



Homilies on Judges (Fathers of the Church Patristic Series)

Origen

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In his General Audience of May 2, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI praised Origen for his "primordial role" in the history of *lectio divina*, the prayerful reading of Scripture. He explained that Origen approaches Scripture reading not as "mere study" but as the pathway to knowing Christ and "falling in love with him." Origen's nine extant homilies on Judges exemplify this approach.

In them, Origen calls his audience to participate in a loving relationship with Christ through interaction with Scripture. Delivered sometime between 238 and 248, these homilies expound on themes extracted from Judges 2-7. Some of the homilies focus generally on God's redemption of Israel through judges after each cycle of sin, enslavement, and repentance, while others stress that victory belongs to God alone through events such as the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon's meager army of 300 men, Gideon's test with the fleece, and the murder of the Philistine general Sisera by the woman Jael. The homilies brim with hope in Christ's ultimate victory over sin and death, a hope that is specific to the individual believer but accessible only within the Church.

Origen applies his allegorical method of Scriptural interpretation to these passages, sometimes drawing faith-enriching meaning from the literal (somatic) sense as well as from one or both of the two figurative (psychic and pneumatic) senses. Using both allegory and typology, Origen shows his audience God's abundant mercy and grace, the power of Scripture to assist in the battle against sin and the promotion of virtue, and the church leader's duty to walk his flock through the transforming terrain of Scripture toward likeness to and union with Christ.

Largely because of early controversies over Origen's legacy, these homilies are extant only in Rufinus's fourth-century Latin translation, but his ability to capture Origen's meaning and spirit is well documented. This is the first-ever English translation of Origen's homilies on Judges.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR:

Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro studied the history of Christianity at the University of Virginia and Yale Divinity School before receiving her doctorate from the University of Notre Dame. She has taught numerous courses at Loyola Marymount University, and presently serves on the Theological Commission for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles while raising her family in Southern California. She is the author of *The Soul and Spirit of Scripture within Origen's Exegesis* as well as a variety of articles on Origen's theology and exegesis.

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