

BIBLE STUDY
March 7 and 10, 2022

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18

Luke 9: 28b-36

Philippians 3: 17-4: 1

1. Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18

- God makes a covenant with Abram. A covenant is a solemn agreement between two parties. It is noteworthy that God is binding himself to Abram. The Creator is putting himself in obligation to the creature. God is entering into a relationship with Abram.
- God promises Abram a reward but he objects that a reward will do him no good if he does not have an heir to leave it to. God then has Abram go outside and look at the stars of the sky. If he could count them, that will be the number of his descendants.
- Abram believes God. Although it seems impossible, he trusts God's word and believes in his promise. This act of faith makes Abram righteous, i.e., in a right relationship with God. Abram's faith is the model for our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Abram then asks for a sign and God answers with an oath. Cutting up animals was a means of making a treaty or an agreement in the ancient world.
- God foretells what will happen to Abram's descendants. They will be enslaved for 400 years and then God will bring them out of captivity. However, Abram will live in peace. In later generations his descendants will live in this land that God is promising him.
- The fire passing among the cut up animals is a sign of God ratifying the covenant.

2. Luke 9: 28b-36

- Luke wants us to connect Jesus' transfiguration with the prediction of the passion and the conditions of discipleship that came eight days before. Eight days is also a symbol of the new creation. God rested on the seventh day after Creation. Jesus rose on the eighth day or the first day of the week—the start of the new creation in Jesus the Lord.
- Jesus takes the inner group of disciples, Peter, James and John, who witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter and will be with him in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- This deeply mystical experience of Jesus takes place while he is praying—very typical of Luke. Important moments in Jesus' life happen while he is in prayer.
- Jesus is transfigured. His glory as Son of God shines forth. Moses and Elijah, who represent the Law and the Prophets, who saw the glory of God indirectly, and it was believed that they would return in the time of the Messiah.

- Jesus speaks to Moses and Elijah about his exodus. Exodus means departure. Exodus, of course, refers to the Israelites' liberation from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. Jesus' death and resurrection will also be an exodus which brings God's people from the slavery of sin and death to the liberation of eternal life. The vision has to do with Jesus' identity as the true Messiah who will save his people through his suffering.
- Peter suggests that they construct three tents. He is probably referring to the feast of Booths which is a harvest thanksgiving feast and associated with the coming of the Messiah.
- God's voice is heard from the cloud just as it was heard at Jesus' baptism. Jesus is again identified as God's chosen Son, but now the command is to "listen to him." Listen to what he is telling you that the Son of Man has to suffer to enter into his glory. Believe him when he says that he will be a suffering Messiah. Trust him when he tells you that we come to glory through what we suffer. Disciples will share in Jesus' suffering that will lead them to glory.

Philippians 3: 17-4:1

- Paul encourages the Philippians to imitate him. This advice is not offered through arrogance or pride but in sincerity and humility. Paul is known to have centered his life on Christ and he desires the church to follow him in centering their life on Christ, too.
- Some people do not accept the message of Jesus' cross. They do not see suffering as the path to salvation. Rather, they live for the pleasures and rewards of this present moment.
- In contrast believers set their sights on heaven. Their true citizenship is in heaven. They do not belong to this world. They are pilgrims on a journey to heaven. They put their hope in heavenly things.
- True believers await the Lord's return from heaven. He will transform us from earthly bodies into glorified bodies like his resurrected body. The power that raised Jesus from the dead and that will bring all things into unity under his lordship is the same power that will transform us.