

Reflections on May 2013 Readings

During May we read Samuel I and II, the Book of Acts and selected Psalms and Proverbs. We met Samuel as a little boy dedicated to the Lord, the answer to a barren woman's prayer. He watched him grow into a strong leader with a close and strong bond with his Heavenly Father. We are shocked by the violence in these two books, as God's chosen people claim the promised land and fight those already there, who have lost God's favor by leading sin-filled lives. Even Samuel himself does not hesitate to slaughter the enemy.

We read about the first two kings, Saul and David. They are powerful leaders and warriors who shed much blood and display shortcomings and sins akin to the ones we hear and read about today: jealousy, greed, lust, disobedience to God's wishes, etc. David, a great musician and writer of songs (psalms) sees the error of his ways and repeatedly returns to the Lord and asks forgiveness. But his waywardness costs him dearly. His road to becoming king is a rough one indeed, and once there, his power ebbs and flows as the consequences of his sin catch up with him.

But David remains "one after God's own heart" and God uses him in mighty ways. He is even mentioned in Peter's Pentecost speech in Acts 2 (25-36) as the direct ancestor of Jesus who points to Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises to David, making quoting and referring to Jesus in his writings (e.g. Psalms 89, 1190, etc. Jesus fulfills the promises God made about his body not decaying, his decedents reigning forever, etc. quoting Jesus and referring to Him throughout his writings.

I'm always so amazed at how the everything fits together so nicely in the Bible, despite the Books being written by so many different people for so many different reasons, for so many different audiences, over a span of 2,000 years. OIt is truly God's love letter to us, telling us how much He loves us, and is ready to forgive and empower us to do His will.

The Proverbs verse about a person who waters others will himself be watered has been a longtime favorite of mine. I was delighted to read it again in context (Psalm 11:24-25):
- *One man freely gives yet grows richer; another withholds what he should give and suffers want.*
- *A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. (RSV)*

Other powerful verses that offer great lessons are:

- Acts 4:12: *There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under Heaven given among people by which we must be saved. (We all know who this verse refers to!)*
- Acts 4:19 *(Peter and John respond to being told to cease talking about Jesus)*

What additional verses can you add from our May readings?