

C&T Class 10/12

"An Everlasting Covenant": Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

31:44 – Jacob and Leban erect a pillar as witness to their covenant – Why?

- The visibility of the pillar reminds them of the covenant
- Also serves as boundary. They can't cross it in order to do harm to the other

16:11-13 – Negative connotations with Ishmael (who is the ancestor of the Muslim people)

- Sarai & Abram try to take matters into their own hands instead of trusting in God to provide a son. He's not the son that God promised to Abram
- Angel comes perhaps to console Hagar, not berate her.
- Is the story different in the Quran? (ie Is Ishmael more respected?)

17:1 – Lord appears to Abram

- Turning point in Abram's life (his name gets changed to Abraham)
- Here is where God promises Abram a son & ancestors
- Abraham falls on his face and laughs at God – God doesn't seem to mind
- God promises descendants to be as many as stars – Why?
 - The pinnacle of Jewish salvation at this time is long life and many descendants
 - There wasn't a number to express how many there would be
- Why is Abraham so much more favored than anyone else?
 - Maybe there's more of a story behind why he is chosen that is not part of the Bible
 - There's a theme of God making the least glorious thing more glorious (eg. King David)

29:21-35 – Jacob works for 14 years to get both Rachel and Leah as wives

- 7 years each—7 is a symbolic number in the Bible
- Leban cheats Jacob here, just as he does with the sheep and goats later
- Jacob also tries to manipulate so he gets a larger wage
- Is Jacob moral?
 - Maybe he's morally neutral (breeding sheep so they will be spotted is not necessarily wrong)
 - Or not, Remember Jacob's name means "He takes by the heel"

27:27-29 – Jacob tricks Esau into giving up his birthright

- Recalls 26:23 "Two nations are in your womb...the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger"
- Jacob is like Odysseus: He uses his wits to get the best for himself

26:24 – Rebekah favors Jacob, Isaac favors Esau

- Shows how a family can be divided, even today

22:10-12 – Abraham nearly sacrifices Isaac

- Maybe this is why God favored Abraham, because he was willing to sacrifice his son?
- Maybe not, because this happens only after he has been chosen and all the promises have been made to him

Passages we didn't discuss

- 18:23-29 – Abraham asks if God will spare the city if there are only a few righteous people there
- 30 – Rachel becomes jealous of Leah

Miscellaneous Discussion topics

- The Genealogies provided in the Bible connect important people
- How long is a year?
 - Measured by seasons or another scale?
 - Maybe people lived longer because they were healthier

Discussion Notes- "Israel and His Children"

October 14, 2009

35:29 – "Isaac breathed is last", but we thought it appeared much earlier

39: all – Joseph's life of slavery

38:10 – Not sleeping with his brother's wife

37:26 – Judah saying Joseph should be sold into slavery, and not kill him

38: all – Explanation of significance of the Judah and Tamar story

33:10 – Irony in saying that seeing his brother was like seeing the face of God, when earlier he did see the face of God.

33: all/ 34:all – Joseph playing the games with his brothers

45:all – Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

33:10

-There is irony involved because he really did see the face of God, but he compares seeing his brothers face as seeing the face of God

-It might be an attempt at flattery to take away from the wrath he would bring upon himself

-why is Esau not acting against Jacob while he is angry

-Could be a good example of a family feud- it doesn't make sense to cause a fight when they haven't seen each other for 15 years

-Jacob did steal the birthright of Esau, it was irreversible because it was a will that had already transpired.

- Esau may be willing to give up the feud because he is well off.

-gives good concept of the power of a blessing in the story of the Bible.

35:29

-Why did he give the blessing of the birthright 15 years before his death, but the perception of the life of Isaac was that he died after he issued his blessing.

-This small excerpt is a blurb in the passage of chapter 35.

37:26

-Why was selling him into slavery a better option than killing him?

-How do you lose love for your brother when he holds dreams and actually does nothing?

-The brothers held contempt for Joseph because he was favored by his father.

-Joseph was born by Jacob's favorite wife, so Jacob favored Joseph.

