

My Notes

Saturday, February 16, 2008
10:40 AM

- Opening Prayer
- Introduction stuff
 - The book is \$5.50
- Read 1 Peter 3:15-16a
- Reason for the order of topics
 - Should be easier from here on out
- Stuff from last time
 - Bible alone?
 - First NT book was Paul's first letter to Thessalonians in about AD 50
 - ◻ So what did the Christians do from the time of Jesus' Ascension into Heaven until AD 50?
 - ◆ Nothing?
 - ◇ No, they took what Jesus had taught them in deeds and verbal words and evangelized the nations
 - ◇ They took these Traditions of Jesus and passed them on
 - ◇ They didn't wait till AD 65-90 (There are different theories as to when Revelations was written.) when the last book (Revelations) of the NT was written
 - ◻ The writings of the NT are a product of the early Church and its Tradition, not the other way around
 - ◻ And the early Church is a product of Jesus leaving us 12 Apostles entrusted with the fullness of revelation, of Truth which Jesus IS
 - When talking with Protestants, don't always have to be the one answering questions; ask one yourself
 - ◻ Go on the offensive and ask the person where in the Bible is the teaching Scripture alone is our only source
 - ◻ Again, they will probably point to 2 Tim 3:16-17
 - ◆ All Scripture, not Scripture alone
 - ◆ Even if it did, how do we know that 2 Tim is inspired and should even be in the Bible?
 - ◆ Did God write a list of books on stone tablets like He did for the 10 Commandments?
 - ◇ No, the canon or list of which books are inspired by the Holy Spirit and should be in the Bible only makes sense with the authority of the Church to make that decision
 - ◇ And there was no Christian Church except for the Catholic Church until Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's
 - Historical-critical method
 - Method of reading the Bible to try and get at the story behind the story
 - Good
 - ◻ A lot of research went into bringing you the information at the beginning of a book and footnotes in a study Bible
 - Bad
 - ◻ When it tries to explain away miracles
 - ◆ Needing a natural explanation instead of a supernatural one
 - ◆ Needing an explanation based in science
 - Documents
 - Purpose - trying to get at an intelligent Catholic way of reading the Bible
 - ◻ Not literalists
 - ◆ Universe doesn't have to be created in 7 24 hour periods
 - ◻ Not Jesus Seminar

- ◆ Group that supposedly proved that only approximately 18% of what Jesus is recorded as saying in the Gospel Jesus actually said
 - Intelligent way
 - ◆ Taking into consideration what kind of literature it is, what is the background of the human author and the original audience, etc
 - ◆ While remembering the Bible is a unified whole made up of individual books that faith tells us is Inspired by God himself and thus different than any other book in existence
 - The CCC distinguishes two senses of Scripture, or two different ways to read Scripture (paragraphs 115-117) - write these on the board
 - The Literal sense
 - ◆ This is the study of the scripture - what is called exegesis
 - ◆ St. Thomas says that "All other sense of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."
 - ◆ This is literal as in what the author initially intended and meant
 - The Spiritual sense
 - ◆ Allegorical - "We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or a type of Christ's victory and of Christian Baptism."
 - ◆ Moral - "The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly."
 - ◆ Anagogical - we can view the things in the Bible in terms of their eternal significance
 - ◇ The Church is a sign of the heaven
 - Can ask yourself the spiritual senses when you read the Bible
 - Why the Church has rejected the Fundamentalist approach of reading the Bible
 - Opposed to the historical-critical method of Bible study
 - Rejects taking into account the Bible's historical origins and development
 - Separates interpretation of the Bible from tradition which has produced it (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit)
 - Why the Church has rejected the Feminist approach of reading the Bible
 - Has brought good ideas to the study of the Bible
 - In its bad forms though, it involves a hermeneutic of suspicion: since history is usually written by the victors, to come to the truth of a passage, it is not good enough to trust what the passage says, but to look for signs that it reveals something quite different
 - It often tries to make an argument from what is not said instead of what is said; that Scripture is trying to hide something
 - ◆ This is different than what we talked about last time - how Scripture only contains what needed to be said and a lot more was passed on by Tradition, outside of Scripture - because the things radical feminist approach to the Bible proposes has no basis in Tradition
- Sin
 - Evil as a privation of good
 - Distinguish between guilt and punishment
 - Distinguish between mortal and venial sin
 - Guilt and punishment
 - Does God forgive the guilt of the sin and still require punishment, atonement, or expiation?
 - Example of King David - 2 Sam 12:1-15
 - ◆ Yes, God forgave David, but even afterwards, required the reparation in the form of suffering
 - Mortal and venial sin
 - Does the Bible distinguish between mortal sin and venial sin?
 - Most Protestants would say no

