

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama

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October 2020

This Month's Cover

Our cover painting this month is *The Martyrdom of Saint James of Jerusalem* (October 23), a work by Stefan Lochner of Cologne, completed sometime after 1435. It is mixed oil and tempera on a walnut panel, and is almost square, measuring about 1'4" on a side. It is part of a huge altarpiece of paintings, each depicting the martyrdom of one of the Apostles. This panel depicts Saint James being beaten to death by a mob.

Scholars for centuries have debated over the identity of Saint James of Jerusalem. He has been identified as James the son of Alphaeus, “James the Brother of the Lord” (whom the Church teaches was not his biological brother, but a cousin—the Greek word translated “brother” has a very broad range of meanings), and almost any other James that the Bible mentions. The only one they all agree he was not is James the Greater, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, who were possibly Jesus’ first cousins. James was the first Bishop of Jerusalem. The Bible does not tell about his death, but very early Church writers, including Eusebius, described it. He was martyred in either AD 61 or 69 when an angry mob dragged him to the pinnacle of the Temple and threw him off. The fall did not kill him, so the mob stoned him, and finally they beat him to death with clubs.

In a recent restoration of Lochner’s paintings, reflective infrared technology revealed an interesting discovery. Technicians were able to see beneath the surface to the level of the prepared wood panel, where they discovered Lochner’s original sketch (called the cartoon). It was evident that he painted all the faces and hands, but left the clothing and background to his students. In the cartoon each item of clothing is marked with a letter—R for red (*Rot*), G for yellow (*Gelb*), GR for Green

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(Grün), B for blue (*Blau*) and S for Black (*Schwartz*). These were instructions to his students. In two places these letters bled through the paint over the years, and can be seen very faintly in the final painting.

Stefan Lochner (c.1410-1451) worked for most of his life in Cologne, Germany, and followed what is known as the “soft” International Gothic style. This involved the use of long flowing lines and bright colors. This style falls somewhere in between the stiff figures of the Middle Ages and the newer tendency toward motion and activity. He also has retained the medieval custom of painting the good or important people as larger than the bad or insignificant ones. In all the panels the Apostles are taller than anyone else. Little is known of Lochner’s life. He is believed to have been born in Meersburg in southwest Germany, and to have studied in the Netherlands. He soared to great fame early in life, but his career was cut short by a premature death of the plague at about age 41. He came to Cologne as a young man to fulfill commissions by the Emperor Frederick III, and remained there to establish the studio over which he presided until his untimely death in 1451.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word from the Editor

Most churches have now re-opened, and we are getting back to the “new normal,” whatever that may be. As we observed a couple months ago, it is not likely that we will ever return completely to the “old normal.” Congregations in all denominations have seen a significant change. Some people who rarely if ever came to church before are now coming fairly regularly. Perhaps the turbulent events of 2020 have aroused their awareness of a spiritual need, or perhaps the absence-makes-the-heart-grow-fonder syndrome kicked in when they were involuntarily deprived of the Church and Sacraments.

On the other side, there are those who previously came to church more out of habit than anything else, and then only if there were nothing better to do. Now that they are out of the

habit they will probably never come back at all. With many of these, coming to church or staying home will not be likely to make much difference in their flaccid spiritual lives either way.

Going to church out of habit is not all that bad a thing as long as it is a habit that we have developed through discipline rather than from simple routine. Much of our spiritual life is based on habit. Daily prayer and Bible study should be habits that we acquired through the discipline of making ourselves do it even when it was inconvenient or when we just didn't feel like it. So it is also with many non-spiritual endeavors. The daily jogger has many times when he really does not want to get out on a cold morning and run through the rain, but he does it anyway out of both habit and discipline, and when he is back home again he is usually glad for having done it.