-The value of life is different in the time period and he has been portraying prophecy of how he will lord over his brothers.

-They saw a reward in slavery because they got money for selling him, but they would receive nothing for killing him.

-A discussion on Reuben

-Is he a good man, or is he trying to cover his own back?

38:all

-Questions as to why the story of Judah and Tamar is included in the passage.

-The story is defaming to Judah within the community because he did take on a perceived prostitute, or it could be that he was trying to protect her from death.

-Judah does act out of the goodness of his heart, taking in an outcast and protecting her from harm.

-Onan did not fulfill the law as a brother-in-law. He refused to bear children with his brother's wife after Er's death.

-Onan is struck down because he breaks the law of God, having sex with Er's wife, but spilling his semen on the ground, not intending to impregnate the woman.

-Why was it placed in the passage we read?

- It offers a historical perspective

- Offers a contrast between Joseph pleasing the lord and the brothers in the passage not fulfilling their obligation to God.

- This could complete the purpose of flashing back just as literature does, to drive the story along.

39:all

-The guard's wife does seduce Joseph, but the man makes a rash decision. Joseph runs the man's life, so why is he so quick to condemn him.

-A man wants to believe his wife, so he has to kick Joseph out.

-The women were not known for their faithfulness, so it could be an attempt to save the perception of his wife.

43:all/44:all

-The story seems to be a fictional story because the action works out perfectly.

-The plot line does work to Joseph's advantage and every action works out completely to fulfill the goals of Joseph's plan.

-The actions that move the plot are not completely out there, they are plausible.

-The famine occurs and the brothers come to Egypt.

- Joseph plants the cup and they return home, consume their grain, and return to Egypt.

-The fact that Benjamin is found with the cup is not very skeptical, maybe a few wrinkles were placed, but the fact that his plan worked out does not take away from the validity of it.

-The pharaoh did control the empire and when he made orders and let his will be known, it did get done because he did hold a lot of power over the people.

45:all

-Joseph reveals himself when he is in the position of power.

-He says it was fate for him to be in a position of power and hold the fate of his brothers in his hand.

-Joseph is nice because he has put them through a lot of trials and tests to make them work.

-He is acting honorably because he does forgive them, but he does get a little bit of his revenge without being too cruel in the same way the brothers treated him.

- It could be a test to see their dedication to their youngest brother Benjamin, because they did not hold a large amount of respect for Joseph when he was the youngest brother.
- Benjamin was the new favorite of the family, so Joseph wants to make sure the brothers have learned their lesson in dealing with him.

C&T Class Notes 10/19/2009

Moses and the Exodus

Passages:

- Ch. 4:21 – God hardens Pharaoh’s heart
- Ch. 4:24-26 – Bridegroom and Blood
- Ch. 2:24 – God remembering
- Ch. 15:19 Pharaoh & army die in Red Sea & celebration
- Ch. 20:1-24 – Ten Commandments
- Ch. 12:28 - Obedience of Israel to God’s commandments
- Ch. 12 - Passover Story
- Ch. 10:1 - Why God hardens Pharaoh’s heart
- Ch. 2 – Moses is Egyptian or Hebrew?

We started with chapter 2 and the question “Is Moses Hebrew or Egyptian?”

Someone says, “His attire is what he was wearing.”

Ch. 2:24 “Was God actually remembering? We thought he was all knowing?”

Ch. 4:21 Pharaoh’s heart hardened to test Moses? Answer is Ch.10:1.

Ch. 9:34 Pharaoh and his officials harden their hearts.

- Magicians help to make Pharaoh’s heart hardened.
- Were plague’s affecting Egyptian’s and Israelites?
- Each plague was directed against each Egyptian God.
- “No direct physical harm was done to anyone until last plague?” “Physical harm was done!
- Time period between plagues was rather quickly and not drawn out.
- Movie’s cloud our view of what might be the actual events.

Ch. 4:24 Circumcision is a sign of the covenant.

