



# BIBLICAL RESOURCES

**Acts 5:12-16; Psalm 118 (117); Apocalypse 1:9-13,17-19; John 20:19-31**

## Jesus said: Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you

John 20:19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

### INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Today we hear one of the most widely remembered stories from the New Tes-

tament: the story of doubting Thomas. It is interesting that that title has stuck, even though the point of the story is that Thomas actually arrives at faith!

Whereas the Empty Tomb Proclamation Narratives resemble each other in all four Gospels, the Resurrection Appearance Narratives are particular to each Gospel. Even within that, the Fourth Gospel is always a bit special. Even in the Empty Tomb Proclamation Narrative, it has significant features unique to itself—Mary Magdalene comes *alone* and there is the *race* between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. The appearances of the Risen Lord are also peculiar to this Gospel. In this excerpt, we hear the substantial story of Thomas, in two parts, followed by the first conclusion of the Gospel. (Scholars often hold that chapter 21, while not original, was added very early, and provides a secondary ending.)

### KIND OF WRITING

This symbolic narrative explores several dimensions of Easter faith: (1) the gifts of the Risen Lord—peace, joy, the Spirit and forgiveness; (2) the identity of the Risen One with the Crucified One; (3) the blessedness of all who believe, eliminating any distinction between present believers and the very first generation of Christians. All three are important. Later generations may have been felt that earlier Christians, who actually encountered the Risen Lord, were somehow more fortunate. Even more important, a later Christian heresy Docetism—which denied the reality of Jesus' humanity and its continued significance after the Resurrection—is countered by the sheer materiality of the risen Lord.

### OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and *breathed* into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

### Thought for the day

How did any of us make the journey towards faith in Christ? No doubt a great part of it is simply what we received—usually from family. At some point, did I make a conscious choice? Perhaps at other times, I felt like walking away from the faith project? What kept me going? Did a more personal ownership of faith result? Perhaps I felt the intuition of John O'Donahue, "Faith is helpless attraction to the divine." In spite of everything, perhaps in spite of myself, somehow it is part of who I am.

### Prayer

Mysterious God, we are those who have seen and at the same time not seen. Help to look beyond the simple gifts of each day to see you the giver behind—and in—every gift. Help us acknowledge Jesus that we may know true blessedness in believing.

...they failed to know the one who formed them and inspired them with active souls and *breathed a living spirit* into them. (Wisdom 15:11)

Wake up! Bestir yourself for my defence, for my cause, *my God and my Lord!* (Psalms 35:23)

### NEW TESTAMENT FOREGROUND

(1) New creation in Christ is reflected in the lay-out of this Gospel, which starts with an echo of Gen 1:1. Jesus' last words on the cross are an echo of Gen 2:2. John 20:1 explicitly recalls Gen 1:1 again and in the breathing Gen 2:7 is echoed.

(2) Holy Spirit / Advocate: in the Fourth Gospel, there is a wonderful and deep presentation of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate. A single verse gives an idea of what is at stake: "*Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*" (John 7:39). It is simply not the case that "as yet there was no Spirit"! Yet, the function of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the Paschal Mystery, is now so new, so different that *it is*

as if there had been no Spirit before. Cf. John 14:26; 16:7.

(3) Peace: see John 14:27 and 16:33.

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But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 19** That is, the day of creation. Jesus’ self-presentation is not impeded in any way by their fear. Peace here is the Easter good news of victory over death and even the fear of death.

**Verse 20** That is, the Risen One is the Crucified and the Crucified is the Risen One. Jesus is both the same and utterly transformed. The first gift was peace, the second gift is joy.

**Verse 21** Repetition for emphasis. “As” should read “just as” and means more than a formal similarity: Jesus’ very own mission from the Father continues unbroken in the mission of the disciples.

**Verse 22** Echo of creation. The third gift is the Holy Spirit, in the new role of Advocate and reminder. A new creation in Christ is a strong early Christian experience and proclamation. *For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!* (Galatians 6:15) *So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!* (2Corinthians 5:17) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* (1Peter 1:3)

**Verse 23** The fourth gift—to all believers—is forgiveness of sins. In this episode, forgiveness is part of the mission of the whole church. “Holding on” to sins means blocking God’s grace.

