

View

A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA

October 28, 2007

Jesus is the Reason

Deciding to preach through the Bible was a more challenging endeavor than I first imagined. And, obviously, I was quite naïve to think that I could do it in a year. Here we are, almost at the end of October, and I'm not even out of the United Kingdom yet.

It's also been a bit frustrating because I know I haven't covered everything that is worthy of coverage. I'm relying on you to read through the text, so they will be able to fill in the gaps as we go along. Meanwhile, I'm attempting to choose topics from the texts that I feel will be most helpful and practical for us at this time. I never set out to make this simply an historical review of the facts. I want the story to come alive and motivate us to action.

However, as we deal with these topics, I hope we can keep the history in view. Ultimately, these events all lead to one place — the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and reign of Jesus the Christ. They have little, if any, significance apart from that one overarching point in history. Jesus is not "the reason for the season." He's the reason for everything that has ever happened in every season of Bible history. He is the warp and woof, the circle and circumference, of every event that is recorded in Scripture. I hope we always remember that point, even as we look in some detail at events that precede his incarnation.

For example, last week we looked briefly at the life of Solomon. He is considered the wisest man who ever lived. In the mind of the Jews at the time of

Jesus, Solomon was an iconic figure, a legend. He was Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison and Benjamin Franklin all rolled up into one.

But where does Jesus put Solomon? He acknowledges his greatness — the "queen of the South came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." But, he goes on, "and behold, something greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42). Jesus was talking about Himself. He also said He was greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:41) and the temple (Mt. 12:6).

Who else can say that kind of thing without being accused of arrogant boasting? He can say it because it is true. Solomon was wise, but he was not God (as he proved several times through foolish acts). Jesus, the Son of God, was and is "all-wise." Jonah was a great prophet who saved Ninevah through his preaching. But Jesus saved the world. The temple represented the presence of God in Israel; but Jesus is God, and is present, not only in Israel but everywhere. He is truly omnipresent.

All of our preaching and teaching eventually centers in Christ, whether we say it explicitly or not. Without Him, these stories are meaningless, no matter how interesting they are. The reason is simple: without Jesus, there is no salvation from our sins; without Jesus, there is no hope for a home in heaven. Without Jesus, faith is empty.

It makes no difference if, by faith, Abraham "went out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8) if Jesus didn't come along later, knowing

exactly where He was going and why. Why would we care about a group of slaves in Egypt who were rescued and then wandered around in the desert for 40 years...except for the salient fact that the nation that sprung from that circumstance produced the Savior of the world?

Everything God has done in history — every person, every event, every word spoken— points in some way to Christ. It's not always obvious; sometimes the connection is indirect and it's a challenge to see the Christ point in some of the events and lives that are recorded. But I know it's there because Jesus is the aim of it all.

A given event may simply move history a step closer to the reality of His life on earth. Or, a particular person may simply provide a "foil" for the coming Lord. A "foil" is a literary term that often contrasts one thing from another. For example, when we read that David was "a man after God's own heart" but then realize his imperfection, he is a foil for the true "man after God's own heart," Jesus. We don't learn anything about Jesus from David's sin itself, but we do learn to appreciate Jesus for His sinlessness. After all, even David sinned.

Of course, we also learn to appreciate forgiveness. Perhaps this is the greatest value, ultimately, in studying Bible characters. While we learn great lessons of faith and often see great transformations of character, both very significant lessons, we never see sinless men and women. Even if their sins aren't specifically mentioned, as in the case of Daniel, we know that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But these all point to Jesus because if these people are righteous, they are righteous in and because of Jesus Christ.

That's what connects us to these Old Testament characters. We share one thing in common, regardless of the time or the environment we live in; we share forgiveness and justification in Christ. When Nathan came to David and said, "You are the man!" and David repented, he received forgiveness in Christ. How's that? Because God, not bound by time, and knowing exactly what He would accomplish through His Son, forgave David in Christ (whether David understood that or not). Christ's death redeems men from both covenants, according to Hebrews 9:15. When we get to heaven and see David, we will realize that he is there for the same reason we are — because Christ died for us.

As we continue through the story, challenge yourself to find the Christ element in each event or person we study. I won't always mention it in the sermon, but it is there. Because "he is before all things and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16).

dp

The church of Christ

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM

Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged
at your convenience.

For more information,
visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

Agenda

The Lord's Day, October 28, 2007

9:30 AM: Worship: Singing, Lord's Supper, Preaching

Sermon: The Story: Greater than the Temple

☪ Preaching: David Posey

5:00 PM: Lord's Supper, Singing, Preaching

☪ Sermon: David Posey, Relationships

5:30 PM: Bible Classes, All Ages

Adult Class Offerings

☪ Room 11-12, SeedSowers

☪ Auditorium, Deuteronomy (Adam Rico)

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

10 AM, A Study of the Book of James. At the Building.

7:30 PM, Bible classes for ages 18 mos. and up,

Auditorium: Deuteronomy (David Posey)

Meeting Notes

Bro. Harrell's sermons and charts are available online on our website (www.folsomchurch.com) or on CD (see a deacon).

re: Instrumental Music in History

NEW OXFORD HISTORY OF MUSIC: "The primitive Christian community held the same view, as we know from the apostolic and post-apostolic literature: instrumental music was thought unfit for religious services; the Christian sources were quite outspoken in their condemnation of instrumental performances. Originally, only song was considered worthy of direct approach to Divinity" (The Music of Post-Biblical Judaism, 1:135).

CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: "Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets. St. Chrysostom sharply contrasts the customs of the Christians when they had full freedom with those of the Jews of the Old Testament." (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 648-652.)

JOHN CALVIN: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (I Cor. 14:16) What shall we then say of chant

ing, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms 33).

"Praise the Lord with harp.' Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings and pipes... We do not need them. That would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument is like the human voice." (Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 42.)

PRESBYTERIAN BELIEF IN REGULATIVE

PRINCIPLE: "Question 6. Is there any authority for instrumental music in the worship of God under the present dispensation? Answer. Not the least, only the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs was appointed by the apostles; not a syllable is said in the New Testament in favor of instrumental music nor was it ever introduced into the Church until after the eighth century, after the Catholics had corrupted the simplicity of the gospel by their carnal inventions. It was not allowed in the Synagogues, the parish churches of the Jews, but was confined to the Temple service and was abolished with the rites of that dispensation." (Questions on the Confession of Faith and Form of Government of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1842, pg. 55.)

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "But as for us, we make use of one instrument alone: only the Word of peace by whom we pay homage to God, no longer with ancient harp or trumpet or drum or flute which those trained for war employ." (190 AD, The Instructor, quoted in Fathers of the Church, p. 130).