- Moses was not circumcised. The event in this passage describes the substitute.
- Moses was not able to go through the ritual because he had to be hidden as a baby.

David the King Notes
October 21, 2009

Suggested Passages:

2 Samuel 5:8 – David hates the lame/blind

2 Samuel 1:13 – David killing messenger—why?

1 Samuel 18:29 – Archetypal leader jealous of subordinate

1 Samuel 18:7 – “Saul kills thousands, David kills ten thousands”

2 Samuel 1:13 – so many wives of David—how does this work in Bathsheba story?

2 Samuel 1:11 – takes off clothes in mourning

2 Samuel 7:22 – “No God beside you we haven’t heard about with our ears”—faith?

1 Samuel 17:49-51—David/Goliath story

2 Samuel 19 – Joab criticizing David’s reaction on the death of Absalom

Last Page – David passes on his revenge while on his deathbed

2 Samuel 6:20 – Michal mad at David’s dancing

General – Dysfunction of David’s family

Discussion:

> Hating the blind/lame:

* Lame/blind- parents sin or a sin passed on by ancestors (deserving in some way)

* Reasons for David getting rid of the lame/blind—to cleanse the city (getting rid of it)

* Another reason for David hating the blind: was told that the lame/blind could repeal him if he were to try to get in the city.

> David killing the messenger:

* Messenger lied to David about how Saul really died

> **THEME RECURRING:** leaders becoming jealous of subordinate

* Saul showing jealousy toward David

* Reasons: Saul went from being the chosen one to seeing David become the chosen one through God

* 2 Samuel 7:15 – God promising David he “will not take my steadfast love” even if he messes up.

* “Saul kills thousand, David kills ten thousands” – the women criticizing King Saul

* Saul brought this upon himself- Gives David his army while sitting around.
(Saul was hoping David would get killed)

* Why can’t Saul be happy? Saul and David both succeeded
(Saul thinks David isn’t good as him even if he is the chosen one)

> Aristotle ‘Monarch’ Idea:

* Good Monarch: a leader who is so far above his subordinates there is no need to be jealous

* Monarch: a leader who believes that his position could be taken over by his subordinates, which where the jealousy come into play.

>POWER:

* Goal: self preservation of power of their monarch

* The lifestyle that comes with being king, leader become accustomed to all the riches and power

> Saul should have simply have accepted David. It seems that David wouldn’t go against Saul, but David has make mistakes morally.

> Bathsheba Story:

*God didn’t seem mad with David by basically committing adultery

> Stories about people’s flaws

* “Teaching them what to do, rather than teaching them how to do it”

Discussion Notes – October 23, 2009

“I Am No Prophet, Nor a Prophet’s Son”

Passages

1: all – Faults of other regions and people

3:14 – “Horns of the alter shall be cut down”, why would he take away from God?

3:3-8 – series of questions God asks

9:14-15 – God says he will restore the fortunes to Israel

4:12 – Wrath of God

9:8 – God will destroy everything except the house of Jacob

8:11 – Amos says that God will send a famine of hearing the words of the Lord

7:10-17 – Stand off between Amos and Amaziah

5:15, 6:6, etc. – He refers to the children of Joseph

1:all

-Why is it a significant to call out the faults of other people as a rhetorical strategy?

- He wants to accuse other people for their faults because the Israelites have fallen in many ways.
- The people would be more likely to listen if he is building them up and talking down about other people. He wanted to make sure the people were going to listen.

3:14

-The alter is a thing for God, why would they inflict harm to a dedication for God.

- If the people are not worshipping God, they may see no problem with defacing the alter.
- The alter has been changed and it is not as elegant as it used to be, so it could be an attempt to return back to its original state.
- The sins of the Israelites were so great that God felt the need to destroy their alter and show them they are not worthy of his presence.
- The shrine could be some type of national identity relating religion and nationalism. The alter could be a defining characteristic of the Israelites, but by destroying it, God may exhibit his power.

3:3-8

-the series of the questions can be an attempt to explain why things are happening.

