

Journey Into God's Word



II Kings 9-17

Lamentations 1-5

II Peter 1-3

Dear Co-Worker in the Kingdom of God,

It is so difficult to find real compassion today. So many people are totally indifferent to human suffering. What a contrast the attitudes of most people are to that of Jeremiah. Even though he had tried to warn the people of Judah over and over of the suffering that was to come, if they didn't repent, he still wept over them when it actually came. The compassion this "weeping prophet" had is shown to us in the book of Lamentations. In **II Peter** we are given clear directives on the necessity to remain true to God's Word and in **II Kings 9-17** we are given additional examples of the results of those who turn away from the Living God. The examples warning and directives we find in these three scriptural readings are of critical importance if we are going to be the compassionate, faithful and productive people God has called us to be. "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."(**II Peter 1:8,9**)

Jeremiah is a man who shows us how to truly care about the suffering of others. He identified with the suffering of those who not only ignored these warning but actually threatened and harmed Jeremiah as he told them of their need to repent in order to avoid the hurt they were now experiencing. Yet now in the midst of their suffering, Jeremiah did not stand there and point the finger saying, "I told you so." Instead his response was, "My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within, my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city."(**Lam. 2:11**) The suffering of others has become his suffering and he declares, "This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed."(**Lam 1:16**)

Oh the destructiveness of sin, what suffering it brings. “My sins have been bound into a yoke, by His hands they were woven together. They have come upon my neck and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has handed me over to those I cannot withstand.”(**Lam 1:14**)

In **II Kings 9-17** we see numerous examples of kings who insisted on sinning and the destruction it brought not only upon their personal lives, but also the kingdom they were entrusted with. Jehu is a king who started out righteous then went far beyond the Lord’s command. You can read about **Jehu in II Kings 9,10**. Today we see many politicians like Jehu who mix their faith with their personal ambitions and then engage in political activity that cuts direct aid to the poor and elderly and abuses prisoners. In **Hosea 1:4,5** we see the punishment announced upon Jehu’s dynasty. Joash is another King who started out good and then drifted from the Lord. The good he did is described in **II Kings** but the reason for his assassination and his wicked acts are shared with us in **II Chronicles 24:17-26**. It is absolutely critical that you do everything you can do to avoid evil. Please look at **II Kings 13:1-9** and state both the sins of King Jehoahaz and what happened after he repented.

Often people will turn to sin knowing full well the suffering it will bring. They sin because they feel they have then no other way out. We must help people to not only see that sin ultimately results in suffering but also that sin does not help—it only destroys. They must be reminded that God wants to help them in that difficult moment. We must share the fact that; “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”(**II Peter 1:3,4**) God has given us everything we need to be a victorious, compassionate people. Please read verses **5-9** of **II Peter 1** and note what you need to add to your personal life in order that you are not ineffective and unproductive. Faith must be more than just mental assent to certain facts. Living faith results in action and growth in Christian character and compassion that include a practice of discipline that is productive and effective.

Jeremiah was a man of faith. He declared in behalf of those he was suffering with, “I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not

consumed, for his compassion never fails. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for Him’”(Lam. 3:19-24) Here was a man who was going through great suffering but yet he had hope. Judah, the remaining tribe of Israel was being taken into captivity. The northern tribes had been defeated by Assyria year earlier and taken to a foreign land. Now Babylon had destroyed Judah and was taken into exile. Jeremiah could have given up but he didn’t. He knew that God’s divine power had given him everything he needed for life. Yes, that life may at that moment have seemed hopeless, but Jeremiah hung on, declaring, “The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”(Lam. 3:25,26) Do you know in the depths of your being that God is good? Have you put your hope in Him to the extent that you know even when suffering seems to be everywhere that God is in control? “Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven and say: We have sinned and rebelled.”(Lam. 3:40-42) Do you see the hurt that has come upon so many because of sin? Has their suffering driven you to your knees weeping in prayer? Have you cried out unto God in behalf of the lost? “Steams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief, until the Lord looks down from heaven and sees. What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city.”(Lam. 3:48-51) These women are left homeless, beaten; raped and misused they are left to suffer alone. But there is hope. “I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea: ‘Do not close your ears to my cry for relief.’ You came near when I called you, and you said, ‘Do not fear.’”(Lam. 3:55-57)

