

## **Bible Study Lesson Summary, Nov. 25, 2018**

*This Sunday, Nov. 25th, your readings should be Day 344: Chapter 6-7 of the Book of the Prophet Daniel, Chapter 39:17-35 of the Book of Sirach, and Chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation.*

### **THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

*I suggest when you read this last book of the Bible, that you pretend that you are at Mass. But don't think of being at Mass in SEAS but in heaven, and that it is the eternal Mass that we all participate in each time we celebrate Mass. As you can read in the introduction this book is written in a particular style called apocalyptic literature. It was a helpful style in times of severe persecution because, if the bad guys got a hold of it and tried to read it, they wouldn't be able to understand it. When I can't understand it, then I feel like a bad guy. But if I think I am at Mass it makes sense again.*

**Rev. 5:** This chapter is still the proclamation of the Gospel. The scroll in vs. 1 is the word of God. The lamb is the Word made Flesh. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. The four living creatures are the Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John. It has the seven seals, which are about the culmination of all things, or the end of the world; which only the Father knows. The seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb are his complete attributes of goodness. Seven means complete, like creation. Everyone sings a long version of Alleluia.

**Rev. 6:** Now think in terms of the message of the Gospel, which is all about what we must do to be saved and what the Lord has done to make that possible. Like the four Gospels it has scary news for those who aren't saved. We have the white horse and its rider with a bow, which is all a symbol of victorious power. Then the red horse and rider with a sword, which is all a symbol of war. The third symbol is the black horse and rider with a scale, which is all a symbol of famine because there is no food to weigh. The fourth seal is the pale green horse and rider with Hades at his side; which all represents death. The fifth seal is the martyrs who wonder when it will all be done? The sixth seal is about the Day of Judgment. Vs. 17: "because the great day of their wrath has come and who can withstand it?"

**Rev. 7:** Vs. 3 is about those who will be saved: "Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." This is like the blood on the door posts in Exodus and the 'T' in the foreheads in Ez. 9:4. The numbers are symbolic so it is give or take a few for each tribe. Vs. 9 lets us know that there will be a multitude from every nation, race, people, and tongue. Remember psalm branches are air-conditioning. Vs. 14: "These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Vs. 16: "They will not hunger or thirst anymore." And like baby shampoo, there will be no more tears.

**Rev. 8:** Now we have the seventh seal. To me this seems to be the transition between the Gospel and the rest of the Mass. For now, in vs. 3, we hear about the altar. At first there is silence for about half an hour. Then is incense representing the prayers of all the holy ones. In vs. 5 the power of these prayers is thrown down to the earth. The trumpet players seem to be the retribution for those who are not saved. In vs. 7: the first trumpet brings hail and fire mixed with blood, which

destroys a third of the land and its produce. Vs. 8-9 is the second trumpet messes up the sea and its creatures and the ships. In vs. 10-11 the third angel blew his trumpet and starts to wipe out the rivers or the fresh water which becomes bitter like the wormwood. In vs. 12-13 is the fourth trumpet wipes out a third of the light sources. The response is Woe.

**Rev. 9:** Vs. 1-12 are about the fifth trumpet which is described in vs. 1 as a star that had fallen from the sky into the abyss. I presume this is Satan but he has a key so he can still get out. The appearance of locusts and scorpions are like the plagues of Egypt which were sent so the bad guys suffer and the good guys escape. The rest of the chapter is the sixth trumpet. This unleashes the troops or angels which vs. 18 reports killed a third of the human race. Vs. 20: “The rest of the human race, who were not killed... did not repent of the works of their hands.”

**Rev. 10:** Now we have the presentation of a small scroll, which in vs. 9 is given to John to “Take and swallow it.” This is to give others a chance by the evangelist passing on the word, but the Good News is sweet, it is just that most of us are scripture intolerant instead of lactose intolerant. Vs. 11: “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” Are you getting the idea that this is on a grand or heavenly scale and is too big to describe? So there are three thirds and yet there are more people left. It is not about math, but something on a large scale.

**Rev. 11:** Remember that the apostles were given the power to loose or bind? So in vs. 6: “They have the power to close up the sky so that no rain can fall during the time of their prophesying. They also have the power to turn water into blood and to afflict the earth with any plague as often as they wish.” If they hold one bound by sin then in vs. 7: “When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will wage war against them and conquer them and kill them.” Then the seventh trumpets blows in vs. 15 and: “The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to his Anointed, and he will reign forever and ever.” And so they give thanks in vs. 17, which is what the word Eucharist means: give thanks.

## THE BOOK OF SIRACH

**Sir. 36:** Reading this chapter should fit right into what we are reading in Ezekiel and Daniel; crush the enemy and vs. 12: “Take pity on your holy city, Jerusalem, your dwelling place.” Vs. 24: “A wife is her husband’s richest treasure, a helpmate, a steady column.” The helpmate part is to make sure that husbands don’t think they own their wives. Vs. 25b: “A man with no wife becomes a homeless wanderer.” I have only lived in 16 places since I have left home, and I am actually married with the Church as my bride.

**Sir. 37:** Vs. 12: “Instead, associate with a religious man, who you are sure keeps the commandments; who is like-minded with yourself and will feel for you if your fall.” So I can’t wear the T-shirt that says: “It is all fun and games until someone gets hurt. Then it is hilarious.”

