

Bible Study Lesson Summary, July 5, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 110-116 on your reading guide.

Jos. 16: The key line in this chapter is vs. 10, "But they did not drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, who live on within Ephraim to the present day, though they have been impressed as laborers." This is another reminder that this is not heaven but the Promised Land. There are still bad influences within it. So each generation would have to struggle with staying faithful to God as they dealt with these bad influences or temptations.

Jos. 17: Vs. 12, "...the Canaanites persisted in this region. Then we have to remember that Joseph was one of the twelve sons but he had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who each got a section of land. Vs. 18-19, if they are strong and can overpower the bad influence of these Canaanites they will have more land. If we overcome temptation we will have more grace.

Jos. 18-19: By casting lots for the last seven tribes they didn't have to fight over them. They would have seen it as the will of the Lord. This would be an interesting way of doing inheritances. Some families are ready to kill each other over an estate. In heaven it will not be that way. We will accept the decision of the Lord.

Jos. 20: Setting up the cities of asylum. This is a little like Purgatory. These towns are for those who are not bad enough to be killed by but are not good enough to be with the general population, only Saints in heaven.

Jos. 21: The Levites needed cities but not extensive land. They would live in the cities but would not be raising livestock. They would only need a little pasture land so the animals that were brought to them would have something to eat as they waited for the feast that they would be sacrificed for. Actually having more land would have tempted them to not do their priestly work. For this same reason monks have vows of poverty but still have a place to live, some more strict than others. This section ends with Jos.21:45, "Not a single promise that the Lord made to the house of Israel was broken, every one was fulfilled."

Jos. 22: Vs. 10, "When the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh came to the region of the Jordan in the land of Canaan, they built there at the Jordan a conspicuously large altar." This was in addition to the altar of the Lord. This causes great concern and is finally resolved but is problematic. It is a problem because it is like someone setting up a second Vatican City in another country. Jesus spoke of concerns like this several times. Once in Mk.9:40, it was, "if they are not against us they are for us." This was when miracles were done in his name by other men who were not apostles and Jesus let it go. And yet He prayed for unity. That is why we have such a struggle figuring out which Christian Churches are okay and which are not.

Jos. 23: Key lines in Joshua's closing remarks and state of the nation include: Vs. 7, "You must not invoke their gods, or swear by them, or serve them, or worship them, but you must remain

loyal to the Lord, your God,..." Vs. 16, "If you transgress the covenant of the Lord, your God, which he enjoined on you, serve other gods and worship them, the anger of the Lord will flare up against you and you will quickly perish from the good land which he has given you." Being a part of the Church is not enough. You have to stay faithful.

Jos. 24: Vs. 13, "I gave you a land which you had not tilled and cities which you had not built, to dwell in; you have eaten of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant." We will receive what we did not earn on our own. Vs. 26, "Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was in the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said to all the people, "This stone shall be our witness, for it has heard all the words which the Lord spoke to us. It shall be a witness against you, should you wish to deny your God." The oak foreshadows the cross and the stone (rock) is Peter and his authority in the Church. The book ends with Joshua, the type of savior, dying.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The number 12 is so prominent in the Bible. Now we have 12 Judges. Much like the 12 apostles, some are barely known and others have a big impact. But not following them always leads to disaster. By the way, one of the earliest names given to the followers of Christ was "the Church of the Twelve."

Jgs. 1: The Chosen People do what God wants and they win battles. The problem is that all the bad influences of the other cultures remain which will continue to provide temptation for the Israelites. Vs. 5-7: Here we have a Canaanite, King Adonibezek, getting punished by the tribe of Judah. He realizes that he is getting treated just like he had treated his enemies. How you judge will be how you are judged was the motto of Jesus. What goes around comes around is another version. Remember that these first battles mentioned are in the area of Judea, which is the desert territory of Israel. Jerusalem is arid and south is all desert, the Negeb.

