

OCTOBER 30

This is another big day because you are beginning Hebrews.

Lamentations 2:20-3:66

Lamentations 2:20-22

Even though God had warned the people that this is what would happen if they rejected Him, and even though He did everything He could to try to help them, it was still hard for Jeremiah to watch it all take place. Remember that rejecting God isn't just a "right or wrong" thing. The further a person or culture walks away from God, the sicker the heart becomes and the more distorted behavior becomes in that sickness. They had become a sick, cancerous society.

V. 20 Notice that two sacred things were violated: the "holiness" of a mother and child and the "holiness" of the priest in the temple. When sin rules there is no holiness or safe place.

V. 21 The young and the old were like the pride of a city, a sign of prosperity and wellbeing. The young men and young women were like those who are fruitful and bring the future. All were killed. The mention of dust is interesting because you'll see that again in the psalm.

V. 22 This was a tragic, long foretold, grand event.

Lamentations 3

Vs. 1-20 This is Jeremiah's "a ministry in review." No one would envy him. When I read v. 1, I always see, *I am the man who has seen affliction*. As you go through this section underline *he* and you'll find several divisions in The One Year Bible text. Each of these divisions shows another poetic image of how Jeremiah felt. It will give you a deeper appreciation of Jeremiah's years as a prophet and this trauma of seeing all of the prophecies of judgment fulfilled before his eyes.

As we follow the Lord in the harvest, if we are close to Him and bearing fruit, we should expect to identify with some of what Jeremiah experienced and felt. Paul had a hard service. Jesus said that a disciple was not above his teacher. Jesus was not treated kindly by those He came to save. Yet, the flipside of the suffering was the blessing. Jesus was blessed as foretold in Isaiah 53. Sharing the blessings of the gospel drove Paul on in his service. And we're about to see that Jeremiah was blessed too, because of what he learned about the Lord Himself.

Vs. 18-20 This seems to be as deep as you can go. Poor Jeremiah.

Vs. 21-24 This seems to be as high as you can go. And, you realize that Jeremiah could only say this with such reality and conviction, because God had shown him Himself through all of what Jeremiah lived through in vs. 1-20. As the old song goes, "you must go through the valley, to stand upon the mountain of God."

Vs. 25-39 These seem like proverbs Jeremiah has learned in all of his long work with the Lord and with the people. Some of this is written in retrospect, thinking of how the people could have been more open to the Lord and allowed themselves to be corrected and guided by Him. The ESV does a good job of grouping the thoughts.

Vs. 25-27 This is what Jeremiah learned and what the people rejected. This is something that every disciple in the harvest has to learn, often through trial.

Vs. 28-30 Submitting to the Lord is not easy. We need to recognize that our sin has to be dealt with and we need to be humbled. Learning to live according to the new man and not the old often comes through mistakes and God's correction. I have met many believers who will never do this because of their pride and their vision of following Jesus that says everything is about them and their welfare.

Vs. 31-33 And this is the hope we learn by allowing God to humble us as we learn to follow. His love and faithfulness are proven again and again in our lives. These lessons were deeply impressed on the soul of Jeremiah.

Vs. 34-39 Verses 34-36 either express the injustice going on in Israel, or they were charges brought against the Lord for allowing His people to be punished by Babylon. But, God is true and doesn't approve of that kind of stuff. Verses 37-39 give the answer that since God is the *Most High*, He can't be charged with evil but He punishes evil. That punishment shouldn't be called unjust.

Vs. 40-42 Therefore Jeremiah calls the people to repent.

Vs. 43-47 Because God has done this....

Vs. 48-51 ... Jeremiah will continue to weep and intercede for his people and to live before the Lord. When I read this I think of the life of Daniel, who lived with this same resolve and intensity before the Lord, praying for his people.

Vs. 52-66 Yet Jeremiah suffered for following God. The very nation he is crying for, at least that generation of them, made Jeremiah's life and service hard. But God was with Jeremiah and saved him and judged them. Underline *you* and you will see that Jeremiah agreed with God's judgment of that generation.

What helped Jeremiah survive, and what helps us in the harvest, is that our reward and nourishment is following the Lord. The Lord Himself is the reward, not people, not results, only Him. He gives us energy and hope and joy that cannot be taken away.

