

## **Bible Study Lesson Summary, Nov. 18, 2018**

*This Sunday, Nov. 18th, your readings should be Day 337: Chapter 40-41 of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapter 36:1-14 of the Book of Sirach, and Chapter 5 of the Book of Revelation.*

### **THE FIRST LETTER OF ST. JOHN**

**1Jn. 5:** Vs. 5-6: “Who [indeed] is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came through water and blood...” This represents baptism and Eucharist. Vs. 15: “And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked him for is ours.” Vs. 16 is an important qualification: “If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin...” Our sacrifice and prayer cannot help anyone in hell.

### **THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN**

This is a very quick letter to a family to keep them on the right track.

### **THE THIRD LETTER OF JOHN**

Vs. 8 is about supporting missionaries: “Therefore, we ought to support such persons, so that we may be co-workers in the truth. But also be good and don’t imitate evil.

### **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. 1:** The prologue is the key. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is also revealed to us in the Mass, in the scriptures and in the breaking of the bread. Vs. 4-8 are like the greeting at Mass. We are introduced as being in the presence of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is arranging the revelation. Vs. 9-20 are the penitential rite. Vs. 17: “When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said, ‘Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives....’”

**Rev. 2:** Now we have the liturgy of the Word. These first readings are like the NT letters by Paul, Peter, & John, etc. They are confronting the area churches with teachings and exhortations. Since

those writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit, we have these writings to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Ephesus, where John had been with Mary before her Assumption, is mentioned first. As John already mentioned in ch.1:9 he is now exiled on the island of Patmos. This was an island that was hard to get to and John had a cave in which he had these revelations. My personal guess is that the seven gold lampstands are good leaders who represent Christ, like a bishops or priests. He warns them about false teachers who would be representing Christ. Vs. 7 ties us right back to the beginning of the Bible: “To the victor I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that is in the garden of God.”

To Smyrna, which obviously is not as wealthy as the thriving seaport city of Ephesus, he warns against members of the assembly of Satan. Anyone who is not a part of the kingdom of God is a part of the kingdom of Satan.

To Pergamum he praises them, even though they live where the leader of the earthly kingdom of Rome is worshipped, they are staying strong with Jesus. But he does have a problem with some of them who are teaching some false teachings.

To Thyatira he has praise for their love, faith, service, and endurance. But he warns against a false teacher whom he calls Jezebel. That is probably not her real name since so much of this is written in code but she was probably someone in power in the city like Jezebel was.

**Rev. 3:** To Sardis he writes that most of them are spiritually dead because they have abandoned what they have been taught, but a few are still clean. Vs. 5: “The victor will thus be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge this name in the presence of my father and of his angels.” This is because they will be a part of this wedding banquet forever, wearing white robes, like the parable Jesus told of the wedding banquet.

To Philadelphia he praises their works but warns them of false teachers who would be tied to Satan. Vs. 12: “The victor I will make into a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never leave it again. On him I will inscribe the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem...” We will be living stones making up the temple of the Lord, or the Body of Christ, as we live forever in the New Jerusalem.

To Laodicea in vs. 15-16, he mocks that “you are neither cold nor hot” but lukewarm. “I will spit you out of my mouth.” Getting into heaven will obviously not be a matter of “I kind of knew God and kind of like my fellow man. Vs. 20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.” That is a famous image of Jesus at a door with no handle to open from the outside. We have to open our hearts to him from the inside.

**Rev. 4:** Now we have the Gospel reading. This isn't just the Word of God at the pulpit but the glory of God and the communion of elders, listening to what is described in vs. 7: “The first creature resembled a lion, the second was a calf, the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight. These are the Gospel writers. The response in heaven is like what we say in response to the Gospel reader's “A reading from the Gospel according to...” “Glory to you O Lord.” This is the message of salvation and we need to pay attention and praise God for his work. After the gospel we say, “Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.”

## THE BOOK OF SIRACH

**Sir. 32:** It starts with simple and wise etiquette. Then it lets us know how to understand God's actions in relation to us. Vs. 14: "He who would find God must accept discipline..."

**Sir. 33:** The church is the upholder of the laws of the Lord so this first part helps us understand that within her we will be safe. The verses. 19-33 must have been my Dad's concept of raising kids even though this calls them slaves. Vs. 26: "Make a slave work and he will look for his rest; let his hands be idle and he will seek to be free."

