

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Apr. 19, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 40-46 on your reading guide.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Ex. 13: Vs. 9, "It shall be as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead...". Many Rabbis still wear phylacteries on their forearms and their foreheads that are little pouches that contain scripture verses. Vs. 11-16 focuses on the image of the first-born male, which is the foreshadowing of Jesus. Vs. 17-18 is about not going directly against the Philistines. This is how we know why God kept the Israelites in the desert so long. It was to toughen the Israelites up enough for battle AND to be faithful under pressure. Vs. 21, "the column of cloud to show them the way, and at night by means of a column of fire to give them light." The Easter Candle takes on this role for Christians.

Ex. 14: This is the other part of God's plan for keeping the Israelites wandering in the desert. It is to trick Pharaoh into attacking. Pharaoh depends on "horses" and even chariots. The Israelites must learn to depend on God's strength. The Israelites will continue to stay off of horses and, at best, ride donkeys for this reason. I love vs. 14. "The Lord himself will fight for you; you have only to keep still." That is not hard to do on a stubborn donkey. This also reminds me not to play God and try to solve all the problems myself. Vs. 21 & 26, "Stretch out your hand over the sea" is a lot like a priest extending his hands in blessing over the people at Mass.

Ex. 15: In vs. 20 the sister of Moses, Miriam "took a tambourine in her hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing..." Remember that Moses is 83 years old at this time and Miriam was an older sister. I guess you are never too old to dance. In vs. 25 the Lord "pointed out to him (Moses) a certain piece of wood. When he threw this into the water, the water became fresh." This is what got the people going on their journey through the desert. The wood of the cross does the same thing to the waters of Baptism for our journey through this world. Just a little further into their journey, in vs. 27, they are shown twelve springs of water. This sure sounds like the Apostles, whose teachings are the basis for teachings of the church, which keep us going as we continue our journey.

Ex. 16: In vs. 4 they receive "bread from heaven", a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. In vs. 8 "the Lord gives you flesh to eat", another foreshadowing of the Eucharist. This bread and meat gave them enough to eat, but they could not get greedy with it or it would just get rotten. In other words, God was letting us know that our treasure was not here but in heaven. That is why in vs. 35 it says, "The Israelites ate this manna for forty years, until they came to settled land; they ate manna until they reached the borders of Canaan."

Ex. 17: I hope that you saw in the notes that Massah means "the test" and Meribah means "The quarreling." God is still testing us, hoping that it will result in something better than quarreling. In vs. 6 it says: "Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink." The rock foreshadows Christ on the cross, from who flows the waters of Baptism. This image is

continued in vs. 11. “As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight...” We can win the battle because Jesus has His arms stretched out on the cross.

Ex. 18: This chapter is a foreshadowing of the Church. First, Moses is reunited with his family (vs. 1-6). Then we hear of Moses (a Jesus figure) sitting in judgment for the people (vs. 13). Then Moses realizes that he will not be able to do all this by himself. One because there are too many people and two because he will not be there forever. So, he looks among all the people for able and God-fearing men to help him, which is a foreshadowing of the Church with its successors of Jesus, which are the apostles and their successors, the bishops and their priests.

Ex. 19: Vs. 5 “Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” “A kingdom of priests” is the key point. Priests aren’t for themselves. They are intermediaries between God and others. In this case the others would be the rest of the world. God is choosing the Israelites to help save the world. “Vs. 9, “The Lord also told him, “I am coming to you in a dense cloud, so that when the people hear me speaking with you, they may always have faith in you also.”” You have to remember how unlikely clouds are in this part of the world. In this God is foreshadowing His Church and His use of spokes-persons, all bishops and priests, but especially the Pope as intermediaries. Approaching God directly is scary. Of course, the main intermediary is Jesus. Vs. 12 sets the limits of who can approach God’s mountain. Only Moses, who is chosen by God, can approach. Jesus came to us to be the chosen one or great high priest so He could approach the Father without fear. The description of Mount Sinai in vs. 18 sure sounds like a volcano. “Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire. The smoke rose from it as though from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.” What better way for God to carve out stone tablets and write on them than with lava. Notice in verse 16, that this all happened on the morning of the third day. Sounds like Jesus coming in glory on Easter.

Ex. 20: After Moses has warned the people to stay back, God delivers the commandments. The key to these is the phrase in vs 2, “I am your God.” God is trying to get the notion of other God’s out of the Israelites heads.

