

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

August 28th, 2011

The Hope of God's Mercy

Focal Passage: Lamentations 3 (KJV)

Cross References: Jam 1:13, Is 40:31, II Pet 3:9

Central Idea: Consequences come to those who refuse to repent and obey God. Yet, God remains faithful, and offers forgiveness to those who turn from sin to Him.

Lesson Idea: We must recognize Christ for who He is, and who we are in relation to Him. Our sin is detestable to Him, and always has consequences.

Background: In Matt 23:37-39, we see Christ lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem. We see His pain and agony over her refusal to accept Him and the other prophets God had sent. Yet, some 600 years before Him, there was another lament over Jerusalem's fate, this one given at the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587/586 B.C.

In the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah had predicted this calamity in chapters 1-29. In Lamentations, he concentrates in more detail on the bitter suffering and heartbreak that was experienced in Jerusalem's devastation. So important was Jerusalem's destruction that the facts are recorded in four separate Old Testament chapters: II Kings 25; Jeremiah 39, 52, and II Chronicles 36.

All 154 verses of Lamentations have been recognized by the Jews as a part of their sacred canon. Along with Ruth, Esther, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes, Lamentations is included among the Old Testament books of the Megilloth, or "Five Scrolls," which were read in the synagogue on special occasions. Lamentations is read on the ninth of Ab (July/August) to remember the date of Jerusalem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Interestingly, this same date later marked the destruction of Herod's temple by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Bible in a Year Readings

August 21-28, 2011

August 21: Jeremiah 41-45

August 22: Jeremiah 46-48

August 23: Jeremiah 49-50

August 24: Jeremiah 51-52

August 25: Lamentations 1:1-3:36

August 26: Lamentations 3:37-5:22

August 27: Ezekiel 1-4

August 28: Ezekiel 5-8

Highlights of the Week:

Jeremiah 50: Babylon's defeat

Jeremiah 51: Babylon's destiny

Jeremiah 52: the capture of Jerusalem

Lamentations 1: The desolation of Jerusalem

Lamentations 2: The anger of God

Lamentations 3: Jeremiah's cry of despair

Lamentations 4: The conditions during the siege of Jerusalem

Lamentations 5: The need for restoration

Ezekiel 1: The vision of the 4 wheels

Ezekiel 2: Ezekiel is sent to Israel

Ezekiel 4: The signs of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 5: The explanation of the signs

Ezekiel 7: Description of the Babylonian conquest

Ezekiel 8: The vision of the Glory of God

Lamentations 3:1-21

- ¹*I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.*
- ²*He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.*
- ³*Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.*
- ⁴*My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.*
- ⁵*He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.*
- ⁶*He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.*
- ⁷*He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.*
- ⁸*Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.*
- ⁹*He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.*
- ¹⁰*He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places.*
- ¹¹*He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate.*
- ¹²*He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.*
- ¹³*He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins.*
- ¹⁴*I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day.*
- ¹⁵*He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.*
- ¹⁶*He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.*
- ¹⁷*And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.*
- ¹⁸*And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:*
- ¹⁹*Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.*
- ²⁰*My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.*
- ²¹*This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.*

DISCUSSION:

- How did Jeremiah identify with the sufferings of the people of Judah?
- What did Jeremiah compare his despair to in Vs 1-18?
- Who were the sufferings of the people directly attributed to? Compare with Jam 1:13.
- What did Jeremiah recall according to vs. 19-21?

Lamentations 3:22-36

- ²²*It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*
- ²³*They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*
- ²⁴*The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.*
- ²⁵*The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.*
- ²⁶*It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*
- ²⁷*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*
- ²⁸*He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.*
- ²⁹*He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.*
- ³⁰*He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.*
- ³¹*For the LORD will not cast off for ever:*
- ³²*But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.*
- ³³*For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.*
- ³⁴*To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.*
- ³⁵*To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,*

³⁶To subvert a man in his cause, the LORD approveth not.

DISCUSSION:

- In the middle of lamenting the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, what profound assurance did the writer express in Vs. 22-24?
- What virtues, or praises to God, were affirmed by Jeremiah in Vs 25-27?
- What does it mean to wait for the Lord? Is 40:31.
- How was God's mercy revealed in suffering according to Vs. 28-33?
- What does it mean that God does "not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men"? II Pet 3:9.
- What was intolerable to the Lord in Vs. 34-36?

Lamentations 3:37-41

³⁷Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

³⁸Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?

³⁹Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

⁴⁰Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

⁴¹Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

DISCUSSION:

- How did Jeremiah describe the nature of God's knowledge in Vs 37-38?
- What did he say about sin and suffering in Vs. 39?
- What did Jeremiah urge them to do about their lives in Vs. 40-41?

Lamentations 3:42-54

⁴²We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.

⁴³Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.

⁴⁴Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.

⁴⁵Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.

⁴⁶All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

⁴⁷Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.

⁴⁸Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

⁴⁹Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission.

⁵⁰Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.

⁵¹Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.

⁵²Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.

⁵³They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.

⁵⁴Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.

DISCUSSION:

- How did Jeremiah describe the sorrows of sin in these verses?
- According to Vs. 43-47 what are the results of unforgiven sins?

Lamentations 3:55-66

⁵⁵I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon.

⁵⁶Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry.

⁵⁷Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

⁵⁸O LORD, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.

⁵⁹*O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause.*

⁶⁰*Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.*

⁶¹*Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, and all their imaginations against me;*

⁶²*The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day.*

⁶³*Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their musick.*

⁶⁴*Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.*

⁶⁵*Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.*

⁶⁶*Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.*

DISCUSSION:

- What was the prayer of the penitent sinner in these verses?
- How did that prayer include both comfort and cursing?

APPLICATION

- List and define the attributes of God found in this passage.
- Why is the continual seeking of God, and confession of sin important?
- What are the practical consequences of living in sin and in rebellion against God for the Christian?