Lamentations November 24

Sorrow and Hope

The book of Lamentations is the mourning of the nation after the destruction of Jerusalem, its cultural and religious capital –

O Jerusalem, beloved Jerusalem, what can I say?

How can I comfort you? No one has ever suffered like this.

Your disaster is boundless as the ocean; there is no possible hope. Lamentations 2:13.

The people remember that -

The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in him, so it is best for us to wait in patience – to wait for him to save us – and it is best to learn this patience in our youth. Lamentations 3:25–27.

Through the despair, death and disgrace the people pray for mercy – Remember, O Lord, what has happened to us. Look at us, and see our disgrace. Bring this back to you, Lord! Bring us back! Restore our ancient glory. Lamentations 5:1, 21.

The course of this nation can be quite like our own lives in Christ; God chooses us, we accept him, not without shortcomings but basically we stay with God. Then our lives prosper in good things start to happen, we think we can do it all on our own and abandoned God. All hope is not lost; the Lord is patiently waiting for our prayer of forgiveness.

VERSE FOR TODAY: The Lord is all I have, and so I put my hope in him. Lamentations 3:24.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to stay on a steady course and not to stray from your protective love.

Daniel November 25

Dream Interpreter

Daniel was chosen from among the Israelites prisoners taken from Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar to be a royal court servant.

King Nebuchadnezzar had two dreams, the royal advisers couldn't tell the king what his dreams meant, after Daniel prayed he asked to see the King and explain the first dream about the giant statue made of gold, silver, bronze and Clay. Daniel explained the future kingdoms – At that time of those other rulers the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will never end. It will never be conquered, but will completely destroy all those empires and then last for ever. Daniel 2: 44. What insight into the kingdom of heaven.

The King second dream was more personal, there was a tall tree representing himself, who became self-centered in his power, Daniel warned him to stop sinning, he didn't so the tree was cut down the stump left so he could become king again after seven years of living like an animal when he declares – "And now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honour, and glorify the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right and just, and he can humble anyone who acts proudly." Daniel 4:37.

We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, no matter what our station in life; we are not able to make it on our own. We must declare the Lord, Lord of our lives and assume the role of God's servant.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Reverence for the Lord is an education in itself. You must be humble before you can ever receive honours. Proverbs 15:33.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to have a healthy pride in myself but to be humble and know my life is governed by your will.

Daniels Friends November 26

The Fiery Furnace

After Daniel interpreted the king's dreams, the king was so impressed – The king said, "Your God is the greatest of all gods, the Lord over kings, and the one who reveals mysteries. I know this because you have been able to explain this mystery." Daniel 2:47. Daniel was promoted!

King Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation about the Lord didn't change his ways, he built a golden statue and demanded that everyone bow down and worship the statue. Daniels friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the idol and were sentenced to be burned but even at seven times the normal heat they did not burn! The three were tied and thrown into the heart of the blaze, when Nebuchadnezzar saw four men walking around in the furnace he said –"They are not tied up, and they show no sign of being hurt- and the fourth one looks like an angel." Daniel 3:25b.

Nebuchadnezzar called out to the three, they came out of the furnace completely unharmed, not even a singed hair! – The King said, "Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued these men who serve and trust him…" Daniel 3:28a.

We find it hard to realize that in the world today there are people who worship God in spite of the fact that doing so could kill them. Our faith and commitment needs to be that strong, that we would still serve God even in the face of death!

VERSE FOR TODAY: "…They disobeyed my orders and risked their lives rather than bow down and worship any god except their own. Daniel 3:28b.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, never to deny you, knowing that my physical death is just the start to eternal life with you. Praise the Lord!

Daniel November 27

The Writing on the Wall

King Belshazzar assumed the throne from his father, who was humbled before the Lord.

At a banquet, before one thousand noblemen – Suddenly a human hand appeared and began writing on the plaster wall of the palace, where the light from the lamps was shining most brightly. And the king saw the hand as it was writing. Daniel 5:5. The King was very frightened and offered is third in command position to the person who could interpret the writing. The magicians and wizards tried to tell the meaning; finally the king's mother heard the disturbance and told King Belshazzar about Daniel and his God given wisdom in solving mysteries.

Daniel was brought before the King and gave this explanation of the writing:

“This is what was written: ‘number, number, weight divisions.’

And this is what it means: number, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; weight, you have been weighed on the scales and found to be too light; divisions, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel 5:25–28.

Belshazzar kept his promise and made Daniel third in power but that same night Belshazzar was killed in Darius the Mede took over the government.

Our days are also number and will be weighed, let's hope we’re not to light in our faith!

VERSE FOR TODAY: So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90:12 KJV.

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, I know my life is short, help me to do my best for you and not to waste my life on sin and hate.

