

November 12th Readings

[1 KINGS 12:20-13:34](#)

[ACTS 9:26-43](#)

[PSALM 132:1-18](#)

[PROVERBS 17:6](#)

1 Kings 12:20-13:34 In the previous reading, in a very graphic manner, Jeroboam had been explicitly promised rule over 10 tribes of the nation of Israel. The prophet who informed him of God's will told him he just needed to turn Israel away from the ways of Solomon and back to the ways of David. Once the kingdom of Israel was his, he seems to lose sight of this one condition. Or maybe he began to think it was all his doing and God was not involved. For he decided to make two golden calves and set up a system of false worship for these gods who had brought Israel out of Egypt.

I read this and I think, "How could he do that? He just needed to do what God told him." Then I am reminded that I sometimes want things I know I can't have or shouldn't have. Sometimes I treat my wife poorly, lashing out in anger, even jealousy. When I let myself run my life, I find ways to go against God's very clear commands. And Satan smiles.

Thank God, for He provided a way of salvation from my stupidity, from my selfishness, from my sin.

November 13th Readings

[1 KINGS 14:1-15:24](#)

[ACTS 10:1-23](#)

[PSALM 133:1-3](#)

[PROVERBS 17:7-8](#)

The Gentile Question – Part 1

Here in Acts 10:9-16, God begins to get to the heart of a matter he has already revealed: the dissolution of the Mosaic Law and the institution of salvation available to all people.

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the

house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

This NEW covenant would be different. Under the Law of Moses, covenant children were taught who their God was. Not so under the new covenant. Under this new covenant, even the least of covenant children will already have been taught about God. Otherwise, they could not become covenant children. And those in this covenant, their sin God remembers no more. They are clean.

When Peter is shown all these 'unclean' animals (unclean under the Law of Moses) and told to eat, God is actually saying, "Go teach the Gentiles who could not be covenant children under the Law of Moses. Under this new covenant with Israel, if anyone knows me, they can be covenant children, also. If they are covenant children, then they are clean, for I remember their sin no more."

November 14th Readings

[1 KINGS 15:25-17:24](#)

[ACTS 10:24-48](#)

[PSALM 134:1-3](#)

[PROVERBS 17:9-11](#)

The Gentile Question – Part 2

ACTS 10:24-48 Peter, as always, is impetuous and sure of himself. Willing to fight for Jesus, adamant to prevent Jesus' death. Here, he tells Cornelius that it is unlawful for him, being a Jew, to meet with Cornelius, a Gentile. But, Peter magnanimously explains, God showed me a vision that said people I had thought were unclean were actually not unclean to God.

Then Peter preaches to Cornelius and his household. His sermon appears to be much the same as other sermons he had preached in the past, but always to homogeneous Jewish audiences. And these Gentiles begin speaking just like the Apostles had on the day of Pentecost – speaking in languages they could not have known. Finally, Peter gets it! What prevents these formerly unclean Gentiles (unclean under the Law of Moses) from having their sins forgiven through baptism just as the Jews (who thought of themselves as clean under the Law of Moses). A new covenant indeed!

November 15th Readings

[1 KINGS 18:1-46](#)

[ACTS 11:1-30](#)

[PSALM 135:1-21](#)

[PROVERBS 17:12-13](#)

1 Kings 18:1-46 Elijah confronts Ahab, husband of Jezebel and ruler of Israel. Ahab is under the same condition of rulership that Jeroboam was under – follow God and you and your line will rule the 10 northern tribes; follow false gods and you will be dethroned. Ahab had followed after Baal.

Elijah says to the people of Israel, *“How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.”* (verses 21-24)

So, the 450 prophets of Baal slaughtered a bull, placing wood and the pieces of the bull on an altar. They began to pray, they limped around the altar. They cut themselves, blood flowing freely. Elijah suggests that maybe their god is sleeping or going to the bathroom, maybe yelling louder would rouse him. Hours passed. No fire.

Elijah then builds the altar for God. He digs a trench around the altar. He slaughters the bull, placing wood and the pieces on the altar. He commands water be poured over the sacrifice. Then more water. And again. Then he prays that God light the sacrifice. And God does. The fire consumes the sacrifice of Elijah, the wood, the water and the altar. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel hears prayer.

Then Elijah led the 450 prophets of Baal to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them. There would be no more preaching the attributes of Baal by these prophets.

What can we get out of this today? Our God is a jealous god. Follow Him, reap the rewards; turn from Him, suffer the consequences.

November 16th Readings

1 KINGS 19:1-21

ACTS 12:1-23

PSALM 136:1-26

PROVERBS 17:14-15

After making a farce of the prophets of Baal, Elijah receives word that Jezebel vows to kill him. He becomes fearful. Generally when I read this passage, I think about how we also can become fearful even after great deeds are accomplished. We know that as fast, smart, or ingenious we are, eventually there is someone who is faster, smarter, more ingenious.

Seldom, do I think about the rest of the passage. The part where Elijah is telling God he is afraid, he has done enough, he is all alone. The point is that he went to God. Even when he seemingly is ignoring that God did those great deeds, (God destroyed the sacrifice and the altar. God delivered the prophets of Baal into his hands. Elijah could not have done this with his inherent power – he had none.) he instinctively tells God all about it. That is a mistake, if he thinks God is going to just let him wallow in his misery. Remember, God works through weak people. When we feel the weakest, that often seems to allow God more room to work in us.

November 17th Readings

[1 KINGS 20:1-21:29](#)

[ACTS 12:24-13:15](#)

[PSALM 137:1-9](#)

[PROVERBS 17:16](#)

In Psalm 137, the writer tells how very difficult it is to sing joyful songs when held in captivity, how hard it is to play happy songs in a foreign land. Yet do we not teach that we are to consider ourselves as travelers in a foreign land, sojourners held in captivity until we can be at home with God, where our souls were designed to be. Yes, the psalmist had an earthly view when writing this psalm. Don't we all from time to time. That should give us more courage. God put this psalm in His story for a reason. Certainly, one of those reasons was to express that even God's own people, tools He uses to accomplish His work, could fail to look to Him occasionally.

November 18th Readings

[1 KINGS 22:1-53](#)

[ACTS 13:16-41](#)

[PSALM 138:1-8](#)

[PROVERBS 17:17-18](#)

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands. - Psalm 138:8

As I grow older, I become more aware of God working through me. Not that He necessarily works through me more now than before, but I am more aware that that is how God works – through sinful, flawed people. He has always worked through flawed people since the Garden. I desire that he fulfills His purpose for me. I want to show the way, not stand in His way. I want to be a bridge for others, not a barrier.

David asked God to “not forsake the work of your hands.” God will not forsake His work through me. Help me not to forsake His work or forget that God works through me.