

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Mar. 29, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 26-32 on your reading guide.

With this 5th class we are about to finish up the Book of Genesis. So, I figured that this is a good time to reiterate how this Bible Study is different than other Bible Studies. Most of them are to help you understand a particular book of the Bible. My lessons are a kind of debriefing on what you have read. If you had not read the chapters I was talking about it would not sink in at all. So, of course, the first difference is that the focus is on the Bible itself and not on a textbook about the Bible. During the weekly class, you can follow along, chapter by chapter, and add to your notes in the margins of your Bible. Yes, it is okay to write in your Bible. Because of something I teach, you may want to go over a section that you had already read to get a better sense of what was in it. By doing all of this, you will have read a chapter, had some interesting things pointed out in that chapter, and then maybe even reinforced it by skimming it again.

But the main difference, that I am trying to add by doing this Bible Study, is to constantly help everyone make the connections between the different books of the Bible, because it is all connected for the purpose of getting to know Jesus from a lot of different perspectives that come from the different books of the Bible.

You will hopefully start to notice things in Mass and in your regular reading of Scripture that I don't even mention, because there are far too many to mention. For instance, we just had the Feast of the Annunciation. In that Gospel reading from Luke, Gabriel said: "the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever..." You have just read about the beginnings of the house of Jacob and now know that this is a starting point for the forming of the Family of God, but also that the people in it are very flawed. Also that this process had been going for a long time and that God has been keeping documentation on it all so that you have been reading His notes and hearing His game plan. How cool is that and what a great reminder that this is not like any other religion that has been founded by a Buddha or Mohammed, another self-appointed priest, or anyone else.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Gen. 38: The sin of Onan is very controversial. Different churches have different things that they interpret from it. The most obvious is the literal. He didn't do what he was supposed to do, provide an heir for his deceased brother's family so they would have a protector under the law. The Catholic Churches take this further. That masturbation is wrong because, like with Onan, it is a selfish, self-centered act. That has been the tradition of the church for almost 2000 years now. It will not change, not even in this generation that is trying to say that all sexual pleasure is good. It is not hard for a 2000-year-old church to figure out the flaws in that "feel good" thinking. It just looks around at all the people who are addicted to pornography.

The story of Tamar and her father-in-law is a possible foreshadowing or at least a lesson that Jesus would have learned to help him teach the Pharisees when confronted with the woman caught in the act of adultery. The lesson being that you had better not judge unless you have not sinned. Who are the only sinless ones? Jesus and Mary. How important is this story? If you

look back the chapter 1 of Matthew you will see that is listed, Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, who mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron....

Gen. 39: Joseph, as a Christ figure, is tempted. Neither sinned, even thou both received the consequences of the temptation from the evil one. The good news comes later for “the Lord was with him and brought success to all he did” (Gn.39:23). Think in terms of the Father in heaven putting His Son in charge. In the place he was sent, like Joseph, Jesus was being tempted to side with Satan. Also, we have Jesus (Joseph) being condemned even though He had not sinned.

Gen. 40-41: The main thing to notice here is that it sets up an amazing “coincidence “. The OT Joseph, son of Jacob, interprets dreams. In the NT Joseph, son of Jacob (see Mt.1:16), has dreams and interprets them. Also note that in Gen. 41:46 we see that Joseph, a Christ figure, was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Also verse 41:42 is a reference that will help understand a culture that has a kind of proxy person. Jesus’ putting Peter in charge as pope, follows this way of thinking.

Gen. 42-43: Just notice the sadness of the father at the loss of his son. This is to help us understand God, who will lose His Son. We also have family asking forgiveness of the leader, who is their brother. This is just like us asking our brother, Jesus, for forgiveness in baptism and reconciliation.

Gen. 44: In vs.18 Judah says to Joseph, “...for you are the equal of Pharaoh.” The Egyptians made monuments of their Pharaohs to help them remember them as Gods. The men in this story see Pharaoh as having absolute power over their lives. They know he holds their lives in his hands. He could have them killed. He controls their food. So, just like Joseph, in this way, is equal of Pharaoh; in a greater way, Jesus is one and equal with the Father.

Gen. 45: In vs. 7-8, “God, therefore, sent me on ahead of you to ensure for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. So, it was not really you but God who had me come here: and he has made of me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his household, and ruler over the whole land of Egypt.” Egypt is the place of slavery. Pharaoh is in charge of it. Joseph now rules it but he is a good man. Jesus is the King of Kings over a sinful world. But Jesus has made all things subject to him, even sin and death, which has enslaved us. Also notice that Joseph forgives his brothers and wants to provide a home for them all despite their sin against him, just like Jesus did for the apostles and then for us after the Resurrection. Joseph’s appearance must have felt like a resurrection event.

