

Seventh Sunday of Easter May 13, 2018

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

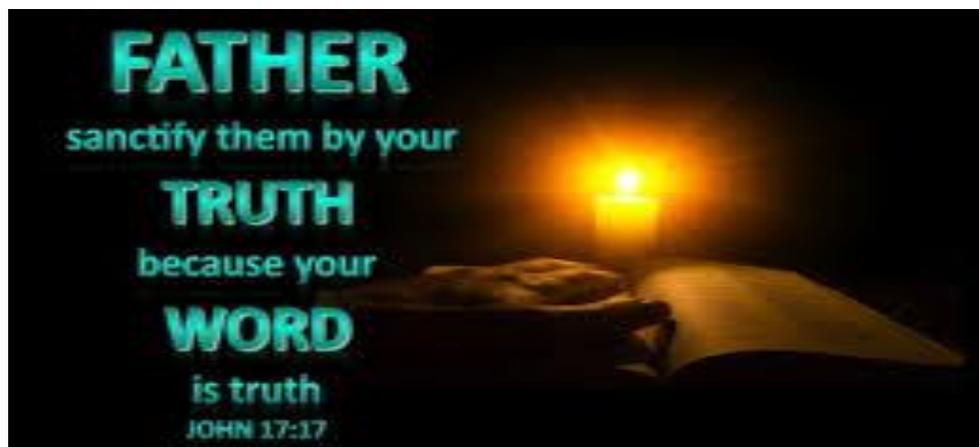
*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- ✦ Through www.Facebook.com at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
- ✦ All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104



<https://tillchrist.wordpress.com/2015/05/17/easter-season-sunday-7-b-to-pray-as-jesus-prays-for-us-faith-known/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 539 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“Christ is the world’s Redeemer“

Published in only 13 hymnals. Visit the website and see if you can answer the question of Peter Finally below.

- [https://hymnary.org/text/christ is the worlds redeemer](https://hymnary.org/text/christ_is_the_worlds_redeemer)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVolurCS50A> An organ prelude."From the organ book "Enter His Gates with Praise: Eight Organ Preludes for the Church Year" These eight new preludes by Matthew Machemer feature hymn tunes that span the entire Church Year." Concordia Publishing House
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3OPBx4iEm4> [Priory Singers - Topic](#) , Belfast
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOK59tedr18> "A song from ChurchFolk, at the October 2nd 9:30 service at College Church in Wheaton." "What tune is this? It's not the more usual Molville" [Peter Finlay8](#)

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; (Next week: Ezekiel 37:1-14; RCL, the same reading or Acts 2:1-21)

"Our lection today is the first recorded faith crisis of the Early Church: What to do with the betrayer, Judas.

We are not given access to the debates and deliberations that precede Peter's explication, but the first thing I notice in this text is that the time was ripe for a faith crisis.

An Ecclesial Crisis (or, After the Honeymoon Period)

The earliest followers of "the Way," for they were not yet called "Christians," met at an upper room in Jerusalem in fidelity to Jesus' instructions (1:4). What was it like in that upper room, perhaps the very room in which the apostles had gathered for the Last Supper? Luke gives us a few indications; however, through a close reading of the text, I believe we can tease out several noteworthy elements.

1. They were frustrated...That's the first marker for crisis: things don't turn out the way we had hoped they would.

2. They were forced to wait... This is worth waiting for, to be sure, but how long? How long, O Lord?

3. There is a transition of leadership... Who might take up his mantle of (Jesus's) leadership? Luke is careful to layout the potential candidates (cf. Luke 6:13-16).

4. Their only recourse was prayer..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1295 [Jacob Myers](#) Assistant Professor of Homiletics, Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Ga

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸ *(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong^[a] he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)* ²⁰ “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

*“‘May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’; Cited from Ps. 69:25*

and

“‘Let another take his office.’ Cited from Ps. 109:8

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

- a. [Acts 1:18](#) Or *swelling up*

Is this reading about Judas, Matthias or how the choice was made? Each of the following commentaries will offer a start to making your decision.

Judas the traitor

“In our passage for study Luke recounts the demise of Judas, but interestingly, what he says is not quite what Matthew says. Matthew says that Judas regretted his betrayal of Jesus, returned the money to the Jewish authorities and went and hanged himself. As the money was blood money, the authorities purchased the potter's field as a cemetery for aliens. Luke says that Judas purchased the field and came to grief on it somehow. We are actually not quite sure what the Greek word, translated in the NIV as "fell headlong", actually means. In the first centuries of the Christian church it was understood as "swelled up". So, it was commonly believed that Judas' stomach swelled up and burst open. Not a nice image! Christian scholars down the ages have tried to align the two stories. For example, many have suggested that the authorities purchased the field in Judas' name, so it was his, although he didn't sign the papers. Augustine suggested

that when Judas hung himself, the rope broke and he fell headlong, bursting open his stomach in the fall. Well, who knows!