It is the same with public worship. If you go in order to "getting something out of it," you probably won't, and eventually you will likely fall away altogether. On the other hand, if you go because this is what God expects of you ("Remember the Sabbath Day that you keep it holy"), you will often find many great rewards. Not only will you receive the life-giving benefit of the Sacraments, but you may give a priceless gift to someone else without even knowing it. Through something you do or say without even thinking about it, you could have a powerful effect on someone else. Sometimes even your mere presence can be a boost or an encouraging example to others. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, and had you been absent you would not have been his tool for accomplishing it. This is what we mean when we say that we go to church to give, not to get. As Christians we are the Body of Christ, which means that we are all in this together. We cannot achieve our own salvation, but together we all contribute to each other's salvation.

As we begin to establish the "new normal," let us strive to make worship one of our new and better habits. And the first habit we should develop is that of putting Christ and his Church first, at least for a little while on his holy Sabbath.

Father Rick Losch

ECW United Thank Offering

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of the Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through the United Thank Offering, men, women and children nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God. These prayers of thanksgiving start when we recognize and name our many daily blessings. Those who participate in UTO discover that thankfulness leads to generosity. United Thank Offering is entrusted to promote thank offerings, to receive the offerings, and to distribute the UTO monies to support missions and ministries impacting the lives of women and children throughout the Episcopal Church and in invited Provinces of the Anglican Communion in the developing world.

The Episcopal Church Women's ingathering of the United Thank Offering will be on Sunday, October 18th. Envelopes for tax-deductible contributions are available on the table at the rear of the church and may be placed in the alms basins. Checks should be payable to Episcopal Church Women or ECW.

Hiram Patrenos

The Gideons International

During the month of October, we will be receiving contributions for the work of the Gideons International. The Gideons is a non-denominational organization of Christian laymen that distributes Bibles and New Testaments free all over the world. All administrative and travel expenses are borne by the members, so 100% of all contributions goes to the printing of these Bibles. We will not have a speaker from the Gideons but we will hold all contributions and forward them to the local chapter following our service on October 25th. Envelopes are available for contributions on the table at the rear of the church and may be placed in the alms basins at the Offertory. Checks should be made payable to "The Gideons." Your contribution is tax-deductible.

Hiram Patrenos

Altar Flowers

Volunteers are needed to provide altar flowers through the season of Pentecost. The sign-up chart is now located on the bulletin board in the vestibule. You may use flowers from your yard or if you wish, arrange with a florist to provide them. For more information, please speak with Carolyn Patrenos.

Hiram Patrenos

Administration of Holy Communion

When Jesus died on the cross his Body and Blood were sacrificially separated in the final Atoning Sacrifice for the forgiveness of human sin. At his Resurrection, his Body and Blood were eternally and inseparably reunited. We thus know that in the Blessed Sacrament, his Body and Blood are both fully and equally present in the consecrated Host, and in the consecrated Wine. We receive a full Communion of his Body and Blood if we receive only the Host or only from the Chalice. For many centuries the people received Holy Communion in only one kind, the Host. The Protestant and Anglican Reformations demanded that the people also be offered the chalice, and the custom entered the Roman Catholic church as an option after the Second Vatican Council about 60 years ago (it is still a hotly debated subject in the Roman Church).

In the light of the Covid-19 crisis, sanitary concerns have raised the question of the safety of administering a common chalice to the people. Technically we should not be concerned about germs in dealing with the Blessed Sacrament, and many studies have indicated that it is safe when a gold or silver chalice is used (these have bactericidal properties). However, it is also written, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matt. 4:7). For this reason, for the foreseeable future we will retain the anciently established practice of administering Holy Communion in only one kind. We do this not only with the Bishop’s consent, but also at his recommendation.