**Verse 24** Thomas featured earlier in the Gospel: John 11:16; 14:5.

**Verse 25** Believe what? That he is risen? That it is the same Jesus?

**Verse 26** I.e. the eighth day, that is, today. The same gift of peace is underlined.

**Verse 27** The Risen Lord takes the initiative, by meeting the heart-felt questions and doubts of Thomas.

**Verse 28** This is the highest proclamation of Jesus’ identity in this Gospel. In this way, deepest doubt can be the direct road to deepest faith. The words also counter the propaganda of the Roman emperors, one of whom, Domitian, wished to be addressed as “our lord and our God” (*Dominus et deus noster!*)

**Verse 29** This is a beatitude, one of the twenty-seven New Testament such beatitudes. Most likely, the writer is meeting an anxiety at the time of writing when the third and fourth generations of Christians felt that the difference in time from the events of salvation put them at something of a disadvantage.

**Verse 30** This is the first ending of the Gospel and is a frank admission that the writer has selected from many traditions. The second ending, in ch. 21, is in the same vein: *But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* (John 21:25)

**Verse 31** This is a key text for understanding the nature of Gospels and in particular the kind of text which the Fourth Gospel is. The goal is a true understanding of the identity of the risen Jesus so that believers may live in him.

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. “Peace be with you” was the greeting of Jesus on meeting his frightened apostles. Who has come to you bringing

peace at times when you were afraid? To whom have you been able to bring peace?

2. Thomas, doubting and questioning, is possibly a person with whom we can identify. What part have doubting and questioning played on your faith journey? How has your faith been strengthened by such moments?

3. Note the way that Jesus dealt with Thomas. He did not give out because he doubted. He accepted how he felt and led him along to see the truth of his resurrection. Who has been that kind of teacher for you, gently taking you where you were and leading you to a deeper knowledge about some truth about life? For whom have you been that kind of teacher?

4. “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed”. That requires great trust. Perhaps you have had the experience of being trusted without having to justify every step along the way. What was it like to be trusted in that way? Whom have you been able to trust in a similar manner?

PRAYER

God of life, source of all faith, through the waters of baptism you have raised us up in Christ and given us life that endures.

Day by day, refine our faith that we who have not seen the Christ, may truly confess him as our Lord and God, and share the blessedness of those who believe.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and signs with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday	Acts	Revelation	John
Easter 2	<b>5:12-16</b> Summary of the rapid expansion of The Way	<b>1:9-13, 17-19</b> Vision of the seer of the Son of Man	<b>20:19-31</b> Doubting Thomas; Gospel purpose
Easter 3	<b>5:27-32, 40-41</b> Peter bears witness before the High Priest	<b>5:11-14</b> Worship of the Lamb on the throne	<b>21:1-19</b> By the sea of Tiberias; Peter is restored
Easter 4	<b>13:14, 43-52</b> Paul turns to the pagans	<b>7:9, 14-17</b> The redeemed before the throne	<b>10:27-30</b> The sheep will never be lost
Easter 5	<b>14:21-27</b> A travel summary: Asia Minor to Syria	<b>21:1-5</b> The new heavens and the new earth	<b>13:31-33, 34-35</b> A new commandment: love one another
Easter 6	<b>15:1-2, 22-29</b> The “council” of Jerusalem	<b>21:10-14, 22-23</b> The new Jerusalem, dressed like a bride	<b>14:23-29</b> The advocate will teach you everything

## Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord

Acts 5:12 Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. 16 A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

### INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The passage chosen is a summary passage found frequently in the Acts. The immediately preceding context is important to appreciate the significance of this summary.