What we actually have in the two stories is a generous description of Judas' end and a less generous description

Even more fascinating is the use of a word in Matthew's description of Judas' end, translated in the NIV as "was seized with remorse." It actually means "repent", to change one's mind for the better. Again, some will counter with the reference to his suicide and argue that a person who commits suicide cannot be forgiven and share in eternity, but there is no scripture to support this argument.

So, there it is, do with it as you will. Was Judas saved? There is little evidence that the apostles forgave him, but then God has a bigger heart than any of us. His grace is boundless; He forgives beyond measure. If Judas did actually repent, did turn to God and ask forgiveness for turning on Jesus, what do you think, is God big enough to forgive? And what of all our garbage, is he big enough to forgive our many sins? "

<http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyot/afterascensionbot.html> Rev. Bryan Findlayson, Lectionary Bible Studies and Sermons, Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Resources.

Matthias

"There is no mention of a Matthias among the lists of disciples or followers of Jesus in the three [synoptic gospels](#) but according to *Acts*, he had been with Jesus from his [baptism](#) by [John](#) until his Ascension... the lot fell to Matthias; so he was numbered with the eleven apostles.^[2]

No further information about Matthias is to be found in the [canonical New Testament](#). Even his name is variable...

The tradition of the Greeks says that St. Matthias planted the faith about [Cappadocia](#) and on the coasts of the [Caspian Sea](#), residing chiefly near the port Issus.^[4]

According to [Nicephorus](#) (*Historia eccl.*, 2, 40), Matthias first preached the Gospel in [Judaea](#), then in [Aethiopia](#) (the region of [Colchis](#), now in modern-day [Georgia](#)) and was there stoned to death.^[2] An extant [Coptic Acts of Andrew and Matthias](#), places his activity similarly in "the city of the cannibals" in [Aethiopia](#).^{[5][6]} A marker placed in the ruins of the Roman fortress at [Gonio](#) (Apsaros) in the modern Georgian region of [Adjara](#) claims that Matthias is buried at that site.

The *Synopsis of Dorotheus* contains this tradition: "Matthias preached the Gospel to barbarians and meat-eaters in the interior of Ethiopia, where the sea harbor of Hyssus is, at the mouth of the river Phasis. He died at Sebastopolis, and was buried there, near the Temple of the Sun."^[2]

Alternatively, another tradition maintains that Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem by the Jews, and then beheaded (cf. [Tillemont](#), *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, I, 406–7). According to [Hippolytus of Rome](#), Matthias died of old age in Jerusalem."

➤ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Matthias

Making the choice

“...One must act carefully when selecting leadership after someone’s actions destroy a community’s sense of identity and integrity. This group knew, first, that they needed to replace Judas with someone with impeccable credentials -- one who “accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us” (verses 21-2). This person’s commitment must have remained intact beyond betrayal and death -- unlike Judas -- into the time of resurrection. Such a one can “become a witness with us to [Jesus’] resurrection” and embody the possibility of resurrection and new life within the community as well. They knew, second, that the replacement must be made after extended prayer involving the whole community (1:14). Prayer offers its own healing, especially for a wounded group seeking restoration. The community that prays together, heals together.

Many communities today would not see the Holy Spirit guiding such a crucial decision through the casting of lots. But the lot is the least important, least required element of their process then or our process now. Whether by lot, interview, or committee vote, the way forward that offers the surest prospect of new life after betrayal focuses on listening and discerning through extended communal prayer, finding people of rich experience and deep integrity, and ending with some sign that this next person is called by God -- however a given community makes that determination. The scars left by Judas or others who betray and damage those around them will remain, but they do not need to define or stop a community’s ministry. God will make a way for people of resurrection to rise.”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2456 **Frank L. Crouch** Dean and Vice President, Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Psalm 1; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 139:1-12 (13-16); RCL, 104:24-34, 35b)

“My Preface shall at least possess the virtue of brevity, as I find it difficult to impart to it any other.

The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever growing pleasure; common gratitude constrains me to communicate to others a portion of the benefit, with the prayer that it may induce them to search further for themselves. That I have nothing better of my own to offer upon this peerless book is to me matter of deepest regret; that I have anything whatever to present is subject for devout gratitude to the Lord of grace. I have done my best, but, conscious of many defects, I heartily wish I could have done far better...

This Psalm may be regarded as THE PREFACE PSALM, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmists's desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon...

- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/psalms-1-1.html>
David Spurgeon

Book One

The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked

1 Blessed is the man^[a]
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
²but his delight is in the law^[b] of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.

