

## **Bible Study Lesson Summary, July 22, 2018**

*This Sunday, July 22nd, your readings should be Day 246: Chapters 1-3 of the Book of Job, Chapter 6:1-11 of the Book of Wisdom, and Chapter 18: 18-43 of the Gospel of St. Luke.*

**So you can plan ahead, there will be no class on August 5<sup>th</sup>, so you have an extra week to catch up if you need it, reflect more on your favorites of past books.**

### **THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE**

**Lk. 12:32-59:** Vs. 32 is critical to my focus on the kingdom image in my book: “Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.” Who does a king who is father give his kingdom to? It is for the royal family. Vs. 41-48 is a condition on whether we will inherit the kingdom. There is a thief, Satan, who wants to steal that from us. So what must we be doing to be ready so the thief can’t do this? Vs. 37: “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.” We must act as servants of the kingdom if we are to inherit it. Each of us will serve in different ways. The twelve were called to be apostles. We are not. Vs. 49-59 are warnings of how tough this will be. For not everyone will accept this concept and so will be divided out. Like anticipating storms, we should be aware that this is coming in our lives. And if we are on the wrong end of the good and bad equation, we had better get it right soon, for you will pay the price. Vs. 59: “I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.” This is part of the concept of Purgatory, for few of us will have everything in order before we die.

**Lk. 13:** Vs. 2 is important for those who think that every negative thing that happens to a person is from the devil, or a punishment from God. “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they are greater sinners than all other Galileans?” Vs. 3 lets us know the other possibility, which is that our training is being tested. “But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!” Just like soldiers, if they don’t train well, they can die quickly.

Vs. 6-9 is the fig tree parable, which shows that we had better bear fruit for God has given each of us what it takes to produce it.

In vs. 10-17 Jesus lets them know he has the power to overcome anything that Satan can throw at us, and that these good works can be done on the Sabbath.

Vs. 18-21, give us the mustard seed and the yeast parables to let us know that He has confidence that His kingdom will grow on earth.

Vs. 22-30 is ignored by those who don’t believe in hell. It is there and it is easy to enter, scary news.

Vs. 31-33, Jesus focuses on His mission in Jerusalem despite the warning about Herod wanting to kill him. It is funny because he actually gets a chance to do that but doesn’t take it when Pilate gives it to him.

Vs. 34-35 Jesus shows His love for that city in which He will die.

**Lk. 14:** In vs. 1-6 Jesus has another cure on the Sabbath. The last one was a face-off with a synagogue official. This one is with lawyers and Pharisees.

In vs. 7-14 Jesus is showing what the Church calls the “preferential option for the poor.” Vs. 14 is our motivation: “blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Vs. 15-24 are one of the parables why the Church believes missing Mass on Sunday is a mortal sin. It was not a good idea on these invited guests to reject the invitation. Even though vs. 16 says this banquet is thrown by “a man” it is obvious he is a king for only a king could react like this, and the story is to explain the kingdom of God.

Vs. 25-33 has an interesting reference in vs. 27: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” You would expect more confusion if He had used the cross image before the crucifixion. It is not odd that Luke wrote it out like this, but what was the original reference? Vs. 33 has inspired many Saints: “In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”

Vs. 34-35 is about us doing what we are made for and not becoming good for nothing.

**Lk. 15:** The parable of the lost sheep and the one of the lost coin tell us that God does not want us to be lost but will try to find us. This is a great lead in to the Prodigal Son story which is the rest of this chapter. Notice the younger son wants his father dead for that is how he could get his inheritance. When he comes back he is treated royally. This does not sit well with the older brother named Frank. At least I always thought that must be his name. He is risking losing his inheritance by not coming in to join the reunion. We never hear if he enters the house at the father’s invitation.

**Lk. 16:** Vs. 1-13 are about the dishonest steward. Notice his original sin mentioned in vs. 1: “squandering his property.” How do we do that? Since everything is the kings, then just not using our gifts and the resources of the kingdom, for the sake of kingdom, is risky. Notice that Jesus is praising prudence but not dishonesty. In vs. 9 he says: “make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” So the moral of the story is we should use the things of this world in a way that will get us treasure in heaven, not a place in hell.

In vs. 14-15 Jesus chides the greedy Pharisees as an example of that parable.

