

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Jan. 21, 2018

This Sunday, Jan. 21st, your readings should be Day 106: Chapters 7-8 of Joshua, Psalm 107, and 2 Thessalonians Chapter 1.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 27: 27-44: Paul's guidance to the people on the ship, as he received it from the angel saved all 276 of them. Some were prisoners like him.

Acts 28: The place they ended up was Malta. The islanders first thought Paul was a murderer because he was bitten by a viper. When he showed no ill effects they thought he was a god. It was an opening that Paul used to teach them the Gospel. Malta is still a very Catholic place. After three months Paul ends up in Rome and spends two years there under house arrest. There is no "The End" after the abrupt conclusion but the reality was that Paul then was killed by the sword. Remember that this whole account started with the Gospel of Luke. Acts of the Apostles is volume two. Luke is just doing his best to relate the good news of Jesus Christ to Theophilus.

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Most scholars agree that it was written about the year 51 A.D. Paul had been at Thessalonica and had sent Timothy to check on things. Timothy's report was what prompted this letter.

1 Thes.1: This is more of a typical length letter for that time, short. But Paul does not scrimp on the traditionally long version of "Dear sir." Vs. 10 ends with, "Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath." Paul pulled no punches in terms of the consequences of sin.

1 Thes.2: This chapter seems like a simple summary of how Paul worked with the people when he had been there but he is setting up a comparison between how he worked (this chapter) and how tempters might approach them with false Gospels (next chapter).

1 Thes.3: Vs. 5: I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had put you to the test and our toil might come to nothing. The good news is that they remained firm with just a few deficiencies in their faith. Vs. 7: "Because of this, we have been reassured about you, brothers, in our every distress and affliction, through your faith." Vs. 10: "Night and day we pray beyond measure to see you in person and to remedy the deficiencies of your faith."

1 Thes.4: Paul gives a couple basic reminders like in vs. 7, "For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness." Vs. 9, "For you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another." And continue to believe in the Resurrection, vs. 16-17: "For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Rapture books have been written about this phrase that are exciting but misleading.

1 Thes.5: Vs. 6, "stay alert and sober." Vs. 8, "putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation." That is one of his ideas about the armor of God. Vs. 21-21, "Do

not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.” This is basically the summary of the Ignatian Spiritual discernment process.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 100: A song of praise and thanks. Vs. 4, “Give thanks to God, bless his name; good indeed is the Lord (the Father).”

Psalm 101: Vs. 3-5 do not sound like Jesus for most people. “I do not allow into my presence anyone who speaks perversely, whoever acts shamefully I hate; no such person can be my friend. I shun the devious of heart; the wicked I do not tolerate. Whoever slanders another in secret I reduce to silence.” That is because very little preaching ever mentions what he said about the scribes and Pharisees; “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and every kind of filth. (Mt. 23:27) Vs. 8, “Each morning I clear the wicked from the land, and rid the Lord’s city of all evildoers.” Jesus cannot have someone in the Father’s kingdom who will stink it up.

Psalm 102: This would have been Jesus’ prayer as he went from Holy Thursday to Easter. But this is written for any of us when we are going through tough times. That is the point of so many of these psalms, Jesus is praying with us and sometimes, for us. We don’t always know what to say so the Holy Spirit gives us these words of Jesus. Vs. 26-27 are a great image of God and the universe. “Of old you laid the earth’s foundations; the heavens are the work of your hands. They perish, but you remain; they all wear out like a garment; like clothing you change them and they are changed, but you are the same, your years have no end.”

Psalm 103: Vs. 8-10, Merciful and gracious is the Lord...has not dealt with us as our sins merit, nor requited us as our deeds deserve.” Vs. 19, “The Lord’s throne is established in heaven; God’s royal power rules over all.” The King of heaven is merciful but Jesus is the instrument of that mercy, reconciling us.

Psalm 104: This is one of the most beautiful prayers of Jesus. I personally love vs. 15 (and wine to gladden our hearts), and vs. 26 (here Leviathan, your creature, plays). But vs. 29-30 hints at the resurrection of the body and the new heavens and new earth. “When you take away their breath, they perish and return to the dust from which they came. When you send forth your breath, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.”

Psalm 105: This is a wonderful psalm of praise for all the great things that God has done for His Chosen People.

Psalm 106: This psalm seems to be the other side of 105 and is a little history lesson of the Chosen People, the story of sinners dealing with God. God loves and too often we respond with sin.

DUETERONOMY

Dt. 27: Dt. 27: Vs. 26 sums up the chapter very well, with all its curses. “Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provisions of this law!” And all the people shall answer, ‘Amen!’”

