

Week 37: Catechism and Easter Stories

- Jesus Opens the Scriptures to the Disciples – Luke 24:44-53
- The Ascension of Our Lord – Acts 1:1-14
- Naaman's Leprosy Is Cleansed – 2 Kings 5:1-14
- Nicodemus Comes to Jesus by Night – John 3:1-16
- The Red Sea – Exodus 13:17-14:31

What was Jesus emphasizing in verse 44?

All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.

What is the usual name today for the Law, the prophets, and the Psalms?

The Old Testament.

What did Jesus say is taught in the Old Testament?

It was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day.

Verse 46 refers to the preaching of Christ's suffering. How is this identified in the text of the next verse?

"Repentance," since the proper preaching of the Law crucifies and kills the flesh.

Verse 46 refers to the preaching of Christ's resurrection on the third day. How is this identified in the text of the next verse?

"The forgiveness of sins," since the preaching of the Gospel enlivens faith and raises us up to walk in newness of life.

Who would hear this preaching?

All nations.

Who would do this preaching?

The disciples.

What would be sent to them? (See verse 49.)

The Promise of My Father.

Who is this?

The Holy Spirit.

Where did the Ascension take place?

He led them out as far as Bethany.

What did the disciples see when Jesus lifted up His hands?

The nail prints that mark His victory over death—this is the source of all blessing.

How did Jesus leave them?

He was carried up into heaven.

Where did the disciples stay for the next ten days?

The temple in Jerusalem.

Who else stayed in the temple for a long period of time? (See Luke 2:21-40 and 1 Samuel 3:1-20.)

Jesus and Samuel.

Meditation:

The key to understanding the Scriptures is always the Christ who suffered, died, and rose again. The Scriptures are not a handbook for morality or a manual for living. The Scriptures testify of Christ. Even the commandments are essential in condemning and accusing us so that we see Christ as the only way of salvation. The Scriptures are always to call us to faith in Christ; so the proper understanding of the Scriptures is achieved only through the preaching of the crucified and risen Christ. As God once dwelt in the temple, He is now present where Christ's Word is preached and His Sacraments are administered. We no longer stay in the city of Jerusalem. We now dwell in the New Jerusalem, the Church, where the voice of the Good Shepherd calls to His sheep in the preaching of Christ who suffered and rose from the dead on the third day. From the Church Jesus Himself reaches out to draw all the nations to Himself that they might have new life in His name.

What is the former book to which the author refers in verse 1?

The Gospel of Luke.

Who wrote both books?

Luke.

What did he write about?

All the things that Jesus began to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up into heaven.

What is the importance of the word "began"?

Jesus' work continues after His ascension through the ministry of the apostles, which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

How did Luke emphasize this in Acts 9:4-5?

Saul's persecution of the Church was really a persecution of Jesus.

To whom and through whom did Jesus give commandments?

To the apostles through the Holy Spirit.

What were these commandments of the Lord?

The commands, or holy orders, were to preach the Gospel, baptize, teach, remit and retain sins, and distribute the Lord's body and blood.

When did Jesus give these commandments to His apostles?

After He had risen from the dead.

How many days after Easter did Jesus ascend?

Forty.

What was He preaching about in that time?

Things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Why did Jesus tell them to wait in Jerusalem?

He wanted them to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What false belief did the disciples still hold in verse 6?

That Jesus would be their earthly king.

What progression would the preaching of the Gospel take? (See verse 8.)

The Gospel would be preached in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

What received Jesus out of the disciples' sight?

A cloud.

What are some other Bible stories in which the cloud appeared? (See Exodus 14:19, 20:21, 40:34-38, and 1 Kings 8:10-11.)

The pillar of cloud led the Israelites out of Egypt; the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle; and the cloud or the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

Who appeared while the disciples were gazing up into heaven?

Two men in white apparel.

Who might these two men have been? (See Luke 9:28-36 and 24:4.)

Either two angels or possibly Moses and Elijah bearing witness to the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

What promise was made in verse 11?

Jesus will come again in the same way He left.

Where did the Ascension take place?

On the Mount of Olives (also called Olivet).

What other events had taken place there? (See Luke 19:29 and 22:39.)

The beginning of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and His betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Who was present in the upper room while they awaited the Holy Spirit?

The eleven disciples, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

Meditation:

The Book of Acts reveals that Christ is still present and at work even after His ascension. Jesus is still “doing and teaching” today wherever the Gospel is preached. The history of the Church is really the history of Christ’s ongoing work through the Holy Spirit whom He pours out on the world through the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. The disciples were still seeking an earthly kingdom even though Jesus had been teaching them about the kingdom that comes only through the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. This kingdom is not held together by rules and might, but by the forgiveness of sins that the Father declares for the sake of His Son’s work, a declaration He made by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus ascended to prepare the way for our ascension into heaven after the resurrection from the dead. Two men, possibly Moses and Elijah, appeared to proclaim that Jesus is not to be found in the contemplation of the heavens, but where His Word is preached to the nations.

