

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Nov. 11, 2018

This Sunday, Nov. 11th, your readings should be Day 330: Chapter 25-27:11 of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapter 32:1-13 of the Book of Sirach, and Chapter 5 of the 1st Letter of St. John.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Jn. 19:23-42: Vs. 23: They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.” The way this garment is described is as a priestly garment like a priest’s alb. This is taken off by God’s design to show that Jesus is going from being the priest offering the sacrifice to being the sacrifice itself. That they would cast lots was predicted in Psalm 22. Only John’s Gospel mentions that Mary is at the foot of the cross in vs. 25. Maybe the others didn’t get close enough to know that. Vs. 30 says: When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.”” Scott Hahn says that what is finished is the Last Supper. Because in this Gospel Jesus skipped the fourth cup which must be done at a Seder meal. The piercing was predicted in Psalm 22 and no broken bones was foreshadowed in the Passover lambs not being allowed to not having broken bones. Also in Psalm 22 it says they could number all his bones. I believe that is a reference to no broken bones because they are not in pieces.

Jn. 20: Mary of Magdala sees the empty tomb first but Peter and John actually check it out. John or the “other disciple” looks but Peter actually goes in. He sees the cloth that covered his head rolled up in a separate place. Back then when the Master left the table if he just threw the napkin on the plate it meant he was done. If it was rolled up it meant he was coming back. Jesus stands before Mary Magdala but he has to speak before he is recognized. After all, he is the word. In vs. 19-23 he comes to the disciples in a locked room and proves it is him then gives them the power for confession in vs. 22: “he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained. In vs. 24-29, Thomas plays a key role in helping us as non-believers and his words are: “My Lord and my God!” This is a contrast to Caesar who was also called that. So you should remember what Matthew describes, which John would have presumed everyone already knew: Jesus was given a gift of gold for a king from a king. For the Magi called him the newborn king but he was a humble baby compared to Caesar who had called the census. Jesus was not a normal king. Vs. 30-31 really sound like they should be the end of the Gospel.

Jn. 21: Jesus appears to some of the apostles who are out fishing in this part that seems like an addition to the original Gospel. They take a while to recognize him. Starting in vs. 15 we have Peter’s confession. In vs. 20-23 we have Peter being a busy-body and wondering about the beloved disciple. This time in vs. 24 we find out that this disciple is the one telling the story. In the last vs. he says there is much more that isn’t written. This is part of what we call sacred Tradition. In other words no everything is contained in the Bible.

THE FIRST LETTER OF ST. JOHN

1Jn. 1: It starts poetic like the Gospel of John but he message is that the author really wants to share the good news. “God is light,”... “We have fellowship with him.” “and the blood of his “Son Jesus cleanses us from all sins.”

1Jn. 2: He gives key points again. Stay away from sin, Keep his commandments, which means you must love your brother to stay in the light. In vs. 16: “For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world.” Vs. 18: “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that the anti-christ is coming, so now many anti-christs have appeared.” In other words there are false teachers. For in vs. 22: “Whoever denies the Father and the Son, this is the anti-christ.” Vs. 25 says the result of believing is eternal life.

1Jn. 3: We are called children of God so don't sin against him. Vs. 12 reminds us that Cain killed his brother and vs. 15 says: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.” That is just like the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5:21-26. Vs. 23 ties Jesus into the Great Commandments. “And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.” He (God) had commanded that we love him and each other so this is a reminder that Jesus is one with the Father.

1Jn. 4: Vs. 1-6 is an older version of don't believe everything you see on the internet. Then he repeats the commandment of love with more similar explanations.

THE BOOK OF SIRACH

Sir. 28:13-26: This part of the chapter is about an evil tongue and can be summarized by vs. 18: “Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not as many as by the tongue.” Between politics and religion, this is sure true today.

Sir. 29: I have been trying to understand the difference between a loan, alms, and surety. A loan that is not repaid becomes an alms for many of us. I think of surety as betting a life on a loan. If it is yours or theirs, you lose if trouble starts. One way they help the poor in the Holy Land or the Middle East is the bartering system. There are no prices on anything. That way they can give a bargain to a poor person and not insult them. They can also soak the rich and not feel guilty for they do it for the poor. I really like vs. 23: “Be it little or much, be content with what you have...”

Sir. 30: God must love me because in vs. 1: “He who loves his son chastises him often, that he may be his joy when he grows up.” That is why I don't expect warm fuzzy things from God. I am in training as his son. Vs. 7: “He who spoils his son will have wounds to bandage, and will quake inwardly at every outcry.” That is why my Dad said his job was to make our lives so miserable that no matter what we did in life, we would be happy. Physical health is good if your mind is okay. Vs. 21: “Do not give in to sadness, torment not yourself with brooding...”

Sir. 31: This is a great set of ideas about wealth, as you try to win the lottery. The ideas on table etiquette is good except vs. 21: “If perforce you have eaten too much, once you have emptied your stomach, you will have relief.”

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

Ezekiel is a priest and was one of the exiles deported by Nebuchadnezzar in 597. His visions are of an awesome God. His priesthood even colors his coming to be a prophet while in exile.

