

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Sept. 2, 2018

This Sunday, Sept. 2, your readings should be Day 281: Chapters 53-55 of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 5 of the Book of Sirach, and Chapter 8 of the Letter to the Hebrews.

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Heb. 1: Notice there is no introduction in this document. It is not really a letter but strictly a teaching. This is a very sophisticated theology, not just a solution problems. The beauty of the descriptions of God's work and His plan are amazing. The first 4 verses: God's revelation was partial before but now through a son who was co-creator and now sits at His right hand. Vs. 5-14 are a beautiful description of the total difference between an angel and the Son of God.

Heb. 2: Vs. 1-4 let us know we had better not ignore the great salvation that was accompanied by "signs, wonders, various acts of power, and distribution of the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will." In vs. 7-8 psalm 8 is quoted: "What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor..." Then the author explains these verses. Vs. 15, we are saved from the power of death, which is the devil's scare-tactic. Vs. 16, he didn't do this for angels but for us. Vs. 18, "Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested."

Heb. 3: Vs. 1-6 are a way of showing Jesus as being more important than Moses. Remember that this is the Letter to the Hebrews so this is important. Moses was their greatest. Vs. 7-11 are referring back to psalm 95. This lengthy reference is again targeting the Hebrew audience with a message beyond what they have had in the OT. Vs. 14; "We have become partners of Christ if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end..." The beginning of the reality would be the OT. So we know this is addressed to Christian Jews, helping them make the connections from what they grew up with.

Heb. 4: The author continues with more explanation on "They shall not enter into my rest." He reminds them that they must still have a day of rest. In vs. 14-16 we refocus on Jesus. Vs. 15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who had similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin."

Heb. 5: Jesus did not become high priest as His own choice but by being anointed by the Father at His baptism: "You are my son, this day I have begotten you" and "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Jesus was obedient to the Father in this way. Vs. 11-14 remind us that this is not easy teaching, not milk.

Heb. 6: In vs. 1-8 they are challenged to go deep into this teaching and produce good fruit. In vs. 9-12 they are about that fruit. Vs. 10, "For God is not unjust so as to overlook our work and the love you have demonstrated for his name by having served and continuing to serve the holy ones." The chapter finishes with the reminder that this all is God's promise, which will not change.

Heb. 7: Melchizedek appeared out of nowhere, no ancestry. Vs. 3: "Without father, mother, or ancestry, without beginning of days or end of life, thus made to resemble the Son of God, he remains a priest forever." Vs. 11-25 explain in depth that this is a greater priesthood than the tribe

of Levi. In vs. 26-28 Jesus is shown to be the greatest priest or the great high priest. Vs. 27: “He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did that once for all when he offered himself.”

THE BOOK OF SIRACH

Sir. 1:16-29: This is more on fear of the Lord. I had a two-thousand pound pet bull names “Spot.” I knew what he could do to me in one second. I feared that. It was a part of what he was. I didn’t want to make him angry. If you would like to call that a healthy respect, that if fine. But I get nervous about “wonder and awe” which is what we tend to teach in terms of God in place of fear of the Lord.

Sir. 2: Vs. 1, “My son, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Vs.6, “Trust God and he will help you; make straight your ways and hope in him.” All of the Book of Sirach sounds like a wise man or teacher, giving life lessons to young people. Vs. 16; “those who love him are filled with his law.” St. John put this in his letters. It is also the basis of the longest psalm, 119.

Sir. 3: Vs. 3-4 is important if you want to make up for your sins. “He who honors his father atones for sins; he stores up riches who reveres his mother.” The same with vs.29, “alms atone for sins.” These are based on the idea of how families work. With our culture throwing out families, they will not help.

Sir. 4: Vs. 4: “A beggar in distress do not reject...” This does not include professional beggars. Vs. 11-19 aren’t just about not being stupid. They are about having wisdom. It is the difference between, don’t fall into that pit, vs. climb that mountain. Vs. 31 is good: “Let not your hand be open to receive and clenched when it is time to give.”

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Is. 39: This is the last of the inserted history chapters. King Hezekiah did not use his 15 years well and lines up with Assyria, so the bad stuff will start happening again.