Yes there is hope for Christ is Risen. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life...but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who rescued Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”(I Peter 1:18-21) Please look at (II Peter 1:16-21) and note how Peter declares He was an eyewitness of the majesty of Christ and how “we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”(II Peter 1:19)

Beware, there will always be some that will try to rob you of this hope that Christ provides. “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord who bought them - bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.”(**II Peter 2:1,2**) What further warnings are given concerning these false teachers in the rest of **II Peter 2**? Desiring to know the truth and remain in the truth, we must read, study and live God’s Word daily. What warning is given in verses **20-23** of **II Peter 2**. “But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”(**II Peter 3:5-9**)

The time to totally renounce sin and serve Jesus is now. Sin robs all that has meaning in life. “Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. ‘The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned! Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim.’”(Lam. 5:15-17) Please examine the kings listed in **II Kings 14-17**. State whether they did “what was right in the eyes of the Lord or not”. Then mention what was the result.

1. **II Kings 14:1-21**- Amaziah King of Judah
2. **II Kings 14:23-29**- Jeroboam II-King of Israel
3. **II Kings 15:1-7**-Azariah –King of Judah
4. **II Kings 15:8-12**-Zechariah-King of Israel
5. **II Kings 15:13-18** Shallum-King of Israel
6. **II Kings 15:17-22**_ Menehom-King of Israel
7. **II Kings 15:23-26**- Pekahiah-King of Israel
8. **II Kings 15:27-31**-Pekiah-King of Israel
9. **II Kings 15:32-38**—Jotham-King of Judah
10. **II Kings 16**-Ahaz-King of Judah
11. **II Kings 17: 1-6** Hoshea- King of Israel.

In **II Kings 17** we see all Israel taken in exile to Assyria. In **II Kings 17:7-23**, what reasons do we have given as to why we see Israel exiled in 722 BC? How had they sinned against God? “So the Lord was very angry with Israel and

removed them from His presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the Lord their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced: Therefore the Lord rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunders, until He thrust them from His presence,”(**II Kings 17:18-20**)

Yes, sin results in suffering both now and for all eternity. Jesus is the answer to the sin problem. “The blood of Jesus, His (God’s) Son, purifies us from all sin.” At the same time, Jesus made it clear that all suffering and affliction was not the result of sin. “As He went along, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’”(John 9:1-3) Jesus then goes on to heal the blind man. Yet there are others who, although they do good, still suffer affliction. For example, did you notice in **II Kings 15:1-5** that Azaniah, King of Judah, “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,” yet he died of leprosy. This raises the age-old question of why do bad things happen to good people. How does Peter address this issue in **I Peter 4:12-19**? Peter goes on and states in **II Peter 3:10-13** that this sin-stricken world will be destroyed and a new creation will take place. In the light of **Romans 8:20** perhaps this involves a re-creation or new creation process for the whole world as is described for the individual in **II Cor. 5:17**. Never-the-less it is a total misrepresentation of scripture for some to use **II Peter 3:10-13** as an excuse for their personalized destruction of creation. After all, Peter goes on and says, “Since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him. Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.”(**II Peter 3:14,15**)

As you reach out to those who are suffering this week, through the love of Jesus Christ, remember His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises.”(**II Peter 1:3,4**) Standing on these promises please join me this week in sharing the hope, life and healing Jesus provides. Let us read together **II Kings 18-25, Ezekiel 1-11 and I Corinthians 1-16**. Now please, “make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective

and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”(II Peter 1:3-8)
Now “be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen”

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice