

Following the Flood

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Mar 1998

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Charles Dye — 12 Mar 1998, 10:08

C R Culver <CRCulver at aol.com> writes:

Said Peter S:

The part where he goes through Thrax holding the Claw aloft recalls `I am the light of the world'

This section is hard for me to interpret religiously, because Severian does release the floodgates, killing the prisoners in the jacal [gaol?]. That is, IMHO, not in any way Christlike.

Er, killing them? Where do you get this?

That chapter is titled "Following the Flood" and I've always seen it as a kind of play on the phrase "born again." Severian is being reborn from the torturers' guild -- literally exiting from confinement, head down through a tunnel, following a flood of water. His second birth should lead to a better life than the first; we get a specific mention of the water's cleansing effects. **Definitely** in the Christian tradition, for my money.

One interesting thing I did notice is Severian's reviving of Miles. The word Miles is Latin for soldier (actually, it is nominative or accusative plural), but it also can mean "thousand." How many people are in a Roman legion? A thousand, or some variation of it?

Of course, it's also a measure of distance; see Severian's own explanation for the name. And note that even Christ wasn't above the occasional name pun!

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