- what is the purpose of so much repetition
 - rhetorical device to make the portrayal poetic in structure
 - more of a device for the flow of the questions and promises
 - adds to the argument, adding up many things trying to get the point across. The events cannot fall into place by chance, they are an exhibit of the power of God.

9:14-15

-The book is the criticism of Israel, but the last two verses describe how he will save His people Israel.

- He wants them to return to the days of old and become the blessed people they once were.

- Maybe this is his way of telling them that they did screw up and the covenant is still there, but they were going to suffer in order to recover that covenant

4:12

-The previous signs were small compared to the punishment he was about to invoke upon the people Israel because they didn’t change.

- Chapter 9 goes into much detail about the wrath God will inflict upon them

Why would you return to someone who is inflicting punishment?

- Fear can make people come back to God
- Old Testament portrays a God of fear so it could be a different in portrayal of God
- God does remind them of all the things they were able to do because of His help, but now they do not reciprocate the appreciation God expects.

9:8

-God gives a “monologue” on his plans for the earth, but he does want to leave the house of Jacob.

- He could be giving the opportunity for people to repent. He will inflict enough punishment for the Israelites to realize that they messed up, but God will never break His covenant.

8:11

-The famine of hearing the words of the Lord can be seen as a vengeful God.

- God is giving a warning and scaring the people that He may revoke His covenant and his counsel.
- The famine of not having God can be the worst possible way to hurt Israel.

7:10-17

-Amaziah is the high priest of Israel he defies Amos’ presence in the temple and king.

-Amos retaliates with prophesying the awful fate for Amaziah’s family.

-The reaction of Amos can be seen as a retaliation to Amaziah’s hardheadedness, because Amaziah is refuting Amos, Amos relays a horrible fate to him.

-“I am no prophet”, there could be a stigmatism attached to the title of a prophet so Amos wants defy that statement.

10.26.2009 C&T

“Images of God in the Hebrew Bible: The Book of Psalms and the Book of Isaiah”

From Introduction – Hebrews believed in the existence of other gods; distinguishing between the belief in one god and the worship of one god.

Also Isaiah 45:5 – God clarifies that there is no other god besides Him.

- Is the belief in more than one god part of the reason that God is angry with Israel?
 - Idol-worship angered God (did they view these as “minor deities”?) even by Israel’s kings
 - Fear of gods from other nations perhaps caused them to neglect their own God

Psalms 103 – Compassion of God in comparison to what we read last time

- Is it a big jump between punishment and mercy?
 - Yes
 - The previous readings focus on vengeful God (you do bad => you are punished)
 - The psalm is more like the “New Testament idea of God”
 - Ignores some of God’s previous passage
 - No
 - This psalm is focused on a different aspect of God (focused on joy instead of fear)
 - Same message: you still need to fear God to get his love
 - God’s never been vengeful, but he’s simply disciplined his people (vengeful has a selfish motive that discipline doesn’t have)
 - Can God have a character flaw?
 - We want to explain what god does in terms of logic, though we can ascribe the actions of characters (eg Odysseus) to character flaw

Isaiah 41:14 – Jacob is a worm, Israel is an insect

- They were just disciplined, and now he’s explaining why he disciplined them
- How insignificant they are and yet He still loves them
- But the image is that of a sledgehammer vs. a worm (shows how great are the things that he is giving, “throwing pearls to the pigs”)

Isaiah 40:2 – God has given Israel double for all of her sins

- Is this a slip up on Isaiah’s part? Revealing the faults of God?
- Poetic license?
- This passage perhaps is supposed to be comforting as opposed to accusing

Isaiah 45:1 – reference to Cyrus

- Historical background
 - Cyrus is Xerxes’ grandfather, king of Persia
 - Persians conquered the Babylonians who had been oppressing the Hebrews and let them start practicing Judaism again
- God uses Cyrus;

- Why is Cyrus anointed?
 - Maybe he’s not: the grammar seems to imply “Thus says the Lord to his anointed [and] to Cyrus”
 - Maybe more “appointed” instead of “anointed”
 - This shows God working on the world scale instead of just in Israel
- Maybe God is working through Cyrus instead of God appearing and talking to Cyrus (you can control the course of history as an omnipotent being without directly speaking to his subjects)

Other passages we didn’t discuss:

Isaiah 40:3 – Different meanings of passage

Isaiah 42:14 – stance on idol worship

General question about Isaiah – is it God talking? Who’s the speaker?

