

We're continue in a series on the Finding God in the Church: the Sacraments. In our Protestant Tradition we have two sacraments: baptism and communion.

Today we reflect on baptism as a refuge, space, home.

REFUGE repeated twice with 2 different words

v.1 מָצֹל [machseh] refuge, shelter - from rain or storm, from danger, from falsehood.

v.11 מִגְדָּל [misgab] a secure height, retreat, stronghold (unassailable)

present נִמְצָא [nim·ṣā] - a present, from the the word found, something that is found, to be found.

Selah (/ˈsi:lə(h)/; Hebrew: הִלֵּךְ, also transliterated as selāh) is a word used 74 times in the Hebrew Bible—seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in the Book of Habakkuk. The meaning of the word is not known, though various interpretations are given below. It is probably either a liturgico-musical mark or an instruction on the reading of the text, something like "stop and listen." Another proposal is that Selah can be used to indicate that there is to be a musical interlude at that point in the Psalm. The Amplified Bible translates selah as "pause, and think of that." It can also be interpreted as a form of underlining in preparation for the next paragraph. At least some of the Psalms were sung accompanied by musical instruments and there are references to this in many chapters. Thirty-one of the thirty-nine psalms with the caption "To the choir-master" include the word selah. Selah may indicate a break in the song whose purpose is similar to that of Amen (Hebrew: "so be it") in that it stresses the truth and importance of the preceding passage; this interpretation is consistent with the meaning of the Semitic root ṣ-l-ḥ also reflected in Arabic cognate salih (variously "valid" [in the logical sense of "truth-preserving"], "honest," and "righteous"). Alternatively, selah may mean "forever," as it does in some places in the liturgy (notably the second to last blessing of the Amidah). Another interpretation claims that selah comes from the primary Hebrew root word salah (סָלַח) which means "to hang," and by implication to measure (weigh). - from wikipedia.

May 12, 2019

Psalms 46

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
To the leader. Of the Korahites.
According to Alamoth. A Song.

¹ God is our **REFUGE** and strength,
a very *present* help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;
³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its
tumult.

Selah

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad
the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of **the city**;
it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

⁶ The *nations* are in an uproar,
the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our **REFUGE**.

Selah

⁸ Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations
he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow,
and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the *nations*,
I am exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our **REFUGE**.

Selah

Acts 2:37-42

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

³⁷ Now when **[the crowd gathered in Jerusalem]** heard **[Peter give testimony to Jesus as the promised Messiah of God]**, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” ³⁸ Peter said to them, “**Repent**, and **BE BAPTIZED** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For *the promise* is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were **BAPTIZED**, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN & CONTEMPLATION

- **What shimmers in your attention as you hear this reading?**
- **How is the purpose of God a promise for us?**
- **How have you experienced baptism and/or repentance as a stronghold of strength, as the presence of God in your life and our world?**
- **How do you remember your baptism?**
- **Do you think of it daily, or on a regular basis? Why? Why not?**
- **The liturgy for the renewal or reaffirmation of the promises made at baptism says, “remember your baptism and be glad.” How do you react to that?**

the city of God – this image is tied backwards to creation and forwards to the end of Revelation chapter 21-22 when John speaks of the new Jerusalem descending from the heavens into the earth. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures it’s a metaphor for the original city of Jerusalem (which means “city of peace”) – the intention from the very beginning of creation, God intended that people, made in his image, should inhabit with him an earthly city.

nations ἔθνη [Goyim] represents all of the goyim, the non-Jews, Gentiles. un-believing people of the earth – the natural enemies/adversaries of the people of God. Goyim, a word thought to derive from gowy [y/G], which means “body” of a person and thus by extension, the corporate body of a people.

³⁷ Now when **they** heard **this** – this is the original rendering of the phrase from Greek to English, I added more details from the previous context to clarify our short reading.

Repent: the original Greek word used here: **Metanoia**, a transliteration of the Greek μετάνοια, means “a transformative change of heart; especially: a spiritual conversion, a changing of direction.”

In Classical Greek, **metanoia** meant changing one's mind about someone or something. Metanoia means afterthought, from meta meaning “after” or “beyond” and nous meaning “mind”. When personified, **Metanoia** was depicted as a shadowy goddess, cloaked and sorrowful, who accompanied Kairos, the god of Opportunity, sowing regret and inspiring repentance for the “missed moment”.

For Jews living at the time of Jesus, the term was used consistently in the literature to express a fundamental change in thinking that leads to a fundamental change in behavior, and/or way of living.

BE BAPTIZED (from the Greek noun βάπτισμα pronounced [baptisma] meaning “washing-ism”). In Greek Bapto- was a verb meaning both to wash, and to dip. It’s the result of a dipping or sinking or submerging., spanning from the image of washing to includes the image of death by drowning. Christian Baptism has similarities to Tvilah, a Jewish purification ritual of immersing in water, which is required for, among other things, conversion to Judaism, but which differs in being repeatable, while baptism is to be performed only once.