

MacArthur Daily Bible (5-25-2012)

May 25

Reading for Today:

2 Samuel 21:1–22:51

Psalm 68:1-6

Proverbs 17:2-4

John 8:28-59

Notes:

2 Samuel 21:1, 2 Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house. By divine revelation David learned that the famine was a result of sin committed by Saul; namely, that he had slain the Gibeonites. There is no further reference to this event. Saul was probably trying to do as God commanded and rid the land of the remnant of heathen in order that Israel might prosper (v. 2). But in his zeal he had committed a serious sin. He had broken a covenant that had been made 400 years before between Joshua and the Gibeonites, who were in the land when Israel took possession of it. They deceived Joshua into making the covenant, but it was, nevertheless, a covenant (Josh.9:3–27). Covenant keeping was no small matter to God (Josh. 9:20).

2 Samuel 22:1–51 David's song of praise here is almost identical to Psalm 18. This song also has many verbal links to Hannah's prayer (1 Sam. 2:1–10) and together with it forms the framework for the books of Samuel. This song focuses on the Lord's deliverance of David from all his enemies, in response to which David praised the Lord,

his deliverer (vv. 2–4). The major part of the song (vv. 5–46) states the reason for this praise of the Lord. David first describes how the Lord had delivered him from his enemies (vv. 5–20), then declares why the Lord had delivered him from his enemies (vv. 21–28), then states the extent of the Lord's deliverance from his enemies (vv. 29–46). The song concludes with David's resolve to praise his delivering Lord, even among the Gentiles (vv. 47–51).

John 8:39 If you were Abraham's children. The construction of this phrase indicates that Jesus was denying that mere physical lineage was sufficient for salvation (Phil. 3:4–9). The sense would be “if you were Abraham's children, but you are not, then you would act like Abraham did.” Just as children inherit genetic characteristics from their parents, so also those who are truly Abraham's offspring will act like Abraham, i.e., imitate Abraham's faith and obedience (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:6–9; Heb. 11:8–19; James 2:21–24). **works of Abraham.** Abraham's faith was demonstrated through his obedience to God (James 2:21–24). Jesus' point was that the conduct of the unbelieving Jews was diametrically opposed by the conduct of Abraham, who lived a life of obedience to all that God had commanded. Their conduct toward Jesus demonstrated that their real father was Satan (vv. 41, 44).

John 8:58 Most assuredly...I AM. Here Jesus declared Himself to be Yahweh, i.e., the Lord of the Old Testament. Basic to the expression are such passages as Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10, where God declared Himself to be the eternally preexistent God who revealed Himself in the Old Testament to the Jews.

DAY 25: What are the steps toward true Christian discipleship?

John 8:31–36 is a pivotal section of Scripture in understanding genuine salvation and true discipleship. John emphasized these realities by stressing truth and freedom. The focus in the passage is upon those who were exercising the beginnings of faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Jesus desired them to move on in their faith. Saving faith is not fickle but firm and settled. Such maturity expresses itself in full commitment to the truth in Jesus Christ resulting in genuine freedom.

The first step in the progress toward true discipleship is belief in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of God (v. 31). “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed” reveals the second step in the progress toward true discipleship. Perseverance in obedience to Scripture (Matt. 28:19, 20) is the fruit or evidence of genuine faith (Eph. 2:10). The word “abide” means to habitually abide in Jesus' words. A genuine believer holds fast, obeys, and practices Jesus' teaching. The one who continues in His teaching has both the Father and the Son (2 John 9; Heb. 3:14; Rev. 2:26). Real disciples are both learners (the basic meaning of the word) and faithful followers.

“The truth” (v. 32) has reference not only to the facts surrounding Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God but also to the teaching that He brought. A genuinely saved and obedient follower of the Lord Jesus will know divine truth and both freedom from sin (v. 34) and the search for reality. This divine truth comes not merely by intellectual assent (1 Cor. 2:14) but by saving commitment to Christ (Titus 1:1, 2).

“Whoever commits sin” (v. 34). The kind of slavery that Jesus had in mind was not physical slavery but slavery to sin (Rom. 6:17,18). The idea of “commits sin” means to practice sin habitually (1 John 3:4, 8, 9). The ultimate bondage is not political or economic enslavement but spiritual bondage to sin and rebellion against God. Thus, this also explains why Jesus would not let Himself be reduced to merely a political Messiah (6:14, 15).

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