

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge
Week 12

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| Monday | Joshua 1-3 | Psalm 65 | Luke 23 |
| Tuesday | Joshua 4-6 | Psalm 66 | Luke 24 |
| Wednesday | Joshua 7-9 | Psalm 67 | John 1 |
| Thursday | Joshua 10-12 | Psalm 68 | John 2 |
| Friday | Joshua 13-15 | Psalm 69 | John 3 |
| Saturday | Joshua 16-18 | Psalm 70 | John 4 |

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 Joshua readings:

1. While it is common to refer to the first five books of the Bible as the Pentateuch, it is thematically more accurate to think of Genesis through Numbers as the “Tetrateuch,” with Deuteronomy serving as the introduction to the Deuteronomistic History comprised of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings.
 - a. Joshua thus serves as the first book of history in this narrative.
 - b. Thematically, the tone is set at 1.5 (and repeated at 3.7; 4.14), when the LORD says: “[A]s I was with Moses, so will I be with you ...”
 - i. Joshua repeats many of Moses’ actions.
 1. And yet, in repeating Moses’ actions, Joshua does not hesitate. He is thus portrayed as the ideal leader.
 - c. The book is dependent mainly on the P (Priestly) source. This may explain an etiological focus (the telling of the origins of things by story), marked by a repeated motif “to this day” (see, e.g., 4.9; 5.9; 6.25; 7.26; 8.28,29; 9.27; 10.27; 13.13; 14.14; 15.63; 16.10).
 - d. In the Pentateuch, Joshua is a minor figure. The dominance of the P source over J or E in Joshua, may explain the difference in focus.
2. The book opens with the commissioning of Joshua, with the balance of the first twelve chapters being a description of the conquest of the Promised Land.
 - a. The name Joshua means “the LORD has saved”. The variant “Jesus” changes the verb into an active voice, “the LORD saves”.
 - i. Both Joshua and Jesus would probably have been pronounced by their contemporaries in the same way, as *Yeshua* or *Yeshue*.
 - b. The conquest of the land is described in epic style. The narrative focuses on a few key cities, as the Israelites establish complete control.
 - i. The description of the capture of Jericho in ch. 2 differs in some details from that found in ch. 6, indicating different literary traditions.
 1. The reintroduction of Joshua by his patronymic indicates a different source.
 - ii. Rahab is described as a prostitute. The verb describing the spies sleeping in her house has sexual connotations.

1. Rahab is listed at Mtt. 1.5 as the great-great grandmother of David, and in the line of descent of Jesus from Abraham.
 - a. God will use extraordinary means to further His purposes!

3. The chapters describing the crossing of the Jordan (3.1-5.1) have a complicated literary history, evidence of multiple sources.
 - a. The account of the crossing is deliberately patterned on the account of the crossing of the Red Sea in Exod. 14-15.
 - i. Note that the chronology (“at the end of three days,” 1.11) and the narrative make no reference to the story of the spies in ch. 2.
 - ii. While variations exist in the names of the tribes of Israel, they are always described as twelve in number.
 - iii. The peoples of the promised land can be identified from extrabiblical sources, with Perizzites, Gergashites, and Jubusites being obscure.
 - b. The account of the placement of twelve stones is confused. The indication of the stones being in the Jordan, as opposed to beside it, is probably later, reflecting a decline in the sanctuary of which they were a focus.

4. The narrative proceeds through the cultic ceremonies at Gilgal (5.2-12) to the destruction of Jericho (5.13-6.27).
 - a. Following the crossing of the Jordan, the main work of Joshua begins.
 - i. As with Moses, his work is preceded by an appearance of the LORD (5.13-15).
 - b. The account of the destruction of Jericho bears more elements of story as opposed to history, but reflects an underlying oral tradition founded in actual events.
 - c. Following the destruction of Ai (7.1-8.29), an interlude describing cultic practices, and the covenant with Gibeon (9.3-27), the campaign turns South, with conquests described through 10.43.
 - d. The campaign to the North is described (11.1-15), with all of the warfare summarized at 11.16-12.24.
 - i. This summary sets the stage for the division of the land, which will occupy the narrative from 13.1-21.45.
 1. Joshua is focused on origins; thus, the lengthy narratives of how particular tribes came to live in particular areas of the land.

