

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Mar. 18, 2018

This Sunday, Mar. 11, your readings should be Day 162: Chapters 19-20 of the First Book of Kings, Proverbs 3:1-18, and Chapter 10 of St. Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians.

There will be no class on Psalm Sunday or Easter Sunday so you have two weeks to catch up on your reading or simply to have a holy, Holy Week. So the readings for April 8th will be Day 169.

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS.

1Cor. 4: Paul describes apostles as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, vs. 1. But says that God will judge him and others. Then starting in vs. 6 he again frets about the divisions and then he gets even more specific about life as an apostle. It probably doesn't make you want to be an apostle. (6-13) The Kingdom of God is not about inflated people but a special kind of power. Vs. 21; "Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a gentle spirit?"

1Cor. 5: Paul starts this with a specific case that goes unnamed, a person sleeping with his father's wife. In vs. 5 he tells them to deliver this man to Satan. He might learn from that experience. In vs. 6-13 he is more generic and talks about clearing out more yeast, or sin.

1Cor. 6: Here he is saying the matters of dealing with immorality should be dealt with by the church not the other courts. That line of thinking is still problematic in our society. Vs. 9-10 go in the face of "God loves us just the way we are." "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. Vs. 12 starts his teaching to clear up their misunderstanding of morality. They think it doesn't matter. He reminds them that they are members of the body of Christ. You had better not treat Christ that way. Vs. 20: "Therefore glorify God in your body."

1Cor. 7: His advice to those who are married and unmarried is great. A husband's body belongs to his wife and vice-versa. Vs. 8, the unmarried should work on self-control but if their urges lead them toward marriage then get married." They had better be careful in choosing because vs. 10-11 says no divorce. Vs. 12-14 is about staying married to an unbeliever. Vs. 15-16 says that if the unbeliever does the divorce it is okay. This is called the Pauline Privilege by the church. The freed Christian is then free to marry since the first marriage was not sacramental but the marriage they get into must be to a believer.

Vs. 17-20 says circumcision is meaningless. Vs. 21-24 is about slavery as it was in that time period. His main point is to hold onto the idea that that person is free because of the dignity given him by baptism.

Vs. 25-35 is where he deals with the idea that time is short so use it well. So deal with sexuality in an appropriate way. Vs. 39-40 is his teaching that marriage is until death parts them only. Not for eternity.

1Cor. 8: This chapter is about food. It is not sinful, but he is worried that it can be an occasion of sin because it might tempt people to idols.

1Cor. 9: This is a great chapter for priests to meditate on. There are lots of good lessons. It also helps parishes understand why they pay salaries to their priests.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 147: Jesus is talking His dad. Some dads might focus more on the child who is strong and athletic. Vs. 11, “Rather the Lord takes pleasure in the devout, those who await his faithful care.” This is a much better basis for judgment.

Psalm 148: Vs. 7-8, “Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deep waters; you lightning and hail, snow and clouds, storm winds that fulfill his command...” Even what we consider harmful, Jesus knows is important and part of the plan of the beautiful creation.

Psalm 149: This is a psalm that is very prominent in the priest’s prayer book. It is said for most middle level feasts and every four Sundays. It is also one that confuses me, especially vs. 6-9. “With the praise of God in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to bring retribution on the nations, punishment on the peoples... To execute the judgments decreed for them—such is the glory of all Gods faithful.” I’m not sure what we are to do to punish injustice done by others?

Psalm 150: One of the simplest and most elegant prayers of praise, which have inspired a few contemporary songs and even how we sing them. I just love the idea that 150 psalms end with several prayers of praise, kind of like Easter joy after Lent.

Bible Study Wisdom Literature

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Some books are to understand the history of the Chosen People. This gave them a context by which to think of themselves. Most of us do not think of how important this is. But the attitudes of the people we grew up with form us. Within these books of history we have seen God’s attempts to form the people of His Kingdom. These are the guideposts that keep us on track. Most of these guideposts can be recognized by the covenants that God set up with his people at the time.

- There is the commissioning of Adam to be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen. 1:28)
- He renewed that commissioning with Noah. (Gen. 9:1)
- There is the promise to Abraham to be the father of a host of nations. (Gen. 17:4)
- With Moses He said: “I have decided to lead you up out of the misery of Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Ex. 3:17)
- With David God promises: “He will establish a house for you... I will raise up your heir after you...and I will make his kingdom firm. It is he who shall build a house for my name. And I will make his royal throne firm forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.” (2Sam. 7:11-14)

The prophetic books take that identity and work with its moral fiber. The prophets do their best to keep the people close to God so that they don’t lose their identity.