Naaman's Leprosy Is Cleansed

2 Kings 5:1-14

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (Year II, Week 19)

Who was Naaman?

Commander of the army of the king of Syria.

Who had used him to give victory to Syria?

The LORD.

What disease afflicted Naaman?

Leprosy.

What is leprosy?

The Hebrew term is used for various skin diseases which disfigured and frequently were white.

What had Syrian raiders done?

Taken a young Israelite girl captive.

What did the young servant girl tell her mistress?

The prophet in Samaria could heal her master.

Who was the prophet in Samaria? (See verse 10.)

Elisha.

How did the girl know Elisha could heal? (See 2 Kings 4:32-41.)

Word had spread about his miracles, including raising a man to life.

What did the king of Syria tell Naaman to do?

Go and take a letter of introduction to the king of Israel.

What did Naaman take with him?

Ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.

Why?

To pay for the healing.

Who did the king of Syria think would heal his servant?

The king of Israel.

How did the king of Israel react?

He tore his clothes.

What did the king of Israel say only God can do?

Kill and make alive again.

Why is this important? (See 1 Samuel 2:6 and Romans 6:3-6.)

This is always God's pattern with sinful men. It is how He works in Baptism.

What did the king of Israel think the king of Syria was trying to do?

Pick a quarrel.

What message did Elisha send to the king?

Have the man come to me that he may know there is a prophet in Israel.

What did Elisha do when Naaman arrived?

Sent a messenger or servant outside.

What message did he send out to Naaman?

Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and you shall be clean.

What was the significance of the Jordan?

Joshua led them across the Jordan into the promised land. It was the place of Jesus' Baptism. Elisha had crossed over on dry ground on the way to Elijah's ascension and then returned the same way.

Why was Naaman angry?

Elisha didn't come out and make a grand show.

Why wouldn't the waters of the rivers of Damascus accomplish the healing?

They didn't have God's word of promise.

Who urged Naaman to reconsider?

His servants.

What did they argue?

If Elisha would have asked something hard, Naaman would have done it.

Why was Naaman healed in the waters?

Because the Word of God was in and with the water.

Throughout the story, who kept directing Naaman to the Word of God in the water for his healing?

Lowly servants.

What is the significance of Naaman's flesh being restored like that of a little child?

In Baptism, we are born again and become as little children in the kingdom of God.

Meditation:

Baptism is for all the nations of the earth. So it was that Naaman, a Gentile, was cleansed from the disease of leprosy by water and the Word. His flesh, which was marked by this sign of death, was fully restored according to the word of promise. We now cling to the promise that all who believe and are baptized will be saved as surely as the word of promise attached to water rescued Naaman from the mark of death. Baptism saves us just as the words and promises of God declare.

Who was Nicodemus?

A Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews.

When did he come to see Jesus?

At night.

Why did Nicodemus say Jesus was a teacher who had come from God?

Because of the signs Jesus was doing.

What did Jesus say to Nicodemus?

No one can see or enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

What did Nicodemus ask?

Whether a man needs to enter his mother's womb a second time.

How did Jesus define being "born again" or "born from above"?

A person must be born of water and the Spirit.

What was Jesus talking about?

Holy Baptism.

What was meant by "that which is born of the flesh is flesh"?

The inheritance of the sons of Adam is sinful flesh and death.

What was meant by "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"?

The Spirit of God brings Christ's righteousness and life.

Why shouldn't Nicodemus have been surprised by Jesus' words? (See Genesis 3:17-19.)

The curse upon Adam was known by the Pharisees who studied the books of Moses.

To what did Jesus compare the activity of the Spirit?

The wind.

What are some important Old Testament connections between the Spirit and wind? (See Exodus 14:21-22 and Ezekiel 37:7-14.)

The parting of the Red Sea. The valley of dry bones that are raised up to life.

How do you hear the Spirit blowing? (See Isaiah 63:7-14 and Acts 2:1-4, 11-14.)

Through the preaching of the Gospel.

Why did Jesus use the plural pronouns "we" and "our" in verse 11?

To refer to the Trinity.

What did Jesus say about the things He had been discussing?

They are earthly things.

What name of Jesus is given in verse 13?

Son of Man.

What was He saying in verse 13?

He is God who came to live among us.

What Old Testament story was Jesus referring to in verse 14? (See Numbers 21:4-9.)

The bronze serpent.

How must the Son of Man be lifted up?

On the cross.

What does Jesus ask men to do?

Believe in Him.

How do we know that God is love?

Because He gave His only Son into the death of the cross to pay the price for our sins.