Vs. 16-17 are confusing without the idea that the OT was about law and prophets to make the Holy Land a good place to live. The NT is about something even harder to attain, heaven. So it is not a matter of God expecting less from us, but even more than what the law and prophets expected. There was a question during the class about the “taking the kingdom by violence” comment by Jesus. I have been looking into it and the only explanation that I have found in Church Fathers is that He means it is a battle. It doesn’t mean they will win.

Vs. 18 are a short version of the teaching about divorce. It is one of those very high expectations.

Vs. 19-31 is another warning about hell. We have heard recently that no one is in hell that doesn’t want to be there. I don’t think the rich man chose hell. He was simply greedy. Repentance could have saved him. Obviously he didn’t do that. But this story shows how much God is willing to do to win us over. He even takes suggestions, like having someone come back from the dead.

**Lk. 17:** Vs. 2 is a great quote from “good ol’ sweet Jesus: “It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.” That is why it is easy for us to have sins that are two-fers. The sin and the example.

Vs. 5-6 had my brother and I going around trying to move mulberry trees with our faith for a week.

Vs. 7-10 are about us not being princes and princesses yet. We are still unprofitable servant doing what we are obliged to do.

Vs. 11-19 are about gratitude for gifts we have received. I personally know that I am way behind on this. I want to thank God by my work and He keeps blessing me with more gifts that make it so

I need to thank him with more work. Notice it doesn't say that our response must be work, I just think it is a good idea.

Vs. 20-21 says that the kingdom is among us. One way of thinking about that is that Jesus is building it with us for the kingdom grows with more royal family members.

The last part of the chapter is about being ready.

Vs. 22-37 are about end times. They don't give a lot of information, mostly we need to always be ready and not to get too excited when people start predicting it. It will eventually happen and those who are ready will go to the right place. Vs. 33: "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it." He is talking about the difference between life in and for this world and life in and for the kingdom, which has been His theme throughout.

**Lk. 18:1-17:** Vs. 1-8 are about persistent prayer. The Father in heaven will give us what is right, but we must persist or remain faithful as we serve Him, (vs. 8b) "When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Jesus doesn't have a lot of confidence in some of us.

Vs. 8-14 are about an attitude of prayer. My way of approaching this is to remember that we are approaching a king and we are unworthy servants. That was the approach of the tax collector.

In vs. 15-17 Jesus calls the children to himself. They are "innocent until proven guilty." Vs. 17: "Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." In other words we should approach the kingdom with innocence not arrogance.

## THE BOOK OF WISDOM

*This book was written about a hundred years before the birth of Christ. God's revelation is becoming clearer. It is a great book to use for meditation. For this author comes from the perspective that resurrection is a reality. A short time later Jesus will fine tune this understanding and prove it with His own resurrection.*

**Wis. 2:12-24:** The bad guys are continuing their ideas on what they think they can get away with and what they need to do to feel good about themselves. Vs. 12: "Let us beset the just one (*Jesus*), because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings... (Vs. 16) He judges us debased...and boasts that God is his Father." (Vs. 20) "Let us condemn him to a shameful death for according to his own words, God will take care of him." (vs. 21-23) These were their thoughts, but they erred...they know not the hidden counsels of God; neither did they count on a recompense of holiness nor discern the innocent souls' reward. For God formed man to be imperishable..."

**Wis. 3:** Vs. 1-12 give the hidden counsels of God. "But the souls of the just are in the hand of God...Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed... But the wicked shall receive a punishment to match their thoughts." We hear much of this at many funerals for it is the reward of the just man after death. We don't hear many funerals tell the other side of the story from vs. 10: "But the wicked shall receive a punishment to match their thoughts, since they neglected justice and forsook the Lord..." Vs. 12 would never go well at a funeral, even if we got away with 10-11. "Their wives are foolish and their children wicked; accursed is their brood." Vs. 13-19 give some specific examples of this good and bad justice theme.

**Wis. 4:** This chapter finishes the thinking of the last half of chapter 3 on childlessness, which is not a big problem with the resurrection for fidelity to God will receive a greater reward.

Even dying young is not a problem with resurrection in sight. Vs. 7, “But the just man, though he die early shall be at rest.”