Both of them have a second purpose of identifying the coming Messiah. The Wisdom Literature, Psalms, Proverbs, etc., takes the morality to another level. It takes different parts of God's presence and looks at different qualities of God and tries to understand it. In history God reveals Himself through His actions. With His prophets He reveals Himself through this morality and promise. Through the Wisdom Literature, we see His emotions and His Spirit. In the Book of Ecclesiastes we see what life would be without Him.

The psalms gave us the prayers and emotions of Jesus as He talked with the Father. Proverbs sounds more like the Father speaking to His children.

Prv. 1: In vs. 2-7 we are given the positive purpose of the book. "That men may appreciate wisdom and discipline, my understand words of intelligence... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; wisdom and instruction fools despise." Then comes the guidance concerning the negative. Vs. 10, "My son, should sinners entice you, and say, "Come along with us!" Vs. 15, "My son, walk not in the way with them, hold back your foot from their path!"

Prv. 2: Seek wisdom and (vs. 5) "Then will you understand the fear of the Lord; the knowledge of God you will find; for the Lord gives wisdom..." That will save "you from the way of evil men..." and save "you from the wife of another, from the adulteress with her smooth words..."

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

1Kg. 6: Note that the temple is built with the best materials and is beautiful and amazing. It has to be for it foreshadows heaven. Vs. 7 says: "The temple was built of stone dressed at the quarry, so that no hammer, axe, or iron tool was to be heard in the temple during its construction." This seems to be to remind us that we are going to be a part of God's temple in Heaven, the Body of Christ but that we are being prepared on this earthly quarry. Then we will fit in when we enter heaven. So be prepared to be hammered and chiseled. Notice also that it is more than building a church because for the people of Israel this there is no separation between church and state. The reason is that the law of God is what governs both; i.e. vs. 12, "As to this temple you are building –if you observe my statutes, carry out my ordinances, keep and obey all my commands, I will fulfill toward you the promise I made to your father David." Many Protestants think that God is against all graven images so Catholics are then evil for having statues. This is only evil if we would be worshipping the statues. For vs. 24-25 is fulfilling God's command to make an image of a cherubim. The churches on earth should be miniatures of what heaven will be like with images of who is in heaven.

1Kg. 7: Vs. 29 speaks of more images, "On the panels between the frames there were lions, oxen, and cherubim; and on the frames likewise, above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths in relief." This sounds like Cabela's Sporting Goods Store with all their stuffed animals.

1Kg. 8: In vs. 1 the Ark of the Covenant is brought from the City of David (Bethlehem) to the temple in Jerusalem for the dedication. Jesus and Mary come from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for the Presentation. Vs. 9, "There was nothing in the ark but the two stone tablets which Moses had put there at Horeb". I'm not sure what happened to the manna and the staff of Aaron. Vs. 19-20, the Lord promised that one from David's line who would be a son to God would build the temple. So

vs. 20 is not quite accurate for it has not been totally fulfilled. For as glorious as this temple was, it will be nothing compared to the temple of the Body of Christ in heaven. But Solomon was not wise enough to know that much of the future. Starting with vs. 22, Solomon's prayer asks that the temple be the place where people could go to get their prayers answered and their sins forgiven. Jesus is the fulfillment of that temple, even to the point of having their sins forgiven.

1Kg. 9: God appears to Solomon in a dream, like in 1Kg.3:5. God renews the covenant with Solomon and makes sure that he understands that it only works if the people are faithful, vs. 4. Otherwise vs. 8 says the temple could be a heap of ruins.

1Kg. 10: The Queen of Sheba comes to visit Solomon and check out his wisdom. Vs. 13, "King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired and asked for, besides such presents as were given her from Solomon's royal bounty." This is what God gives us in heaven if we seek and follow His Son's words. Solomon became wealthy as promised by God when he had asked for wisdom to judge his people wisely. In vs. 28-29 Solomon starts collecting horses and chariots. I see this as when he started to go to the dark side, thinking he was great and didn't need God.

