

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge

Week 11

Monday	Deuteronomy 19-21	Psalm 59	Luke 17
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 22-24	Psalm 60	Luke 18
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 25-27	Psalm 61	Luke 19
Thursday	Deuteronomy 28-30	Psalm 62	Luke 20
Friday	Deuteronomy 31-33	Psalm 63	Luke 21
Saturday	Deuteronomy 34	Psalm 64	Luke 22

Sunday: *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under “Adult Education, Bible Study”.*

The Deuteronomy readings:

1. See the study summary for week 10 for background information on Deuteronomy.
 - a. Chs. encountered this week include the conclusion of the book of laws (19-26.1-15); the conclusion to the giving of the Law (26.16-28.69); Moses’ third address to the people (29.1-30.20); and the last will and testament, and death of Moses (31.1-34.12).
2. In the laws relating to homicide, exceptions to the strict *lex talionis* of a “life for a life” are found in the specification of three “cities of refuge”—safe havens from retribution.
 - a. The medieval status of a church as sanctuary finds its origin in this scriptural warrant. (*See also* references to sanctuary at Exod. 21.13-14 and 1 Kgs. 1.51; 2.28-34).
 - b. The distinction between intentional and unintentional killing is made clearer here than in the Covenant Code (Exod. 21.13-14).
 - i. Note that the “avenger of blood” is not a public official, but is next-of-kin.
3. The LORD is described as a warrior God in the rules relating to the conduct of war (20.1-21.14).
 - a. Regulations are specified for the treatment of prisoners of war.
4. Miscellaneous laws relating to lost property are found in 21.15-23.1, followed by humanitarian and cultic laws (23.2-25.19).
 - a. The worldview of the Law which treats a human being as an individual having a unique personal interest, and as one in personal relationship with God, is a revolution in human thought (finding its origin at Genesis 1.26, that each human being is created in God’s image and likeness).
 - i. It is on the basis of this worldview that humanitarian considerations arise and are treated as holy.
 - ii. The corollary is individual as opposed to corporate responsibility as a principle of divine justice (*cf.* Jer. 31.29; Ezek. 18.5-18).
5. The Law is concluded with what amounts to an Israelite *credo* at 26.5-11.
 - a. Notably, this recitation of faith is deemed completed only upon the paying of a tithe.

- b. This conclusion continues in the form of an address of Moses, one which includes both blessings and curses.
 - i. Blessings and curses are made as definitive statements of the Law, and in the form of a testament.
 - 1. Blessings and curses are first stated about acts, and then about the status of the people in their lives and community.
 - a. Curses climax in the experience of defeat and exile (28.33-37), evidence of Deuteronomy being written/edited at a much later date than during Moses' lifetime.
 - c. The address includes the recitation of a three-fold ("this day") acknowledgement of the Law as a reciprocal covenant (26.16-19).
 - i. The causative of the verb *'amar*, found in "you have declared," has the technical sense of acknowledging a statement as juridically binding.
 - d. The covenant is officially renewed (ch. 29), reflecting God's fidelity (ch.30). Famously, the people are exhorted to observe the Law as attainable, and to "choose life" in the observance of God's commandments (30.15).
6. Moses' last will and testament includes the commissioning of Joshua (31.1-8). Deuteronomy then switches into a verse form, "The Song of Moses" (32.1-43), a later addition which echoes earlier themes from the E source.
- a. The blessing of Moses (ch. 33) includes blessings on particular tribes.
 - i. The blessing on Joseph indicates an origin of the Northern Kingdom not later than the 8th century, B.C.
 - ii. *Urim and Thummim* (33.8) refers to an oracular device, probably something like dice. Levi is no longer a secular tribe.
 - b. Moses' death (ch. 34) is probably from a P source document (*cf.* Num. 27.12-23).
 - i. In contrast to Num. 27.18, where Joshua is appointed because he possesses spirit, here the spirit of wisdom (the ability to rule) is conferred by the laying-on of hands.

The psalms: *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

1. The psalms encountered this week include:
 - a. 59: An individual lament, probably royal; a cry for deliverance from besieging enemies.
 - b. 60: A communal lament, probably following a military defeat. In response to the people's plea for an answer (v. 7), God asserts His supremacy over Judah-Israel and their enemies.
 - c. 61: An individual lament which assumes a royal character on the basis of its plea for the king.
 - i. The reference (v. 2) to "the ends of the earth" may also be translated as "from the brink of the netherworld". This makes the reference to the "enemy" (v. 3) possibly a reference to the final Enemy, Death.
 1. Therefore, the movement from the presence of Death to the presence of God (v. 4) is a reference to salvation.
 - d. 62: A classic psalm of trust. The psalmist recites his own trust in God, and invites the community to trust likewise.
 - e. 63: Classified as a psalm of trust, but with obscure elements. The parallel elements in vv. 3-5 of lips responding to God indicates a formal prayer.
 - i. The Israelites prized life above anything else. Thus, the v. 3 reference to God's love being better than life itself, is both powerful and unique in the Old Testament.

1. This insight foreshadows the understanding of God's love being extended beyond death (*cf.* Rom. 8.38-39).
- f. 64: An individual lament. Note the parallel reflecting divine justice that those who shoot "arrows" at the psalmist will be targeted by an arrow of God.