**Sir. 34:** Vs. 1-17 are about trusting in the Lord rather than anything else. Then the chapter finishes with good common sense.

**Sir. 35:** Vs. 14 is the OT version of being there for the most vulnerable: "He is not deaf to the wail of the orphan, nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint..." As I have mentioned before the unborn and the aged are in that category now.

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

**Ez. 25:** In vs. 3 we read that the Ammonites are being punished "Because you cried out your joy over the desecration of my sanctuary, the devastation of the land of Israel, and the exile of the house of Judah..." Moab, Edom, and the Philistines don't do well either. Have you ever heard of these countries lately? Either way I wouldn't suggesting gloating over their destruction.

**Ez. 26:** The city of Tyre will not fare well. Vs. 20 says: "Then I will thrust you down with those who descend into the pit, those of the bygone age: and I will make you dwell in the nether lands, in the everlasting ruins, with those who go down to take your place in the land of the living." Burial in those days was placing a body in a cave. After a while the bones were collected and put in a pit with all the other bones of the ancestors. It saved gravesites. So this has a double meaning of their bones going to that pit but also the pit of hell. But remember that as God cleans house it this way it does not discount personal judgment, so when a city is destroyed not everyone goes to hell, like the innocents.

**Ez. 27:** As a seaport Tyre will not do well either.

**Ez. 28:** The prince of Tyre will also be in trouble. Vs. 6-7: "Because you have thought yourself to have the mind of a god, therefore I will bring against you foreigners, the most barbarous of nations..." Vs. 25-26 tell us that all this destruction will happen so that as he gathers the house of Israel back from exile, that they will be able to dwell secure.

**Ez. 29:** Vs. 9 summarizes what will happen to Egypt. "The land of Egypt shall become a desolate waste..." I've been there and it still is. Then in vs. 17-20 we read that God will reward Nebuchadnezzar, who didn't get enough wealth from Tyre, with the wealth of Egypt.

**Ez. 30:** This isn't just the Lord going against Egypt but also all her allies. (See vs. 5) Again this will be the work of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Ez. 31:** This story for the Pharaoh of Egypt about the cypress that grew lofty, even above the clouds but then cut down is concluded with vs. 18b: "Such are Pharaoh and all his hordes, says the Lord God."

**Ez. 32:** In vs. 2 we read that Pharaoh is like a sea monster. In vs. 4 God say "I will leave you on the land." So he will be like a beached whale. The starting in vs. 17 is more bad news for all of Egypt.

**Ez. 33:** Ezekiel is named the Lord's watchman. In vs. 6: "But if the watchman sees the sword coming and fails to blow the warning trumpet, so that the sword comes and takes anyone, I will hold the watchman responsible for that person's death, even though that person is taken because of his own sin." Vs. 11 is an important description of God: "As I live, says the Lord, I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live." Then in vs. 12: "The virtue which a man has practiced will not save him on the day that he sins; neither will the wickedness that a man has done bring about his downfall on the day that he turns from his wickedness." This is not a football game in which we keep score. It is a matter of becoming loyal to the king or not. In vs. 22 "My mouth was opened, and I was dumb no longer." This is déjà vu all over from Ez. 24:27. As a preacher I appreciate vs. 32b: "They listen to your words, but they will not obey them. But when it comes—and it is surely coming!—they shall know that there was a prophet among them."

**Ez. 34:** This whole chapter is about good and bad shepherds and the consequences.

**Ez. 35:** This chapter is about the coming downfall of Mount Seir in Edom.

**Ez. 36:** God will rebuild Israel. Vs. 24: "For I will take you away from among the nations, gather you from all foreign lands, and bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you." This is really about heaven which is the only place it can be and last.

**Ez. 37:** This story of the bones being resurrected is important because it reminds us that this new life is not just for those who survive but even those who have died, which is what we believe as Christians. The story of the two sticks is a reminder that we need to stick together; pun intended. But more important is that heaven will not be two countries.

**Ez. 38-39:** This is just so we know that the bad guys will not win, but as in Ez. 39:28: "Thus they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God, since I who exiled them among the nations, will gather them back on their land, not leaving any of them behind." Do you feel like you are exiled here? You are since you were meant to live in the kingdom of Heaven.