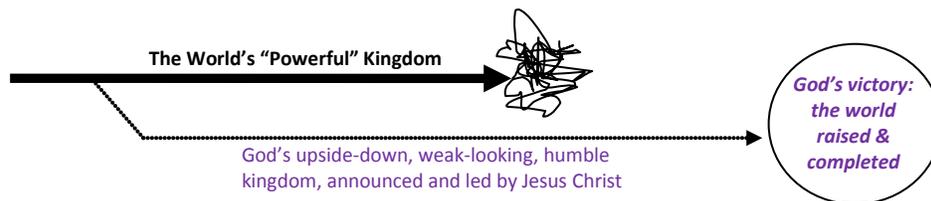


Weekly Bible Study

group – December 2, 2009

This week's reading assignment: **John 18-21**

Reflection by Bob Zurinsky (bob@spu.edu)



We've reached the end of John's gospel. Now we can take the whole thing together and read it in light of the complete story. It's the story of Jesus, God's Messiah, who broke into the world like a light shining in a dark land. He announced that God was doing a new thing, that God was calling people to abandon life as they had known it. God was calling them into a new reality, a kind of life that shines like the stars in the night sky. He said that the world was failing. The systems around them were collapsing, that "they've already been condemned." By following the false kings and powers of the earth, people have been led away from God's plan for humanity.

The systems of this world prove to be corrupt every time they lead people to grasp power and privilege and wealth and status and distorted, oppressive relationships – all of which is perfectly opposite of God's plan for his people. When God first called one nation, one people group, to stand apart it was for the purpose of making his glory and love visible to the entire world. But in the course of time, that mission got side-tracked, until the people of God resembled the people everywhere, no longer able to shine like a light in the darkness, a city on a hill.

Jesus showed the world what it really looks like to live in complete submission to God's plan for humanity – he showed it in his teaching, and his life, and his death. Holding nothing back at all, he did the will of his Father to the end, even though it cost him everything. This is what the New Testament writers mean when they say that Jesus fully embodied "the righteousness of God." He was the image of the obedient man. God with us, showing us the plan. And he commanded his followers to completely follow him in his path of healing, forgiveness, love, and humility, even to the point of giving all.

And he was right. That's the end of the story in the gospel of John. *He was raised from the dead.* Vindicated. The future redemption of the world breaking into history. It is God's promise to all of us – made visible in the flesh of Jesus, the *new* representative of the human race, the chosen one of God.

"These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."