

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Apr. 26, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 47-53 on your reading guide.

Now that we have passed 50 days of reading the Bible, I thought it might be a good idea to tell you a little about how it came about. Here is a very short summary. The Gospel and letters of John were the last of the NT to be written, about 100 A.D. These and the other writings of the apostles were circulating around to Christian communities. The problem is that other letters and gospels started to be written. This meant that the church leaders needed to sort out which were authentic. This went on for around 200 years. Guys like Jerome and Augustine each had their opinion. The factors they looked at were the intermediate writings by guys who knew the apostles, like Polycarp, Irenaeus, etc. That pretty much presumes that the OT was the books by the 70 writers that were used in Israel at that time. This made sense because they were almost all referred to by the apostles in their writings. That was definitive until Martin Luther came along in the 16th Century and didn't like some books. He decided he wanted a different set of Jewish books that were used by the Greek community of Jews, because they didn't include some of the things Luther disagreed with. He also wanted to get rid of the Letter of James, and Revelation but couldn't find a strong enough reason to eliminate them. But he did get rid of several books of the defined OT. So, Protestant Bibles have less books than Catholic Bibles.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Ex. 26-27: These chapters are a continuation of the theme that lets us know just how important God feels His Word is. It is not just the ark, which bears the Word of God on stone, but all the trappings surrounding it must be just right in order to please God. In the NT the ark is Mary. If God was so insistent on detail in how the home for the Word of God on stone was taken care of, imagine what perfection He wanted for this new ark, Mary.

Ex. 28: In verse 5 we find out that the vestments of the priests are to be “gold, violet, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen.” The Church has added green but otherwise these are still the colors we use for vestments. Verses 36-38 speak of the miter of Aaron, who is a foreshadowing of the bishops. It says that Aaron bears whatever guilt the Israelites may incur in consecrating any of their sacred gifts.” So, the priest bears the guilt of sin while these sins are being atoned for. That is why the priest must be the *alter Christus* at Mass. It would also seem to make sense that he should listen to the sins of the people in confession. Jesus is the ultimate, great high priest and bore all the sins of humanity. Notice that all of the trappings of priesthood are very elaborate in its details. This idea of priesthood is their connection with God and his Kingdom.

Ex. 29: In verse 4 Aaron and his sons must be washed before they begin their work as priests. Jesus did this at the Last Supper when He washed the apostle's feet to prepare them for priesthood. But he also emphasized that it would be a priesthood of service. In verse 7, “Then take the anointing oil and anoint him with it, pouring it on his head.” Priests, prophets and kings were anointed in this way of having oil poured on their head in the OT. Priests are still anointed with oil, except now the bishop anoints them on the hands. But we are all baptized into the priesthood of Christ at baptism, which is when we anoint the head of the person with oil. In

verses 23-24 the loaves of unleavened bread are put into the hands of Aaron. The paten with a host and a chalice is put into a new priest's hands by the bishop during their ordination. In verses 32-33 we find out that the bread and meat of the sacrifices were to be the food of the priests. The Levites did not go out to work the herds or fields so they must be provided for.

Ex. 30: The OT model of the burning of incense is shown in verses 7-8. The priest must wash his hands and feet before offering sacrifice "lest they die." The washing of hands at Mass during the preparation of the gifts continues this. We find out that other things are anointed with oil in verses 26-27, the meeting tent, the ark, the table, etc. Now a church and the altar are to be anointed before they are used.

Ex. 31: Notice that God wants the best of artisans to do the work of His dwelling place. In vs. 13-14, "Take care to keep my Sabbaths, for that is to be the token between you and me throughout the generations, to show that it is I, the Lord, who make you holy. Therefore, you must keep the Sabbath as something sacred. Whoever desecrates it shall be put to death. If anyone does work on that day, he must be rooted out of his people." Note that this is a "perpetual covenant" (vs. 16). Jesus had some comments on this but it still stands.

