

Former Prophet
1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14

10 Then David slept with his ancestors,
and was buried in the city of David.

¹¹The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years;
he reigned for seven years in Hebron,
and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

¹²So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David;
and his kingdom was firmly established.

³ Solomon loved the LORD,
walking in the statutes of his father David;
only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places.

⁴The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there,
for that was the principal high place;
Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt-offerings on that altar.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon
in a dream by night;
and God said,
'Ask what I should give you.'

⁶And Solomon said,
'You have shown great and steadfast love
to your servant my father David,
because he walked before you
in faithfulness, in righteousness,
and in uprightness of heart towards you;
and you have kept for him
this great and steadfast love,
and have given him a son
to sit on his throne today.

⁷And now, O LORD my God,
you have made your servant king
in place of my father David,
although I am only a little child;
I do not know how to go out or come in.

⁸And your servant is in the midst
of the people whom you have chosen,
a great people, so numerous
they cannot be numbered or counted.

⁹Give your servant therefore
an understanding mind
to govern your people,
able to discern between good and evil;
for who can govern this your great people?'

10 It pleased the Lord
that Solomon had asked this.

¹¹God said to him,
'Because you have asked this,
and have not asked for yourself
long life or riches,
or for the life of your enemies,
but have asked for yourself understanding
to discern what is right,
¹²I now do according to your word.

Indeed I give you
a wise and discerning mind;
no one like you has been before you
and no one like you shall arise after you.

¹³I give you also
what you have not asked,
both riches and honour all your life;
no other king shall compare with you.

¹⁴If you will walk in my ways,
keeping my statutes and my commandments,
as your father David walked,
then I will lengthen your life.'

Epistle
Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵ Be careful then
how you live,
not as unwise people
but as wise,

¹⁶ making the most
of the time,
because the days
are evil.

¹⁷ So do not be foolish,
but understand
what the will of the Lord is.

¹⁸ Do not get drunk with wine,
for that is debauchery;
but be filled with the Spirit,

¹⁹ as you sing
psalms
and hymns
and spiritual songs
among yourselves,

singing
and making melody
to the Lord
in your hearts,

²⁰ giving thanks
to God the Father
at all times
and for everything
in the name
of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

Gospel
John 6:51-58

⁵¹ I am the living bread
that came
down from heaven.

Whoever eats of this bread
will live for ever;
and the bread
that I will give
for the life
of the world
is my flesh.'

52 The Judeans then disputed
among themselves,
saying,
'How can this man
give us his flesh to eat?'

⁵³ So Jesus said to them,
'Very truly, I tell you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood,
you have no life in you.

⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh
and drink my blood
have eternal life,
and I will raise them up
on the last day;

⁵⁵for my flesh is true food
and my blood is true drink.

⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh
and drink my blood
abide in me,
and I in them.

⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me,
and I live because of the Father,
so whoever eats me
will live because of me.

⁵⁸This is the bread
that came down from heaven,
not like that which your ancestors ate,
and they died.

But the one who eats this bread
will live for ever.'

Reading the Former Prophet this Week

This week's fencepost in the RCL is succession:
David's dead, Solomon is king
here's hagiography of both – with a bit of subversion still
affirmation, celebration – and foreshadowing tragedies

For chapter-a-day audio of Everett Fox' 2014 translation:
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/> 1 Kings 2 & 3 a month ago

But... Solomon worshiped at the high places
This coronation dream is given at Gibeon, a principal one
Not in Jerusalem's ark or temple, but at a civil war shrine
coded for liminal, boundary, frontier meanings

God offers whatever Solomon wants –
He asks wisdom and gets it –
Bonus: long life and wealth
(be careful what you ask for?)

What do you know of Solomon's life and rule,
the substance of only half of 1 Kings
before the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah?
What's his legacy – or to be regretted?

Yes, he's wise
Yes, he's rich and honoured
Till his life ends with another civil war of succession

He's promised a longer life
If he follows statutes and commandments
As if David had done so!

I haven't preached this since 2012 and 2015:
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2012/09/succeeding-notes-from-www.html>
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2015/08/choosing-wisely.html>
what'll you hear to proclaim this time?

Reading the Epistle this Week

This selection from Ephesians 4-5 is still advice on piety
less contentious perhaps than moralism last week,
Or 'spiritual warfare' next week –
Let's relax, and enjoy the music!

Audio & notes of 4&5 w/ David Bentley Mays' 2017 translation:
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/02/thursday-wk-4-ephesians-4.html?q=Ephesians+5>
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/02/friday-wk-4-ephesians-5.html?q=Ephesians+5>

You will notice what the lectionary omits –
'children of light' as a code for 'us' against 'them'
Household codes about submissive wives
this 'be nice' and 'be good' bit is easier

Yes, I'll be omitting or avoiding this in worship again
Not out of disrespect for musicians and singers,
But preferring the other narratives
But Tuesday group may revisit our 'anger' talk

Are the days in our world evil?
Have you observed alcohol abuse as a response?
How do you understand addictions,
substance abuse, opioid epidemic,
in relation to faith?

Is it OK to cherry-pick,
To steal a phrase, and omit its context?

Reading the Gospel this Week

Here's the 4th of 5 clips from John 6 –
the Beloved Disciple writing the Fourth Gospel,
doubling down on 'flesh and blood'

How do you spiritualize
'5 barley loaves and 2 fish' feeding 5000
Into 'true bread', Jesus' flesh and Jesus' blood?

What hunger and thirst are met
What is this 'live forever'?

This text won't let us stop at metaphor =
It keeps returning to 'eat me'

What's the 'Son of Man',
Spoken of in the third person by John's Jesus
In relation to a Jesus of history,
And a 'Christ of faith', as we put it in 20th century

Beyond the 'Christology', person and work of Jesus
What's your 'soteriology' –
How you participate in a body of Christ,
And how you are included in a promise of eternal life?

Lingering with John is hard work:
are we up to it?
Are we forgiven for ducking it
Or vaguely spiritualizing it
This 4th of 5 Sundays?