**Wis. 5:** This is to be read with the “just one” being Jesus or his faithful followers. Vs. 3-4, “His life we accounted madness, and his death dishonored. See how he is accounted among the sons of God; how his lot is with the saints!” These chapters should really make you want to be a good-guy.

## THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

*This is not an extension of 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees. More like a different perspective on some of the same time period.*

**2Mc. 3:** This is a great story. Simon is greedy and is looking to make friends with the king by using the money from the temple treasury. The High Priest Onias has everyone pray and fast with him so the representative of the King of Asia, Heliodorus, doesn’t get the temple money. Heliodorus tries and sees a terrifying horse and rider and two other powerful beings, who beat him. He realizes that God is protecting the temple.

**2Mc. 4:** Onias tries to get the king on his side but it doesn’t work for that king dies. So Simon causes more trouble and Jason the wicked brother of Onias becomes the next High Priest. He sets up gymnasiums and other things good people shouldn’t be doing. There is more and more intrigue and even Onias the original high priest is killed. There is a riot because of what is going on with the temple

**2Mc. 5:** Jason even starts killing other Jews who are revolting against these things. The king of Egypt thinks this is a civil war and uses it as an opportunity to attack Israel. In vs. 17 we get to what 1Maccabees was about: “But Judas Maccabeus with about nine others withdrew to the wilderness where he and his companions lived like wild animals in the hills, continuing to eat what grew wild to avoid sharing the defilement.”

**2Mc. 6:** The temple is further desecrated. Lots of bad things happen that are explained in vs. 12-17. “Now I beg those who read this book not to be disheartened by these misfortunes, but to consider that these chastisements were meant not for the ruin but for the correction of our nation.... Thus, in dealing with other nations, the Lord patiently waits until they reach the full measure of their sins before he punishes them; but with us he has decided to deal differently, in order that he may not have to punish us more severely later, when our sins have reached their fullness.” Vs. 18 starts the story of Eleazar, who prefers a “glorious death to a life of defilement” (18-31). This is all about the hope of resurrection and the judgment of God winning out against all evil. Vs. 26, “Even if, for the time being, I avoid the punishment of men, I shall never, whether alive or dead, escape the hands of the Almighty.” So you can see that the Jews are getting closer to what Jesus teaches about the resurrection and accomplishes.

**2Mc. 7:** The story of the mother and her seven faith-filled sons is also all about resurrection and judgment. In vs. 9, “At the point of death he said: “You accursed fiend, you are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up to live again forever. It is for his laws that we are dying.” And vs. 14, “but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.”

**2Mc. 8-11:** This is the section on Judas Maccabeus and his battles but they sound way cooler in this version. Like much of this book it is hard to follow because the author does not seem to be very worried about keeping things in chronological order. But one of the things that show up is angels. In 10:29 young men appear and help the good guys. “In the midst of the fierce battle, there appeared to the enemy from the heavens five majestic men riding on golden-bridled horses, who led the Jews on.” Remember that angels have been helping them since the time of Abraham. We haven’t heard as much about evil spirits, but by the time Jesus comes it seems that everyone realizes that if you have good angels you probably have bad ones. In 11:8 we have another appearance. “Suddenly, while they were still near Jerusalem, a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white garments and brandishing gold weapons.”

**2Mc. 12:** The story of the battle in vs. 38-46 is very significant to the Catholic understanding of Purgatory. Some of Judas’ soldiers wore amulets that were sacred to idols. They had been good men and good soldiers so Judas prayed that this indiscretion would not be held against them in their judgment. So he had a collection taken up among the soldiers that had survive the battle and sent it to Jerusalem as an expiatory sacrifice. This was noted as being excellent and noble, “In as much as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death.” (vs. 43-44) This is a strong OT witness to the Churches teaching that we, on earth, can make atonement for the sins of the dead.

**2Mc. 13-14:** Judas continues to stand up for what is right but he is not the only one. If you like blood and guts heroism, the story of Razis in 14:37-46 is filled with it.

**2Mc. 15:** The idea of a prophet coming back to give a message from God is described in vs. 14-16. Jeremiah comes back to present a gold sword to Judas. This foreshadows John the Baptist being seen as Elijah for the purpose of witnessing to Jesus as the Messiah.