The Acts of the Apostles purports to be history; it is not, however, so straightforward or simple. Three different kinds of "history" overlap in this marvellous writing:

#### Documentary History

*Chiefly raw facts, dates, documents and data. Examples in Acts: geography, politics, Roman institutions, place names etc.*

#### Explanatory History

*An attempt at explanation, drawing to gather context, personalities, causes and consequences, usually in some narrative sequence.*

#### Poetic History

*An attempt to speak to the present moment, by means of a selective retelling of the past. In this case, the desire to instruct and uplift is paramount. Examples in Acts: the first Pentecost, the conversion of Cornelius, the shipwreck of St Paul.*

In a word, the book of Acts is not a novel, nor biography, nor history, nor apologetics in any strict sense, through it shows features of all these genres. Rather, it is best viewed narrative of origins, broadly historical and strongly apologetic, aimed at instructing the hearers / readers at the time of writing.

### CONTEXT IN THE COMMUNITY

#### Context of writing

Acts was most likely penned in the early

second century, in Rome. It may resonate with Jewish revolts in the Diaspora (115-117). The pastoral content feels like that of the late Pastorals: "wolves", heresy, rejection of the OT, uneasy with the empire, yet no direct persecution. The warm affirmation of the Jewish roots of Christianity may be a response to what later emerged under Marcion, who promoted a wholesale reject of the mother religion.

#### Context within Acts

In Acts 4:24-5:42, we hear of increasing hostility towards The Way. In contrast, there is a counter theme, the inexorable expansion of the church.

### KIND OF WRITING

The summary is laid out in chiasmic fashion, as follows:

A	vv. 12-13a: answer to the petitions in 4:29-30
B	v. 13b: response of people to the apostles
B <sup>1</sup>	v. 14: response of people to the apostles
A <sup>1</sup>	vv. 15-16: answer to the petition in 4:30

See Acts 4:24-30 below for the background.

### RELATED PASSAGES

When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.' For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:24-30)

Cf. summaries in 2:42-47 and 4:32-37.

### BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 32** Verse 12 The summary picks up the miraculous in the preceding episode (5:12; see 2:43 and 4:30), done through the hands of the apostles (see also 14:3; 19:19; cf. 8:17; 9:41; 11:30).

Solomon's portico is mentioned in Acts 3:11 and Jn 10:23. It was a covered walkway formed by rows of columns supporting a roof and open on the inner side facing the center of the temple complex. Located beside the Court of the Gentiles, it was a very public area.

**Verse 13** "None of the rest" seems to be an exaggeration in the light of v. 14, when some did join them. Nevertheless, the group is beginning to have a distinct identity. The people's reaction is a recognition of the divine at work: Acts 10:46; 19:17; Lk 1:46, 58 and many Psalms.

**Verse 14** The messianic community is identified as "the believers" (cf. 2:44; 5:32). The increase is regularly noted (cf. 2:41; 4:4). The NRSV has "added to the Lord" but "added by the Lord is better."

**Verse 15** These are examples of the signs and wonders. Notice that Peter is the focus of attention. Cf. the healing power of Jesus' clothing in Lk 8:44 and the cloths touched by Paul (Acts 19:12). Women as specifically mentioned for the first time as a group.

**Verse 16** This verse takes us out of the Temple and even out of Jerusalem. A considerable expansion is implied.

### POINTERS FOR PRAYER

**1.** Hostility to the faith (or at least to the Church) is not unknown in our day. Perhaps we too are called to show courage and to speak the word with all boldness?

**2.** The scene is one of healing and recognition of need. What needs to I bring before the Lord for his healing touch?

**3.** The women are clearly important for Luke (cf. "some women of our group astounded us" - a reaction not unknown in many a parish!). How do I see the future evolution of women in our church?

### PRAYER

God of salvation, you offer life to all through Jesus and the preaching of the Word. Show us how to bring that word of life and healing to the people of our time. Amen.

# Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Rev 1:12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp stands, 13 and in the midst of the lamp stands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. 14 *His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.* 16 *In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.*

Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades. 19 Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.

## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The lectionary offers us for Eastertide in Year C a judicious selection of readings from the New Testament Apocalypse. This book is not otherwise read on Sundays except for Christ the King in Year B. Everyone recognises that the book of Revelation is not easy to read and that it presents a challenge for the ordinary listener. At little perseverance will pay dividends, however. The book of Revelation speaks to a constant concern: how to square belief in God with the fact of evil and suffering. As such it corresponds in the NT to the book of Job in the OT. As part of its response, it offers the highest Christology of the New Testament, combined with a through-going theology of incarnation and suffering. In a word, God now "rules" through vulnerability,

because in Jesus God has entered the human story, especially in its darkness and tragedy. See Rev 5:6.

## CONTEXT IN THE COMMUNITY

The setting is Asia Minor (western Turkey today), as we see from the named cities. The context is two-fold: (i) some kind of severe oppression, if not quite persecution, on account of the faith; and (ii) emperor worship. The latter is widespread, even "in your face" and participation was regarded as a test of loyalty to the state. In general, the book of Revelation is quite damning about the Roman Empire—in its view, the latest and worst "incarnation" of evil empires from time immemorial.

## KIND OF WRITING

Apocalyptic refers to a spiritual movement (see above in relation to theodicy) and a kind of writing. Our NT Apocalypse is an example of a vision apocalypse. Using a potent combination of biblical, political, mythological and liturgical allusions, the book takes seriously the hardship undergone by believers while reassuring them that in Christ victory is already assured. He even offers a (some premature) mock funeral liturgy for the Empire, by way of concrete illustration.

## RELATED PASSAGES

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near. (Revelation 1:1–3)

"See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22:12–13)

## BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 9** The writer closes the gap with the readers: he shares the persecution and he too is called to perseverance and to testimony.

**Verse 10** We are meant to think of an ecstatic and overwhelming experience later digested and presented with immense literary skill as our Revelation.

**Verse 11** These cities were carefully chosen to represent the typical challenges of the time—including emperor worship and simply losing fervour, even faith itself.

**Verse 12** The seven golden lamp stands evoke the decoration of the Temple and thus represent the presence of God. As the vision unfolds, we learn that the lamp stands also represent the seven communities named.

**Verse 13** The imagery is taken from Daniel 7:13.

**Verses 14–16** These verses are intense, evocative and mysterious...and, of course, anything but literal. Their omission in the lectionary makes the the reaction of dread collapse in v. 17 more difficult to grasp. In any case, the seer presents his vision as extraordinary and overwhelming, with a great deal of allusion to the Old Testament.

**Verse 17a** Such collapse is the correct etiquette should one ever receive such a vision. Ezek 1:28; Dan 9:18.

**Verses 17b–18** The language is taken from the Old Testament (see Is 44:6) and will resonate throughout the Apocalypse. Cf. Rev 1:8; 2:8; 21:6; 22:12–13 (above). The resurrection is proclaimed, followed by Jesus' power over death, symbolised by the keys. Cf. Rev 3:7; 9:1; 20:1.

**Verse 19** NB: *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.* (Revelation 1:3; also 22:18–19!).

## POINTERS FOR PRAYER

**1.** Go back in your own mind to some time when you had an intense experience of "presence," an awareness of God-with-you. This may help you enter this reading.

**2.** Everyone one, more or less, in the Bible is told at some point not to be afraid. It is part of the deep reassurance of faith, a reassurance we need and should not be afraid to acknowledge.

## PRAYER

God, giver of all life, source of resurrection hope, lead us to a deep faith in Jesus, risen from dead and give us courage to live our faith fully, from the inside out.

# THE LITURGY

## Acts 5:12-16; Psalm 118 [117]; Apocalypse 1:9-13,17-19; John 20:19-31

### READINGS 1 AND 3

The readings present two contrasting moments: crowds joining The Way and an individual struggling with faith. The image of rapid expansion may encourage but the journey is always individual.

### THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The verses from Psalm 118 (117) are a generic thanksgiving. However, one verse was used by early Christians to speak of the death and resurrection of Jesus: *The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.*

### SUNDAY INTRODUCTIONS

#### First Reading

*Acts 5:12-16*

Until the feast of Pentecost, our first readings are all taken from the Acts of the Apostles. Today, in a few broad brush strokes, the writer paints a picture of both courage and expansion, in a hostile environment.