Dt. 28: This starts out with the balance of the previous chapter. It has the blessings. This is basically the format that Jesus used, when He preached the Sermon on the Plains, in Lk.6:20-26. But then the rest of the chapter goes back to the bad news of what happens when you don’t follow God’s law. It goes on and on so the moral is that you better follow the law of God because there are too many bad consequences if you don’t. Does anyone still think that God loves us so much He doesn’t care about our sins?

Dt. 29: Vs. 12-13, “...so that he may now establish you as his people and he may be your God, as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But it is not with you alone that I am making this covenant, under this sanction of a curse; it is just as much with those who are not here among us today as it is with those of us who are now here present before the Lord, our God.” The NT says that Jesus is the cornerstone of the structure that God is building. The cornerstone is put in after the ground has been prepared and a basic foundation set in place. The Jews are the foundation and the Church is set upon that foundation as structure that God is building, a kingdom.

Dt. 30: Vs. 4, “Though you may have been driven to the farthest corner of the world, even from there will the Lord, you God, gather you; even from there will he bring you back.” This applies first to the unfaithful Jews who will be scattered in what is called the diaspora. God allowed that to happen just as He allows the forces of this world, who along with the devil are trying to pull the church apart. God promises that He will bring His faithful ones and those who are repentant back together. Vs. 11 brings us back from thinking that all of this is too much. “For this command which I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you.”

Dt. 31: Vs. 9, “When Moses had written down this law...” This is why the Jews speak of these first five books of the Bible as having been written by Moses even though he dies in the last chapters. Joshua, a name that can also be Jesus, is named as the one to replace Moses. Vs. 26, “Take this scroll of the law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord, your God, that there it may be a witness against you.” The Word of God (Jesus) in the new Ark of the Covenant (Mary) contains the Law and the Prophets and more.

Dt. 32: The song of Moses tells of the power of God and the pitiful nature of His people. After singing Moses gets to view the Promised Land from Mt. Nebo, but then will die before he can go to it. In this way he stands for all of us. You have to die to go to heaven.

Dt. 33: Moses talks of the sons of Jacob and the tribes that come from them.

Dt. 34: Moses, “though his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated”, and Joshua takes over and leads the people into the Promised Land. Moses truly prefigured Christ in many ways. Pope Benedict XVI’s book, Jesus of Nazareth does a great job of outlining many of those ways. But Moses was only the shadow. Then Joshua foreshadows another part of Jesus.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The whole book, which is the history of the conquest of the Promised Land, is a prophecy of the spiritual conquest of the world through the church under the leadership of Jesus the Messiah.

Jos. 1: Joshua becomes the leader. Vs. 5, “No one can withstand you while you live.” But Joshua did die. That is why the devil was so excited to be able to have Jesus killed because he then thought he could win. With Jesus coming back, the devil can never win.

Jos. 2: He gets help from outside the Chosen People. Rahab foreshadows the first Gentile followers. She is a sinner outside the People of God who helps the cause and wins salvation. Rahab is even mentioned in the NT in Mt. 1:5 because she ended up marrying into the line of Jesus’ ancestors. She is also mentioned in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. Vs. 19, Rahab’s family will be safe as long as they stay in the house, just like staying in the church once you get there is important. Outside is not safe. Outside of God’s Kingdom is hell.

Jos. 3: The Ark of the Covenant takes the lead. At the wedding feast at Cana, Mary, the new Ark of the Covenant, takes the lead and encourages Jesus to start His ministry. It is believed that this is also the spot that Jesus and the apostles did baptisms. See chapter 5.

Jos. 4: Vs. 2, “Choose twelve men from the people...” Jesus picks twelve apostles. Vs. 7, Twelve rocks as a perpetual memorial...The twelve apostles become the foundation stones of the church that are built on the cornerstone, Jesus.

Jos. 5: They are at the Jordan River and all the men must be circumcised for this had not been done in the desert. The Old Covenant sign for salvation and hope of the Promised Land is circumcision. The New Covenant sign is baptism. In Jn.3:22, “After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing.” Vs. 13, Joshua starts getting help from the Lord through an angel.

Jos. 6: The fall of Jericho is one of the first victories. The people, the priests, and even some Gentiles work together and conquer the city. Vs. 17-19, Rahab and her family is to be spared but they are limited in what they can keep as loot. This is significant because they are entering the Promised Land and it reminds us that when you enter heaven you can’t take it with you, i.e. silver and gold, etc.