

Week Thirty-Seven

Days 253–259



Exile Narrative: Jeremiah 45—52 | Supplemental: Lamentations 1—5; Obadiah; Proverbs 17:21—18:16

Messianic Checkpoint Narrative: Matthew 1—7 | Supplemental: Proverbs 18:17—18:24

JESUS' GENEALOGY—LIKE US—IS A VARIED LOT



Lamentations of Jeremiah
by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

We have an extraordinary opportunity this week to see the deep connections of God's work among all human beings. We can especially marvel at the way the Bible shows the united story of God's work with the Jews coming to fulfillment in his own Incarnation. First, in the concluding chapters of Jeremiah and the books of Lamentations and Obadiah, we read the last of the exilic writings. They highlight the suffering of the people and God's prophecies of judgment against various nations that participate in Judah's destruction. We balance this content with our reading from Matthew, a Gospel highlighting God's fulfillment of all his promises of salvation to the Jewish people and ultimately to all the nations.

- In Jeremiah 51, the longest chapter of the book, we see the condemnation of Babylon. Though God uses Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar to bring judgment upon his people, they are not good. God uses them to fulfill his will.
- Lamentations starts with a flashback to the city of Jerusalem. Jeremiah wanders through the city in the middle of the siege, bemoaning the tragedy that has befallen Israel.
- The book of Lamentations ends with Jeremiah's cries of agony and abandonment—but also with hope because he is still praying to the Lord.
- The Lamentations of Jeremiah shows us a way to deal with overwhelming suffering: We can let it become a prayer. We can transform our suffering into something that lifts us up and helps lift those around us.
- The prophet Obadiah preaches to the Edomites. They are the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. Obadiah tells the Edomites that they will be destroyed because they did not help Israel in its time of need.
- The genealogy of Jesus is not filled with only virtuous people; many of those mentioned did sinful things, and we can see their stories in Scripture. Nonetheless, God was able to bring goodness out of their actions. Jesus' perfect ministry cannot be hindered by human sinfulness.
- In a sense, genealogy is central to many of our readings. The people of Israel have been waiting for thousands of years for the promised Messiah—and he has come at last.

Dive Deeper

Throughout your day, as little or big moments of suffering arise, choose Jeremiah's way—letting these moments become a prayer. Pray his lamentations, and ask the Lord to transform your suffering into something that brings you and those around you closer to him.

Bible Answers

How does Jesus come to fulfill God's promises to Israel?

We are now familiar with the handful of prophetic fulfillment passages that begin Matthew's Gospel. Matthew quotes several prophets and says that some part of Jesus' life "fulfills" the words of the prophet. Along with other elements in the Gospel, this is Matthew's way of demonstrating to his readers that Jesus fulfills all the promises that God has made to Israel.

We also see deep connections between the lives of Jesus and Moses. For example, we recall Moses coming down the mountain with the Law. In our passages in Matthew, Jesus goes up a mountain to proclaim the New Law that fulfills the Law given to Moses. God has been preparing the Jewish people to experience God's guidance and his actual and transformative presence among them.



MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

This image shows the Mount of Beatitudes, the traditional site of Jesus' famous sermon (Matthew 5-7). There exists now the Church of the Beatitudes to commemorate that biblical event.



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