Ex. 32: In vs. 7, the Lord says, "Go down at once to your people." Sounds like God is ready to disinherit his family. But notice how in this chapter Aaron, the high priest, was a part of the problem. He gets into trouble before all the information from God can even be put into action. While Moses is gone, he is a leader but goes the wrong way. Now we can see why God is insistent on the cleansing of sin before ordination and after. In verse 19 Moses broke the stone tablets. As far as I know, he is the only person to break all Ten Commandments simultaneously. The people had broken the commandments so Moses gave them what they had worshiped. In vs. 20, he made them drink the gold from the calf. In verse 24 Aaron sounds like a kid: "They gave it (gold jewelry) to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out." Verse 4 had already told us how he had actually fashioned it. I hope you remember that this is a reversion to Egyptian gods, like Apis as a bull. In verse 26 Moses says, "Whoever is for the Lord, let him come to me!" In other words that had to make a visible sign of the sorrow and repentance. If not, they were killed. Sounds a little like confession, only now the priest doesn't have to do the killing.

Ex. 33: Moses had found favor with God and wanted to see God's glory. In vs. 22, God said, "When my glory passes, I will set you in the hollow of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face is not to be seen." Only Jesus could know God in His glory.

Ex. 34: Vs. 27, "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with them I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." God had made a covenant with Noah, a family. God had made a covenant with Abraham to make him a big family. God made a covenant with Moses, for a tribe. Each covenant is with a bigger group. Observe that nothing in the OT is as big or as great as what it foreshadows in the NT. In verse 29 we find out that Moses' face shown in glory. In the Transfiguration, all of Jesus shown in glory and Moses is just a side-kick.

Ex. 35: In Ex.35:2-3 we have a reminder of how seriously God takes the day of rest. “Anyone who does work on that day shall be put to death. You shall not even light a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day.” Notice it doesn’t say anything about lighting a fire in God’s dwelling, so altar servers are safe.

Ex. 36-38: In the rest of these chapters we have a repeat of many of the instructions from earlier and then the people making offerings so that the work can be done. Notice that they are out in the desert and they don’t have a department store to pick up some extra things. This was probably the last of the things many of them had brought out of Egypt. But the important thing was that the Lord was with them. The people obviously hadn’t given Aaron all of their gold to make the calf.

Ex. 39: Notice it repeats that the vestments are decorated with violet, purple, scarlet and gold. Still the main colors of the church vestments. I’m thinking green has been added in gratitude that we are not in the desert anymore. I love the green we now have in the Nebraska spring.

Ex. 40: You should have realized that the main focus is the Ark with the Commandments, which are the word of God. We still anoint priests, a new church and/or an altar with oil. The glory of the Lord came upon this tent. The people moved when it moved. God was their guide.

The Book of Psalms

Psalm 47-48: Both of these are marvelous songs of praise of God as king in heaven. These must have been prayed on days when things were going well for Jesus.

Psalm 49: This psalm lets us know that we can’t take it with us. Our material wealth will not follow us to heaven. Verse 15 lets us know what happen to those who trust in this folly; “Like sheep they are herded into Sheol.”

Psalm 50: One of the main questions that the writers of scripture try to answer is what makes God happy. This psalm (vs. 9-13) lets us know that God is no longer into animal sacrifices as His main appeasement. “Offer praise as your sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High.” It also lets us know that if we do not obey Him, He will not be pleased. The animal sacrifices were partially to get the Egyptian gods out of His people’s minds.

Psalm 51: This psalm is the prayer of Jesus that fulfills what God said He wanted in psalm 50, an acceptable sacrifice.” Vs. 17, “Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim your praise.... Vs. 19, “My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit; God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart.”

Psalm 52: God will strike down a liar, but the righteous must trust in God to be saved. In the NT Jesus reminds us that it is not what goes into a man that defiles him but what comes out of his mouth. So, I am thinking Jesus was praying this psalm as he dealt with scribes, Pharisees, and high priests.

Psalm 53: This psalm follows the same pattern as 52. But note that vs. 4, “All have gone astray; all alike are perverse. Not one does what is right, not even one.” This is used by some to say that Jesus could not have been sinless if this line in scripture is true. But in verse 2 it is clear that “Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.” So the psalm is letting us know that fools think and say these things. Jesus can be sinless and scripture true because fools are wrong. I once heard that this means that April 1st could be the Atheist’s National Holiday, since they say there is no God.

Psalm 54: A prayer that Jesus probably thought during His Passion.

Psalm 55: This is also Jesus during His Passion. In vs. 14-15 we have reference to the sorrow that Judas will cause with his treachery. “But it was you, my other self, my comrade and friend, you, whose company I enjoyed, at whose side I walked in procession in the house of God.”

