

OCTOBER 25

Today you will read Paul's last written words. It is interesting that the Lord worked it out so that Paul's final words would be written to a disciple, and they are great words. Also, I'm sure if you take everything Paul has written and rearrange the letters just right, you can make the sentence, "Go out and enjoy a pumpkin spice latte as you read today."

Jeremiah 48-49:22

This section today records God's punishment of three neighboring nations who were also "relatives" of Israel. Moab and Ammon were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. Edom came from Esau, the son of Isaac and brother of Jacob. All of these nations played a role in the corruption and demise of Israel, but Edom's actions during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem put them into a special category.

Jeremiah 48

This is the judgment on Moab. I have no idea why so much space is given to them other than they may have had the largest and most ungodly influence on Israel. Their influence goes back to the wilderness and Baal Peor and Balaam. That was a crucial, defining event in Israel's wanderings in Numbers 25, and it is referred to again and again in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Also, Solomon was greatly influenced by his wives from Moab and Ammon. It was Solomon who introduced idolatry into Israel and into the family of David. It is probably because of this idolatry that Solomon and his sons were not in the physical line of Christ, the line of Mary, as given in the Gospel of Luke. Chemosh, Molech and Milcom were names for the same god, and these were the gods who were worshiped by throwing babies into their open mouths of fire. The babies came as the result of the "X-rated" worship of Baal and his wife Ashtoreth. It was the sex apparently that lured the old king into this spiritual defection. As the text below shows, Solomon worshiped these gods and this came by the influence of his wives from Moab and Ammon. Again, this is probably the reason why Moab is given such eminence in this judgment.

1 Kings 11:5-7 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.

Vs. 1-8 This is the declaration of destruction and distress that will come on Moab. Notice the reference to Chemosh in v. 7.

Vs. 9-10 Moab will flee but the pursuers will not give up.

Vs. 11-13 Moab lived in relative ease, never having to change, also meaning that they never repented from idolatry. Chemosh is there again.

Vs. 14-20 This is the taking away of Moab's pride, both in removing its heroes and destroying its cities.

Vs. 21-25 This again is the summary of Moab's humbling.

Vs. 26-27 And this is the reason for God's judgment. It is interesting that God promises this judgment, but the armies that did it were not from Israel. Moab was destroyed by God, using other nations, not Israel.

Vs. 28-33 The people of Moab would become homeless.

Vs. 34-39 This is the mourning and crying of the people of Moab.

Vs. 40-46 This is God's declaration of judgment and suffering. And here is Chemosh mentioned again in v. 46.

V. 47 Yet at the end of the age, in the Millennial Kingdom, there will be blessing for Moab. Go figure.

Jeremiah 49

Vs. 1-6 This is the judgment on Ammon.

V. 3 Milcom was another name for Molech or Chemosh (the sacrifice of babies).

V. 6 Yet even for Ammon, at the end of the age, in the Millennial Kingdom, there will be blessing.

Vs. 7-22 The judgment against Edom.

Vs. 9-10 This hints at some of Edom's sin. During the destruction of Jerusalem and destruction of the surrounding cities, the Edomites were like the grape pickers and thieves, Babylon's little helpers. The Edomites picked everything bare.

You'll notice that there is no mention of restoration for Edom. We'll read more about Edom in the book of Obadiah, but Malachi 1:4 says it all.

If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the LORD of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called 'the wicked country,' and 'the people with whom the LORD is angry forever.'"

No millennial blessing here.

Notice again that God Himself pronounces judgment, but Israel was not His tool for punishment of the nations. God allowed the nations to punish one another. Israel was purposed for the redemption of the nations; and, as we've seen, they themselves were judged and punished.

2 Timothy 4

Vs. 1-2 The day I memorized this, it was like being given a privilege by the Lord. Next to the Great Commission and Acts 1:8, I believe this is the greatest charge to us in the NT. It's hard to get back to the old, strong roots of conviction; but this charge, this truth, and this confidence in the Word of God has to be alive in our hearts in each generation until Jesus returns. It is the Word, and nothing but the Word, that the Spirit uses to give light and life. We are here to shine in the darkness and to give testimony to the truth.

V. 2 Notice that Timothy is cautioned again to teach with *complete patience*.

Vs. 3-4 Again, that sense of urgency.

V. 5 This was a personal charge for Timothy, from teacher to disciple. Notice the call to suffer and to reach out. Somehow I think those go together.

Vs. 6-8 Paul was confident that his time was short.

Vs. 9-10 Timothy needed to get to Paul ASAP. Demas may have been the only person to desert Paul, but it seems fishy to me that Titus and Crescens were mentioned in the same breath.

It could very well be that when the great panic struck the group, as the Romans did what they did and grabbed Paul, that in sheer fear, the group scattered. Demas, apparently, was motivated by something more than fear. And too, it may be that Titus and Crescens had already left and were on assignment when the hammer fell.

Vs. 11-13 Luke was still there, good old Luke. Paul needed help and I think it may have been more than a one-man job.

Mark is the guy who deserted Paul early in the book of Acts, but now Mark had written the Gospel of Mark. He was a cousin of Barnabas.

If Timothy was working in Ephesus, one of the things on his mind would have been leaving the work unattended to go to Paul in Rome. Therefore, I think, Paul told Tim that he had already sent Tychicus to him, to take over for him.

V. 13 Paul needed the cloak for the dark, dank, dirty, dismal dungeon. It is interesting that Paul wanted the Bible too. He needed the encouragement of the Word right to the end. Apparently they didn't have "compact" versions back then.

Vs. 14-15 We don't know who this Alexander was, but God did. Timothy was ordered by the Spirit to avoid him.

Vs. 16-18 Paul appeared before Nero and the other judges. In 64 A.D. Nero burned Rome and began his persecution of the Christians, whom he made the scapegoats for his madness. This was now 67 A.D., and though Paul had managed to serve "under the radar," God brought him "front and center" now to bear witness before the Gentiles. Look at what Jesus told the Twelve when He sent them out:

Matthew 10:17-20 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts, and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Vs. 19-22 These are very interesting short bursts. I find it interesting that God didn't allow Trophimus to be healed.

For a second time, Paul asks Timothy to come quickly.

Though we will read more of what Paul wrote, these are Paul's last recorded words on earth, in the harvest. And they are from a faithful disciple to a disciple.

Psalms 95-96

Psalm 95

Vs. 1-5 What a joyous call to worship.

Vs. 6-11 And this is an interesting way to tell people that if they are His sheep, they need to follow. When we get to Hebrews, we'll hear some of these words again in reference to entering God's rest.

If you are interested, the group, "Sons of Korah," have a great song for this psalm. It is almost word-for-word to the NIV. It gives you an idea of how this psalm might actually have been sung in worship.

Psalm 96

Vs. 1-6 This psalm is full of testimony to the nations based on the new song of salvation that the Lord had put into the hearts of His people. This is the way God does it. Those who know Him, His love and His presence are the ones who are compelled to share Him in the harvest.

Vs. 7-9 Notice how redemptive this song is. All nations are called upon to come to the Lord and give glory to Him.

V. 10 The good news for everyone is that the Lord reigns. And we know the One who is on the throne.

Vs. 11-13 The curse on creation will be lifted when the Lord comes. Though judgment is mentioned here, no one who sings this psalm has any fear of the Judge. There is only the joy of His coming.

Proverbs 26:9-12

This all looked pretty good. I was smiling and agreeing with it all, until I ran into v. 12 and hurt myself. ☺