#### Second Reading

*Apocalypse 1:9-13,17-19*

This year until the feast of the Ascension, our second readings are all taken from the book of Revelation. Written in symbol and metaphor, this book can be hard to fathom. The language is always rich and challenging, but at the centre stands an immense faith in Jesus, risen from the dead, the ground of our hope.

#### Gospel

*John 20:19-31*

Known as the story of doubting Thomas (and so a source of consolation to us all, perhaps!), it could also be called “believing Thomas” because the main point is that finally he did come to faith. The closing beatitude speaks to subsequent generations, including ourselves.

### WEEKDAY INTRODUCTIONS

#### Monday 4 April

*The Annunciation*

*Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10*

There is a Christmas ‘feel’ to this reading. This historical promise of a (normal)

birth was read in the New Testament to point to the virginal conception of Jesus.

*Hebrew 10:4-10*

You might feel you are back in Holy Week; nevertheless, it is important to hear again the *why* of the incarnation.

*Luke 1:26-38*

In our Gospel, Mary is portrayed as a true disciple because she listens and has faith.

#### Tuesday 5 April

*Acts 4:32-37* The ideal community

Every so often, Luke gives us a general summary—perhaps looking back somewhat idealistically. The vignette has inspired many across the centuries—not least St Augustine of Hippo in his Rule of life.

*John 3:7-15*

The conversation with Nicodemus makes use of wordplay which is impossible to translate. In Greek, to be born again/from above is the one expression. Jesus *means* “from above” while Nicodemus *hears* “again.” The imagery of the serpent reflect the story of Moses and the bronze serpent, a story of healing.

#### Wednesday 6 April

*Acts 5:17-26*

This miraculous anecdote (not lacking in humour) illustrates how irrepressible the preaching of The Way was and how its bearers were and *are still today* under God’s protection.

*John 3:16-21*

The opening words in this Gospel are justly famous—surely one of the greatest affirmations in Scripture. They echo the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. The rest of the Gospel is difficult for us, until we remember that we are overhearing the robust dialogue between the Church and Synagogue from about AD 90. It may be best to understand the harsh line on judgment to refer to full believers who have walked away.

#### Thursday 7 April

*Acts 5:27-33*

In this passage, Peter responds to those

who would silence him. The clarity of his defence might help us today: obedience to God comes before obedience to humans.

*John 3:31-36*

Our reading of John 3 moves forward to the teaching on the lips of John the Baptist. The writer is looking back with the 2020 vision of (theological) hindsight. While it is very unlikely that the historical John the Baptist expressed himself in the vocabulary of the Johannine community (!), nevertheless our reading gives us a rich reflection on Jesus and what he means to us today.

#### Friday 8 April

*Acts 5:34-42*

As we continued the tale of the aftermath to the escape, a certain Gamaliel speaks. His advice is sound both as law and as strategy.

*John 6:1-15*

Today we hear a version of the multiplication of the loaves from John’s Gospel. The evangelist signals that the time is Passover—and he uses the story to explore Jesus’ identity as a Moses-type figure: he feeds in the wilderness, he acts as a prophet and is misunderstood as a king. The sensitive reader will notice that the superabundant feeding also echoes the Christian Eucharist: bread, took, gave thanks, gave.

#### Saturday 9 April

*Acts 6:1-7*

Acts is quite realistic in that it reports tension between two groups of Jewish Christians, those who spoke Aramaic and those who spoke only Greek (the Hellenists). The Greek-speaking members complain and an arrangement is arrived at. Notice, however, that the “deacons” are not for preaching but for practical work!

*John 6:16-21*

John 6 continues the exploration of Jesus’ identity by means of allusions to the stories of Moses. In particular, the expression “It is I” evokes the name of God, I AM WHO I AM. For the calming of the storm and the sudden arrival at the seashore, see Psalm 107:23-32.