

2020-2021 Bible Study

#32

6/1/21

Current Bible Study

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A Prayer to be Recited Before Reading the Sacred Scriptures

- Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.
- Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created.
- And thou shall renew the face of the earth.
- Let Us Pray*
- O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things and ever to rejoice in His consolation.
- Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Review of our Last Class

- Last week, we looked at the outline of the Catholic Epistles: James, 1st and 2nd Peter (and after the summer, John 1-3, and Jude) in that they were not written to a specific individual or church, but to the seven churches of Asia Minor
- The Epistle of James was most likely written by James (the lesser), the Bishop of Jerusalem in the late 50s A.D.
- Father suggested that it was very Jewish, like the wisdom literature of the Old Testament

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- The first chapter may be seen as a summary of the entire letter
- James begins by disusing the early church (the new Israel) dispersed due to the early persecutions
- As these early Christians joined some of the Pauline churches in Asia Minor, they were exposed to Paul's theology which James was attempting to clarify
- His reference to "works" were not related to the works of the Torah, but to good acts that baptized Christians would perform, to include seeking virtue over wealth

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- James was calling his listeners to do good acts toward orphans, widows, and the poor
- One could not demonstrate great faith without helping others as they were to act as the face, hands, mouth, and feet of Jesus
- Father pointed out how some (in the footsteps of Luther) have misread this letter as being the opposite of what Paul was saying in Romans
- James also established the scriptural basis for the Sacrament of the Sick

The Catholic Epistles (Cont)

1st Peter

1st Peter

- Father pointed out that **1st Peter** was one of two letters written by St. Peter and is one of the most beautiful jewels of the New Testament
- The author identified himself in the first words in the letter as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ”
- It was most likely written sometime between the Spring of 63 A.D. and July of 64 A.D.

1st Peter (Cont)

- It looks very much like a baptismal homily
- The **2nd Letter of Peter** has likewise always been a part of the cannon
- Since there is no way that it was written from Babylon in Mesopotamia, Babylon was used as a code name for the city of Rome
- The intended audience was those under heavy Roman persecution in Asia Minor: *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*

1st Peter (Cont)

- His motivation for writing this letter was to encourage the Christians under persecution by the Jews and Romans, by providing needed catechesis, consolation, direction, and encouragement
- James wrote his letter with the same doctrinal issues in mind
- Thus, Peter was writing to them from Rome, to encourage them after hearing about their problems
- Father asked that we look for some of the beautiful baptismal imagery in this letter

1st Peter (Cont)

- **1st Peter 1:1-25**

- Peter used “Trinitarian language” when speaking of the “sprinkling of his blood”
- This phrase must be understood to reflect “the death of Jesus, which we receive at our baptism”
- Peter used Old Testament imagery from **Exodus 24** and **Leviticus 16** to make his point
- “Born again” or being “born anew” is baptismal language
- It is all about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and our resurrection at the second coming of Jesus

1st Peter (Cont)

- Father pointed out that this letter was written to the same community in *Asia Minor* to which James had written his letter
- That group was struggling with the idea of “faith”
- We saw similar language from Paul in **1st Corinthians 10** where he was telling his audience that one must have and live out that faith

1st Peter (Cont)

- Father said that if anyone asks if you have been “born again,” you should reply: “Absolutely” (at my baptism)
- This has been and remains the uninterrupted teaching of the Church (until the misunderstanding taught by the Protestant Zwingli)
- We, as Catholics, know that we are saved by “water and the spirit”

1st Peter 2

- **1st Peter 2:1-5,9,11**

- “A chosen race, a royal priesthood,” is right out of **Exodus 19**, and means that we, as Christians, are members of the Body of Christ (Israel)
- This is not the same thing as being a member of the modern nation of Israel
- Once again, Peter discussed those in the “dispersion”
 - This could be a spiritual way of speaking of the Christians who were enroute to end times/or
 - Those Christians in the 1st century who actually fled from Jerusalem and Judea
- Either way, Peter was simply saying that (as Christians) they were the “house of God,” no matter where they resided
- They were stones of the temple of the living God

1st Peter 3

- **1st Peter 3:7, 15-22**

- In this section, Peter reminded husbands and wives to get along
- Peter also observed that by saying that Christians always need to be prepared, he was providing the first “papal encyclical”
- He further explained that Christ died to reunite us to God through our baptism
- His resurrection brings about our bodily resurrection (which we recite at the end of the Creed every Sunday)
- It is also interesting that Peter (topologically) connected baptism with the flood

1st Peter 3 (Cont)

- The flood washed away the wicked to preserve righteousness via the “wind” which was “His spirit”
- When Israel crossed the Red Sea, we observed that this was done by means of the “water and the spirit”
- Father pointed out that the walls of the ancient baptisteries contained images of the creation account, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, the three youths in the fiery furnace, Jonah and the whale, and the baptism of Jesus (Melkite church in McLain)

2nd Peter

2nd Peter

- **2nd Peter**

- Father suggested that we read **2nd Peter** on our own due to the semester time constraints

Transition

- This ends our formal review of the Book of Acts and the Epistles for this year
- At this time, I would like to present an overview of what we have looked at since September, 2020