

October 13th

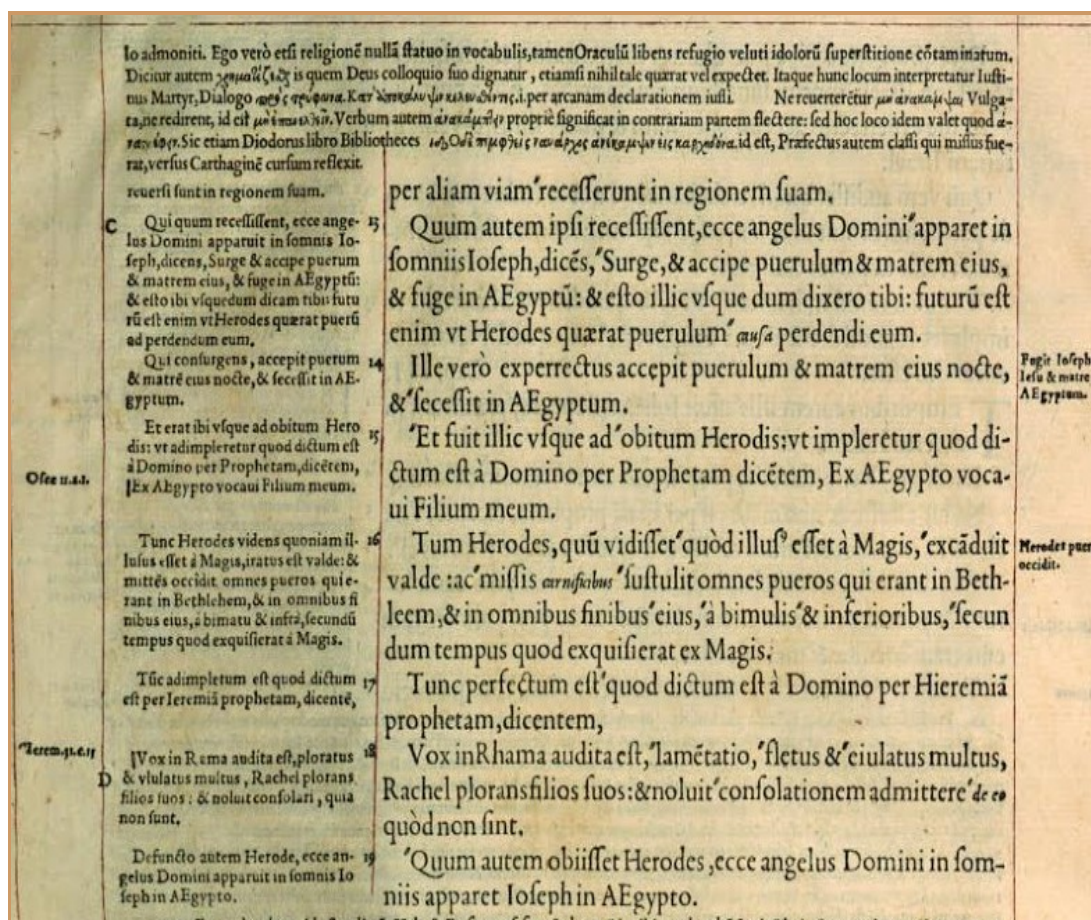
Blessed be the Lord my strength

which teacheth my hands to war,
and my fingers to fight: Psalm 144:1

For information about this verse see yesterday's lesson.

A Reformer and his Bible¹

Today is the anniversary of the death of Theodore Beza (1519-1605) a remarkable man and a great Christian scholar. The French Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564), scholar, preacher and writer, is a well known figure. Beza was his less well known younger co-worker in Geneva, Theodore Beza. Beza was a scholar and linguist of exceptional skill and his new translation of the New Testament from Greek into Latin was published in 1556. Perhaps his greatest work, however, was his *Annotations of the New Testament*. You can see a page of it below.



It was at the Reformation that the great movement for translating the Bible into the language of the common people began. At this time Latin was still used it as a regular means of communication, enabling scholars to exchange ideas all over Europe. As we learned earlier this month, Immanuel Tremellius² made a translation of the Old Testament which was very popular among protestant scholars but what about the New Testament? This is where Beza comes in.

¹ Adapted from a lesson on the free IGCSE Latin course which is available here: <https://latinigcse.weebly.com/>.

² We read about Tremellius in the lesson for 9th October.

Beza's *Annotations of the New Testament* consisted of the Greek text of the New Testament and two translations into Latin, one of which was the Vulgate³ and the other the new translation by Beza himself. The two Latin texts were set out in parallel for easy comparison and there were very full and detailed notes to aid the reader, rather like a modern Study Bible. This book was very influential because the Puritan refugees who had fled to Geneva during the persecution of Queen Mary I's reign made great use of it in the English translation (also with notes and comments) of the whole Bible that they made. This was the Geneva Bible of 1560 which was very widely used by Puritans back home in England, especially when the refugees began to return on the death of Mary. When King James gathered a team of translators together to make the Authorized Version translation they in turn made use of Beza's original work as well as William Tyndale's 1526 English translation of the New Testament. The translation team were familiar with the Geneva Bible and also consulted it. The results of their work was published in 1611 and the Authorized Version gradually became the standard Bible for English Christians for the next three hundred years and beyond.

Beza's Latin translation is superior to that of the Vulgate in being more word for word and accurate. Sadly for Latin learners, however, it is not easy to get hold of a copy. There is no modern reprint and second hand copies of older reprints are rare and expensive. Although it can be seen on line⁴ there is no accurately digitised and searchable version yet on line, as far as I know, as there is for the Vulgate which is used on all the major digital Bible platforms.

Some Geography: *Estamos bien en el refugio los 33*⁵

Get out your atlas and find **Chile** on a map. Can you see that it is a long thin country running down the western edge of South America? If your atlas shows geographical features, you may notice one thing that has caused the unusual shape of Chile.⁶ Chile depends on minerals for its wealth. It produces getting on for one third of the world's copper. Do you know what copper is used for everywhere?⁷ You will find quite a lot of it in your house – and in every other house in the developed world – in fact in every building and between the buildings carrying something we now find vital to our existence. Chile also exports other minerals including gold but her copper is crucial to the whole world.

Can you find the **Atacama Desert** in your atlas? The picture shows you something of what it looks like. There are copper mines in this part of Chile.



Mining is a dangerous activity and copper mining is no exception.

Disasters underground often have a tragic outcome. However, today is the anniversary of the end of a mining disaster in 2010. The collapse in a copper and gold mine in the Atacama Desert did not result in loss of life, although the

3 We learned what the Vulgate is in the lesson for 30th September.

4 Here https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=e5dUAAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y

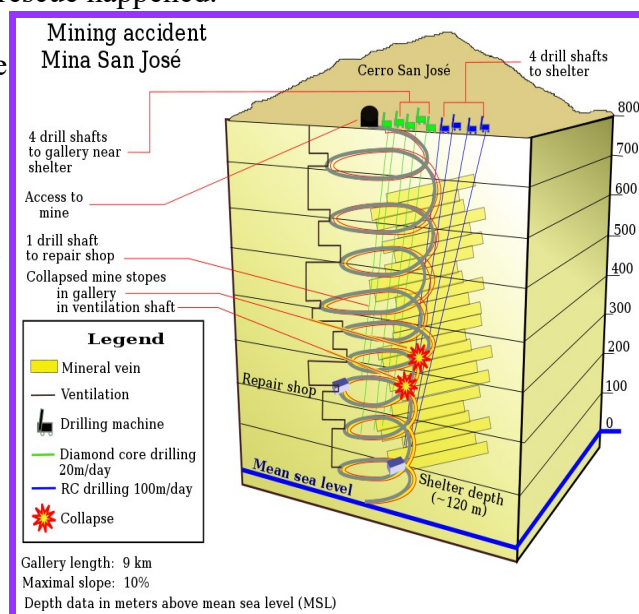
5 Diagram of mine: By Createaccount - Own work, information is from <http://www.latercera.com/multimedia/interactivo/2010/08/687-27661-4-las-opciones-de-rescate.shtml>, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11631756>

6 The range of mountains, the Andes, that runs down that side of South America, separates Chile from Argentina.

7 Copper is used for electrical wiring.

33 men who were trapped underground waited sixty-nine days before they were brought safely to the surface. If your map is sufficiently detailed you may be able to find Copiapó, which is where the Mino San José disaster and subsequent dramatic rescue happened.