Jgs. 2: Vs. 13, "Because they had thus abandoned him and served Baal and the Ashtarothe, the anger of the Lord flared up against Israel, and he delivered them over to plunderers who despoiled them. Then in vs. 18 we get the theme of the whole book. "Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, he would be with the judge and save them from the power of their enemies as long as the judge lived; it was thus the Lord took pity on their distressful cries of affliction under their oppressors. But when the judge died, they would relapse and do worse than their fathers, following other gods in service and worship, relinquishing none of their evil practices or stubborn conduct." This is the constant problem of people expecting their leaders to be good and holy, even though they are not holy themselves. Bob Kerrey once said, why do you expect leaders to be holier than everyone else, when they are elected from the people. My answer is that we are trying to elect the best of the best, but we are all going to be judged by God.

Jgs. 3: Vs. 6 shows why God is worried: "In fact, they took their daughters in marriage, and gave their own daughters to their sons in marriage, and served their gods." God knows that women have tremendous power. Ehud is the second judge and is left-handed. This would be an

odd thing for us to mention but for them it was as significant as us mentioning that a tennis player was left-handed. It means that there would be a different strategy needed to defeat him, and since it was so unusual, it gave him an edge.

Jgs. 4: God uses, Deborah, the prophetess, to judge His people. Then He has Jael, wife of Heber, to do the dirty work of driving a tent peg through the bad guy's head after giving him milk to make him sleepy. The Canaanite general, Sisera, underestimated Jael, because she was a woman. By the way, this was a scary moment for Satan. He had been warned that the woman would strike at his head while he struck at her heel. He would have wondered if this was the woman? No, she was just a foreshadowing of Mary.

Jgs. 5: The long song of praise of God and Deborah. Someone must have loved her enough to write this song.

Jgs. 6: Gideon is called to be a leader but he doesn't want to take anything for granted. An angel isn't enough, he wants signs. God gives them to him. I have talked to so many people who have been like this. God just about has to knock them on the side of their head to get them to believe. How many signs do each of us get throughout our lives and yet we always want another one? The biggest problem is that I resemble this problem.

The Book of Psalms

Psalm 110: This psalm is about Jesus being both King of kings, and great High Priest.

Psalm 111: This prayer of Jesus is a psalm of praise of God that should be our words from day to day.

Psalm 112: This is about heaven and Hell. Vs. 3, (Heaven) "Wealth and riches shall be in their homes; their prosperity shall endure forever." Vs. 10, (Hell) "The wicked shall be angry to see this; they will gnash their teeth and waste away; the desires of the wicked come to nothing."

Psalm 113: A psalm of praise of God for taking care of those who have so little.

Psalm 114: A song of praise to God for His miracles in the desert, but it makes me wonder if the Father and Son would joke and laugh about creation. They put so many cool things in it, like "the mountains skipped like rams; the hills, like lambs of the flock."

Psalm 115: This is a prayer praising the greatness of God. In Vs. 5-6 there is a great portrayal of the foolishness of false idols, or our good luck charms; “They have mouths but do not speak, eyes but do not see. They have noses but do not smell.” Vs. 17-18: “The dead do not praise the Lord, all those gone down into silence. It is we who bless the Lord, both now and forever.” Without Jesus’ resurrection and the hope of the same for us, the prayer of Jesus would be a lie. Picture Jesus praying this as he was dying on the cross.

Psalm 116: Vs. 11, has been quoted to show that Jesus could not be sinless, but if this is a prayer of Jesus, which I believe, then it makes sense. “I said in my alarm, ‘No one can be trusted!’” He makes this statement during His Passion and His panic. Vs. 13, “I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.” And vs. 16, “Lord, I am your servant, your servant, the child of your maid-servant; you have loosed my bonds.” Mary even called herself the maidservant of the Lord to Archangel Gabriel. When we are thinking we are so great we should realize that Jesus considered Himself a servant of the Father. That is another one of those things from my dad, that comes from the bible; for he referred to us as his slave labor.