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. 65: Essentially a prayer for rain. The psalmist looks to God’s past blessings upon Israel.
 - i. Confession and repentance are offered. Sin can prevent the coming of rain (1 Kgs. 8.35-36).
 - ii. Successful agriculture depends not only on weather but upon safety. Hence the prayer for security from attack (v. 8).
 - b. 66: A composite of a hymn of divine praise, a communal thanksgiving for deliverance, and an individual thanksgiving for deliverance.
 - c. 67: Probably a communal thanksgiving for a successful harvest.
 - i. Elements of petition exist in the parallel between vv. 2 and 7.
 - d. 68: A psalm which is difficult to classify. It may be a single hymn, or may be a composite.
 - i. The imagery in v. 2 echoes Num. 10.55.

- ii. V. 1 was inscribed on crosses given by the Tsar to imperial officers during the Romanov dynasty.
- iii. Imagery of God's enthronement is present. Therefore, the psalm may include a series of allusions to victory.
- iv. V. 18 is one of the origins of the medieval tradition of the Harrowing of Hell by Jesus.
- e. 69: An individual lament in which one unjustly accused appeals to God for justice.
 - i. V. 23 is alluded to at Mtt. 27.34; Mk. 15.23; Lk. 23.36; Jn. 19.29.
- f. 70: An individual lament; a doublet of Ps. 40.14-19.

The Gospel readings:

Luke

1. Refer to the summary for week 8 for an introduction to Luke's gospel.
2. Ch. 23 focuses on the trial of Jesus before Pilate, His encounter with Herod, and His final Passion, including crucifixion and death.
 - a. The wronged and righteous Jesus is handed over to crucifixion (23.1-25).
 - i. Pilate declares Jesus innocent, but plays the coward when the people demand His death.
 - ii. Luke describes the people calling for Jesus' death five times: 23.18, 23, 24, 25a, 25b.
 - b. The rejected prophet calls for repentance (23.26-31).
 - i. "[T]hey led him away ..." The antecedent description is of the high priests, leaders and people. In using this ambiguous phrase, Luke is softening his description of Roman involvement.
 - c. Among sinners, Jesus prays for their forgiveness (23.32-34).
 - i. What the prophet Jesus foretold at 22.37 now comes to pass. He is among transgressors.
 - ii. Only Luke has Jesus pray for the forgiveness of those who have condemned and torture Him.
 - iii. Negative and positive responses to Jesus are portrayed (23.35-49).
 - d. Jesus dies. The sixth hour (v. 44) would have been at about noon.
 - i. Darkness signals the Day of Judgment, as in Joel 2.31 and Amos 8.9. (In Amos the darkness occurs at noon.)
 1. God's judgment against evil occurs at Jesus' death.
 2. The Temple veil is torn (v. 45). In Jesus all now have access to God.
 - ii. Jesus' final words echo Ps. 31.5, the prayer of an innocently suffering righteous one.
 - e. The centurion's response is portrayed by Luke as the model response for all who come to know the Lord.
 - f. Jesus is given a kingly burial (23.50-56a).
3. Jesus is vindicated. He is raised. He promises the Spirit. He ascends to heaven (all, 23.56b-24.53).
 - a. The disciples journey from sorrow to joy because of the appearance of the Lord.
 - b. Women are depicted as evangelists.
 - c. When Jesus tells the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to "remember," Luke uses the word *mimnēskethai*. This is reference to bringing something past into the present, with

deepened insight, and is used in this pregnant sense at 1.54, 72; 23.42, and at Acts 10.31 and 11.16.

