

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge
Week 28

Monday	Job 28-30	Psalm 5	Galatians 1
Tuesday	Job 31-33	Psalm 6	Galatians 2
Wednesday	Job 34-36	Psalm 7	Galatians 3
Thursday	Job 37-39	Psalm 8	Galatians 4
Friday	Job 40-42	Psalm 9	Galatians 5
Saturday	Proverbs 1-3	Psalm 10	Galatians 6

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 Job readings:

1. See the study summary for week 26 for an introduction to Job.
2. Ch. 28 is comprised of a poem which is difficult to situate within the ongoing dialogue, or, indeed, within the book. The personal references contained in the speeches are missing, and the content is at best tangentially related to the problems which the speakers have been discussing.
 - a. The poem is an extended meditation on the search for wisdom. It may comprise an interlude in the ongoing debate.
 - i. Thematically, the poem relates to the transcendence of divine wisdom, and the inaccessibility of this wisdom to humans.
 - b. Many disputes and uncertainties exist regarding the text; hence the differences between English translations (*compare, e.g., the RSV, the NIV, and the REB*).
3. Chs. 29-31 include Job’s final soliloquy, which serves as a conclusion to the dialogue. (Ch. 3 had served as the introduction.)
 - a. Job alone speaks, but he speaks by oath, *i.e., with witnesses*.
 - i. He summarizes his own thinking about his situation and whether he has any responsibility for it.
 1. Structurally, the book here flows as a “psalm of lament”:
 - a. Ch. 29: Past happiness.
 - b. Ch. 30: Present misery.
 - c. Ch. 31: Oath: the oath is spoken for human witnesses, and before God.
4. Elihu now speaks (chs. 32-37). This extended speech is generally considered to be an insertion from another writer into the book.
 - a. The writer here acts as a critic, one who seems to have been dissatisfied with the original conclusion of the book.
 - i. He “corrects” Job’s outbursts.

- ii. He apparently did not feel that the friends' speeches did justice to the traditional view of divine justice. The "critic's" insertion is an early example of doctrinal development. He puts his arguments into the mouth of a speaker in the drama.
 - b. This section is different linguistically. Elihu essentially repeats the arguments of Job's friends, but more in the style of Proverbs (didactic and argumentative).
 - i. The critic disavows the friends' association of suffering with retribution alone, but also is mildly shocked at Job's outbursts.
- 5. The LORD now enters the "dialogue". Chs. 38-42 are truly the key section of the book. God now speaks from heaven to earth.
 - a. God never makes a statement. He poses a series of ironic and unanswerable questions.
 - i. Because Job is incapable of answering any of these questions, how can he engage in any "debate" with God?
 - ii. Nonetheless, God's speech reveals both the infinite richness of variety in creation, and His loving concern for His creatures.
 - iii. Job acknowledges his "lesson" and in some small way is restored what he has lost, but this epilogue bears all the hallmarks of an insertion as a rather awkward conclusion.

The psalms: N.B. *In The Bible Challenge the Psalter is read twice (once in each half year). This week re-starts the reading of the Psalter. We may all be led into new insights, particularly in focusing on praying each psalm (preferably aloud). See the summary for week 1 for a general introduction.*

1. See the study summaries for weeks 1 and 2.

The readings from Paul's Letter to the Galatians:

1. The "Galatians" were an Indo-Aryan tribe from Asia, related to the Celts of the British Isles.
 - a. In his *Gallic War*, Julius Caesar refers to the Celts or Gauls as "Keltae in their own language, but in ours [Latin] Galli." These Celts settled in the Asia Minor in the late third century, B.C., following protracted wars in the Danube basin and Greece.
 - i. The blue-eyed, sometimes blond "Anatolian Turks" of the area today are descendants of the Galatians.
 - b. In writing to "the churches of Galatia" Paul is not writing to a *place* but to a people; to a people considered outsiders by the Greeks. This is mission to the Gentiles writ large!
 - c. The letter was probably written from Ephesus, in the late 50's.
 - i. The letter was written to address issues raised by "agitators" (1.7). These were "Judaizers" from Judea who argued that to become a Christian one must first become Jewish (*i.e.*, be circumcised).
2. The letter is polemical, not irenic (like Romans). It adopts the classical rhetorical forms for argument:
 - a. *Praescriptio*: In Roman legal usage, this limited the scope of argument, *i.e.*, the plaintiff could not bring a similar case against the same defendant.
 - i. This is Paul's opening formula, "stating the case" in his greeting, 1.1-5.
 - b. *Exordium*: Introduction of the topic of the argument, 1.6-11.
 - i. Paul speaks of his amazement at how the Gospel is questioned, and pronounces an anathema on those who oppose it.
 - c. *Narratio*: The statement of the grounds for the argument, 1.12-2.14.

