

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge

Week 27

Monday	Job 10-12	Psalm 149	2 Corinthians 8
Tuesday	Job 13-15	Psalm 150	2 Corinthians 9
Wednesday	Job 16-18	Psalm 1	2 Corinthians 10
Thursday	Job 19-21	Psalm 2	2 Corinthians 11
Friday	Job 22-24	Psalm 3	2 Corinthians 12
Saturday	Job 25-27	Psalm 4	2 Corinthians 13

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 Job readings:

1. See the study summary for week 26 for an introduction to Job.
2. In ch. 10 Job reacts to his friends' advice, convinced of their wrongness. He agonizes over the nature of God. This is reacted to by Zophar, in his first speech (ch. 11), in which he reiterates that Job must in some way deserve his ill fortune, and therefore he must amend his ways.
 - a. Job reacts (chs. 12-14) in his longest speech.
 - i. He states that his wisdom matches that of his friends.
 - ii. He argues that his friends defend God dishonestly; they impute human behavior and motives to Him.
 - iii. He protests his innocence, and pleads with God for explanation.
 - iv. He laments over the vagaries of human life.
 - v. He speculates about intimacy with God following death.
3. Chs. 15-19 contain Eliphaz's second speech, Job's fourth response, Bildad's second speech, and Job's fifth response.
 - a. The friends continue to question Job's piety, since he is questioning God.
 - b. Job continues to express hope, even though he is now abandoned by friends, family, fellow humans and (apparently) God.
 - i. God is greater than how He is perceived, and Job expresses hope in his Redeemer.
4. The dialogue continues: Zophar speaks again, and Job responds (chs. 20-21). Eliphaz speaks again, and Job responds (chs. 22-24). The issues raised and responded to echo earlier arguments. This repetitive pattern may structurally be intended to represent an ongoing series of trials, in which Job's faithfulness is tested and demonstrated.
5. Chs. 25 through 27 contain much obscurity in text tradition. The text is disordered and partially incomplete. The likely explanation is that parts of the original manuscripts were missing, but it is possible that this obscurity sets the stage for the search for wisdom, which is described beginning

in ch. 28. This possibility highlights the fact that the treatment of *theological issues* in Job is never raised to the level of explicit doctrinal debate.

- a. Job's friends appeal to common sense, to what is "established" (4.7), and assume that Job will share in their understanding (5.27).
- b. The friends may also argue deductively (34.10-12), or cite anecdotal evidence (4.4; 5.3), or even argue on the basis of transcendent authority gained in private revelation (4.13-16).
- c. Above all, the friends rely on tradition, both explicitly (8.8-10) and implicitly (*i.e.*, in the use of traditional religious instruction, as in sayings, didactic examples).
- d. Job opposes his friends' "common sense," rational argument, revelation and tradition because of his certain knowledge that what his friends claim is inconsistent with his own experience.
 - i. The book forms, in part, and extended debate about ways of knowing, *i.e.*, how God reveals Himself and His will for us.

The psalms: N.B. *In The Bible Challenge the Psalter is read twice (once in each half year). This week re-starts the reading of the Psalter. We may all be led into new insights, particularly in focusing on praying each psalm (preferably aloud).*

1. The psalms encountered this week can include:
 - a. 149: This is a communal hymn of praise in two parts:
 - i. vv. 1-4, praise to God with music.
 - ii. vv. 5-9, praise of God who leads His people to victory.
 - iii. The reason given for praise to the LORD is His delight in His people.
 1. Praise is, therefore, a species of thanksgiving.
 2. Thanksgiving is to be public (v. 1, "in the congregation") and private (v. 5, "on their beds").
 - b. 150: This psalm is a doxology for Book V of the Psalter, and for the entire Psalter. The grounds for the praise of God are His mighty acts in creation.
2. For psalms 1-4 *see* the study summary for week 1.

The readings from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians:

1. *See* the study summary for week 25 for an introduction to 2 Corinthians.
2. Having written of Titus' mission, in ch. 8 Paul begins his discussion of the collection for those suffering in Jerusalem. This discussion continues to 9.15, prompting some scholars to question whether chs. 8 & 9 are integral to the letter, or are part of a separate correspondence which has been inserted.
 - a. The collection for the Jerusalem impoverished (Rom. 15.26) was decided at the Jerusalem Council (Gal. 2.10) in the early Fall of A.D. 51. Paul hoped that this good will gesture from churches in Asia and Europe would bridge the gap between the Jewish and Gentile wings of the Church.
 - i. Paul recognizes that the collection poses a challenge to those in Corinth. He does, however, gently chastise the Corinthians for failure in performance, after they had accepted the idea of giving.
 - ii. Paul writes also of the theology of giving, emphasizes that a gift must be an act of will (9.7).

3. In ch. 10 the flow of the letter changes to such an extent that most scholars believe that it represents a separate letter.
 - a. The theme remains Paul's apostleship, but he now approaches this theme in a radically different way.
 - i. Whereas Paul had used measured argument in the first part of the letter (or "Letter A"), now in the second part ("Letter B") he expresses frank outrage. His language is no longer temperate in his own defense, or in his criticisms of his opponents (who have intruded into the church at Corinth).
 1. Paul enjoins obedience (10.1-18), making clear that in its absence, he will return an exercise authority.
 2. Paul adopts the boasting approach of his opponents to demonstrate how the Corinthians should be ashamed (11.1-12.13). The boasts made by Paul are likely to echo the type of claims made by his opponents.
 3. Paul makes clear that the intruders are false apostles (11.13), invoking the rabbinical Jewish tradition that Satan has transformed himself into a shining angel in order to seduce Eve (v. 14; cf. *Apocalypse of Moses* 17.1-2).
4. Paul's speech in the mode of a "fool" closes with an epilogue at 12.11-13 which echoes the justification given for boasting (11.1-21a).
 - a. The Corinthians had seemingly attempted to judge between the apostolicity of Paul and his rivals by looking to who performed miracles. Paul reiterates that weakness in the world is a manifestation of the presence of God.
 - b. Paul returns to the theme of financial support, and warns that he is prepared to make a visit to settle the issues in the Corinthian church. In next week's readings, the letter concludes (ch. 13) on a note of warning, and final greetings.