Meditation:

Nicodemus came by night so that his fellow Pharisees would not think evil of him. Jesus' deeds impressed him because Jesus was doing so much good, but Nicodemus did not believe that Jesus was both Son of Man and Son of God. Although he was a teacher of Israel, Nicodemus knew nothing of the Holy Trinity. Indeed, Nicodemus had not even believed in the curse that was placed upon all men in Genesis 3. Men of flesh can only produce men of flesh who will die, but the Spirit of God, who first breathed life into all creation (Genesis 1:2), is the very Spirit who can breathe life into men once again through the saving water of Holy Baptism. The Spirit is heard as He rushes about everywhere in the preaching of the Gospel, but He is not controlled by men. Through the Gospel of the Son of Man, the Spirit calls men from death to life.

Where did God not lead the people?

On the road through the Philistine country.

Why?

So they would not face war and want to return to Egypt.

Where did God lead them instead?

The wilderness road toward the Red Sea.

How did the people leave Egypt according to verse 18?

In orderly ranks, armed for battle.

What important promise of the sons of Israel was kept by Moses?

That they carry the bones of Joseph with them.

Had Joseph's bones been a sign of the Law or the Gospel?

Gospel, because the LORD had promised to return His people to Canaan.

How did the LORD lead the Israelites?

In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

What were some other occasions when the cloud was important? (See Exodus 40:34-38 and Matthew 17:5.)

The cloud filled the tabernacle at its dedication. At the transfiguration of Jesus, a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!"

Where did the Israelites camp?

Pi Hahiroth.

What did God tell Moses that Pharaoh would do?

Pharaoh would pursue the Israelites, and God would gain honor for Himself over Pharaoh and his army.

What did Pharaoh decide?

To go get the Israelites.

Who went with Pharaoh?

His army, his horses and chariots, and all of his officers.

Why were the Egyptians able to overtake Israel?

Because God had Israel camp by the sea until the Egyptians' arrival.

What happened when the Israelites saw the Egyptians approaching?

They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.

What accusation did the people make against Moses?

He had brought them into the wilderness to die.

When had they said words similar to verse 12? (See Exodus 5:21.)

When Pharaoh ordered them to make bricks without straw.

Did Moses speak Law or Gospel to the people in verses 13 and 14?

Gospel.

What did Moses mean when he told them to be still? (See also Psalm 46:10.)

To live by faith in the LORD who is the true God.

What did God tell Moses to do in verse 16?

Lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the water.

What would God accomplish according to His words in verses 17-18?

He would gain glory and honor over Pharaoh, and the Egyptians would know that He is the LORD.

Who moved from the front to the back of the Israelite army?

The Angel of God.

What did the people see?

The pillar of cloud.

Where was the cloud located?

It came between the armies of Egypt and Israel.

What did it do?

It was darkness to one and light to the other.

What happened all night?

The LORD drove back the sea with a strong wind.

Describe the scene.

Israelites were passing through the water on dry ground: the water was walled up on the right and the left.

What happened when the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the sea?

The LORD threw the Egyptians into confusion, and God made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving.

When did the LORD act?

In the morning watch, the last watch of the night.

How is this connected to the life of Christ? (The morning or last watch was from 3 AM to 6 AM.

This is what the New Testament calls the fourth watch. See Matthew 14:25 and Mark 6:48.)

That was the time when Jesus walked on the water.

Name some other enemies whom God threw into confusion in the Old Testament. (See Joshua 10:10, Judges 4:15, and 1 Samuel 7:10.)

The Canaanites when the sun stood still; the armies of Sisera; the Philistines at Mizpah.

What happened when Moses again stretched out his hand?

The water returned and flowed back over the Egyptians.

What time of day was it?

Daybreak.

What else took place at daybreak? (See John 20:1.)

The resurrection.

What happened to the Egyptians?

Not one of them survived.

What did Israel see that day?

The Egyptians lying dead on the seashore, and the great work which the LORD had done.

What did this cause the people to do?

They feared the LORD and believed in Him and His servant Moses.

How is this like the resurrection of our Lord? (See 1 Corinthians 15:13-23.)

Faith trusts in the resurrection to which so many bore witness.

What great deliverance in our lives is connected with the Red Sea crossing? (See 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.)

Holy Baptism.

Meditation:

By means of water God rescues His people from death and gives them life. In the water of Holy Baptism our Lord fights for us. As Moses extended his rod over the waters of the Red Sea, so also our Lord has extended the wood of the cross over the water that we might safely pass through and escape our enemy Death. As the great deliverance of God worked faith in the hearts of the people, so now the Spirit of God blows upon us in the waters of Baptism and creates faith in the hearts of men. Our Lord has given us the waters of deliverance in Holy Baptism that we might be certain that all our enemies have been vanquished. There we have died with Christ and been raised with Him that we need not fear our death in the body. As surely as the Israelites saw their enemies dead upon the shore, so may we be certain that our enemy has been destroyed by means of the waters of Baptism.

