

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For November 9:

Ezekiel 20:1-49:

In August 591 B.C. (5 years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem) elders came to Ezekiel in Babylon since they wanted direction from the LORD (1). The result is that Ezekiel received a message from the LORD (2) which is comprised of two main parts. First, there is a lesson from Israel's history with the purpose of highlighting the sins of Israel from the time the LORD saved them out of Egypt all the way to their current exile, all of which is set forth to show that the LORD will not be inquired of by them (3-31). This is very much the same thought we find in Amos 8:11 where the prophet spoke of a famine of the Word of the LORD. Part of the judgment for their sin was that the LORD would not currently speak to them (other than what He would choose to communicate through Ezekiel). In this history lesson, we learn that the reason the LORD did not destroy His people after key times of evil was that He acted for the sake of His name (or reputation). In other words, He acted in a way to remain faithful to His promises and that would glorify Him (9, 14, 22). He judged Israel in these times that they might know He is the LORD (26). As such, we see God working both for His glory and that people might come to know Him truly.

The second part of God's response is a look to the future restoration (32-44). However, it is somewhat different than many prophetic passages which look to future restoration. This one has the sense of the wrath of the sovereign God in it. He will judge and purge them so that He will be king over them (33). He shall purge out the rebels and have a people who truly follow Him (38-44). In the same pattern we have seen elsewhere in the prophets' writings, this looks not only to the return of Israel to their land, but even further to a time when a New Covenant will be made with them whereby their hearts will be changed by the work of God's Spirit in them (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The pattern we see here in Ezekiel 20 is a pattern we still see today: God works in us for His glory (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14), that we might know Him (John 17:3; 2 Peter 3:18), and that we might be holy (Romans 8:29-30). We should allow this pattern to inform our view of God's providence, as well as to shape how we pray.

Hebrews 9:11-28:

Today's reading in Hebrews is part of the elaboration of the superiority of the priestly work of Christ and the New Covenant He accomplished over the human priestly system that was part of the Old Covenant (chapters 8-10). Yesterday we were reminded how the Old Testament tabernacle (and temple) worked, to show that their structures were symbolic (pointing to Christ) and thus could not truly perfect the conscience of the worshiper by accomplishing salvation. In 9:11-28 we discover that what those Old Testament structures could not do, Christ has accomplished.

We learn in these verses that Christ entered not into man-made copies of heavenly realities, but He entered into the very presence of God the Father Himself in heaven to present the offering of his own death and resurrection to pay the penalty of the sins of sinners. This work of Christ paid for sins once for all to bring eternal salvation. As such,

He is not only the mediator of a New Covenant, but also the one and only true, ultimate, eternal salvation (that to which the Old Testament system pointed). As such, how foolish it would be to return to the offering of bulls, goats, to an Old Law Covenant! What is more, the one who has accomplished this salvation once for all will come again to “save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (28).

This section of Hebrews is not only helping us understand what Jesus Christ accomplished in His death, but also show us how the Old and New Covenants (and Testaments) relate to one another. The Old Typified what is fulfilled and made clear in the New. We see that all either points to, reveals, or explains Jesus Christ! He is the center of God’s Revelation and His redemptive work (Ephesians 1:10; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Psalm 107:1-43:

This psalm celebrates God’s goodness for His steadfast love and wondrous works (1, 15, 21, 31) to those who are not deserving and who can’t help themselves, those wandering in desert wastes (4f.); sitting in darkness and the shadow of death (10ff.); foolish in their sinful ways (17ff.); and doing business in the sea (23ff.).

Proverbs 27:11:

Here we learn a truism that parents are often known by how their children act. So, this is an admonition to young people to live wisely and righteously for the benefit of mothers and fathers.