**Sir. 38:** Vs. 1: “Hold the physician in honor...” In other words don’t mock the guy who will be doing surgery on you. Vs. 9 & 12: “My son, when you are ill, delay not, but pray to God, who will

heal you... But then give the doctor his place lest he leave; for you need him too.” Vs. 24-34 are about a different system than we have in the USA. Many physical labors are geniuses.

**Sir. 39:1-16:** Vs. 1 & 3 are now about all of you: “How different the man who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High! He studies obscure parables, and is busied with the hidden meanings of the sages.”

## **THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL**

**Ez. 40:** This starts a whole section on a future view of the temple. We have just heard all about who will be destroyed, so now we will hear what God will set up in its place. It should be understood on two levels. The first would be the rebuilding of the nation of Israel and its temple. The second would be the New Heavens, New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. The man that looked like bronze in vs. 3 is a representative from the Lord. It is about as exciting and reading blue prints. My apologies to the architects that this is fun. Just get the idea that it is well planned out and will be big.

**Ez. 41:** Vs. 22 even mentions an altar: “This is the table which is before the Lord.” Otherwise it is more details.

**Ez. 42:** In vs. 13b we have the description of what will be the rectory kitchen: “here the priests who draw near to the Lord shall eat the most sacred meals, and here they shall keep the most sacred offerings: for it is a holy place.” This is like a fire station in which they don’t leave to go home when they are on duty.

**Ez. 43:** Vs. 7 would be their version of a tabernacle. “The voice said to me: Son of man, this is where I will set the soles of my feet; here I will dwell among the Israelites forever.” The forever part would have to be about heaven, and not our finite world. The description of the altar and its usage in vs. 13-27 is a reminder that the altar was to offer sacrifices. In this case that would still be animal sacrifice for the temple they would build. Jesus would be the sacrifice in the New Heavens.

**Ez. 44:** Vs. 9: “Thus says the Lord God: No foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and in flesh, shall ever enter my sanctuary; none of the foreigners who live among the Israelites.” Remember only family will be able to stay in heaven. The temple is the place where God connects with His family. Vs. 20-21: “They (the priests) shall not shave their heads nor let their hair hang loose, but they shall keep their hair carefully trimmed. No priest shall drink wine when he is to enter the inner court.” Vs. 28: They shall have no inheritance, for I am their inheritance; you shall give them no property in Israel, for I am their property.” Just like in the founding of Israel. Vs. 31 says they should not eat road kill.

**Ez. 45:** Vs. 3: Here they are instructed to have a place for “the sanctuary, the holy of holies.” Then are instructions in vs. 9-12 for being fair and in vs. 13-17 for making offerings. Then are instructions for renewing the feasts: Passover in vs. 18-24, and the Feast of Booths in vs. 25.

**Ez. 46:** Vs. 8-18 are about the prince. I think this is to foreshadow Jesus as the Son of the King. Vs. 20 lets us know that in the kitchen: “Here the priest cook the guilt offerings and the sin offerings...” I would have a lot to learn about cooking.

**Ez. 47:** This chapter presents the image of the stream flowing from the temple that is a foreshadowing of grace from God and baptism, from which the family of God will flourish. Then is the re-dividing of the land for the tribes of Israel.

**Ez. 48:** This finishes the dividing of the land for the people and the prince, Jesus. The last line of the book is great: “The name of the City shall henceforth be “The Lord is here.”

## **THE BOOK OF DANIEL**

*The book is about a young Jewish man who was taken to Babylon with the exile. It shows that living according to God’s law can help one to survive the greatest difficulties, for God will help. This is another side to the questions of the Book of Job. In Job God allows suffering. In Daniel God rewards goodness. Both are a part of the picture that Jesus gave us. According to the scholars the book is written four hundred years after the exile, which was the time of Daniel. Some of this book is only in the Greek version of the core Jewish Scriptures and so was eliminated by Martin Luther. So Lutherans are not as familiar with the story of Susanna, Bel, and the Dragon.*

**Dn. 1:** Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are made servants of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. These four young Jewish men chose to follow God’s law even though it creates a risk of offending the king.

**Dn. 2:** Daniel interprets the king’s dream and is rewarded with a high post. The dream is about his kingdom and its future. The gold represents the Babylonian era, the Median era is represented by the silver. The bronze represents the Persian era, and the iron represents the Hellenistic era. The rock from the mountain is the eternal kingdom of Jesus who comes from the Father in heaven.

**Dn. 3:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (the new names of Daniel’s three friends) decide not to worship the golden statue. They are thrown into the fiery furnace and are saved by an angel of the Lord. The king is impressed, “For there is no other God who can rescue like this.” (vs. 98) Notice that in the song they sing to glorify God has one repeat. Vs. 67 & vs. 69 both mention chill. This could be because part of it was added or lost at one point which is what the brackets are for. My thinking is that they just came out of the white-hot furnace.

**Dn. 4:** Daniel interprets another dream, this time about a tree. It is clear to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar will lose his mind for seven years and then recover as a way for God to prove that God is in charge, not the king of this mighty city and empire.

**Dn. 5:** King Belshazzar has a vision of handwriting on the wall and Daniel interprets the writing. The king rewards Daniel but dies that night. These stories should give you an idea of why the kings of this great empire decided to send the people of Israel back home with money to rebuild the temple. But this last story helps us to understand the meaning of the phrase about seeing “the writing on the wall.”