

2020-2021 Bible Study

#26

4/5/21

Review of our Last Class

- In our last class, we finished our brief overview of Romans (by looking at Romans 7&8) where we saw Paul reminded the Jewish Christians that because the Law was only during a person's lifetime, that it was no longer binding after their death in Baptism
- He pointed out that (based on the Law), he knew what was right and he often found himself doing what was wrong (a battle was waged within his soul)
- He then discussed the post-baptismal problem that results from our spirit being saved, but our flesh remaining in sin (only to be resolved after our bodily death)

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- In **Romans 8**, Paul announced that Jesus has left a new “Law” according to the spirit, which tells us what is right and directs the body to follow that law
- Father pointed out that this was not the same as the two god pagan dualism
- Paul explained that this conflict was a result of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden (where they severed their spiritual relationship with God)
- This means that there are two parts to our salvation (spiritual and physical)

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- Paul told his audience that someday they and all of creation will be raised from the dead, and be as it was originally in the Garden
- It would mean that those who achieved this would be sons (and daughters) of God (spiritually and physically)
- Father then ended this presentation with an explanation as to how and why Luther (and others) misinterpreted this passage, and set up an anti-sacramental theology

Acts 20

- As we saw earlier in **Acts 20**, Paul arrived at *Corinth*, where he stayed for three months, and it was from there that he wrote his **Letter to the Romans**
 - Father pointed out that we must move on (from **Romans**) as this is an overview of the New Testament course
 - The additional details of Paul's letter to the **Romans** will be covered in greater detail in the course on the Pauline Corpus

Acts 20 (Cont)

Father said the most important information in the letters of Paul (which we have studied) will serve us well for our study of Theology, Apologetics, and Spirituality

This information is very important in an area where most Christians today have little understanding and/or are often confused

Acts 20 (Cont)

- **Acts 20:3** “*There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for **Syria**, he determined to return through **Macedonia**”*
- Shortly there after, a plot arose against Paul, when he was about to sail directly to *Syria* (**Acts 20:5-6** travel log)
- Paul hoped to return to *Jerusalem* before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Passover*)
- He wanted to do this because he was still trying to live by the rules of Judaism, and making the three pilgrimages to *Jerusalem* were required
- But, he changed his mind and went overland back through *Macedonia*, then on to *Asia*
- He ended up celebrating the “Feast of unleavened bread” (part of the *Passover*) in *Philippi*, where he stayed for seven days, before sailing for *Troas*, where he stayed for another seven days

Acts 20 (Cont)*

- **Acts 20:7-12** *“On the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread , Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and he prolonged his speech until midnight...and were not a little comforted”*
 - This passage discusses a Eucharistic gathering as a part of the Sunday Vigil
 - The Early Christians often gathered on the first day of the week (Sunday) to celebrate the Eucharist
 - They did this at night (the vigil), to get as close to the time of Jesus’ resurrection as possible (just before dawn on Easter Sunday)

Acts 20 (Cont)

- Even though we would call this the middle of Saturday night, the early church called it Sunday morning
- It would appear that Paul gave a very long sermon, causing a young man named *Eutychus* to succumb to sleep and fall out of a third story window, and was perceived to be dead!
- He was revived by Paul, who returned, and completed the Mass before resuming his travels to Jerusalem (**Acts 20:13-15** travel log)

Acts 20 (Cont)

- **Acts 20:13-27** *“But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there; for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land...the whole counsel of God”*
 - Paul then sailed to *Miletus* (not far from *Ephesus*), he hoped to arrive in *Jerusalem* by the Feast of Pentecost (50 days after Passover)
 - At this point, Paul called the Elders (*Presbuteros*) down to *Miletus* from *Ephesus*, and told them that he was going to *Jerusalem* even though the Holy Spirit had warned him that he would be imprisoned there
 - At this stage in the early church, there still were no “priests,” only deacons and bishops

Acts 20 (Cont)

- **Acts 20:28-36** *“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood”*
 - Father said that the word “guardian” here means “bishop”
 - He also said that we will revisit the concept of holy orders in other letters of Paul
 - Finally, he gives his tearful farewell to the leaders from *Ephesus*, and sailed on to *Caesarea Maritima* and then up to *Jerusalem*

Acts 21

Acts 21

- **Acts 21:17-22** “*When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly...circumcise their children or observe the customs*”
 - Paul resumed his travels to *Jerusalem* (**Acts 21:1-12** travel log)
 - When Paul got to *Jerusalem*, the brethren welcomed him gladly
 - The next day, he went to see James, the Bishop of *Jerusalem* (along with all of the elders) as he had been among the Gentiles for a number of years
 - The members of the Church in *Jerusalem* listened to him and glorified God for his work
 - But then, they asked him about his teaching concerning the fact that Jews (living among the Gentiles) no longer has to obey the Law of Moses

Acts 21 (Cont)

- James reminded Paul that many of the Jews in *Jerusalem* had heard about this and were upset
- Father said that in addition to the Jews living in *Jerusalem*, most Jewish Christians were still keeping the *Torah*
- In fact, some of the Jewish Christians were more zealous for the *Torah* than the non-Jewish Christians in order to prove that they were serious about their Jewish faith (the New Way)
- They had heard that Paul was teaching the Jews in the diaspora not to circumcise their sons or observe the rest of the Jewish customs
- James told Paul that these men would certainly hear that he was in the city and would want to kill him

Acts 21 (Cont)

- **Acts 21:23** *“Do therefore what we tell you...you yourself live in obedience to the law”*
 - So James directed Paul to go to the temple and act like a good Jew
 - Father Sebastian said that he would have loved to have been in that room and witnessed this discussion between James and Paul
 - The fact was, that Paul did not act like a Jew, unless he was among Jews
 - Both men knew what Paul had been teaching, even though Paul had not actually been telling “Jews” to forsake the law
 - What he was teaching was that Jewish Christians were no longer “obliged” to keep the Torah after they had been baptized

Acts 21 (Cont)

- He certainly did not teach that all Jews out in the diaspora would have to forsake the *Torah*
- Father said that he did not teach that as it was none of his business
- So here, James tells Paul to go down to the temple and act like a good Jew, so that his critics would know that he was living according to the Jewish customs (and everything would be fine)
- Hopefully, the Jews would think that there was no truth in what he had heard about him
- Father pointed out that there was some dishonesty going on here (a clarification with a little distraction from the issue)

Acts 21 (Cont)

- **Acts 21:25-40** *“But as for the Gentiles who have believed,...he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying”*
 - Father said that this was the letter from **Acts 15**
 - But, when Paul went down to the temple the next day, he attempted to act like a good Jew and participate in a week of prayer
 - When the week was about over, a group of Jews came to *Jerusalem* from *Asia* who stirred up the crowd by claiming that Paul was teaching against the Law
 - Most of *Jerusalem* was upset and they seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple wishing to kill him

Acts 21 (Cont)

- When word reached the Roman authorities, they rescued, arrested Paul, and took him into custody
- Paul asked for permission to speak to the crowd
- When it was granted, he began to speak to them in *Hebrew*