- ◆ Rom 6:23
 - Some sin is deadly and some are not
 - ◆ 1 John 5:16-17
 - ◆ James 1:14-15
 - ◇ Might be slightly stretched, but difference between beginning and mature sin
 - ◇ Mature sin brings death
 - Church
 - Mortal - sin that brings death soul
 - Venial - sin that merely wounds and disfigures soul
 - Possible outcomes at death
 - Die in perfect state of grace with no sin or reparation due to sin
 - ◆ Go directly to Heaven
 - Die in state of unrepented (mortal) sin
 - ◆ Do directly to Hell
 - ◆ God doesn't send you to Hell; you choose it yourself - part of free-will
 - Die in state of grace, but with venial sin or with unpaid reparation due to forgiven sin
 - ◆ Don't deserve Hell - in a state of grace
 - ◆ Not in perfect state
 - ◇ Rev 21:27 - "nothing unclean shall enter"
- Purgatory
 - Matthew 22:2-14
 - Read
 - Not a perfect analogy because you cannot lose Heaven once you are in Purgatory
 - Protestants who did believe in Purgatory
 - Samuel Johnson saw it as a reasonable belief
 - C.S. Lewis believed in Purgatory
 - Important points
 - God is perfect and we are called to the same perfection or holiness
 - Matthew 5:48
 - 1 Peter 1:15-16
 - Different than what Luther believed
 - ◆ Luther believed we are dung heaps covered with snow
 - ◆ Catholics believe the grace received from Jesus' death and resurrection is not just a band-aid, but it is the very blood and platelets that heal the wound of our sins, our faults in our character
 - ◆ God wants us to heal us of sins, not just make us feel better
 - Without being perfect we cannot enter Heaven
 - Hebrews 12:14 - actual sanctification is necessary to enter Heaven
 - Rev 21:27
 - Only makes sense in God's mercy everyone would not go to Hell for how many of us are perfect when we die?
 - Purgatory comes from purge which means to "purify" or "cleanse"
 - Purgatory is thus a place or process where we are purified or cleansed
 - What do we believe about Purgatory?
 - Temporary state of purification for the imperfect saints
 - Die in a state of grace (in favor with God), but with venial sins or with reparation due for forgiven mortal and venial sins
 - Here they are purified and made perfect so they can enter Heaven
 - All character flaws are purged

- All self-love is purged until only love of God remains
- Three points
 - Not a second chance
 - Place for saints, those in a state of grace, that are imperfect
 - Purgatory exists for purification and reparation
 - The effects of sin are purged
 - Purgatory is only temporary
 - Once purified they enter heaven
 - Once everyone is purified that needs to be purified, Purgatory will cease to exist
 - ◆ Only Heaven and Hell are eternal
- Is Purgatory Scriptural?
 - Word does not appear in Bible, but concept of an intermediary place does
 - Secondary references
 - Matthew 12:32
 - ◆ Sin is not forgiven in Heaven or Hell
 - 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
 - ◆ Verse 13 - talking about judgment that comes after death
 - ◆ Cannot be talking about Hell because there is no being saved once you are in Hell
 - ◆ Cannot be talking about Heaven because there is no suffering in Heaven
 - 1 Peter 3:18-20
 - ◆ Prison for disobedient, but were still saved
 - ◆ Probably not the place where righteous souls of the OT waited until Christ opened the gates of Heaven be
 - ◇ They are righteous and not disobedient
 - ◇ Draw on board
 - ▶ Bosom of Abraham, Paradise (the thief crucified with Christ), netherworld Shoal
 - ▶ Final four things: death, general judgment (versus individual judgment), Heaven, and Hell
 - ▶ Hell didn't mean Hell until Christ died on the Cross
 - 1 Peter 4:6
 - ◆ St. Peter is describing a temporary state where disobedient souls will eventually be saved
 - ◆ So there must be a third place - call it what you want; Catholics call it Purgatory
 - 2 Maccabees 12:44-45
 - ◆ No need to pray for souls in Heaven or Hell
 - ◆ This is why pretending that everyone who dies is a saint doesn't help them
 - ◆ We pray for the souls in Purgatory at Mass
 - ◇ In the four main Eucharistic Prayers, we pray for the dead, who again would not need our prayers if they were in Heaven or Hell
 - ◆ This passage is so direct, that it is thought that this is why Luther went with the Jewish Canon for the OT instead of the canon Christianity had used since the time of Christ
 - ◆ It does show that Jews a 100 years before Christ prayed for the dead and they still do today
 - ◆ Early Christians prayers and ancient Christian tomb inscriptions from the 2nd and 3rd century frequently contain an appeal for prayers for the dead
 - ◇ This only makes sense if the early Christians believed a in a place besides Heaven and Hell, even if they didn't call it Purgatory
 - ◇ Tertullian, writing in AD 211, presents the practice of praying and sacrificing for the

dead as an established custom

- Praying for dead the norm of Christians for 1500 years, until the Protestant Reformation
- Some more NT Scripture
 - 2 Timothy 1:16-18
 - ◆ Here Paul is asking that God be merciful to Onesiphorus on "that Day"
 - ◇ All the English translations have Day capitalized which makes me think it is not unreasonable that this would be the day of judgment
 - ◇ Again, no need to pray for him if he is in Heaven or Hell
 - 1 Corinthians 15:29
 - ◆ Here Paul does not condemn or approve the practice of being Baptized for the benefit of someone who has died
 - ◇ However, he doesn't condemn the idea that one's state can change after death either
 - ◆ Your book notes that on the grounds of Scripture, Protestants have no way to refute Mormon practice of Baptism for the dead - they have to recourse to the Fathers and Church Tradition to prove that Christianity never endorsed this practice
- Jews, Paul, and the early Christians prayed for the dead
 - Thus we should do the same
 - Praying for the dead assumes there is a place besides Heaven and Hell
- I think Purgatory is a beautiful teaching
 - I don't plan on being ready to be in the presence of Perfection, God, but I hope not to deserve Hell either
- Obviously though, people have interpreted the Bible to say that there is not a Purgatory
 - So again we end up at the doorstep of the argument of authority
- Small group
 - Discuss what you think of the Church's teaching on Purgatory
 - Is it a good thing?
 - Is it helpful?
 - How do you think we can better bring comfort to family members at the time of death and yet not pretend that we know for sure they are in Heaven?
 - I don't think they are opposed
 - Rob people of prayers for purification by pretending they are already in Heaven