Richard R. Losch+

Be Wordly Wise

The Four Temperaments of Hippocrates

Physicians in ancient Greece were legally allowed to dissect dead human bodies (the Romans would later ban the practice). Unfortunately, they had no understanding of the circulatory and nervous systems or of the functions of most of the internal organs. They learned a great deal about the physical layout of the body, but knew little about how it actually operates. They knew about blood because they had experienced bleeding, even though in a corpse the blood congeals very quickly. Hippocrates identified four fluids that he presumed control the living body: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. This led to the “Four Cardinal Humors” theory that all disease results from an imbalance of these fluids or “humors.” It was believed that we find something funny when it shifts the balance of our humors, and thus it is humorous. A person who has an innate ability to sense this shift is said to have a sense of humor. Although Andreas Vesalius’ anatomical research opened the doors to the modern world of medicine in the 16th century AD, the Four Humors theory lasted well into the 19th century.

Hippocrates associated the four humors with the “Four Temperaments.” He taught that black bile from the gall bladder causes sadness and depression. In Greek, black bile is *melana chole* (μελανα χολη), from which we get the word melancholy. A too quiet person has an overabundance of phlegm, *phlegma* (φλεγμα), the fluid of inflammation, and was therefore phlegmatic. An irritable or crotchety person has too much yellow bile (*chole*, χολη), and is thus choleric or bilious. We also get the name of the disease cholera from this. If a person is hyperactive, too talkative, or feverish he has too much blood (Greek *haima*, αιμα and Latin *sanguis*). He is hematic or sanguine. According to Hippocrates, then, the four temperaments are melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic and sanguine, resulting from an imbalance of black bile, yellow bile, phlegm or blood. We still use these words today, almost 2500 years later.

Richard R. Losch+

Israelites in Egypt

Many scholars challenge the historicity of the Exodus, but two factors cannot be denied. First, any event that has been so deeply embedded in the minds and traditions of a people for thousands of years is bound to be based on more than mere myth or legend. Secondly, the Biblical account contains far too many historical accuracies, and is too consistent with what we know about Egypt and its environs at that time to be dismissed as being purely imaginative. Archaeological research continues to pour forth new discoveries that confirm biblical events that were once considered to be only fable.

While there are many details in the story that can be challenged, that does not diminish the basic truth of the narrative. For example, the claim that the Israelites were slaves is unlikely. Slavery in Egypt, relative to slavery in every other known culture of the time, was an unimportant institution.¹ It is far more likely that the Israelites were a *corvée* labor force. This is forced labor similar to the Anglo-Saxon *esnes* or medieval serfs and villeins, who were required to work for a feudal lord for bare survival pay. Workers' villages have been discovered near the work sites from both the pyramid era (c. 2500 BC) and the building of the city of Pi-Ramesses (13th century BC). The latter is almost surely the city that the Bible describes the Israelites working on. These villages, including hundreds of documents of all sorts, including pay records, indicate that the workers were *corvée* labor and not slaves.

The common image of the Egyptians is that they were extremely xenophobic, and that is true after the Exodus. By the time of the Exodus they wanted no part of foreigners, and for good reason. Before the 17th century BC, however, foreign

¹ The Hollywood image of thousands of Israelite slaves building the pyramids is absurd. The pyramids were built 1000 years before the Israelites came to Egypt, and they were not built by slaves. They were built by volunteer farmers who worked for room, board and scant pay during the time each year that their farms were flooded by the Nile. They gave their labor in exchange for the opportunity to go to heaven with the pharaoh.

groups regularly settled in Egypt. While they may not have been warmly welcomed, they were not rejected. One of these was a large group from somewhere in western Asia whose name and specific origin is unknown, but whom the Egyptians called *Hyksos*, “Foreign Rulers.” By 1650 BC their numbers had grown so large that they seized power in the Delta area, and ruled most of Egypt for a century.

There are two theories of the arrival of the Israelites. One is that they were Mesopotamian mercenaries, a nomadic army known as the Habiru (Hebrews), hired by the Hyksos to help them retain power (they obviously could not count on the Egyptian military). We know that there were such armies at the time, and there is significant evidence to lead us to deduce that Abraham was the general of one of them a couple generations earlier.¹ It would not have been unreasonable for a Hyksos pharaoh to choose a capable Hebrew, Joseph, as his viceroy, but it is very unlikely that an Egyptian pharaoh would have done so. The second theory is that the Hyksos themselves were Mesopotamians, and that the Israelites were their descendants. There is less evidence to support this idea, but it is possible.