The Gospel readings:

1. Refer to the summary for week 8 for an introduction to Luke's gospel.
2. Jesus continues His instruction on the character and meaning of the Christian Way.
 - a. Disciples are renewed inwardly. A stern warning is issued to disciples not to cause their brothers or sisters to abandon their pilgrimage (17.1-2).
 - b. As Jesus enters the last leg of His journey to Jerusalem, He instructs His disciples in what it means to follow Him.
 - i. Of the lepers Jesus encounters only the Samaritan offers thanks. He is described as "seeing" Jesus (17.15) using a Greek term (*eidōn*) of experiencing and understanding.
 1. No boundaries of nationality are recognized by God, a point emphasized by Luke in his recording Jesus as saying to the leper "... your faith has saved you" (17.19).
 - c. A series of exhortations to faith follows. Disciples are to have faith throughout the end times that Jesus describes.
 - i. Notably, the Pharisees are unable to see "end times," the coming of the kingdom of God, in Jesus' cleansing of the lepers.
3. Luke ties the following parables (The Widow and the Unjust Judge; The Pharisee and the Tax Collector; The Rich Ruler) to the coming of the Messiah. The faithful must remain faithful despite end times.
 - a. Disciples must depend on God rather than on themselves. This is highlighted at 18.9-14 and 18.18-30.
 - b. Once again Jesus predicts His own Passion, and this is followed by examples of His ministry to outcasts (*e.g.*, a blind man)(18.31-43).
4. Jesus is welcomed by an outcast (the tax collector Zacchaeus). The story is unique to Luke, and his point is reinforced by the tax collector's name meaning "clean one".
 - a. The tax collector—as an outcast— responds readily to God's call, demonstrating that it is God who saves, not the man. A tax collector is a rich man, but with God all things are possible. A rich man get's through the needle's eye!, and this salvation extends to all of his household (19.9).
 - b. The point of salvation as being in response to God is reinforced by the parables of the ten talents (19.11-27), in which it is made clear that disciples must take risks in following Jesus.
5. Jesus is rejected in Jerusalem. Luke closely follows Mark in this section of his narrative. The narrative includes a triumphal entry, a lament over Jerusalem, the cleansing of the Temple, and challenges to Jesus' authority, which are answered with a parable (of The Wicked Tenants) and a denunciation of scribes.
 - a. Jesus takes possession of the Temple and is Himself the Temple (19.45-46).
 - b. He affirms His authority to speak for God and teaches God's Way.

- i. In answering the question about paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus is not speaking about civil authority but about its limits.
 - 1. The coin He is shown would have borne the inscription “Tiberius Caesar, Son of the *divine* Augustus, great high priest.” Jesus is making a point more about idolatry than about paying taxes.
 - ii. In lauding the widow for giving of her all for the support of the Temple (21.1-4), Jesus is also condemning the religious teaching that would have a widow give to support a decaying institution.

- 6. Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple (21.5-9). This prophecy precedes a series of teachings about end times and about the need to watch.
 - a. It is immediately following these public confrontations that Jesus meets with His disciples, and the plot to kill Jesus is hatched.
 - i. Luke follows Mark’s narrative closely, but his theology of Jesus’ association with sinners is woven throughout his source material.
 - b. Jesus initiates the farewell discourse and meal by sending Peter and John to secure the room for their meal (22.8).
 - i. Peter and John, who will be leaders in the Church, obey their master’s command, in contrast to Judas, who has gone “away” (22.3).
 - c. Jesus institutes the Holy Eucharist as His legacy to the Church.
 - i. Jesus’ farewell address parallels in form the farewells of David (1 Kgs. 2.1-10) and Mattathias (1 Macc. 2.49-70). Luke uses Jesus’ farewell as exhortation for His communities, *e.g.*, for how to prepare for Eucharist.
 - ii. Luke’s reference to the “hour” (v. 14) parallels Johannine understanding.
 - 1. “Take this” (vv. 17-18): Until His dying breath, Jesus continues to feed His disciples.
 - 2. Jesus’ reference to His Body uses the word *sōma* (v. 19), which is a reference to being in addition to flesh.
 - 3. The new covenant in Jesus’ blood echoes the establishment of a bond between God and His people, as found at Exod. 24.3-8 and Jer. 31.31.
 - iii. When Jesus instructs His disciples to “Do this in remembrance of me ...” (22.19) the word used is *anamnesis*, the sense of which is “to make present again”.
 - 1. The first part of Jesus’ farewell address thus ends with the pouring out of His Blood as the means to salvation.

- 7. Recall that *Acts* is the second volume of a two volume work which includes Luke’s gospel. The examples of leadership which will be seen in Acts must thus be viewed in light of what happens at the Last Supper.
 - a. Luke does not follow Mark, in that he places the betrayal of Jesus in the context of the supper, not before it (*cf.* Mk. 14.18b-21).
 - b. The dispute over greatness (v. 24) uses the term *hēgoumenos*. Luke may be warning about Church leaders.
 - i. The portrayal of Peter’s failure thus places his later leadership in the Church in context: The leader leads as empowered by God.
 - c. Jesus is faithful (in the garden) and the disciples are not.
 - i. The failure of Peter is again contrasted with Jesus fulfilling the Father’s will.
 - ii. It is when Jesus is apparently powerless that He foretells God’s vindication.