

More than Salvation of the Just Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday,
November 11, 2014 8:15 AM Ti 2:1-8, 1-14; **Ps 37:3-4, 18, 23, 27,29**; Lk 17:7-10
(The “you” includes not only the disciples at that moment, but all of the disciples who would
ever be gathered in a Eucharistic assembly, in what we call our Mass.)

There has been an uneasy connection over time in the Christian Church between the Old and the New Testaments—an uneasy connection. Some Christians wanted to get rid of the Old Testament altogether, notably Marcion, but there are others; he’s just the name we associate with that idea: just forget about **the Old Testament**; we will just have one Testament; it will be the New one. Well, the problem with that is the New Testament is written with so many allusions to the Old Testament, to the prophets, to the Law, to the wisdom, and so on, that pretty soon you would have nothing to refer to. People would be reading and say: Well, what does this refer to? So you can’t really get rid of the Old Testament.

On the other hand, **how do we interpret it?** Again, there’s not one single Christian view. **In the early Church there were two different views:** one saying that more or less the Old Testament should be interpreted as it’s written, except where something Jesus says contradicts it. So that means you could accept more or less the stories of the Old Testament, the stories in Genesis and all this because Jesus doesn’t contradict any of them. But then even in the early Church there was another school of thought saying, well, really it doesn’t make much sense all this history, all these laws, because Christ didn’t live that. It isn’t that he contradicted it so much, it was just irrelevant to him, so therefore the only purpose of the Old Testament is a prefiguring of the New Testament, a framing of the New Testament, a symbolizing of what the New Testament would become. That was the school of Alexandria; the first was the school of Antioch. Now both these schools have something to recommend them.

But the real problem comes really with the psalms, because the Psalms have been since earliest times very **favorite hymns and poems within the Christian liturgy**. We repeat the Psalms constantly. Now **very often the Psalms are interpreted Christologically, meaning in reference to Christ**, but in a way that most people don’t understand. **If you interpret the Psalms as they were intended and as people take them literally, they often give a very wrong impression. Today’s is an example.**

“The salvation of the just comes from the Lord”

Is this wrong? Well, in a sense, yes, it is wrong. It’s not absolutely wrong, but **it is not what Jesus was about**. Jesus did not come to save the just; **Jesus came to save the unjust**. That’s the whole point. He spent his time with sinners, with those outside the Law. He ate with them. He violated kosher rules in order to be with them. He said it isn’t the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick do. That’s the whole point. He went outside the boundaries of holiness to capture lepers and those blind from birth and those who languished in sickness for years and years and years, all of whom would be ignored totally by the just, all of whom were outside the realm of holiness, all of whom didn’t qualify for membership in the community ruled by the Torah. So “the salvation of the just comes from the Lord,” well

indeed, but so does the salvation of the unjust. And that is the whole purpose of Christ coming and dying on the cross. He died for the unjust, not for the just.

In fact, **he also died for his own apostles.** He said, “Take and eat, this is my body given up for you.” The “you” was his apostles, his disciples, his closest associates. Now how were they unjust? Well, they weren’t perfect followers of the Law; in fact, he taught them not to be, and yet he died for them. Now the “you” in that sentence, “given for you,” same with the words spoken over the chalice: “This is my blood poured out for you,” the same you, **the “you” includes not only the disciples at that moment, but all of the disciples who would ever be gathered in a Eucharistic assembly, in what we call our Mass.** They are all “you,” but then he adds, “and for many,” over the blood. **“And for many”**—“many,” who are they? **They are in addition to those who have been gathered through the ages around the Eucharistic table.** So this is something to think about. For whom did Christ come? For whom did Christ die? What is salvation really all about? It is a lot more than “the salvation of the just.”