In 1550 BC Ahmose I defeated and expelled the Hyksos and founded the 18th Dynasty. Since “the friend of my enemy is my enemy,” he obviously would have suppressed the Hyksos’ friends, the Habiru. As we mentioned above, enslavement would not have been a likely option, but corraling them and holding them as a *corvée* labor force would. Egyptian pharaohs were obsessed with building projects that usually involved building elaborate temples, tombs² and palaces. These were an important part of the pharaoh’s legacy, built to impress the gods. Most of these buildings, unlike the pyramids, were built by *corvée* labor. Such labor forces often lasted for generations,

¹ The Bible tells us that it was Abraham’s grandson Jacob who settled in Egypt with his twelve sons and their tribes.

² By this time the tombs were no longer pyramids, but they were nonetheless elaborate edifices, usually hidden underground. The Valley of the Kings contains countless such tombs.

so the Bible's claim that the Israelites served for 430 years (Ex. 12:40) is reasonable. About 400 years after the fall of the Hyksos the 19th Dynasty came into power. It included the pharaoh Ramesses II (the Great),¹ who is most commonly accepted as the pharaoh of the Exodus. The Bible tells us that the Israelites were making bricks for the building of the cities of Pithon and Ramesses (Ex. 1:11). In the 13th century BC Ramesses rebuilt the original Hyksos capital Avaris on the Nile Delta as a new city, named Pi-Ramesses. Historians almost universally agree that the Israelite conquest of Canaan, which the Bible tells us started 40 years after they left Egypt, took place in the late 13th and early 12th centuries BC. The chronology of the Book of Exodus meshes quite nicely with what we know from non-biblical sources about Egyptian and Middle Eastern history.

The question often rises, how did a band of rag-tag slaves manage to escape the Egyptian army, which was the mightiest army in the world at the time? We have discussed this in detail in the past so we will simply give a sketch of it now. If they were not just slaves but a mercenary army suppressed into corvée labor, it is very likely that the military tradition and discipline of the original Habiru was passed from father to son for generations, including martial training. Since Moses was a Hebrew, even though he was raised in the royal family, he would not have been eligible to inherit the throne. The only alternative for a prince was to be trained as a military commander. When it was time to leave, there was an army of trained soldiers under the command of a general trained by the best army in the world. Also, Moses had lived for years in the wilderness as an exile, and knew well the art of survival in it. The biblical accounts of battles before and during the conquest of Canaan show that Moses and Joshua were both brilliant military leaders, and that the Israelites were an excellent army.

The question that must follow is that if the story of the Exodus is true or at least solidly based on fact, then why is there no

¹ Ramesses II, also known as Rameses and Ramses.

record of it in Egypt? The Egyptians were, after all, assiduous record-keepers, and the records of the 19th Dynasty are among the most voluminous and best preserved of all. The answer is based on Egyptian religion. The Egyptians believed that everything in this life is nothing more than a preparation for the afterlife in eternity. In order to enter their version of heaven, a man was carefully examined by the gods after his death. The examination was based primarily on the written records of his life. It was essential that these records tell the truth, but they could be immensely exaggerated as long as they did not contain any outright lies. A lie was a guarantee of hell or obliteration. It was not necessary that the records contain anything bad about the person, even if bad things had happened. The gods cared only about what was written.¹ The escape of a huge labor force would have been a terrible humiliation to a pharaoh, especially one as arrogant and powerful as Ramesses II. He would want no record of such a thing to exist when he had to answer to the gods, so he would have destroyed any records of it and would have forbidden any reference to it anywhere.

There can be little doubt that many of the details of the story of the Exodus are either inaccurate or fanciful, but there can also be little doubt that it is based on actual historical events.