Gen. 46: Jacob, as told by God, must go to the land of Egypt with all his possessions. He is actually leaving the area of the Promised Land. But this is before it really holds its promise. He is forced to go to a place where he will be tested. God wants us to be baptized, but we must still go through a testing to see if we will stay loyal.

Gen. 47: Vs. 12, “And Joseph sustained his father and brothers and his father’s whole household, down to the youngest, with food.” So, Jacob and his family receive land and food. They are taken care of by Joseph who prefigures Jesus. The food is a foreshadowing of Communion. Then in vs. 13-26 is Joseph’s drought policy. Joseph ends up making slaves of the

Egyptians. He first takes their money, then their livestock, and then they turn themselves over to him as slaves, but it is all in his work for Pharaoh. In Pharaoh's name he takes their land. Remember the Sermon on the Mount; "Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the land."

Gen. 48: Notice in vs. 12-14 that Joseph has two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Ephraim gets the blessing even though he is the younger. This should sound familiar from Jacob and Esau. Being the older does not bring any guarantees. I believe this to be a foreshadowing of the Jewish people having no guarantee of salvation even though they are the older siblings of the Christians. God gives His fullest blessing to the Christians over the first chosen. This also completes what will be the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob had 12 sons but the Promised Land will be divided by 12. Levi's tribe will not get land, but will be priests and live off of offerings. Joseph's land will be divided between Manasseh and Ephraim. So, even though this is 11 plus 2, it still comes out 12, because of the Levites being taken out of the equation.

Gen. 49: This chapter is the turning point. Reuben is oldest and should be top dog, but remember he slept with his father's concubine, in Gen. 35:21. Simon and Levi must have done the circumcision because of the "knives" reference in Gen. 49:5, so they are out. In vs.10, "The scepter shall never depart from Judah, or the mace from between his legs, while tribute is brought to him, and he receives the peoples' homage." So, from here on, Judah will be the focus. God will use him to continue with the next stage of His revelation. Even Joseph will not be in charge, although Jacob prays that he will receive many blessings.

Gen. 50: In vs. 18 the brothers say to Joseph, "Let us be your slaves!" Joseph does not accept this. Just like Jesus, who said to his apostles, "I no longer call you slaves."

The Book of Psalms

Psalms 22: Like psalm 22, this is written to describe Jesus' feelings as He went through His passion.

Psalms 26: This may have been written about King David, who wasn't always innocent, but he was good; but it truly describes Jesus, who was truly innocent. Verses 4-5, "I do not sit with deceivers..." Jesus did sit with them but called them to conversion, so He did not become one with them. He wanted them to become one with Him. This prayer of innocence would have fit Jesus until He took on our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Psalms 27: Vs. 4; "One thing I ask of the Father; this I seek; to dwell in the Father's house all the days of my life..." I actually try to picture Jesus as He was going back to the Father's house in my mind. I see Him as having a bigger smile at that point than on Easter morning.

Psalms 28: Besides being a prayer for help, it also seeks justice. Vs. 4, "...give them what they deserve." Until I realized that these psalms were really the prayers of Jesus, this kind of

statement made me very nervous. I don't consider myself the one to be asking for vengeance, for it might come back to me since I am not perfect. My imperfection would also create imperfect justice. Knowing that Jesus and God are handling it gives me more comfort. It is a little like King David who was given a choice of three punishments. He chose the one from God because he felt God would be more merciful than a human attacker (1stChron.21:9-13).

Psalm 29: This psalm is one of the reasons I believe it is so important to hold onto the image of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is not a psalm in which Jesus is praying to a weak Father. This is a Father with power, which is what we need if we are in need. Vs. 10-11: "The Father sits enthroned above the flood! The Father reigns as King forever! May the Father give might to his people; may the Father bless his people with Peace!" That is powerful.

Psalm 30: This psalm would be a prayer from Jesus on Easter Sunday. Verse 4, "Father, you brought me up from Sheol; you kept me from going down to the pit." Jesus descended into Hell, and on the third day rose again. Verse 6, "At dusk weeping comes for the night; but at dawn there is rejoicing." That is what a God of power can accomplish.

Psalm 31: Vs. 1-19 are a prayer from Jesus while in the Garden of Gethsemane. The rest of the psalm is Jesus having absolute confidence in the Father to hear Him.