Psalm 117: The shortest psalm and a prayer of praise.

ST. PAUL’S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

Gal. 2: Vs. 1-10 refer to the first church council, which was in Jerusalem. You read about that in the Acts of the Apostles. He picks on Peter for the period that Peter was falling into the trap of the law of circumcision. That would be justification by the law. The council did rule that only the basic laws like being mindful of the poor, were important carryovers from Jewish laws. Faith in Jesus is now the rule of salvation. Baptism is the sign of it.

Gal. 3: “O stupid Galatians!” Paul is not subtle. Faith in Christ is the basis of our being family members of God and so justified. This is the New Covenant. We are adopted into God’s family by baptism, which seals our faith in God. That gives us a chance with God. Until that was the case you had to try to be perfect law-abiding Jews to receive the promise. That inheritance was the Holy Land.

Gal. 4: He continues with the idea of becoming part of God’s family to receive the inheritance. He gives the allegory of Abraham’s two sons. One to Sarah and one to Hagar. Ishmael was the son of the servant woman Hagar. He did not have the blessing of being the son of Sarah, Abraham’s wife. Isaac has an easier path to salvation because he is family. Paul is telling the Galatians that they have received the same blessing. This theme of family is critical to the plan of salvation.

Gal. 5: Paul continues to outline the difference between being baptized which makes you a part of the family; and being circumcised which makes you a slave to the law. He is once again blunt as he makes a suggestion about those who are insisting on circumcision in vs. 12; “Would that those who are upsetting you might also castrate themselves!” Starting with vs. 13 he shows what the freedom is for. It is not to have sexual freedom but rather an opportunity to serve one another through love. This is a great message for those who are married. It is a freedom to give all your love to a particular person, not just a license for sex. Starting in vs. 16 he really lays it on the line about those who won’t get to be in heaven and those that will.

Gal. 6: In here he is outlining that we can’t be the judge, only God. We must correct in a gentle spirit and bear one another’s burdens; never grow tired of doing good. Vs. 17 is interesting; “From now on, let no one make troubles for me; for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.” Are these scars, that he is referring to, from being stoned or the stigmata? We don’t know.

THE LETTER OF ST. JAMES

There is no agreement on which St. James wrote this letter. Some say it was St. James the Less or the Apostle that wasn’t the brother of St. John. Others think it was another James that was in charge of the Church in Jerusalem for a while. I just worry about what it says. I see the letter as halfway between how Paul writes and how the book of wisdom is written. Either way it is straight forward and blunt. You also need to know that this Letter of St. James was one that Martin Luther really wanted out of the Bible because it doesn’t fit his “Sola fide” motto. James is obviously clarifying that faith alone is not enough for salvation.

James 1: The first thing to note is how James identifies himself in the first verse, “a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...” He does not see himself as a brother or a son. This will set a tone as to how he identifies the will of God for himself and us. In vs. 3, he is not looking at this life as a walk through a rose garden, but testing. In vs. 5, if you don’t know what the master wants, you better ask him. In vs. 6, just don’t doubt the boss, for there is no other right one. He levels the playing field in vs. 9-11 for we are all nothing compared to the master. Vs. 12-18 remind us to not think that God is trying to tempt us away from Him. That temptation is from ourselves in our weakness. If you stay with the idea of slave you will realize how he understands that we must do the will of the master and not just hear it.

James 2: Vs. 1-13 goes back to the idea that we are all equal before the master so we must treat each other as equals and not play favorites. He ends that section with the idea that we shouldn’t be proud that we didn’t break all the commandments. One is enough for us to lose the freedom of a merciful master. Then he gives another take on doing more than hearing or having faith. You have to do the will of the Father. Vs. 20 is emphasis of his point, “Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless?” He gives examples of Abraham and Rahab had to actually do something for them to be saved.