The diagram on the right shows you that the mine was inside a mountain with the entrance some 800 metres above sea level. The men were about 700 metres below the surface – that is getting on for half a mile!⁸ Their normal means of access to this level was by a four mile long roadway called “the ramp” in a tunnel that spiralled down into the ground. The diagram shows the shelter where the men awaited rescue. You can see the mineral veins of copper ore where the miners had been working. The diagram also shows where stopes in the mine had collapsed. Stopes are dugout tunnels or spaces in mines that contain the ore that is being mined.



The collapse began with a wailing rumbling sound. The miners had heard this before and called it “weeping”. They noticed that the mine was weeping a lot that day. At first the men attempted to get to the surface using the ventilation shafts you see in the picture. Alas, the shafts were not fitted with ladders! Their supervisor gathered them together in the shelter or refuge. This was a structure with heavy steel doors and supplied with air from outside the mine designed for use in an emergency. All the connections with the outside world had been cut off: there was no supply of air, water or electricity. There was a little food in the refuge but among the 33 men it was not going to go very far. Now the men were facing death they turned to one of their number, José Henríquez, who they knew was a Christian. “Don José, we know you are a Christian man, and we need you to lead us in prayer,” they said. “Will you?”

From that moment José Henríquez became their pastor, leading them in prayer before every meagre meal and from that time things began to improve among the frightened men. The men apologised to one another when they had not behaved well and a strong relationship began to develop among them. They became sure that God would provide a way out. On the 8th August, three days after the collapse the men heard the sound of drilling. Someone was coming to rescue them! The sound carried on for two days... and then died away.

José Henríquez told the men histories and parables from the Bible. He told them about Jonah and also, thinking about the way their food was running out, he told them about the five loaves and two fishes. Afterwards he explained how special this time was:

It was amazing to watch the Lord responding to us, even in the dark... we began to see what God was planning to do with each of us... That was the reason we could be tranquil. We could have peace and be united together... God didn't need any doors to get down there in the mine where we were... Every time we called on His name, He came. He was there, and He was present.⁹

There was more drilling again but sometimes it stopped. What was going on? The men had no way of knowing.

In fact there were three separate drilling rig teams. Not only the Chilean government but also NASA

⁸ Half a mile is 805 metres approx.

⁹ Quoted in “Chilean Miner Speaks in Chapel” in *Dallas Baptist University News*. Winter 2012-13 p.16.

from the United States and many other corporations from around the world were cooperating in the rescue. However the instability of the mine meant that there was a need for great caution in case a further collapse was caused.

Meanwhile the men below pondered what to do if a drill from the rescue operation broke through. One of them remembered that in such circumstances the rescuers needed to know three things: how many men there were, what condition they were in and where they were located. Bearing this in mind the men found a red marker and some graph paper and wrote, *Estamos bien en el refugio los 33*, “We are well in the refuge the 33 of us.”

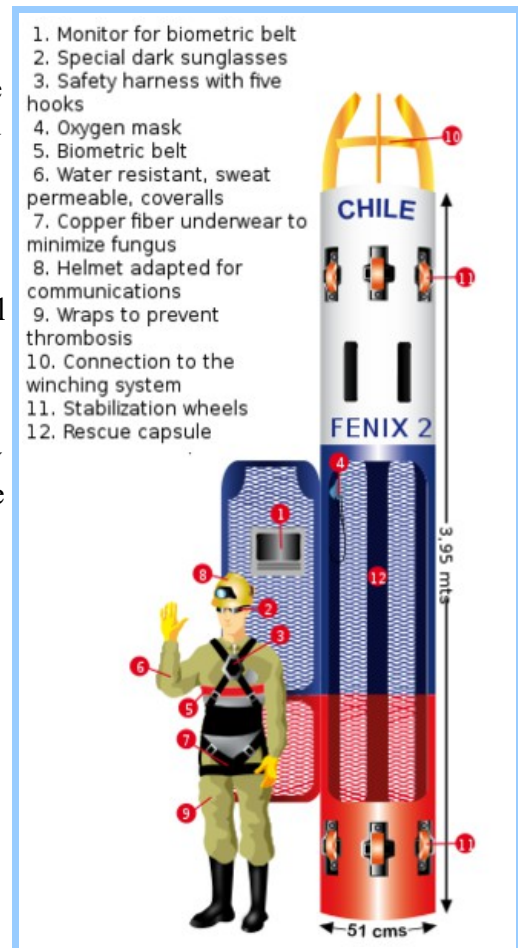
On the surface an escape capsule was being designed while the cautious drilling was taking place. You can see a picture of it on the right. The drilling could be heard by the trapped men below but the drill seemed to be going past their refuge. The men had almost given up hope when after days and days of waiting they heard something like a small explosion not far from the refuge, followed by what sounded like falling rock. They rushed to the spot – the drill had broken through at last! The excited miners hit the drill bit with tools in the hope that the sound would travel to the surface. Then they marked the drill bit with some red spray paint, hoping their rescuers would see it and know that they were alive. Then they wrote messages and fixed them to the drill bit with some plastic and electrical tape for protection. They did not forget to put in the note saying, *Estamos bien en el refugio los 33*.

