

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Oct. 7, 2018

This Sunday, Oct. 7, your readings should be Day 295: Chapters 17-18 of the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapter 13:14-17 of the Book of Sirach, and Chapter 3:1-21 of the Gospel of St. John.

THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

2Tim. 2: Be tough, vs. 3; “Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” I wonder if he got slapped at Confirmation? Then Paul gives advice on being good. Vs. 14-26 are about being useful rather than quarreling or gossiping. Vs. 21: “If anyone cleanses himself of these things, he will be a vessel for lofty use, dedicated, beneficial to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

2Tim. 3: Bad things will happen but don’t fall into them because others have. Vs. 14-15; “But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed... you have known sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” Vs. 16 refers to the scripture that existed in Jesus’ time since the NT was still being written; “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching...” This is not a valid reason for “Sola Scriptura”, which has been the banner for many parts of the Protestant Reformation. But the question after all of this study is whether you see the OT as: “useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” With that as a given, the NT is an even greater blessing.

2Tim. 4: Vs. 3 predicts today’s society perfectly; “For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths.” Then Paul finishes the letter with his image of running the race (vs. 6-8), more of his personal struggles (9-18), and his greetings to friends.

THE LETTER OF JUDE

This is a really short letter that can be a little confusing because it mentions things from books we don’t have available.

The author gives advice by using OT examples of bad behavior. Vs. 20; “But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit.” Vs. 22; “On those who waver, have mercy...”

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

This gospel is very different than the other three. There are very few miracles. It is probably written much later than they were so John presumes that everyone knows about the miracles so he focuses on the teachings of Jesus.

Jn. 1: The first part with vs. 1-18 is John birth narrative. It is read at Christmas midday Masses. It does not focus on the earthly story but the heavenly mystery. Then comes what is called the Book of Signs. This is what John calls miracles. For him they are important only to point to something else. Vs. 19-34 focus on John the Baptist as a sign that points to Jesus. In vs. 29 Jesus is called the Lamb of God. This refers to the sacrifice God promised Abraham in place of Isaac, and the Pascal Lamb that was actually sacrificed for the freedom from Egyptian slavery. Vs. 35-51 is the reality of John the Baptist's disciples heading off to follow the real thing after leaving John who was the sign.

Jn. 2: Vs. 1-12 is the first miracle, the changing of water into wine at the wedding at Cana. Jesus is now pointing to the Eucharist by showing His power as God, over the elements. Vs. 13-15 tell of the cleansing of the temple. Having shown His power as God He is now acting as God and making the connection between the temple in Jerusalem and what it points to, which is the new temple that is Christ's body.

THE BOOK OF SIRACH

Sir. 9: Vs. 1-9: If the author were writing advice about dealing with women now he would have to add, stay away from pornography for it will ensnare your mind. The rest goes back to who to trust, which is what vs. 10-16 are about: having the right friends. The last two verses are about rulers which moves into the next chapter.

Sir. 10: In terms of rulers or leaders, God is in charge (vs. 4-5) so pride is foolishness (vs. 6-18). True honor comes in following the commandments (vs. 19-30).

Sir. 11: Vs. 16-17 are a good summary; "Error and darkness were formed with sinners from their birth, and evil grows old with evildoers. The Lord's gift remains with the just; his favor brings continued success." The miserly rich man in vs. 18-19 is the basis for a parable by Jesus about the rich fool in Lk.12:16-21. Vs. 23, "What further pleasure can be mine?" is obviously not a good question to live your life by, if you want to get to heaven.

Sir. 12: Jesus hung out with sinners but this chapter helps understand how to deal with them. Vs. 4-5; "Give to the good man, refuse the sinner; refresh the downtrodden, give nothing to the proud man. No arms for combat should you give him, lest he use them against yourself..." Jesus said to love your enemy (Lk. 6:27), but vs. 10 reminds us to "never trust your enemy." That is not contradictory.

Sir. 13:1-13: Vs. 4: "As long as the rich man can use you he will enslave you, but when you are exhausted, he will abandon you." In today's world this would be about corporations that are ruthless.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Jeremiah tries to get the people to reform to no avail. This book is warning after warning. But he does foretell a remnant being saved. The book is about the time from 612-587 B.C. Everything is falling apart in the two kingdoms.

Jer. 3: Vs. 14, “Return, rebellious children, say the Lord.” Vs. 15, “I will appoint over you shepherds after my own heart, who will shepherd you wisely and prudently.” Vs. 16, “They will in those days no longer say, “The ark of the covenant of the Lord!” They will no longer think of it, or remember it, or miss it, or make another.” (*When you have the Word of God made flesh, who needs words on stone tablets in an ark.*) The reason we can’t go beyond God the Father is in vs. 19b; “You would call me, “My Father,” I thought, and never cease following me. But like a woman faithless to her lover, even so have you been faithless to me...” It is also important to note that Jesus did not change the OT in calling God “Father.”

