

## 1-15

1-When a congregation sings "The Doxology" it's more than just a ritual of a well-known tune. It's supposed to mean so much more than just a familiar tune that accompanies "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..." The word "Doxology" literally means "studying the glory." The singing of that melody is supposed to represent our desire to draw near to admire, be bathed in, and become accustomed to what will be the eternal reality for His people.

2-Some of the best parables in the Bible are actually found in the Old Testament. One of the most provocative is found in Judges 9. It's part of the aftermath of the terrible legacy of Gideon... (Yes, "terrible". Look it up.) Many of us would do well to learn the lesson of Jotham's tale of the trees. There are two obvious lessons to be uncovered:

1) Wisdom tells you to define well the best role that Heaven has ordained for you.

2) There's huge danger in being willing to live in the shadow of a bramble. Just look under any blackberry bush.

3-That there's no perfect Bible translation... it's an impossibility. The difference in languages just won't allow it. Even the wonderful old King James Version has some very obvious flaws, like use of the Latin term "Easter" which has no business in a Greek text at all!. But God has shown that He's not just capable of working through flawed mortals in writing and transmitting His thoughts but can work with well-meaning translators to accomplish His purposes.

4-The term that is translated as "worship" in the New Testament provides a fascinating lesson and challenge. We usually equate "worship" with some liturgy or order of service but the Greek term actually means so much more... **Proskunew** is pronounced "pros-kuneoh" and it literally is a compound term that means, "to fall before in humility" and then "to kiss." Really! The best definition of this worship is to adore. We'd do well to think of that the next time we say anything about "worship", wouldn't we?

5-If you took all of the DNA in every person in the world and put it in a bottle you actually wouldn't need a bottle? In reality, you could fit all of the DNA of every living being in a teaspoon! It's true. Yet, it's those minute strands that define who you are in opposition to every other person on the globe. We are truly "fearfully and wonderfully made."

6-No matter the convolutions of your choices in life, God can still get you exactly where He wants you to be. His providence is that amazing. One of the best sections of the Bible to prove that is found in the last third of Genesis. No matter how many lousy choices Jacob and his sons made, when it came to chapter 50 Joseph reminds us that God can still accomplish exactly what He wants. Isn't that amazing?

7-God's friends are to be the most predictable people in the world. No one should ever be surprised at the response of a child of God to any situation. That lesson is graphically portrayed in the life of Daniel. In chapter 6 the enemies of God's friend know exactly what to expect of him and where they will find him... that's why they can set the nefarious trap that they do. And, the story reminds us that God values that kind of boring predictability!

8-There are two stories in the Bible that are specifically defined as stories that we must continue to repeat over and over again... and one of them is just gruesome! I believe Jesus made a command when He concluded the feast of Simon the Leper and its scandalous foot washing with, "Wherever you speak gospel you must tell this story." But, the other story is just horrible... Yet we are also never to forget the nasty and unpredictable results of sin when we review the episode of Judges 17-19. The ultimate butchery of a young woman also holds lessons for us, too.

9-The book of Genesis actually gives a record of 40% of world history according to Bible reckoning. The chronology of the Bible puts this recorded human history at somewhere around 6,000 years. Genesis alone takes your from around 4,000 b.c./b.c.e. to around 1,500 b.c./b.c.e. of so. That's a monstrous slice of history in only 50 chapters!

10-When God "Exodused" the Hebrew people He was basically moving the equivalent of the population of the Phoenix metropolitan area from central Arizona all the way to Salt Lake City!

11-The book of John (contrasting with Genesis covering 40% of world history!) actually only speaks of 22 days. In 21 chapters, speaking of the life of Jesus, John gives us only a very, very few highlights... but they are necessary in two ways:

1) They tell us much more about Jesus in Jerusalem where the other three gospels are predominantly Galilean.

2) Though John's chronology is terrible, it's more "first person" than the others and if it weren't for his reporting we wouldn't actually know that Jesus' ministry was just over three years. (And you'd know nothing about a bunch of stories like the raising of Lazarus!)

12-There were two roles in Israel at opposite ends of the spectrum, and the top one absolutely needed the bottom one. The position of a Scribe was held in great honor. The Tanner was the lowest legal profession, the Mishnah clarifies that over and over again. But, without the work of a Tanner the Scribe never would have been able to have the parchments for the sacred Text!

13-Some of the most important life lessons came very, very early in the Bible. I did a whole series on the radio entitled "Kindergarten Truths" and they were all found in the first chapters of Genesis. One simple one is pretty provocative... "Don't talk to strangers." If Adam and Eve had heeded that warning we might not be in the mess that we are in.

14-There are two kinds of crowns in the New Testament and you clearly want the one and not the other. *Stephanoi* is the Greek word for the crown we desire. It's the crown granted to the victor. *Diadema* is the crown that you and I never want to seek to obtain. That's a self-crowning and we have no right to even think about that. Herod and Nero and people like that wear that kind of crown. (In fact, only one citation shows and acceptable *Diadema*. That's in Revelation 19 where the Son of God goes forth to war. No one is going to challenge His right to place the crown upon Himself!

15-Observant Judaism has several sweet lessons to be learned about the Sabbath, and one of them is that we could try to make it a 25 hour day (or more!) Those who live the ritual consider the Sabbath to begin at least 18 minutes before sundown on Friday. Then the sacred hours are not ended until at least 42 minutes after sundown on Saturday night (or when you see the first three stars in the sky.) That's pretty neat! Get to Sabbath as soon as you can and don't be in a hurry to leave it.