Ez. 8: Jesus was tempted three times by the devil as he came out of the desert. Ezekiel has three visions. The first is in vs. 10-11: “I entered and saw that all around upon the wall were pictured the figures of all kinds of creeping things and loathsome beasts [all the idols of the house of Israel].” Before these stood seventy of the elders of the house of Israel, among whom stood Jaazaniah, son of Shephaniah, each of them with his censer in his hand.” Then in vs. 14 and “I saw sitting there the women who were weeping for Tammuz.” (Tammuz is an Egyptian fertility god) Then in vs. 16b he sees at the door of the Lord’s temple “were about twenty-five men with their backs to the Lord’s temple and their faces toward the east; they were bowing down to the sun.”

Ez. 9: Vs. 4: “Pass through the city and mark an X on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced within it.” The letter ‘taw’ is like the sign for the Franciscans and looks like a capital T. This is a lot like the blood on the doors of the slaves in Egypt, but now is closer to the cross rather than the blood.

Ez. 10: This chapter is a vision description of the glory of the Lord, which includes the word of the Lord. Vs. 14 has the evangelist signs; the ox, the man, the lion and the eagle. The whole point is in vs. 18: “Then the glory of the Lord left the threshold of the temple and rested upon the cherubim.” Vs. 25: “And the glory of the Lord rose from the city and took a stand on the mountain which is to the east of the city.”

Ez. 11: Ezekiel has to prophesy against the 25 leaders who think they will get out of the kettle or the city and survive, by the Lord has bad things in store for them. But in vs. 17: “I will gather you from the nations and assemble you from the countries over which you have been scattered, and I will restore to you the land of Israel.” Vs. 19 and 20b: “I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the stony heart from their bodies, and replace it with a natural heart... Thus they shall be my people and I will be their God.” This is fulfilled in heaven.

Ez. 12: God uses an exile skit to show the people of Jerusalem how he is going to use the bad guys to do his work of cleansing his people. Vs. 13: “I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon...” And in vs. 16: “Yet I will leave a few of them to escape the sword, famine and pestilence, so that they may tell of all their abominations among the nations to which they will come; thus they shall know that I am the Lord.” God will also get rid of false prophets as in vs. 24: “There shall no longer be any false visions or deceitful divinations within the house of Israel, because it is I, the Lord, who will speak.” This is again a double prophecy because it is about having the false prophets of the time removed but also that there will only be God’s word in heaven.

Ez. 13: In this chapter God outlines how he will clear out all the falsehoods from false prophets by showing the truth.

Ez. 14: God lets Ezekiel know how he hates idolaters. He also makes it clear that only the sinner will pay the price as in vs. 14: “and even if these three men were in it, Noah, Daniel, and Job, they could save only themselves by their virtue, say the Lord God.” And in vs. 21-22: “Even though I send Jerusalem my four cruel punishments, the sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast, still some survivors shall be left in it who will bring out sons and daughters...”

Ez. 15: The inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be valuable like wood from a tree, but worthless like the wood of a vine.

Ez. 16: This whole chapter is about Jerusalem being like an abandoned child that the Lord cared for and nurtured into a beautiful woman she ended becoming a harlot with other countries and their gods. But in vs. 59-60: “I will deal with you according to what you have done, you who despised your oath, breaking a covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you when you were a girl, and I will set up an everlasting covenant with you.” This will be the wedding feast of Christ and his church in heaven as described in the Book of Revelation. Ezekiel and Revelation are really connected. More than other books.

Ez. 17: This image of the top of the tree being taken and grown but turning to another eagle is about the king of Judah turning away from God and trying to find help from Egypt. God or the first eagle will destroy that tree. But God will take a king from the tree and plant it on a high mountain. That king is Jesus and the high mountain is heaven where his kingdom will thrive.

Ez. 18: The first part of this chapter takes away many of our excuses for being bad. My parents didn't do a good job, or my pastor? didn't do a good job? God won't buy that excuse. Vs. 13b: “But because he practiced all these abominations, he shall surely die; his death shall be his own fault.” Then God lets us know that it is our last state in life that will be important in judgment. It will be with that last attitude that we will face him.

Ez. 19: Remember that the fourth son of Jacob was Judah, called the lion. Jerusalem is Judea God summarizes the people of Judea with this allegory of Lions. It is likely that the specifics of two cubs are Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, who are brothers that ruled Judea. The allegory of the vine is about David's line.

Ez. 20: This is a nice summary of the family of God, Abraham's descendants.

Ez. 21: The phrase ‘Son of man’ is used in this chapter a lot. The word of God comes through him. Ezekiel foreshadows Jesus in all of this. A sword or a punishment will come on the people but in the fulfillment of this Jesus will have that sword of punishment come on him and thus save us, the body of Christ.

Ez. 22: Because of all the bad behavior of his people, God says in vs. 13: “See, I am brushing one hand against the other because of the unjust profits you have made...” It like brushing the dirt off your hands after hard work.

Ez. 23: Here is the story of Jerusalem and all the ways she prostituted herself, which was even worse than Samaria which only connected with a few other countries. But the north and south territories are both going to feel the wrath of God.

Ez. 24: Here will have an allegory of a pot that is rusty, as from corruption and makes bad food even when the best food is put in it. So God will get rid of it. He will even destroy his own temple. When that happens Ezekiel will speak. Vs. 27: That day your mouth shall be opened and you shall be dumb no longer.” I missed the part in chapter 3 when God said in vs. 26: “I will make your tongue stick to your palate so that you will be dumb and unable to rebuke them for being a rebellious house. Only when I speak with you and open your mouth, shall you say to them. Thus says the Lord God!”