

Lent Devotional April 10, 2019

SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 25:30-38

³⁰You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

The LORD will roar from on high,
and from his holy habitation utter his voice;
he will roar mightily against his fold,
and shout, like those who tread grapes,
against all the inhabitants of the earth.

³¹The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment against the nations;
he is entering into judgment with all flesh,
and the guilty he will put to the sword,
says the LORD.

³²Thus says the LORD of hosts:
See, disaster is spreading from nation to nation,
and a great tempest is stirring
from the farthest parts of the earth!

³³Those slain by the LORD on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become dung on the surface of the ground.

³⁴Wail, you shepherds, and cry out;
roll in ashes, you lords of the flock,
for the days of your slaughter have come—and your dispersions,
and you shall fall like a choice vessel.

³⁵Flight shall fail the shepherds,
and there shall be no escape for the lords of the flock.

³⁶Hark! the cry of the shepherds,
and the wail of the lords of the flock!

For the LORD is despoiling their pasture,
³⁷and the peaceful folds are devastated,
because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

³⁸Like a lion he has left his covert;
for their land has become a waste
because of the cruel sword,
and because of his fierce anger.

Romans 10:14-21

¹⁴But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” ¹⁶But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

¹⁸But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for
“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,

and their words to the ends of the world.”

¹⁹ Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,
“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,
“I have been found by those who did not seek me;
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”

²¹ But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

DEVOTIONAL

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These words from Jeremiah sound gruesome. Jeremiah proclaims God’s wrath against all nations and all people. No one will escape God’s judgment, and complete destruction of the earth is imminent. Is this picture of an angry, merciless, or judgmental God the point of Jeremiah’s prophecy? I doubt it. I believe that here Jeremiah is expressing the pathos of God, who was indescribably hurt by His people’s wrongdoings and was awaiting their repentance. In Romans 10, Paul confirms God’s faithful love even to His “disobedient and contrary people” and emphasizes the need to spread this good news about the love of God through the words of Christ.

What is your own picture of God like? What do you believe it means for your posture and actions toward others? Are God’s followers called to judge and exclude, or are we called to proclaim God’s love to the ends of the earth and to bring people back to God, who is “slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Ps. 145:8)?

Let Christ-followers everywhere remember that God’s wrath stems from His love for His own people and is directed toward their repentance and complete union with Him in divine love. For the complete picture of God’s love for His people is our salvation through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.

PRAYER

God of mercy and forgiveness, we acknowledge that we, at times, take wrong paths and sadden you by our foolish choices. Whenever we succumb to wrong paths, guide us to repent and renew our relationship with you. Help us to bask in your mercy and forgiveness so that as living witnesses we may proclaim your love to the ends of the earth.