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew Chapter 14: This is Herod Antipas, the son of the one who killed the Holy Innocents. Lust is one of his driving forces. He marries up and takes his brother's wife who seems very willing to play into it until the lust of her new husband turns to the daughter. This is a very dysfunctional family, certainly not the first one mentioned in the Bible. By now you should be able to make a list of a few dysfunction families, and some who passed the crazy on for generations.

The feeding of the five thousand shows Jesus to be a man of God like Elisha who miraculously feed one hundred men (2 Kings 4:42-44). Even more so, it shows Him to have the power of God to feed them like God gave them manna from heaven. These connections are critical in order for the apostles to believe in His ability to change bread into His body and feed the world. But the walking on the water story shows that the apostles are not ready for this yet, not even Peter. But Peter is still ahead of the pack. Peter stepping out of the boat is a reminder that as they go out as missionaries they will need to trust in Jesus. Jesus strengthens their faith with more miracles at Gennesaret.

Matthew Chapter 15: In this first part of the chapter Jesus is doing some clarifying of some the OT laws. He knows that some of them have been twisted around and others are taken too far. This is something that the Church has had to do during all the centuries since Pentecost. Jesus is showing how to going about this kind of interpretation. Verses 18-20 gives a summary of the previous part of the chapter and clarifies what Jesus sees as unclean.

You might be wondering why Jesus multiplied loaves twice. Here is what I have heard in the past. Feeding 5000 and having 12 baskets left is about the People of Israel and having many potential followers and enough for each of the 12 tribes. The 4000 is about a smaller number of early believers but there are seven baskets left, so enough for all the continents. It seems to be stretching it, but I have another version below. Basically, it is a reminder that the Gospel writers are not giving miracle stories like sports statistics. The Gospels are about finding the meaning behind the many things that Jesus did, by focusing on some of the ones that give the clearest lessons. The trouble is that each generation has different lessons to learn.

In Vs. 21-28, Jesus is in Gentile country and the Canaanite woman is one of those Gentiles, which would make us think this is going to be about dealing with them. Then in vs. 29-31 he does more miracles in Jewish territory. Then he finishes with the second miracle of the loaves and fishes' miracle. He starts with seven loaves; which, like a whole week, is about completeness and abundance, like in creation and a day of rest. Seven baskets left is also about this kind of completeness.

Chapter 16: In vs. 4 we hear about Jonah again. As I have mentioned before, he was a huge sign of the resurrection. Notice in vs. 5-12 Jesus mentions Pharisees and Sadducees twice as the bread of another teaching sandwich. In the middle is the meat. In there He is trying to help the apostles understand that He has this abundance for everyone. They don't understand yet that He is the Bread of Life, even after two multiplication episodes.

Caesarea Philippi is the site of a huge pagan temple made of rock. Jesus uses this as the backdrop of His renaming of Peter as the Rock on which He will build the Church. He then gives Peter power and the keys. This is like the power that Joseph had in Egypt as the second in command.

Then Jesus predicts his passion and Peter doesn't think that should happen to good old Jesus. Jesus is not amused and calls him Satan or the tempter. Peter does not know that the crown of thorns will be a crown of glory for Jesus. In vs. 24-28 Jesus does give the apostles an idea of how tough discipleship might be.

Chapter 17: After predicting His own death, Jesus strengthens Peter, James, and John with the Transfiguration. Notice it is on a mountain, which is like God having Moses on the mountain in Dt.18:15. Once again the Father is having a proud moment with His Son. So Jesus is giving this scene to help the main apostles through the Passion and the Father is encouraging the Son for the same reason. Then Jesus clarifies Malachi 3:23: "Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes..." John the Baptist would be that coming of the Spirit of Elijah. In vs. 14-21 Jesus gets frustrated with the disciples because their faith is so weak that they couldn't cure the boy. Then He predicts his death and resurrection again. This time they don't argue but mourn (vs. 23). The last part of the chapter is the temple tax issue which is to show Jesus' connection to the Father. Matthew knows that this can't be in doubt during the Passion.

Chapter 18:1-20: Jesus starts with how great kids will be in heaven, and a very dire warning about leading them into temptation. Vs. 6: "it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." That is not "Good old sweet Jesus." The parable of the lost sheep is about Jesus' concern for each one of us. Notice that this is the opposite of what bad example is all about. One pushes people away from Jesus and the other draws them to Him. In vs. 15-20 Jesus lets us know we had better not be the block that

stands in the way of another's being found by God. He says: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This is not confession for he is talking to everyone. It is about reconciling with each other. Then He says: "Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father." I don't think this is about the lottery, since it is still in the context of getting people to heaven. Then he says: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Matthew forgot to add, "because it was a miracle getting them together." Actually, that is my quote, not Jesus, and it applies to church meetings, not sports. That is easy.