As you have heard me say before, these are basic survival commandments, so they can start to build a kingdom with God as the king. He will lead them into the Promised Land. Vs. 24, “An altar of earth you shall make for me, and upon it you shall sacrifice your holocausts and peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In whatever place I choose for the remembrance of my name I come to you and bless you.” This is still the early form of sacrifice that God is asking for. It is what these people are ready to understand. One of the things we have to realize is that sacrificing animals is partially about pushing the Egyptian gods away. Hathor, the Egyptian sun goddess was portrayed as a cow. Apis, an Egyptian fertility god, was portrayed as a bull. God is telling His people, kill those gods. But notice that God gets to decide how we please Him, not us.

Another part of the lesson of this type of sacrifice is the idea of the seriousness of a covenant. It is not just a contract. Blood is life. Having half the blood on the altar of God and the other half on the people is a reminder that they are family and if one side breaks this bond, they lose their life.

Ex. 21: In terms of dealing with the concept of laws, these people are very primitive in our eyes but were ahead of most other cultures back then. They have been working under the basis of the survival of the fittest until God chose them for His own. To get them in line, he must discipline them very severely. So just about everything has a punishment of “shall be put to death.” Notice that in vs. 20-21, there is a less severe punishment when dealing with slaves. Slaves could have been gentiles or Jews who have lost their rights, through wrongdoing. It seems that God was not ready to force his people to believe in a concept of equal rights for everyone. Part of that is that he is not building a democracy but a kingdom. Vs. 24 has “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” This seems like God’s way of discipline for His kids. It is harsher than a spanking but then they are not really children. Vs. 32 tells us that the price of a slave is thirty shekels of silver, just like the price Judas received for Jesus.

Ex. 22: Here we have a lot of laws to help them find solutions to their problems. Verses of note are vs. 18, “Anyone who lies with an animal shall be put to death.” Sex is not for pleasure. Vs. 20, “You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.” Remember Abraham & Isaac and the situation with their wives in foreign territory. So, God tells them to learn from their experiences to be compassionate. Vs. 28, “You shall give me the first-born of your sons.” God will not accept anything but the first fruits. This is not to kill the son but to consecrate him to God’s work. Vs. 30, “Flesh torn to pieces in the field you shall not eat; throw it to the dogs.” Don’t eat road kill. This was a hard rule for the poor to live by. They did not have many alternatives if they had one cow and predators killed it. This is why some of the people were so surprised when Jesus said that the poor might get to heaven faster than the rich. The rich wouldn’t be forced to break any of these laws. The poor found they were tempted all the time.

Ex. 23: In vs. 2, “Neither shall you allege the example of the many as an excuse for doing wrong.” Ethics and morality are not done by a democracy. What a great lesson for our country today. It also fits family life. “Mom, everyone else is going.” Another lesson we have forgotten today is from vs. 12 “For six days you may do your work, but on the seventh day you must rest, that your ox and your ass may also have rest, and that the son of your maidservant and the alien may be refreshed.” This refers back to the third commandment (Ex.20:11) “In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” God is still big on this commandment, while we have become lax. In vs. 18 “You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread.” This foreshadowing is God’s early way of making sure that Mass is always tied in with the feast of unleavened bread, Passover.

Ex. 24: Verses 5-8 have a description of what they must do for a sacrifice. Young bulls are sacrificed. Half of the blood is splashed on the altar. This foreshadows Jesus’ death. The book of the covenant is then read aloud to the people. The people respond to the readings. The people are sprinkled with the rest of the blood, while Moses says: “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his.” This is an OT version of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Vs. 9-11, Moses, and some others who were acting as priests, beheld the God of Israel, but they were not smited nor did they die. “After gazing on God, they could still eat and drink.” This is the Eucharist and foreshadows

the priesthood. Only the priest says the words of consecration at Mass. Later Moses will ask to see God and only be able to see Him as He goes past. Then Moses spends forty days and nights with the Lord, foreshadowing Jesus.

Ex. 25: In verse 2 “Tell the Israelites to take up a collection for me.” Vs. 8, “They shall make a sanctuary for me, that I may dwell in their midst.” For God, the building of churches is not a waste of time or money, like some would have us believe. In vs. 21, “In the ark itself you are to put the commandments which I will give you.” The commandments are the written word of God. The NT version of this is Mary (the Ark) carrying within her womb the living Word of God (Jesus).