Is. 40: This chapter is the promise of salvation. In Isaiah’s time it was that a remnant would be saved. But the real fulfillment starts with John the Baptist who is described in vs. 3-5: “A voice cries out: in the desert prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in...” Vs. 18, “To whom can you liken God?” This is the theme for vs. 12-31.

Is. 41: This chapter through chapter 45 describe the work of the Messiah, who will bring salvation. Vs. 10 is about this powerful God showing His love: “Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.” His love includes justice.

Is. 42: This chapter describes the Savior: “Here is my servant who I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit...” This should remind you of the Baptism of the Lord. Vs. 9: “See, the earlier things have come to pass, new ones I now foretell; before they spring into being, I announce them to you.” That is about all the prophecies that God provides to point to His work of salvation. Vs. 10 starts a positive plan of salvation. Vs. 18 starts why this is mercy. It is because they don’t deserve it at this point.

Is. 43: Vs. 18-19: “Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new!” Vs. 20: “Wild beasts honor me, jackals and ostriches...” This is the new way, or as we know it, the New Heavens and New Earth.

Is. 44: In vs. 6 it says: “Thus says the Lord, Israel’s King and redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; there is no God but me.” Then vs. 9-20 are God mocking idols and the people who would depend on them. Vs. 28, “I say of Cyrus: My shepherd, who fulfills my every wish; He shall say of Jerusalem, “Let her be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.” This fits Isaiah’s time but also foreshadows the future, with Jesus as our shepherd leading us to the New Jerusalem.

Is. 45: Vs. 1: Thus says the Lord to his anointed, Cyrus...” Cyrus is the king of Persia, who has conquered Babylon. The whole chapter is about Cyrus being the leader God, the Almighty, has chosen to punish His people in Israel; but that he had better not let it go to his head for God is still God and Cyrus had better not get a big head. The only hope comes in vs. 18-25 where God starts to let the “descendant of Jacob” know to “Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of the earth, for I am God; there is no other!” (vs. 22) Then in vs. 23b we hear a phrase that St. Paul will use “every knee shall bend...” (Phil. 2.10)

Is. 46: God declares His power in vs. 5: “Whom would you compare me with, as an equal, or match me against, as though we were alike?” This is God’s word against the gods of Babylon.

Is. 47: God explains Babylon’s position. Vs. 6: “Angry at my people, I profaned my inheritance, and I gave them into your hand; but you showed them no mercy...” Vs. 11: “But upon you shall come evil you will not know how to predict...”

Is. 48: God once again gives His word to his own people. Vs. 3: “Things of the past I foretold long ago, they went forth from my mouth, I let you hear of them; then suddenly I took action and they came to be.” Vs. 9-10, “For the sake of my name I restrain my anger, for the sake of my renown I hold it back from you, lest I should destroy you. See, I have refined you like silver...” Vs. 17b-18: “I, the Lord, your God, teach you what is for your good, and lead you on the way you should go. If you would hearken to my commandments, your prosperity would be like a river...”

Is. 49: This chapter is ultimately about Jesus. There are a lot of lines that should seem familiar. Vs. 1b: “The Lord called me from birth, from my mother’s womb he gave me my name.” Vs. 4: “Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength, yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God. Vs. 6b: “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Vs. 8-13 are about the ultimate salvation in heaven (vs. 10) “They shall not hunger or thirst, nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them...” The powerful pro-life line is vs. 15: “Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?”

Is. 50: Vs. 1-3 are simply about God not forgetting his people but they have not remembered Him. Vs. 4-11 are about a prophet but ultimately about Jesus, the Word of God. Vs. 6b is even about the trial of Jesus, “My face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.”

Is. 51: This chapter is what God is promising. Vs. 1 sets it up, “Listen to me, you who pursue justice, who seek the Lord...” Vs. 5, “I will make my justice come speedily...” Vs. 6b; “My salvation shall remain forever...” Vs. 14: “The oppressed shall soon be released; they shall not die and go down into the pit...” Vs. 17-23 are about the cup of wrath that God will give His people to drink, but will eventually take it from them and give it to their enemies.

Is. 52: Vs. 1-12 are about restoring Jerusalem to eternal glory. Vs. 13-15 are about Jesus. Vs. 14 is again about the trial of Jesus; “Even as many were amazed at him—So marred was his look beyond that of man.”