

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Jan. 24, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 313-319 on your reading guide.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Jer. 52: As the footnotes say, this chapter is basically the same history as given in 2Kings 24. It is the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. But this chapter, as an obvious addition, can help you understand that these books were added to, shuffled around, and corrected in ways over the centuries. They did not just pop into existence. The Hebrews studied them, held on to them, sometimes forgot about them, brought them back to study. All so Jesus could use them on the road to Emmaus and all through His teaching, to develop His story and purpose.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

This book is set after the destruction of the temple and the exile, after 587 B.C.

Lam. 1: This is the sadness felt by the people of Jerusalem after seeing their pride and joy destroyed. Vs. 18-19: "The Lord is just; I had defied his command. Listen, all you peoples, and behold my suffering: My maidens and my youths have gone into captivity. I cried out to my lovers, but they failed me."

Lam. 2: Vs. 1: "How the Lord in his wrath has detested daughter Zion!"

Lam. 3: Chapter 3:17-24 is a good summary of this book of the Bible.

"My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the Lord. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall; remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me, but I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope; the favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him." This about the people of Israel that have been in exile but it can also be read like the psalms, as a prayer of Jesus going through his passion and carrying all our sins and sorrows.

Lam. 4: The situation that the people were in, was extreme. The city had been under siege, as described in this chapter. The result was things like vs. 10, "The hand of compassionate women boiled their own children, to serve them as mourners' food in the downfall of the daughter of my people." But to get them back to God would not be easy because they are now in exile.

Lam. 5: Now they pray to get back to being right with God. Vs. 6-7, “To Egypt we submitted, and to Assyria, to fill our need of bread. Our fathers, who sinned, are no more; but we bear their guilt.” And so in vs. 21-22, “Lead us back to you, O Lord, that we may be restored: give us anew such days as we had of old. For now you have indeed rejected us, and in full measure turned your wrath against us.”

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET BARUCH

The first part of this book is similar to the way Jeremiah wrote. Baruch was his secretary. It is not written by Baruch but by someone who wanted the next generations to understand the sufferings of the people in their time of distress. We can figure this out because Baruch would have had to have been over 100 years old. So it was written in Baruch’s name to help the people who are now back in Jerusalem understand what went on during the siege and the exile.

Bar. 1: We realize right in the beginning, in vs. 4, that the people of the remnant of Israel are in “Babylon by the river Sud.” Since they are talking about sending money to pay for sacred vessels for the temple, they have got to have been in Babylon for quite a while. In vs. 11 they are praying for Nebuchadnezzar so this had to have been after his revelations from God and not right after he destroyed Jerusalem. This should give us a clue about why the church asks us to pray for world leaders, no matter how evil they are. We should pray that they let God touch their hearts. Vs. 18 is a summary of their confession of guilt that goes from vs. 13 to vs. 10 of the next chapter: “We have neither heeded the voice of the Lord, our God, nor followed the precepts which the Lord set before us.” This helps us understand that the leaders cannot be blamed for all the evil in the world. We all play a part with our sins.

Bar. 2: Vs. 11 is their prayer for deliverance. Vs. 17: “Look directly at us, and behold: it is not the dead in the nether world, whose spirits have been taken from them, who will give glory and vindication to the Lord.” They remind God of his promise to free them. Vs. 30: “But in the land of their captivity they shall have a change of heart; they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God. I will give them hearts and heedful ears; and they shall praise me in the land of their captivity, and shall invoke my name.” Vs. 34: “And I will bring them back to the land which with my oath I promised to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and they shall rule it.”

Bar. 3: That prayer continues through vs. 8 in this chapter. The rest of the chapter is a reminder of the wisdom of following God’s law and the foolishness of disregarding it. That continues through vs. 4 of chapter 4.

Bar. 4: The people realize how they have failed God. In vs. 5-6, “Fear not, my people! Remember, Israel, you were sold to the nations not for your destruction; it was because you angered God that you were handed over to your foes.” Vs. 18, “He who has brought this evil upon you must himself deliver you from your enemy’s hands.” Vs. 29, “For he who has brought disaster upon you will, in saving you, bring you back enduring joy.”

THE BOOK OF SIRACH

Sir. 23: That last verse and the first six of this chapter are a prayer to the Father. Vs. 7-15 are good lessons on controlling our mouth which Jesus said was where impurity resides. For all those who continue to say: “Oh my God” vs. 10 is a reminder of the 2nd Commandment: “So one who swears continually by the Holy Name will not remain free from sin.” Vs. 16-27 outline thoughts on three levels of impurity. In vs. 16: “For burning passion is a blazing fire, not to be quenched till it burns itself out: A man given to sins of the flesh, who never stops until the fire breaks forth...” That is about lust and self-gratification, which leads to vs. 17: “The rake to whom all bread is sweet and who is never through till he dies...” is about fornication. Vs. 18: “And the man who dishonors his marriage bed and says to himself, “Who can see me?” is about adultery. Don’t worry women are included in vs. 22: “So also with the woman who is unfaithful to her husband and offers as heir her son by a stranger.”