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 25: The parable of the ten virgins continues the theme that not all will be saved. The foolish virgins did not have treasure in heaven (oil) so they were not ready at the end when the bridegroom, the king, will come. Notice they were not bad, just not that good. The parable of the talents gives another look at how we must serve the king. Vs. 23 makes me nervous; “I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.” I think this means we will be working in heaven, which would be better than what Satan might have in mind for us in hell. For in vs. 30 it says, “And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”

Vs. 31-46, The Judgment of Nations is the 2nd Coming, but it is important to note that “Nations” refers to gentiles, or people who have not become a part of the family of God. So, this is what pagans, who don’t know better, will be judged by. So, there are two things to note about this story. One is that there is no mention of having to believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, just do good deeds. The second is like it, you have to love your neighbor. That is because this is the judgment of non-believers.

Matthew 26: Notice in vs. 5 the chief priests do not want to do anything to Jesus during Passover. In vs. 8 we see that it was “disciples” not just Judas that were upset at the waste of perfume. Also notice that Matthew does not say she did this for forgiveness, just an act of kindness. It’s a little like the Last Judgment lesson we just had.

In vs. 14-16 Judas is the finish of another of Matthew’s sandwich technique. The chapter started with the conspiracy of the chief priests, which is now finished with the betrayal by Judas. Those were the slices of bread, but realize the real lesson or the meat of the sandwich is the goodness of this woman. Notice that Judas betrays Jesus right at the beginning of the Last Supper in Matthew’s account. It doesn’t say if he leaves before receiving communion but we can surmise this. After all, he was the first one to leave Mass early.

Vs. 26-29 is all Matthew uses to teach us about the Last Supper, the words of consecration. Then in vs. 30 it is already time to leave after singing a song. Then in vs. 31-35 is the warning of the danger and Peter vowing his strength. Jesus obviously knows better. Vs. 36-46 finds Jesus in the Garden and wants prayers from his disciples, especially Peter, James, & John. They couldn't handle an hour of prayer. That is why we have a tradition in the church to spend an hour in church from sometime after the Mass on Holy Thursday to midnight, hoping we can do an hour without falling asleep.

Vs. 47-56 gives Matthew's account of the betrayal and arrest. At this point Jesus seems fearless, determined. The disciples aren't. This goes back to what Jesus had just talked about with Peter and which refers to Zechariah 13:7: "Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed, and I will turn my hand against the little ones." But the next verse in Zechariah is also important: "In all the land, says the Lord, two thirds of them shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left."

Vs. 57-68 is about the illegal trial, but it gives Jesus a chance to declare himself as the Son of Man. This passage from the Book of Daniel is not talking about his humanness. This is his power as God. Then as predicted Peter denies him. Think about why Matthew inserted this in the Gospel. Peter is the leader of the Church when Matthew is writing this. It is not to put him down but to show how real faith can come about in a real person.

Matthew 27: In Matthew it seems like the trial must last all night for in vs. 1 it is suddenly morning. They bring Jesus to Pilate, but this is the beginning of another sandwich. This time the meat is the death of Judas. Then it goes back to Pilate as the second slice of bread. The focus is the idea that Judas and Pilate seem to be trapped into their actions, as if they had no freedom.

This is the sinful state. We become slaves to sin. The only way out is with Jesus.

The sentencing includes the story of Barabbas, or the son of the father. Bar means son and abba means father. It is no coincidence that he is freed instead of the Son of the Father, Jesus. This again is to show that God has this planned. The crowning of thorns and the mocking of Jesus as the King of the Jews is also important. Thorns were the punishment for sin given to Adam. Also, the Jews believed that the eternal kingdom promised by God to David would become the only kingdom, eliminating all others; so the king of the Jews mentioned in that promise would be an eternal and universal king, or King of kings.

Simon of Cyrene had no choice either. The whole account of the crucifixion should sound familiar from Psalm 22, which Jesus actually recites but, because he can't breathe, can only voice the first line. Notice that there is no mention of John, the beloved disciple; nor is the lance in the side mentioned.

But the burial and the placing of the guards is clearly to set up the awesomeness of the Resurrection, for it takes away all doubt that there is any other possibility of what happened to Jesus.