

Scripture Readings and Sermon

August 15, 2021 by Rev. Mark Brechin

Commentary on 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14 (Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#))

The book of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings overlap with the death of David and the rise of Solomon as king. Even though Solomon was anointed king at the end of 2 Samuel, 1 Kings begins with a power struggle in the first chapter which Solomon wins. In Chapter 2, David bestows his blessing upon Solomon and Solomon consolidates his power. The official start of Solomon's reign begins with an offering made on a "high altar" in Gibeon. It is important to note that Solomon has not yet built the Temple. After the Temple is built, kings will be criticized for not tearing down the "high altars". While Solomon is blessed by David and anointed by Nathan, the true blessing comes from God in Solomon's vision after sleeping by the altar (compare to Jacob's dream). This event is so important that it also begins the Second Book of Chronicles. Solomon's response to God's offer by acting as a shepherd concerned for his flock rather than a king concerned with power shows that Solomon has learned from the faults of David's pride.

1 Kings 3:9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind ... to discern between good and evil;

Before buying something, do you research the best product and the best price?

If we do this for material possession, should we not do this for our spiritual life?

Looking back, can you remember a time when acting in haste had bad results?

How much effort would it take to spend 10 minutes asking God for advice?

Do we ask without listening for an answer that might be different from our own?

Try praying this simple verse every day this week.

Commentary on John 6:51-58 (Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#))

The words of Jesus shock "the Jews". The phrase "the Jews" is unique to the Gospel of John and appears at least once in every chapter. The "Jews" do not represent the nation or the people but rather the Temple authorities. In John 1:19, it says, "the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem". Note that the "Jews" are distinct from the priests and the Levites. The one of the authorities who are identified is "a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews" (John 3:1). The High Priest Caiaphas is not one of the authorities but "was the one who had advised the Jews" (John 18:14). The "Jews" appear to be the authority on the Law. Therefore, when Jesus speaks of eating flesh, they immediately begin to "dispute among themselves". It is not just that Jesus said "eat" but used a very unique word only found in the Gospel of John. In the rest of Scriptures, the Greek word that translates "to eat" means to consume referring to the digestion of food. John, only in this section, uses the Greek word that means to chew or gnaw. This is a very descriptive word which challenges the hearer to spiritualize the process. This is not "take and eat" but rather "here is my flesh to chew on". Is it any wonder that they began to dispute among themselves. Jesus goes on to speak of drinking blood (not kosher) and the Living Father (only found in this passage). Combined, this is one of the most difficult passages of Scriptures to understand.

John 6:56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.

Is it surprising that Romans thought Christians were cannibals?

How does this passage make you feel when you heard it as a child?

Do you ever think of Communion bread as the actual "Body" of Christ?

Is Jesus saying the equivalent to "you are what you eat"?

What does eat mean to "eat" self sacrifice and "drink" forgiveness?

How should Communion change how we live in the world?

Commentary on Ephesians 5:15-20

(Youtube [*Lectionary Study Video*](#))

Paul continues his lesson on the old self and the new self by plumbing deeper into why we feel the need for control. For Paul, life in the flesh is death both spiritually but also literally. It is our fear of death that drives our need to feel in control. For those who fear death, the days are evil for the march us inevitably to our end. For those who are wise in faith however, death is not the end but simply a transition into another reality. The ones who believe that this reality is all there is say to each other, "Eat, Drink, Be merry for tomorrow you may die!". Paul, however says that this is foolishness. "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit." The time we have on earth should be a time of joy for we are merely waiting on the porch until it is our time to enter an eternity full of love. Therefore, give "giving thanks to God the Father at all times".

Ephesians 5:17 So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Do you truly believe that there is a great purpose and plan to our world?

If so, do individuals and human institutions follow that plan or their own agenda?

How is following our own agenda working out for our world, our country, ourselves?

If it is not working out, than isn't keeping with "tradition" foolish?

What if we stopped following the way of the world and started listening to God?

Could it be that the Creator actually knows what is best for us?

Guest Preacher Sermon