

Day 11 of “Through the Bible in 2016 with Pastor Don”

Jan. 11, 2016

- Genesis 19:30-21:21 – From the shame of Lot’s daughters to Hagar and Ishmael.
- Matthew 13:44-14:36 – Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth; the death of John the Baptizer.
- Ecclesiastes 4:8-16 – The vanity of motivations of greed and prestige.

Reflections:

1. Genesis 19:30-21:21. In 19:30-38 we can see what happens when people live for the world: they lose it all. They lose in this life because it passes away (even if they are not realizing it) and in the next life. This is the message for all believers and unbelievers (1 Jn 2:15-17; Luke 17:30-37; Matt. 11:23, 24). In chapter 20 we have the deception of Abraham and God’s providential protection of His people in accordance with the Abraham covenant. The key issue in this chapter is God keeping the purity of Sarah. God wanted the people of Israel to be a pure people unto Him, which meant not intermarrying with pagans. Unfortunately, Israel did not remember this (Mal. 2:10-17). Now that Isaac, the promised son is born, God providentially allowed the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael at this point to insure protection of God’s appointed line, so Isaac would get the inheritance. We see the Angel of the Lord, pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, appear to Hagar and promise her that her son would become a great nation.
2. Matthew 13:44-14:36. In Matthew 13:55-56 there is a reference to the “brothers” and “sisters” of Jesus. Was Mary a perpetual virgin, or did she have other children after Jesus’s virgin birth? Roman Catholicism teaches that Mary was a perpetual virgin. In other words, that she never engaged in sexual intercourse even after Jesus was virgin born. The Catholics point out that the terms “brothers” and “sisters” are often used in the Bible for cousins or close relatives. However, there are three reasons that make this Catholic doctrine untenable: 1) nowhere does the Bible affirm the doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity; 2) when “brothers and sisters” are used in connection with father or mother, then it does not mean cousins, it means actual blood brothers and sisters (cf., Luke 14:26; Mark 6:3), and we have such a case in Matthew 13:55; and 3) there are other references to Jesus’s “brothers” in the Bible that point to real brothers:

John 7:5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

Galatians 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Matthew 13:55 "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

John 2:12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

3. Ecclesiastes 4:8-16. Note the vanity of this temporal life with its motivations of greed, advancement, and prestige. Sounds like what a lot of people think is the ideal life, the American Dream. But for what in the end, since it is in reality nothing but vanity and striving after the wind—if the goal of it all is not to grow in love and service for God, our Final End. Quo Vadis?

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don