³He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
 that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
 In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

⁶for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

- a. [Psalm 1:1](#) The singular Hebrew word for *man* (*ish*) is used here to portray a representative example of a godly person; see Preface
- b. [Psalm 1:2](#) Or *instruction*

"Why do they keep messing with my Bible?"

I chuckled at this exasperated question following an adult forum on Bible translations that I was leading in one of our local congregations. Upon asking for more specificity, I was deluged with the likes of "When did the Red Sea become the Reed Sea?"; "What's wrong with 'the Son of Man'?"; and "What are 'resident aliens,' anyway . . . immigrants?" to cite but three of many.

The familiar opening phrase of Psalm 1, "*Blessed* is the man," (King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New International Version), rendered "*Happy* are those" in the New Revised Standard Version, prompts similar questions. While there may be little difference between the two translations in contemporary English, there are sound reasons for translating *ashre* with "happy" rather than "blessed." Most importantly, "Blessed is/be . . ." (using the Hebrew word *baruk*) is a benediction, that is, a request, prayer, or wish that God would bless that individual. "Happy is . . ." on the other hand, is a beatitude, that is, a statement, a declaration that someone is fortunate because of something they possess or because of something they have done...

The translation "those" instead of "man" is trickier. Obviously, the NRSV is attempting to avoid a gender specific suggestion that the happy or blessed one is an adult human male. Surely

most will agree that the promise and admonition of this psalm is not directed solely to them. But pluralizing the Hebrew singular obscures the common trope, found in other passages of the wisdom literature, of comparing a *singular* devout individual to a *group* of the "wicked," rhetorically maximizing the contrast and perhaps suggesting an emphasis on individual righteousness in the face of societal or communal evil. Maybe we should read "How happy is the *one* . . ." as does the New English Translation, or more ambiguously "O how fortunate. . ."

The New Revised Standard Version translation of the verbs in the rest of verse one ("follow . . . take . . . sit"; for "walk . . . stand . . . sit") is also unfortunate. Why one would choose to disrupt the obvious flow of the Hebrew progression is unclear to this interpreter, especially when one recognizes the contrast between the righteous person who "does not stand (*amad*) in the counsel of the wicked" (verse 1, New International Version) and the wicked who "will not stand (*qum*) in the judgment" (verse 5, New International Version).

Perhaps the most important aspect of Psalm 1 is its function as an introduction to the Psalter. Although it contains neither praise nor lament, the warp and woof of the book of Psalms, most interpreters these days believe the final editors of the Psalter have intentionally placed Psalm 1 here as a useful guide to the reading of the rest of the book, either alone or in conjunction with Psalm 2. Reading this wisdom psalm first, invites us to read the following psalms through the lens of what is generally known as "Torah piety," an ethical reflection on what it means to live one's life in accordance with the vision presented in Scripture..."

➤ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1231

Mark Throntveit Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

1 John 5:9-15; RCL, 1 John 5:9-13 (Acts 2:1-21; RCL, Romans 8:22-27 or the same reading)

"In looking at the first letter of John for these weeks of Eastertide, we have suggested that this epistle is really a sermon.

It lacks the salutation and farewell of a typical first century letter, and the style and movement of the work suggest an extended homily rather than the give and take of correspondence.

We have further suggested that the occasion for the homily is some kind of growing division within 1 John's community. The division is, in part, over the right interpretation of the text that that community holds sacred -- the book we call The Gospel of John.

Thus, the occasion for the sermon is a community dispute, and the text for the sermon is John's Gospel.

In today's verses, written as the sermon draws to a close, we watch the epistle writer draw on themes that are familiar to us from the Gospel -- witness, Sonship, faith, and eternal life..."

➤ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=313 **David**

Bartlett Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary. Decatur, GA

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. ¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

That You May Know

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

“...The letter is reaching its climax. 'Testimony' or 'witness' is legal language. It is used frequently in the Gospel of John. It is a very strong way of affirming something as true. The emphasis here is on the testimony which God has given. We might ask: about what? What truth is on trial? The answer lies in what precedes: that Jesus really did come in the flesh and really did die! Jesus was real. That is God's testimony about his Son. The writer sees this as critical...”

<http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/BEpEaster7.htm>

THE MARK CHALLENGE

“Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem...,”
but of course you already know the rest because you started Chapter 7>



John 17:11b-19 ; RCL, John 17: 6-19 (John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15; RCL, the same reading)

“Today's Gospel once again places us in the upper room on the evening before Jesus died for us on the cross. Judas has left the gathering and is on his way to the authorities in order to

get the band of soldiers that he will lead to Gethsemane in order to betray Jesus. Jesus has pretty much finished the teaching He intended to give His disciples in that place. He is almost ready to go to Gethsemane where He will be arrested.