1Kg. 11: Solomon sins by worshiping false gods and God turns away from him. Vs. 29, "Ahijah (*the prophet*) took off his new cloak, tore it into twelve pieces, and said to Jeroboam (*Solomon's servant*); 'Take ten pieces for yourself; the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I will tear away the kingdom from Solomon's grasp and will give our ten of the tribes.'" Only the land of Judah is left for Solomon for there is no land for the Levites. Later it says that the tribe of Benjamin is down in Judah also. Solomon dies at the end of this chapter.

1Kg. 12: From here to the end of the Second Book of Kings you need a chart to know the players.

Israel, ten tribes, Northern Kingdom
922-721 BC Fell to Assyria

Judah, two tribes, Southern Kingdom
922-587 BC fell to Babylon

Most Bibles have a chart that lists all the kings of each kingdom. You might want to have that in front of you while you read this section. I will not be focusing on this at all but just on some of the stories.

Rehoboam rules over Judah with two tribes and the Levites and Jeroboam rules over the other ten tribes or Israel. Since Jeroboam can't go to Jerusalem to worship he sets up new places of worship with calves of gold (vs. 28). Why do they always worship cows?

1Kg. 13: King Jeroboam has the ten northern territories which do not include a temple so he builds one trying to control God. The man of God comes to Bethel, the place of the new altar. Coming from Judah and the real temple he prophesies against Jeroboam saying in vs. 2: "O altar, altar, the Lord says, 'A child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, who shall slaughter upon you the priests of the high places who offer sacrifice upon you, and he shall burn human bones upon you.'" Jeroboam tests the power of the prophet and loses the use of his hand. Pleading with the prophet he gets it back but then tries to convince the prophet to abandon the temple and legitimize his territory by joining him by breaking bread with him. The prophet first resists but then is tricked into it. He is killed by a lion in vs. 24 for disobeying the Lord. This is a warning for those who try to get to God by their own methods rather than the ones He gives us. It also warns us not to have Mass where we aren't authorized.

1Kg. 14: Jeroboam's son is dying so he sends his wife to the aging prophet, Ahijah. Because of the evil that Jeroboam has done Ahijah says in vs. 10: "Therefore, I am bringing evil upon the house of

Jeroboam; I will cut off every male in Jeroboam's line, whether slave or freeman in Israel, and will burn up the house of Jeroboam completely, as though dung were being burned." But in vs. 20 it says: "The length of Jeroboam's reign was twenty-two years. He rested with his ancestors, and his son Nadab succeeded him as king. That was the northern kingdom. Rehoboam, son of Solomon was king in Judah but did evil in God's sight but worshipping false gods. The king of Egypt took the gold treasures from the temple to show God's displeasure. Rehoboam was at constant war with Jeroboam. When Rehoboam died his son Abijam became king of Judah.

1Kg. 15: Abijam was the next king of Judah and was evil. His son Asa took his place but was good and followed God's law. Baasha of the house of Issachar killed Nadab and became king. Vs. 29, "Once he was king, he killed off the entire house of Jeroboam, not leaving a single soul to Jeroboam but destroying him utterly, according to the warning which the Lord had pronounced through his servant, Ahijah the Shilonite..." Baasha was evil also.

1Kg. 16: Vs. 3, the Lord said: "I will destroy you, Baasha, and your house; I will make your house like that of Jeroboam, son of Nebat." His servant, Zimri, entered while Baasha was drunk and: "he struck and killed him...and reigned in his place. ...Once he was seated on the royal throne, he killed off the whole house of Baasha, not sparing a single male relative or friend of his." Zimri is killed by his own hand when he found out his general, Omri was marching against him. Omri and Tibni vied for the kingdom and Omri won out. He was evil, died and his son Ahab replaced him as king of the north. Ahab was more evil than those before him and even married Jezebel. They worshipped Baal together.

1Kg. 17: Elijah the prophet arrives and in vs 1 predicts a drought to Ahab. He leaves the area and goes to Zarephath, where he helps out a widow and her son. In Lk. 4:24, Jesus quotes this story when he tells the people of his home territory "No prophet is accepted in his own native place." Elijah brings the widow's son back to life. Vs. 24 says, "'Now indeed I know that you are a man of God," the woman replied to Elijah. "The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth.'" Jesus does the same things to prove he is the Son of God, provides food and brings people back to life.

1Kg. 18: The story of Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal is an amazing story of the power of God working through his prophet. The message is all about trusting in God. As a sign of His blessing the Lord had it rain.