴ to Jerusalem. Because of the chapter break we tend to think of the entry into Jerusalem as coming later with a *different* cheering crowd. If we leave out the chapter break we see the continuing action. Thus:....

The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt...

What we have is a large procession of people who support Jesus. They ascend with Jesus from Jericho to Jerusalem. They become the nucleus of the cheering Jerusalem throng. Spiritually, we join them!

All Saints Day is next Sunday, Please prepare John 11:32-44:

³ Jesus would have crossed the Jordan near the Sea of Galilee and traveled on the *east* bank as pious Jews did on their pilgrimages. The travelers did so to avoid passing through the land of the Samaritans on the *west* bank. The river valley took them 260 meters (853 feet) *below* sea level to a ford across the Jordan near Jericho. The pilgrims crossed the Jordan there and then proceeded the 17 miles ascending 760 meters (2,500 feet) *up* to the mountainous city of Jerusalem

⁴ See note 3

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The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus
From an unidentified Medieval illuminated manuscript

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Today’s Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

✠ THEY CAME TO JERICHO. AS HE AND HIS DISCIPLES AND A LARGE crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you

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well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. [© NRSV]

Mark’s Plateau

St. Mark is about to take us into uncharted territory. We’re at the end of the 10th Chapter. The first verses of the 11th - they were read in Church for the Palm Sunday procession - begin with the search for a donkey and the subsequent ride into Jerusalem. We’ve reached a plateau of Christ’s ministry. The crowd will soon cheer:

	Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!	Blessed is the coming kingdom of our
ancestor David! Hosanna in	the highest heaven!’

A bit later they will cry out,
Let him be crucified!

Although Jesus had told them death and Resurrection was coming the apostles’ reaction to his Crucifixion demonstrates that they did not believe him. Even when the women came with news that he was alive and that *they’d* seen him, the men still didn’t believe. In Luke’s version the apostles treat the women cavalierly, eleven males talking-down to "foolish" women they judge to be hysterical. Luke’s condescending term is “an idle tale.”

St. Luke 24:²⁻¹² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’ Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. **Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.** But Peter got up and ran to the tomb;

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stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Only when they, *the men*, come to the tomb do the Apostles begin to believe.

Today’s Gospel illustrates that even in those last days of his ministry, nearly all were blind to who and what Jesus was and is. Nearly all, that is, except a *blind man*¹, to whom Jesus said: ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’

A Contextual Problem with Scripture

Misleading Divisions

You may remember that earlier this year, in fact, twice, we mentioned the dividing of Scripture into chapters as done by in the 13th century by Stephen Langdon, Archbishop of Cant- erbury and the 16th century further dividing into verses by French printer Robert Stephanus. We wrote:

Around 1227 Archbishop Stephen Langdon, took a tack from these Hebrew pauses² 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. 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

¹ Like Mark, the Gospel of Luke speaks of one blind man; St. Matthew’s, two.

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