Isaiah 45:18 – the idea of chaos and a refutation of it

Creation

Genesis 1-2

Passages:

Chronology in general

Where do the aforementioned sections divide?

2:10-14 four rivers in Eden

1:28 man's dominion over life

1:26 what is the image of God

Greek vs Creation

2:24 marriage of one flesh

2:3 the 7th day

2:6 stream from under ground

2:18 woman made to help man

1:6-8 concept of sky as dome

2:17 tree of knowledge

Discussion:

Chronology:

-two different stories of the ways in which God created earth

-translations of the two could be key to the differences

Divided Sections: (Chap. 2 written before Chap. 1)

-someone saw Chap. 2 written then decided to explain the creation in more detail of how man can about

-starts in the middle of the story. Went back to explain the rest.

Rivers of Eden:

-using a story (fictional story) to explain why something is or something that is hard to explain

-creation stories parallel through so-called stories

Greek vs Creation:

-Greeks did have a creation story (no explanation on how things came about)

-Hebrews have a very ordered and detailed creation story

-Greeks: more precise and scientific

-Hebrews: more poetic and story-based (had to know where they came from, or just oral tradition and someone thought to write it down?)

1:26: (our image of God)

- the use of the words 'us' and 'our' (royal 'we' or the 'trinity') who was he talking to?

-could be talking to angels

-good and evil (acknowledge there is someone evil, Devil)

-what is God's image? How does God have an image when he is a spirit?

our image is the logic we can use and our soul as humans

1:28: (man over life)

- why are people over life?

-we have a soul, use logic everyday

-animals use instinct, people use logic

-God never references the eating of animals

-is eating animals a sin? Why is eating from the tree of knowledge a sin?

Ecclesiastes (10/30)

9: 11-12—disaster can follow anyone / prophecy

- Jeff: maybe it is just referencing chance
- Ian: good qualities don't affect your outcome only circumstance and chance
- Scott: If we only rely on our qualities is God abandoning us?
- Zach: You can work and be at the mercy of God or not work and have nothing for certain
- Dylan: given gifts and don't use them this is vanity and life without God
- Kyle: What of chance?
- Tyler: Reference to the present- we strive for all these things that are defined as vanity

2: 1-24

- Toil
 - Is toiling good?
 - Andrew: Seems to saying toiling is good and bad.
 - Jeff: Don't find fault in toiling. Do it without complaint because this is what God has planned for you.
 - Geoff: Does this mean to forget the bad and focus on the good of your situation
- Vanity
 - Jeff: If you search for a deeper meaning for your hard work besides it providing for yourself you will have a hard time finding it because that is not our purpose
 - Zach: Know that you have purpose and not search for your exact purpose
 - Scott: Interpreted it as King Solomon saying this- I have everything and have struggled and it is not worth it.
 - 2: 18-19
 - Ian: It is bad to look to who will inherit the results of your hard work. This is vanity. It is better to do the work that you can than to sit back and worry

3: 18

- Conflict Genesis
 - Zach: may be written to humble humans and not be so mighty in our existence
 - Tyler: we die like animals not that we are the same necessarily

- Jeff: the similarity is in the end of life not the process and living of it.
- Geoff: Our ability to think and figure out all these things are what brings us down

6: 2,3

- Jeff: Those who have things will not enjoy them but those who don't have them truly appreciate them
- Andrew: putting objects and wealth on a pedestal makes them seem worth so much less when you actually get them. Argument over vanity above fits this well

7: 3

- Sorrow- laughter
 - Jeff: Sorrow shows us laughter
 - Dylan: Searching and striving even when bringing sorrow is better than not toiling and finding laughter