

Thursday, October 31

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Lamentations 4:1 - 5:22

4 **1** How the gold has lost its luster! Even the finest gold has become dull. The sacred gemstones lie scattered in the streets! **2** See how the precious children of Jerusalem, worth their weight in fine gold, are now treated like pots of clay made by a common potter. **3** Even the jackals feed their young, but not my people Israel. They ignore their children's cries, like ostriches in the desert. **4** The parched tongues of their little ones stick to the roofs of their mouths in thirst. The children cry for bread, but no one has any to give them. **5** The people who once ate the richest foods now beg in the streets for anything they can get. Those who once wore the finest clothes now search the garbage dumps for food. **6** The guilt of my people is greater than that of Sodom, where utter disaster struck in a moment and no hand offered help. **7** Our princes once glowed with health— brighter than snow, whiter than milk. Their faces were as ruddy as rubies, their appearance like fine jewels. **8** But now their faces are blacker than soot. No one recognizes them in the streets. Their skin sticks to their bones; it is as dry and hard as wood. **9** Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of hunger. Starving, they waste away for lack of food from the fields. **10** Tenderhearted women have cooked their own children. They have eaten them to survive the siege. **11** But now the anger of the LORD is satisfied. His fierce anger has been poured out. He started a fire in Jerusalem that burned the city to its foundations. **12** Not a king in all the earth— no one in all the world— would have believed that an enemy could march through the gates of Jerusalem. **13** Yet it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the sins of her priests, who defiled the city by shedding innocent blood. **14** They wandered blindly through the streets, so defiled by blood that no one dared touch them. **15** "Get away!" the people shouted at them. "You're defiled! Don't touch us!" So they fled to distant lands and wandered among foreign nations, but none would let them stay. **16** The LORD himself has scattered them, and he no longer helps them. People show no respect for the priests and no longer honor the leaders. **17** We looked in vain for our allies to come and save us, but we were looking to nations that could not help us. **18** We couldn't go into the streets without danger to our lives. Our end was near; our days were numbered. We were doomed! **19** Our enemies were swifter than eagles in flight. If we fled to the mountains, they found us. If we hid in the wilderness, they were waiting for us there. **20** Our king—the LORD 's anointed, the very life of our nation— was caught in their snares. We had thought that his shadow would protect us against any nation on earth! **21** Are you rejoicing in the land of Uz,

O people of Edom? But you, too, must drink from the cup of the LORD 's anger. You, too, will be stripped naked in your drunkenness. **22** O beautiful Jerusalem, your punishment will end; you will soon return from exile. But Edom, your punishment is just beginning; soon your many sins will be exposed.

5 1 LORD, remember what has happened to us. See how we have been disgraced! **2** Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners. **3** We are orphaned and fatherless. Our mothers are widowed. **4** We have to pay for water to drink, and even firewood is expensive. **5** Those who pursue us are at our heels; we are exhausted but are given no rest. **6** We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough food to survive. **7** Our ancestors sinned, but they have died— and we are suffering the punishment they deserved! **8** Slaves have now become our masters; there is no one left to rescue us. **9** We hunt for food at the risk of our lives, for violence rules the countryside. **10** The famine has blackened our skin as though baked in an oven. **11** Our enemies rape the women in Jerusalem and the young girls in all the towns of Judah. **12** Our princes are being hanged by their thumbs, and our elders are treated with contempt. **13** Young men are led away to work at millstones, and boys stagger under heavy loads of wood. **14** The elders no longer sit in the city gates; the young men no longer dance and sing. **15** Joy has left our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. **16** The garlands have fallen from our heads. Weep for us because we have sinned. **17** Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears. **18** For Jerusalem is empty and desolate, a place haunted by jackals. **19** But LORD, you remain the same forever! Your throne continues from generation to generation. **20** Why do you continue to forget us? Why have you abandoned us for so long? **21** Restore us, O LORD, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had! **22** Or have you utterly rejected us? Are you angry with us still?

Hebrews 2:1 - 18

2 1 So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. **2** For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. **3** So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak? **4** And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose. **5** And furthermore, it is not angels who will control the future world we are talking about. **6** For in one place the Scriptures say, “What are mere mortals that you should think

about them, or a son of man that you should care for him? **7** Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. **8** You gave them authority over all things.” Now when it says “all things,” it means nothing is left out. But we have not yet seen all things put under their authority. **9** What we do see is Jesus, who was given a position “a little lower than the angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned with glory and honor.” Yes, by God’s grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone. **10** God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation. **11** So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. **12** For he said to God, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people.” **13** He also said, “I will put my trust in him,” that is, “I and the children God has given me.” **14** Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. **15** Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. **16** We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. **17** Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. **18** Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Psalms 103:1 - 22

103 1 Let all that I am praise the LORD ; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. **2** Let all that I am praise the LORD ; may I never forget the good things he does for me. **3** He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. **4** He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. **5** He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle’s! **6** The LORD gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly. **7** He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. **8** The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. **9** He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. **10** He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. **11** For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. **12** He has removed our sins as far

from us as the east is from the west. **13** The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. **14** For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust. **15** Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. **16** The wind blows, and we are gone— as though we had never been here. **17** But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him. His salvation extends to the children's children **18** of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments! **19** The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything. **20** Praise the LORD, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. **21** Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! **22** Praise the LORD, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom. Let all that I am praise the LORD .

Proverbs 26:23

26 23 Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.