The Book of Psalms

Psalm 39: Vs. 9, Jesus was the scapegoat for our sins. He carries them for us so they can be forgiven. This psalm probably gave Him strength when He stood and had to put up with the mocking of the Sanhedrin and the soldiers. “I was silent and did not open my mouth because you were the one who did this.” (vs. 10)

Psalm 40: This is another Agony in the Garden prayer for Jesus. “Sacrifice and offering you do not want; but ears open to obedience you gave me. Holocausts and sin-offerings you do not require; (vs. 8-10) “so I said, “Here I am; your commands for me are written in the scroll. To do your will is my delight; my God, your law is in my heart!”” In vs. 14-15, “Lord, graciously rescue me! Come quickly to help me, Lord! Put to shame and confound all who seek to take my life.” The Father’s will was that He be the sacrifice. Because Jesus followed the will of the Father, He was rescued and also saved us.

Psalm 41: In vs. 10, “Even the friend who had my trust, who shared my table, has scorned me.” Sounds like He is talking about Judas. “The good man faces many trials, but the Lord has mercy and raises them up.” (vs. 11) The Father will raise Jesus up.

Psalm 42-43: Here is a prayer of Jesus on Palm Sunday. In vs. 5, “When I went in procession with the crowd, I went with them to the house of God, amid loud cries of thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival.” But the next verse says: “Why are you downcast, my soul; why do you groan within me?” Jesus knew what was coming on Palm Sunday, and later, for it was prophesied in these psalms.

Psalm 44: Notice that the first part of this psalm starts with: “O God, *we...*” This is the prayer of Jesus standing with His people. In verse 5 Jesus refers to “my king and my God.” There are so many kingdom references.

Psalm 45: This psalm is one of my favorites. It speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven and the royal family that the Father is building through His Son who is praying about it. In verse 10 it says: “Daughters of kings are your lovely wives; a princess arrayed in Ophir’s gold comes to stand at

your right hand.” The Church is the Bride of Christ. Mary is the perfect bride, so is given the honor of Queen of Mother. In vs. 17, “The throne of your fathers your sons will have; you shall make them princes through all the land. I will make your name renowned through all generations; thus nations shall praise you forever.” Mary is now the Queen of Heaven. We, the Church, are her sons and will stand as princes.

Psalm 46: Jesus is again speaking with His people. So, this is to be our prayer to God: Vs. 11, “Who says: “Be still and confess that I am God!”” I love that line. It is Jesus quoting the Father.

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 22: This chapter continues the theme that the last chapter ended on, Jesus poking the high priests. Vs. 7 is important: “The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. This is not a good old sweet God who loves everyone and everyone will get into heaven. This is a king who is not happy when people are showing Him that they are not going to be loyal to Him. Vs. 15 shows the Pharisees back in the picture. Obviously, the high priests have backed off but these guys with little clout still think they can mess up Jesus with this tax question. Then the Sadducees try a resurrection question because they don’t believe in it. Jesus solves that with the statement that heaven is not about that kind of marriage that produces biological children. Then in Vs. 34 the Pharisees and the Sadducees come at Him together. In their eyes Jesus has been teaching new stuff. So, they go to an old question, the greatest commandment. This is not new. The OT has this in Dt. 6:4-5: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.” The rabbis kept this passage in their phylacteries, strapped around their heads. They still do, during Sabbath prayer. Jesus didn’t change the law, so they lost again.

The question of David’s son is Jesus reinforcing that He is Son of God, as God had promised.

Matthew 23: All but the last part of this chapter is Jesus putting the scribes and Pharisees in the rightful place, out of the game. They are not leading the People of Israel closer to God, but the opposite. Jesus wanted the people to be clear on this. It should also be a lesson to priests who are not teaching and living the right stuff. After taking the methods of the Pharisees out of the picture in the eyes of his followers, starting in vs. 37 he gives a beautiful image of wanting to protect Jerusalem, but they will not accept him as Savior.

Matthew 24: This starts where 23 left off. Jesus is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem. The Western or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem all that is left of the temple from 70 A.D. when Rome destroyed it. Maybe that destruction is not done, since there are still a few stones on other stones. I don’t know if we can take it that literally. From verses 3-31 he is referring to what will happen with his death and also the second coming. It is hard to distinguish, but that is what the

church has taught. From verse 32 to the end the chapter, Jesus is warning us to be ready. Notice again, that not everyone will be saved.