Four hours later as the men watched, the drill began to rise towards the surface again. They clapped and cheered and sang the Chilean National Anthem.

On the surface, raising the drill bit was a long operation. The operators knew that they had broken through and had heard some sounds that were made by the men banging the drill bit. When the drill bit was cleaned of mud there was jubilation when the remains of the red spray paint were discovered and then three of the messages. The miners had written dozens of notes but all the others had been lost on the way up. *Estamos bien en el refugio los 33* was one of the three remaining messages – the miner who written it had attached it to the drill in the very best place he could think of, behind the bit and protected by rubber tubing.

The jubilation of the waiting families knew no bounds. All the miners were alive! The drill had been carrying a length of tubing down behind it and now this was used to send down a video camera and then a telephone line. The men were no longer cut off from the workers on the surface.

Everyone knew that the men were very hungry and that they would still have many days to wait before a rescue capsule could reach them. What should be sent down for them to eat? Great caution was needed because in their weakened state a big meal might be fatal. They would have to have their strength built up very gradually. Scientists from NASA were on hand at the site and devised a nutritional program that could go down the tube, beginning with just glucose gel in small doses. This was followed over the following days by protein drinks and fresh water.



But now the mine was beginning to be infected by a fungus that made the men ill. Also with contact with the outside world came offers of money to the men and their families and pressure from the media. The trapped men began to quarrel among themselves about religious matters whereas before they were united and followed José Henríquez's lead even though most of them were professing or nominal Roman Catholics. The numbers coming to the morning sessions for prayer began to get lower and lower. How often we only turn to God when things are at their very worst. When there is even slight improvement we go back to our old ways!

It took four weeks to drill a shaft through which the men could be rescued. All that time they had to wait. Then, when there were only three more days before the work of bringing the men up to the surface was due to begin, the mountain began to “weep” again and there were rumbles of explosions nearly as loud as those on the day when the disaster began. Some of the men were very superstitious and they believed that the Devil, who they imagined always lived in gold mines, was making a last push to keep them from being released. The men began to panic. “Get us up now!” they pleaded but there was no way this could be done. The workers on the surface were drilling and preparing the capsule as fast as they could.

On 12th October the capsule descended and just before midnight the fittest of the miners stepped into it. He was chosen to be first because his fitness would make him more likely to survive any problems that might occur. The trip to the surface took 15 minutes and countless millions all over the world watched on TV as on 13th October the first rescued miner stepped out of the capsule. The miners were gradually pulled to the surface in the capsule at a rate of one per hour but what would their lives be like now?

The 33 miners were now international celebrities. Some of them found this very hard to cope with. They were showered with gifts, treats and holidays abroad but none of this could erase the effects of the strain they had endured. Many of the miners had professed faith when they were underground. Although José Henríquez is sure God was with them in their ordeal, many have returned to the Catholicism of their upbringing.

Something to do

Younger children may enjoy making their own escape capsule out of cardboard boxes, squeezing into it and imagining being pulled to the surface of the mine. Older children could consider what they would do to keep their minds and bodies active in a limited space such as that endured by the trapped miners. All can learn that God is with us in all situations and that we can always call on Him. It is also not difficult (certainly in my experience, at any rate) to recall situations where we have quickly forgotten God's goodness in rescuing us from harm, whether physical, spiritual or mental, and continued to go our own way. Children can consider this issue in a way that is appropriate to their age.

If we are Christians, God is always working everything out for our good. However, that does not mean that he rescues us from all physical danger. He knows best and what seems like a disaster can be for our good. God sometimes even takes away his saints to spare them from the evil that is coming. (Isaiah 57:1)