Daniel November 28

In the Lion’s Den

Darius liked Daniel but other people in the government didn't so they tried to find things to show that Daniel was bad – They said to one another, "We are not going to find anything of which to accuse Daniel unless it is something in connection with his religion." Daniel 6:5.

They got Darius to issue an order that did not permit anyone to request anything from anybody, including gods, except Darius for the next 30 days. Daniel continued to pray three times a day facing Jerusalem from his opened upstairs window. The wicked administrators saw Daniel and reported him to Darius, who was distressed at the news but had to comply with the decree – So the King gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and he was thrown into the pit filled with lions. He said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve so loyally, rescue you." Daniel 6:16.

Darius spent a very restless night and at the crack of dawn he went down to the pit – When he got there, he called out anxiously, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was the God you serve so loyally able to save you from the lions?”

Daniel answered, "May your Majesty live for ever!" Daniel 6: 20, 21.

The King was very happy and had the accusers thrown with their families into the lion’s den, they were dead before they reached the bottom, indeed God had saved Daniel!

We may never need rescuing from lions, but we do need saving from ourselves, our human wants and desires, that can lead to eternal destruction.

VERSE FOR TODAY: “…God sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions so they would not hurt me…” Daniel 6:22a.

PRAYER THOUGHT: May I always have Daniel’s trust and loyalty unto eternity.

Jonah November 29

Can God be Avoided?

Jonah was called by God to take a message to Nineveh – He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware how wicked its people are." Jonah 1:2. Jonah had different ideas; he went the other way and boarded the ship for Spain. Suddenly a big storm hit the sea and the sailors were frightened – The sailors said to one another, "Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger." They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn. Jonah 1:7.

Jonah told the sailors about his Hebrew nationality and that he was supposed to be in Nineveh but he was trying to run away from God. Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard, they tried to row against the storm but the storm became worse, the sailors cried out to the Lord for mercy and threw Jonah overboard, the storm stopped as soon as it started!

Jonah was swallowed by a large fish as the Lord commanded and three days later after much prayer, Jonah was thrown-up on shore. Then Jonah completed his mission to Nineveh with God's message of destruction, the people of Nineveh believed God's message, they gave up their wicked ways and by God's mercy the city was saved.

Jonah's disobedience was wrong but his adventure did lead the sailors and the city of Nineveh to the Lord, good can come out of a bad situation.

VERSE FOR TODAY: This made the sailors so afraid of the Lord that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him. Jonah 1:16.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to know O Lord, that your will, will be done no matter how much I try to avoid it. Help me not to be stubborn but to put your will first in my life.

The Old Testament November 30

In Summary

There are many that feel the Old Testament is just boring history, it does have a lot of repetition and genealogy which can be boring.

There is also a lot of prophecy both fulfilled and future events foretold that are yet to happen!

The Psalms are poems of prayer, worship, praise, comfort and hope.

The Proverbs are packed with wisdom to aid us in our everyday life.

We see the Old Testament is not just boring history, but vital to our daily lives. We've only read a very small part of the Old Testament, hopefully your curiosity has been awakened and you will read the Old Testament completely. The Bible cannot be read like a good novel, once and you got it, every time passages are read there is something new to be gained. God is infinite and his Word is inexhaustible. The important thing is to read with an open mind and a receptive heart, looking to find something new and the Lord will reveal it to you.

Study, read and digest the Bible, don't just read it once but keep going back and keep getting more and more fulfillment.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15. KJV

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to approach your Word whether the New or Old Testament with an open mind and a receptive heart to receive what you have written there for me.

Profile: John the Baptist December 1

Foretold

We often think of John the Baptist as a strange person who preached in the desert but he had much more going for him than that, Isaiah foretold of John the Baptist – A voice cries out,

"Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God!...”Isaiah 40:3.

Zechariah, the priest and Elizabeth, his wife were both godly people and childless, one day at the altar while Zachariah was doing his priestly duties, an angel appeared to him, he became frightened – But the angel said, "Don't be afraid Zechariah! God has heard your prayer, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You are to name him John…" Luke 1:13. Zechariah questioned the angel, the angel made him unable to speak until after the baby's birth.

To be childless in this time was socially acceptable, after Elizabeth became pregnant –

"Now at last the Lord has helped me," he said.

"He has taken away my public disgrace!" Luke 1:25.

Elizabeth felt life when Mary, Jesus’ mother to-be came to see her; they both were carrying children of the Lord!

Our children are blessings of the Lord we must be aware of that and treat them as blessings not as inconveniences.

VERSE FOR TODAY: “…How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!” Luke 1:45.

PRAYER THOUGHT: A special prayer for children today, may they always be treated as a blessing, may we help them, pray for them, teach them and most of all love them.