- i. The disciples on the road have abandoned the way of Jesus, for He did not meet their expectations. His appearance to them is, therefore, a revelation of the self-giving of God.
 1. The disciples have abandoned the way, although their description of what happened to Jesus fulfills His own prophecies found at 9.22; 13.32-33 and 18.31-33.
- d. Jesus appears amidst themes of peace and table fellowship (24.36-53).
 - i. When Jesus appears, each time He opens the disciples' minds (*e.g.* at 45)
- e. When Jesus leads His disciples out to Bethany, He is described doing this using the same verb used in the Greek version of Exodus to describe God leading the people out of Egypt.
 - i. Jesus completes His exodus. Cf. 9.31.
 - ii. Jesus ascends to heaven. Cf. Acts. 1.6-11. This gospel account is of a doxological nature, stressing the worship of Jesus.

John

1. John was written probably near Ephesus, probably around the mid-90's, with later editing (perhaps by another hand) in the first decade of the second century. Style and theology are intertwined.
 - a. This Gospel is attributed to John, son of Zebedee. The content of the Gospel reveals the author as one who regards himself in the tradition of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Authorship is therefore often assigned to the "Johannine community," with redaction taking place about the same time as the composition of 3 John (*ca.* A.D. 100-110).
2. Following a prologue (1.1-18), the "Hymn to the Logos," which summarizes the career of the incarnate Word, John shifts to:
 - a. The Book of Signs (1.19-12.50), in which the Word reveals Himself to the world and to His own, but they do not accept Him:
 - i. Prominent are the "signs" (seven miracles), which begin with the water changed into wine at Cana and culminate in the raising of Lazarus (after which Jesus is condemned).
 1. The signs point to who Jesus is.
 - b. Old Testament feasts feature in the narrative, with themes of light and life prominent:
 - i. Jesus, the new Moses, replaces the Sabbath ordinance to rest (5.1-47).
 - ii. The Bread of Life replaces manna (Passover)(6.1-71).
 - iii. The Source of living water and Light of the world replaces water and light ceremonies (Tabernacles)(7.1-10.21).
 - iv. Jesus is consecrated in place of the Temple altar (Dedication)(10.22-42).
 - c. The Book of Glory (13.1-20.31): To those who accept Him, the Word shows His glory by returning to the Father in death, resurrection and ascension. Fully glorified, He communicates the Spirit.
 - i. The Last Supper and Jesus' discourse (chs. 13-17).
 - ii. Jesus' passion and death (chs. 18-19).
 - iii. The resurrection (20.1-29).
 - iv. Epilogue (21.1-25): Galilean resurrection appearances.
3. Note that at 1.3-4 the Word, Jesus, is described as Creator. This highlights the problem (reflecting what is known in theology as Modalistic Monarchianism) of avoiding the invocation of "Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit” because this formulation is somehow thought to be exclusive, and substituting “Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier”.

- a. Each Person of the Trinity is a Person, not a mode of action.
4. John the Baptist is described as a man “sent from God” (1.6-8). He is not a messianic figure, but a prophet.
 - a. Despite his testimony, the Word is rejected.
 - b. The Word became flesh. This counters the Docetic heresy (from the Greek verb *dokein*, “to seem or appear”) that Jesus did not have a body.
 - c. “[F]rom his fullness we have received grace ...” (1.16) is a reference to the fullness of God’s grace (*cf.* Pss. 5.8; 106.45) and mercy (*cf.* Ps. 51.3).
 5. Jesus gathers His disciples.
 - a. John is not the Messiah (1.19-28).
 - b. Jesus is the Lamb of God (1.29-34).
 - c. Andrew, Peter (Simon), Philip and Nathaniel are called (1.35-51).
 - i. The summons to conversion is based on the confession that Jesus is the Messiah (1.40-42).
 6. The disciples see Jesus’ glory at Cana. The first sign (water to wine) occurs, followed by Jesus cleansing the Temple (2.1-25).
 7. Following the cleansing of the Temple, Nicodemus comes to Jesus. Jesus speaks of rebirth and eternal life (3.1-36).
 - a. Nicodemus must grow in faith. He does, as witnessed by his participation in Jesus’ burial.
 8. Jesus withdraws to Galilee (4.1-3), enters Samaria (hostile territory), and is revealed as the Savior of the world (4.4-42).
 - a. Jesus returns to Galilee, where He heals the official’s son (4.46-54). This is the second of Jesus’ signs.