Sir. 24: The first 17 verses are like a song about wisdom. Vs. 26 of this continuation of a narration on wisdom is a favorite of mine ever since I grew past being a teenager, when I knew everything, to being a senior citizen, who now knows that I knew very little. “The first man never finished comprehending wisdom, nor will the last succeed in fathoming her.” Learning more and more forever in heaven will keep it interesting.

Sir. 25: From vs. 1-11 is the good news or actually about good people. It can be a kind of checklist on how we are doing. Just remember vs. 6: “The crown of old men is wide experience; their glory, the fear of the Lord.” Just remember we have experience and not necessarily wisdom. For with age comes wisdom but sometimes only age shows up. Vs. 12-25 is about nasty women. This author really feared their power. Vs. 15: “With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell than live with an evil woman.” This is all about the difference between the strength that men have and the power that women have, which is horrible when it is not balanced by men and women working together, and working within a sacred bond.

Sir. 26: Vs. 1-4 is the very often-quoted description of the blessings of a good wife. He also describes an unruly wife in vs. 5-12. Then vs. 13-18 go back to giving more information on a good wife. Vs. 19-20 go with the first part of chapter 27.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

Jn. 11:28-57: John is showing us how Jesus was able to give lessons through good timing, like waiting for Lazarus to be entombed. So in vs. 45, “Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.” This puts the high priests in a corner so Caiaphas comes up with his famous line in vs. 50: “You know nothing, nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish.” He wasn’t thinking right but was still prophesying correctly. In vs. 54, Jesus gets out of town. In vs. 55-57 the chief priests and the Pharisees plan to arrest him.

Jn. 12: In vs. 2 of chapter 11 it said “Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair.” In vs. 3 of this chapter she does it again. I say again because the community of John would have corrected this if it had only been once. Judas’ reaction sets the stage for his betrayal for money. All the believers were making the chief priests nervous enough that in vs. 10 they even plot to kill Lazarus.

Then in vs. 12-19 Jesus has a triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He comes in on an ass. In 2Samuel 15, King David flees Jerusalem. Now the fulfillment of prophecy of an eternal king is coming back in. It is done with a celebration, just as described in Lev.23:40. Jesus uses the occasion to speak of the idea that his hour has come in vs. 20-36. This is continued with a whole narration on Jesus being the light. Vs. 46: “I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness.” The final battle is about to begin, for His time has come.

Jn. 13: Now we start the Book of Glory, better known as the Last Supper, Passion, Death, & Resurrection of Christ. Before this Jesus was showing signs of what he was to accomplish. Now he is doing it all. He starts with humble service in vs. 1-20. Many people forget how this sets the tone for his humbling himself to accept death on a cross. It is also the preparation for the priesthood of the apostles who were being ritually cleansed like in Deuteronomy.

Vs. 21-30 is about the betrayal. Vs. 23, “One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus’ side.” John uses this technique of referring to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, to put us in the picture. We all should have wanted to be in that position. Loved by Jesus, and loving Him back. Then in vs. 27: “After he took the morsel, Satan entered him.” According to some Church Fathers, when God created the angels and asked them to serve mankind, Satan refused this idea of humble service. This leads in vs. 31-35 with the commandment of love one another, or humble service. Peter’s arrogance shows itself and he is warned where it will lead him.

Jn. 14: John spends far more time relating the teachings of Jesus at the Last Supper than the other Gospel writers. Vs. 1-14 are about Jesus’ connection with the Father. Vs. 15-31 are his connection to the Holy Spirit, the Advocate.

Jn. 15: After his explanation of the Trinity in the last chapter, the vine and the branches image helps us to understand the next step, which is our connection to all of this. We need God as a branch needs to stay connected to the vine, which goes back to love one another, because we will all have to be connected. Vs. 18-25 are about the opposition we will face from the world. If we

are connected to him, they will hate us just like they hate him. Vs. 26-27 is a reassurance that the Holy Spirit will help them and us as they and we go through this opposition.

Jn. 16: This whole chapter is all about the temporary sense of loss that they will have when he faces death. It should also help us feel the same loss as we contemplate his sacrifice for our sins. He again reminds them that the Spirit will help them and they will eventually find joy again. Vs. 20: “but your grief will become joy.” But they shouldn’t worry because in vs. 33b he says: “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”