- i. Paul describes the history of his call to preach the Gospel.
 - 1. The Gospel is not of human origin, but has been approved by the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem.
 - d. *Propositio*: Paul's Gospel is set forth (2.15-21). The "statement of the case".
 - e. *Probatio*: Argument and evidence (3.1-4:31).
 - i. It is God's plan that we should be saved by faith.
 - 1. First Proof: The experience of the Galatians in receiving the Holy Spirit (3.1-5).
 - 2. Second Proof: The example of Abraham, and God's promises to him (3.6-26).
 - 3. Third Proof: The believer's experience in Baptism (3.27-29).
 - 4. Fourth Proof: The believer's experience as a child of God (4.1-11).
 - 5. Fifth Proof: The Galatians' experience with Paul (4.12-20).
 - 6. Sixth Proof: The example of Sarah and Hagar (4.21-31).
 - f. *Exhortatio*: Exhortation to action, response.
 - i. Counsel: You have freedom in Jesus Christ. Preserve this freedom (5.1-12).
 - ii. Warning: Do not live according to the flesh, but by the Spirit (5.13-26).
 - iii. Advice: The proper use of Christian freedom (6.1-10).
 - g. *Postscriptio*: A reaffirmation of credentials, and a farewell blessing (6.11-18).
3. Obviously, much more can and has been written about Galatians than the bare outline provided above. The importance of the letter cannot be overstated (witness, for example, the fundamental effect of Galatians on the theology of figures like St. Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther). Together with Romans 3, Galatians is the bedrock of the affirmation that believer's are "justified by faith".

The readings from Proverbs:

1. Proverbs is a Wisdom anthology, a collection of brief, two line sayings that summarize traditional teaching (chs. 10-29), prefaced by extended poetic instructions in discernment and right-living (chs. 1-9), with a conclusion made up of longer sayings and short poems (chs. 30-31).
 - a. The content is didactic and moralizing, and the book has traditionally been viewed as a "manual of conduct".
 - b. Proverbs is related to other works within the ancient Near Eastern Wisdom tradition. A genre of such works exists, such as the *Instruction of Amenemope*, from Egypt.
 - i. Proverbs must be viewed as representative of this genre. It does not represent an exclusively Jewish instruction, except to the extent that the instructions invoke the LORD as the source, arbiter and end of wisdom and justice.
2. The book probably dates from late 6th C. or early 5th C. B.C., and represents an editorial compilation of earlier material from multiple sources.
 - a. Proverbs does not rely so much on Torah as on traditional teaching, but shares terminology and insights with Deuteronomy (which is probably nearly contemporary in composition), "second" Isaiah (Isa. 40-55), and Jeremiah.
 - b. Proverbs may be stated as instructions (as from a teacher to a pupil, or a father to a son), as found in chs. 1-9; 22.17-24.22; and 31.1-9, or as "proverbs," pithy statements expressing a particular truth in a memorable way.
 - c. The book as a whole may not be classified according to an overarching, coherent structure. This points to the fact that it is a collection of material.

- d. The text appears easy to understand, but contains profound insights regarding:
 - i. The nature of Wisdom as something which can be sought by all, and is not reserved to a privileged and enlightened few. It is gained by making well-informed choices in living.
 - ii. Wisdom is personified as a woman to be courted.
 - 1. Proverbs are stated as an instruction to a son, in a patriarchal society. Too much must not be read into the personification of Wisdom.
 - a. In *no* way does Proverbs equate Wisdom with the LORD. The personification is a literary device directed to a young man.
 - b. Nonetheless, the symbolism is apt, for Wisdom is to be sought out and cherished, and must be discerned amidst competing attractions. Once Wisdom is attained, she will remain faithful
 - iii. Wisdom is a form of mediation between God and the world. Theologically, Wisdom equates with how God has given us the reason which allows us to discern in the order of creation that there is a Creator.
 - 1. Wisdom is of divine origin, and thus allows us as well to understand some aspects of God's will for us.
 - a. The heart of wisdom is the "fear of the LORD".

3. The first three chapters of Proverbs include:

- a. Introduction: Warning about sinners (1.8-19); speech about personified Wisdom (1.20-33).
- b. The benefits of Wisdom:
 - i. Wisdom's benefits (Second Instruction), 2.1-22).
 - ii. Fidelity toward God: 3.1-12.
 - iii. The value of Wisdom: 3.13-26.
 - iv. Righteous conduct: 3.27-35.