Jer. 4: This is not good news for Judah and Jerusalem. Vs. 14; “Cleanse your heart of evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved.” Vs. 27; “For thus says the Lord: Waste shall the whole land be; I will not wholly destroy it.”

Jer. 5: More bad news as a consequence of bad behavior. Vs. 1, “Roam the streets of Jerusalem, look about and observe, search through her public places, to find even one who lives uprightly and seeks to be faithful, and I will pardon her!” Vs. 23; “But this people’s heart is stubborn and rebellious; they turn and go away and say not in their hearts, “Let us fear the Lord, our God, who gives us rain early and late...””

Jer. 6: Bad news continues. Vs. 10; “See, the word of the Lord has become for them an object of scorn, which they will not have.” Aren’t you glad you are reading scripture? Vs. 20; “Of what use to me incense that comes from Sheba...” The wise man from Sheba must not have heard this part.

Jer. 7: God is clear about what He wants them to do. Vs. 5, “Only if you thoroughly reform your ways and your deeds; if each of you deals justly with his neighbor; if you no longer oppress the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow; if you no longer shed innocent blood in this place, or follow strange gods to your own hand, will I remain with you in this place, in the land which I gave your fathers long ago and forever.” Vs. 25-26, “...from the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers.”

Jer. 8: Vs. 22; “Is there no balm in Gilead, no physician there? Why grows not new flesh over the wound of the daughter of my people?” At this point the healer has not come, but now Jesus is the balm in Gilead. I think that is what the song is about.

Jer. 9: Still no good news. Vs. 10; “The cities of Judah I will make into a waste, where no one dwells.” If there is any good they need to know it comes from the Lord. Vs. 22; “Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength, nor the rich man glory in his riches; but rather, let him who glories, glory in this that in his prudence he know me, knows that I, the Lord, bring about kindness, justice and uprightness on the earth; for with such am I pleased, says the Lord.”

Jer. 10: Most of this chapter simply states that idol worship is really silly. Vs. 5; “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, they cannot speak; they must be carried about, for they cannot walk.”

Jer. 11: God tells Jeremiah to warn the people of Judah to follow the covenant. Notice that the Kingdom of Israel or Northern Kingdom is already lost and they still don’t listen. Vs. 15 is a reminder that empty promises and the wrong sacrifices will do no good. “Can vows and sacred meat turn away your misfortune from you?”

Jer. 12: The book is filled with these admonitions and the people do react. They try to get rid of him. Notice that the verse numbering is not in order. The scrolls must have gotten mixed up. Vs. 19, “Yet I, like a trusting lamb led to the slaughter, has not realized that they were hatching plots against me: “Let us destroy the tree in its vigor; let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will be spoken no more.” Jeremiah does not take this well. Vs. 20, “let me witness the vengeance you take on them...” Vs. 14-16 gives hope to the Gentiles like us: “But after plucking them up, I will pity them again and bring them back, each to his heritage, each to his land. And if they carefully learn my people’s custom of swearing by my name...”

Jer. 13: Jeremiah uses images from the Lord to make his point. In this chapter he used a linen loincloth, which rots to show how God’s precious people have hid from Him and are now rotten. He also uses quick images like a wineflask (vs. 12-13), a woman giving birth (vs. 22), etc.

Vs. 14: In vs. 11 God says He will not even listen to the people if they fast, etc. In vs. 13 Jeremiah tries to make an excuse for the people: “Ah! Lord God, I replied, it is the prophets who say to them, “You shall not see the sword; famine shall not befall you. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.” So God basically says He will be even harder on the false prophets. Then Jeremiah speaks of how the Lord mourns for the people in vs. 17-22.

Jer. 15: Vs. 1 lets us know that God would not even listen to the pleadings of Moses and Samuel, who had saved the people in the past by their prayers. So who will He listen to? Jeremiah wonders what he should do since the people did not listen to him and are just out to get him. Vs. 19-20; “Thus the Lord answered me: If you repent, so that I restore you, in my presence you shall stand; if you bring forth the precious without the vile, you shall be my mouthpiece. Then it shall be they who turn to you, and you shall not turn to them; and I will make you toward this people a solid wall of brass. Though they fight against you, they shall not prevail, for I am with you, to deliver and rescue you, say the Lord.” This whole part of Jeremiah should be read in the context of it foreshadowing Jesus, who is now the only one God will listen to.

Jer. 16: Vs. 1, Jeremiah is to use his life as a warning. In vs. 14-15, the Lord promises to bring them out of exile: “However, days will surely come, says the Lord, when it will no longer be said, “As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt”; but rather, “As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of the North and out of all the countries to which he had banished them.” I will bring them back to the land which I gave their fathers.” In vs. 16 he promises to send fishermen and hunters to track down the good and the bad. Jesus sends fishermen to pull us out of our wickedness.