Richard R. Losch+

The Epistle is Online

The last seven years of *The Epistle* are now online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top. On a mobile device, click on the blue menu at the top right and select the “Epistle” page.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ This is why we often find clear attempts to expunge records. If something recorded went wrong, all records of it were destroyed as if it had never happened. Sometimes a pharaoh would try to keep a rival out of heaven by eliminating all record of him, such as destroying all his images and writing, and scratching out all inscriptions that mention him. In modern times, this was a common practice in the Stalinist Soviet Union.

Christianity's -Contribution to Civilization

The more Christianity comes under attack, the more the accusation is made that not only has it done nothing to better civilization, but it has also introduced oppression, intolerance and corruption. It is true that throughout its history these evils have existed in the temporal Church, but it is not reasonable to blame Christianity for them. These are human failings that can be found wherever there are humans, and that have existed since our origin. Nonetheless, they are incompatible with any of the moral and ethical teachings of Christianity, and where they have existed they have been counter to, not consistent with, the Christian Faith. Though there will always be corrupt people in the Church, it is important to remember that while they may be *members* of the Church, they are not *the Church*.

Until the introduction of Christianity, the world was a place of barbarous cruelty and licentiousness at levels almost inconceivable to any modern civilized person. The only significant culture in the ancient world that had any noteworthy reverence for life and human rights was Judaism. The Jewish culture and religion honored life and had a strict moral and ethical code to which all its people were expected to adhere. Even ancient Judaism was a harsh culture by today's standards, but by the standards of the world of two millennia ago it was amazingly upright and considerate of the rights and welfare of others, even of slaves. It was on this divinely given basis that the teachings of Jesus, and subsequently those of his Church, were built. As Christians we believe that the teachings of Judaism and then those of Christianity were inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is why we use the phrase "Judeo-Christian values."

Consider the world of two thousand years ago. While most of the western world was under the influence of Greco-Roman culture, there was little difference between Rome and any other major culture of the time when it comes to morals and values. With the exception of the Jews, these cultures were all pagan and belligerent. They were not religious as we use the term today—we would call them more superstitious—but the gods were

all around them and permeated every aspect of their lives. Their relationship with their gods was completely different from the Judeo-Christian concept of a relationship with God. The gods demanded obedience and the observance of countless major and minor rituals and sacrifices, but did not care a whit if you loved them or hated them. As long as you made the proper sacrifices and said the proper words, your feelings for the gods and theirs for you were totally irrelevant. It was extremely dangerous to anger them, and what angered them was disobedience or disrespect. What you said with your lips to or about a god was very important, but what you thought in your heart did not matter at all. Whatever moral standards existed did not come from the gods, but were values that experience had shown were important for the stability of society. The gods themselves were not bound by any morals, but only by the laws set down by the chief god or gods. Zeus, for example, killed his father, married his sister and ate his children, all the while seducing or raping whatever goddess or human took his fancy.

As for life, in all but the Jewish culture it was meaningless. In the city of Rome there were squads whose job each morning was to carry the dead bodies off the streets to be burned in a common pyre outside the city. Murder among the upper classes was a serious matter (although it was done regularly), but in the slums and tenements another dead body was just another mouth that no longer had to be fed. The lower-class areas of every city were controlled by gang bosses who were frequently at war with one another. The upper classes often employed them to do their dirty work, and thus tolerated their criminal activities. It was there that was born what would become the Mafia, and brutal gang life was the norm. Even the noble families often conducted business in what we would consider a Mafia-like fashion. Julius Caesar was a classic "godfather." By the end of the Republican era, standard entertainment for the masses was the public torture and execution of criminals, along with gladiatorial fights to the death at which the people cheered as gladiators literally hacked each other to pieces.