Jesus, knowing that His disciples were about to experience three of the scariest and loneliest days of their lives, has one last thing to do before they leave for Gethsemane. He prayed to the Father on their behalf and He allowed the disciples to listen in. We call this prayer Jesus' high priestly prayer and the Gospel for this day is part of that prayer..."

- <http://lcmssermons.com/index.php?sn=1317> James T. Batchelor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hoopeston, IL Pastor Batchelor was an electrical engineer for almost 20 years before turning to the ministry.

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 15th Chapter”

¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.^[a] ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them^[b] in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself,^[c] that they also may be sanctified^[d] in truth.

- a. [John 17:15](#) Or from evil
- b. [John 17:17](#) Greek Set them apart (for holy service to God)
- c. [John 17:19](#) Or I sanctify myself; or I set myself apart (for holy service to God)
- d. [John 17:19](#) Greek may be set apart (for holy service to God)

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“Extravagant Giving

Today's reading (6-19) comprises a central section of Jesus' prayer and so offers some of the major themes of Jesus' prayer which encompasses the whole of chapter 17.

Perhaps the most significant of the themes is in the prominent language of "giving" which in nine occurrences runs throughout and characterizes the theology of this passage (as in the 75 times in the gospel as a whole) in terms of a mutual extravaganza of giving. Both the Father and the Son are "givers" and their mutual giving constitutes the grace which those who belong to Jesus have inherited and in which they are now seen to live. Once again, precisely in the action of "giving" the Father and Son are joined as one. Their mutual giving reveals once again the oneness expressed in John's prevalent "just as" theology. As the Father does, so does the Son. As the Father is a giver, so the Son imitates the Father in his giving...

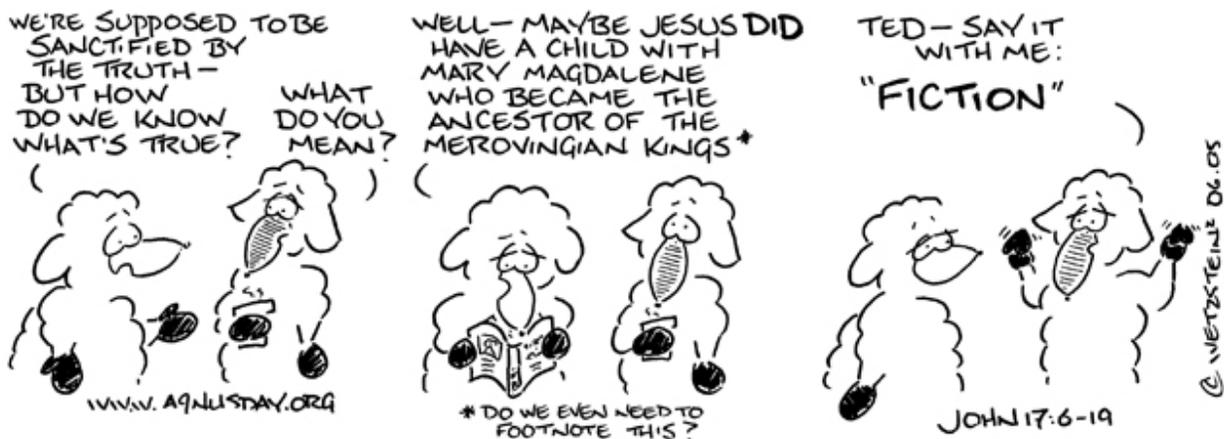
Sent Into the World

Because of the Father's name -- because of who the Father is and what the Father has "given" in love to the Son -- we can know ourselves as made holy and kept holy in the truth of the word (17:17). But that holiness is not a one of separation from, but precisely for immersion in the world. Again we hear John's "just as" theology of the sending of the Son. "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (17:18). Our oneness with the Son and Father will imply a rejection by or distance from the world as enemy of the Father. Just as the world rejected Jesus in his suffering and death, so the world will also reject the disciples. Disciples will thus need the Father's and Son's protection in the world, "because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world" (14, 16).

Still in spite of the risk, and precisely because of the Father's love, this community of disciples are sent into the world, just as the Father's love has sent the Son into the world. We thus are again reminded of the two-fold significance of "world" for John. The world is both that which does not know and rejects the Word (1:10) and those who belong to him (17:14), but the world is also the object of the Father's love and of his and the disciples' ongoing love and mission.

As such disciples, too, are sent into the world armed with the word in its two fold sense - the Father's Word now become flesh, and the words of that Word. Guarded and sustained in that word we can know ourselves as disciple community constituted in the power of Christ's death and resurrection and in the promise of his presence in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor and Comforter. About which we will hear more in next Sunday's lesson for Pentecost Sunday.

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1292
James Boyce Emeritus Professor of New Testament and Greek, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN



Agnus Day appears with the permission of <http://www.agnusday.org/>