Hebrews 1

The letter to the Hebrews was probably written after the events in the book of Acts (62 A.D.) and before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.). No one knows what church this might have been. Though it could have been a letter that circulated to a lot of cities and churches, it seems to be addressed to a particular group in a particular place. The main issue in the book is one we've seen come up in a few of Paul's letters, that is, the temptation to bring more Jewish law into the practice of following Christ. It seems that these Jewish Christians were being pressured by the local community to slip back into the observance of the law.

The letter has a "sermonic" sense to it. Although the argument is very logical, there is a feel to what is said, as if a formal, public exposition is being made.

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. Paul would be a good guess because of the very logical writing and the very deep knowledge of the Scripture. Of all the NT writers, Paul is the only one we see with this bent. People say that some of the style and word usage is different than Paul's; but if this were a public sermon, that might account for the differences. The other best guess is Barnabas. Barnabas was a Levite and it would explain the vast knowledge of the OT. Other guesses range from Timothy to Apollos, although Timothy, himself, is mentioned at the end of Hebrews.

From beginning to end, remember that this group of converted Jews had once been very alive and willing to suffer for Christ. Now, after these years, the rising of persecution had them reeling and wondering if maybe a little "law" would really hurt, especially if it made the persecution go away.

Hebrews 1:1-14

Vs. 1-2 As you read this you sense that this is a formal beginning to a sermon. And you notice that a comparison is being made. Also, it says we are in the last days.

Vs. 3-14 So, as you read this you already know that Jesus is "better" than everything else, but what do you think might be some of the underlying problems that are being addressed? If anyone

thought Jesus was just an angel made by God into a god, this section speaks against that. In this section you see Jesus as fully God and fully man, born in the flesh, but eternal. Also, if Jesus were just to be regarded as a good teacher or one of many prophets, that would also be totally wrong.

Vs. 3-4 This is the summary of Jesus in His divinity, His position as the human "Son of Man." The fact that Jesus sat down and took that place was necessary to fulfill prophecy and to show that a son of Adam could assume lawful, sinless authority over the world of men.

Vs. 5-6 Jesus is the Son who is worshipped. As Jesus said in His temptation and confrontation with Satan, only God can be worshipped. God said so.

Vs. 7-9 Notice the contrast. Angels are ministers of God, but in v. 8 God calls Jesus, God.

Vs. 10-12 And this Son is eternal. Hold on to these verses because you'll see them again very soon.

Vs. 13-14 Jesus sat down at the right hand of God. That is amazing. The angels were created to serve those who would inherit eternal life. Think of this too in terms of Satan overstepping his authority. I believe that he was supposed to serve man, but through rebellion found a way to have authority over mankind when Adam and Eve sinned.

Every day as I read the Gospels, I'm always humbled by the very real challenge everyone had looking at that "unbeautiful" and unattractive Jewish man, that tree root visible in the dry ground. They watched Him work a wonder and heard Him say God was His Father. How could that little Jewish guy be the one of whom it is said, *All things were made through him and without him was not any thing made that was made* (John 1:3)? Only by the grace and Spirit of God can we be privileged to understand this, and know and serve Him in the harvest.

Psalm 102

Vs. 1-11 It looks to me like Jeremiah wrote a psalm. No, actually it looks like this was written after the people returned to Jerusalem after the exile. They were low and despised then too. It will take getting to v. 12 to see that this comes from the returned exiles.

Vs. 12-17 Notice the focus on rebuilding Zion. Look at v. 14 and remember the dust in Lamentations 2:21. There is a future feel to these verses because someday all nations will honor the Lord in Zion.

Vs. 18-22 This is being written for the next generation so they will praise God. Sounds like they are interested in disciple making too. This section also ends with a view to the end of time when the King rules.

Vs. 23-28 This is their present despair and their future hope. What if I told you I can prove from this section that that hope is in the redemptive plan of God and in the work of Jesus? How? Look at vs. 25-27. Now look at Hebrews 1:10-12. Who are those verses in Hebrews talking about? Kind of interesting, huh?

Proverbs 26:21-22

The destruction spoken of in these verses is incredible. The image of fire is obvious, but the morsel that goes down deep is ten times worse. When a lie becomes imbedded in a heart of a person or a culture, it may never come out.