Respect for life was so minimal that parents had the right to

kill a minor child any time they wanted until the daughter was married (which usually happened around the age of 14) or the son was legally recognized as an adult (usually 15). Minor children had no rights whatever, not even the right to life. The oldest adult male of the family was the *paterfamilias*, and he had absolute authority over who any women in his household (including adults) could marry, and over all business and social affairs of anyone living in his household. In the late Republican era a law was passed requiring a *paterfamilias* who wished to kill one of his children to give a magistrate a notice of one *nundinium* (eight days, the Roman equivalent of a week) before doing so. This was not to protect the child, but to protect the man from doing something rash that he might later regret.

Slavery was integral to every culture of the time, including the Jews. Again, a primary difference was that the Jews had strict laws protecting the lives and basic human rights of slaves, while in all other cultures slaves had no rights whatever, not even the right to life. A master could torture or kill his slave any time he wanted, and had to answer to no one for it. Ancient slavery had no racial implications, as most slaves came from the people of defeated nations. It was a totally different institution from slavery in America. There was a broad class structure among slaves. Many who were talented, clever or well-educated lived quite well, often far better than most free lower-class Roman citizens. The majority, however, suffered brutal hardship and pain and had very short lives.

Sexual morality among ancient peoples was virtually non-existent, although there was a strong double standard between men and women. A woman was expected to be a virgin for her first marriage, although since most were married at 13 to 14, that was not a great problem. A boy, on the other hand, was expected to be “experienced” before he would be recognized as an adult. So that the purity of a family’s blood line could be assured, a wife’s adultery was a serious offence, but a married man who did not have at least one regular mistress and frequent occasional dalliances was not considered much of a man. While heterosexuality was the expected norm, occasional dab-

bling with homosexuality or pedophilia (with young girls or boys) was merely chuckled at and bore no condemnation as long as it was discrete and not too frequent. Prostitution was a normal part of the social structure, and the Guild of Prostitutes kept the brothels well supplied with both females and males of all ages, slave and free. Bands of prostitutes, usually paid for by the general, accompanied the armies to serve the soldiers.

One of the reasons the Romans (and most other societies) distrusted and eventually hated early Christians was that they could not understand these strange moralists with their single God, their ridiculous reverence for life and human rights, their absurd respect for celibacy and chastity, and their disdain for the material world. While the Jews had had similar standards for centuries and had communities in every city in the known world, they had always kept to themselves and had not tried to convince others to accept their values. The Christians, on the other hand, preached the Gospel as widely as they could and sought conversions. In the eyes of the Romans this made them an insult to the gods and a threat to society. They were persecuted more for being different than for their religion itself, yet during two hundred years of vicious persecution the religion continued to grow at an astounding rate. In AD 312 the emperor Constantine I legalized Christianity and banned all further persecution, and in 380 Theodosius I made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. Within another century most of the Western world was Christian. As the Roman culture crumbled it was replaced with what would evolve into Western Civilization, which was solidly rooted in Judeo-Christian values.

Despite the corruption that has regularly ebbed and flowed in the name of Christianity for 1900 years, its values have been the mainstay of our civilization ever since. It has been these values that have confronted and destroyed ecclesiastical and civil corruption time and time again. Despite whatever evils have been committed by members of the Christian Church over the centuries, because of Christianity this world is a far, far better place today than it was when Jesus first walked in it.

Richard R. Losch+

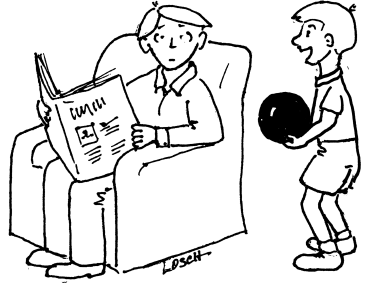
A Touch of Trivia

During the battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777 a fox terrier wandered into the American camp bearing a tag with British general William Howe's name on it. Washington returned the dog to Howe with a note saying, "To General William Howe: General Washington's compliments to General Howe. He does himself the pleasure to return him a dog, which accidentally fell into his hands, and by the inscription on the collar appears to belong to General Howe."

Richard R. Losch+

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



*"Great news, Dad!
It took seven tubes of epoxy,
but I fixed the holes in
your bowling ball."*



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