

## Unsearchable Judgments

Romans 11:33-36

The Holy Trinity, May 27, 2018

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

In the book of Leviticus God commands animal sacrifices. Sheep and goats are ok. In the book of Leviticus God commands sacrifices from the fruit of the ground. Flour and olive oil are ok. If that is the commandment of the Lord and both Cain and Abel bring legitimate sacrifices according to the Law, then why does God gaze at Abel's offering in acceptance, but does not gaze at Cain's offering in acceptance?

I don't know, but that is the way that it is and Cain kills Abel because of it.

Out of all the people on the face of the earth that God could have selected to be the father of the nation from which His Son would be born, why did He pick Abraham? God forbade the worship of idols and yet Joshua recounts for us that when Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, Abraham worshipped idols. Abraham was an idol worshipper and yet God chose Abraham to be the father of the nation from which His Son would come and bless the nations. Why an idolater?

I don't know, but that is the way that it is and because it is the way that it is not only can we find God's Son, but we also know that the Word of God is true.

Before Jacob and Esau were born God told their mother Rebekah that the older would serve the younger. That is contrary to the way things worked in ancient times and most of the time it is contrary to the way that things work today. Typically the oldest brother has authority over the rest of the siblings. Esau was the older brother and yet before he and his brother Jacob were even born God had already told their mother that the older would serve the younger. Jacob would prevail and dominate over Esau. Jacob's descendants would predominate over Esau's descendants.

And all of this took place before Esau ever despised his birthright. All of this took place even before Esau lost the blessing of his father Isaac to Jacob. And even when Jacob obtained the blessing from his father Isaac, he did so by treachery and deceit.

Isaac as you recall was elderly when his sons came of age. He wanted to give his blessing which would include the bestowal of God's blessings upon his oldest son, Esau. He sent Esau out into the fields to hunt some tasty game that Isaac enjoyed. He wanted to eat some good and then formally bless Esau his eldest son.

Rebekah was listening outside the tent when Isaac sent Esau into the fields to find game so that Isaac could bless Esau. Rebekah told Jacob to pull some goat meat and she would prepare it the way that Isaac loved it. Jacob would take the meat to his father and pretend to be Esau, his brother. Jacob protested to his mother's plan that Esau was a hairy man and that Jacob was smooth of skin and that if Isaac happened to touch Jacob it would be revealed that he was deceiving Isaac, his father, in order to get the blessing. Rebekah's answer was to take goatskins and tie them to Jacob's arms and hands. She put Esau's clothing on Jacob and Jacob took the meat into his father, Isaac, in order to obtain Isaac's blessing.

When Jacob entered his father's presence, Isaac was surprised that his son had returned so quickly with game. Jacob answered that the Lord, the God of Isaac, had provided the game quickly. Isaac recognized the voice of Jacob and asked if it were Jacob. Jacob lied to his father and said that he was Esau. Isaac asked a second time if it were really Esau, Jacob lied a second time and told his father that he was Esau. When Isaac caught the smell of Esau's clothing on Jacob, he gave the blessing of God to Jacob and

once the blessing was bestowed it could not be revoked. When Esau came in from the field the deception of Jacob was discovered and Jacob had to flee his own home because Esau bore him a grudge.

The blessing of God passed to Jacob. God's Son did not come from the line of Esau. God's Son came from the line of Jacob. It is not Esau's descendants who bore the blessing of God. It was Jacob's descendants who bore the blessing of God and Jacob obtained that blessing by deceit! And God blessed it and honored how the blessing was bestowed upon Jacob. In fact He was the one who had predicted that this would happen in the first place!

And why does God who forbids treachery and lying pass on His blessing to Jacob and his descendants in this fashion? I don't know. But He did it that way and our Lord came from Jacob and not Isaac.

Abraham and Isaac both have dealings with foreign kings. In each of their dealings with foreign kings they lie to the king in question. They lie about their wives insisting that their wife is actually their sister. When someone tries to approach the wife of Abraham or Isaac thinking that she is available God punishes that person and blesses Abraham and Isaac. So God rewarded their dishonesty toward foreign kings and gave them great wealth for putting their wives' lives at risk and cheating foreign kings out of their wealth.

And why does God do this? I don't know, but it made Abraham and Isaac wealthy enough to sustain their family line for the Christ.

And I could go on and on.

Why did God permit Ruth a Moabite woman to be the ancestor of our Lord which just a few years earlier He had commanded through Moses that no Moabite would be permitted to enter into His assembly?

Why did Rahab, a prostitute in the city of Jericho, survive the destruction of the city when Joshua attacked it with God's aid?

Why did God favor Israel in the conquest of the land and command them to kill every living thing in the land and to leave nothing alive? Hadn't Israel worshipped idols the same as the people of the land? Hadn't Israel made a golden calf?

Saul and David both rendered apologies for their sins? Why was David forgiven, but Saul removed?

Judas and Peter both committed treason against their Lord, why was Judas the son of destruction as our Lord calls him and Peter was restored to his apostolic office?

Why is it that when the Lord became incarnate and executed His kingly office that He threw the Pharisees and the Sadducees out of office as rulers in His Kingdom and appointed tax collectors, prostitutes and Gentiles in their place?

I don't know. The Bible does not say. At least it does not say in the way that you Greeks would like for Him to say.

You and I are the heirs of Greek thinking. We actually believe that the universe makes sense on its own. We believe that there are these rules out there that apply to everyone even to God. We use these rules to judge God.

And don't sit there on the pew and arrogantly think to yourself that you do not judge God. Of course you do. There are some parts of the Bible that you don't like. There are some parts of the Bible that you don't listen to. There are some parts of the Bible that you ignore and pretend as if they are not there.

There are some parts of the Bible with which you openly disagree and you are not afraid to express your disagreement with the almighty and eternal God even if it is at a meeting of the congregation! You who lecture others about how the Bible is God's Word don't honor it yourselves. I don't know why you expect other people to honor the word of the Lord when you yourselves do not.

The reason that we think that we can judge God is that we believe that there are these rules out there to which everyone must abide including God. We justify this belief by saying that God Himself is the author of these rules and therefore He should keep them also. We forget that God is our Maker and because He is our Maker He makes the rules. He is above the rules. He is beyond the Law. You and I are the created ones. We are the clay and He is the potter. Shall the clay say to the potter, "Why did You make me like this?"

And not only do we tell the potter that He made us wrong, we also tell Him that He made everything else wrong. We tell Him that He made our neighbors wrong and our spouse wrong and our children wrong and our lives wrong. We sit in judgment over Him as if we were the God and He were the One that we had made. Even some of our own literature has been arrogant enough to say that out loud!

There are no rules except the rules that God establishes. There is no word that counts except the word that He utters. There is no judgment that will prevail except for His judgment! What He says is first and what He says is last. God says things and that is just the way that they are!

And so God favored the tax collectors and the prostitutes over the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In spite of the fact that the Sadducees and the Pharisees were righteous in their external works and the prostitutes and the tax collectors were not.

And so God favors Peter over Judas. He favors Jacob over Esau. He favors Abel over Cain. He favors Mary over all of the rest of humanity.

And He favors the godless over His own Son for His Son gave His life for the ungodly.

So if you are godly, fear Him, for His judgments are unsearchable and His ways untraceable. But if you are godless and sinful and worldly, then rejoice for He has favored you over the life of His own Son.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.