

21 January 2018

Ezra 7:8-10 and 27-28

Ezra is set a task and then gives thanks for it

⁸ Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king. ⁹ He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

²⁷ Praise be to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honour to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem in this way ²⁸ and who has extended his good favour to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

James 1:22-25

Listening and Doing

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

2 Timothy 2:15

Dealing With False Teachers

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

14 January 2018

Daniel 5:12-30

The writing on the wall

¹² He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

¹³ So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, “Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. ¹⁵ The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. ¹⁶ Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

¹⁸ “Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendour. ¹⁹ Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. ²⁰ But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. ²¹ He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes.

²² “But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. ²³ Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honour the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. ²⁴ Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

²⁵ “This is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

²⁶ “Here is what these words mean:

Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

²⁷ *Tekel*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

²⁸ *Peres*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

²⁹ Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, ³¹ and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

7 January 2018

John 3:14-21

Life through the Son

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John 5:16-30

Jesus and God are one

¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. ¹⁷ In his defence Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him.

²⁴ “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

31 December 2017

Matthew 2:1 - 12

The Wise Men bring their gifts

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.””

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod returned to their country by another route.

24 December 2017

Isaiah 9: 2, 6 and 7

9 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Luke 2: 1 – 7

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.
⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.