

# DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

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## 08-27-2023 // WEEK 34 NOTES

### Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther 1-5

#### Lamentations

- Lamentations should be Jeremiah, part 2. The book of Jeremiah is a long prophecy about Israel and other nations' sin, plus God's judgment upon that sin, especially for Israel. God had warned his children (as they entered the Promised Land) that if they chased after the gods of the Canaanites they would eventually be taken into captivity by a foreign nation and be expelled from the land. That happened and you read, for example, in the famous chapter **Jeremiah 29**, about how God wants them to behave and believe while they are in this captivity. His plans for them are for a future and a hope, as **Jeremiah 29:11** reminds us.
- The book of Lamentations describes Jerusalem as the Babylonians are laying siege to Jerusalem and its ultimate demise. **Chapters 1-4** describe this desolation in graphic detail. But please note that in the midst of this description of desolation stand the remarkable verses in **chapter 3:19-55**. Jeremiah proclaims that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases and that his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. **Great is God's faithfulness!** Then **chapter 4** returns to despair and **chapter 5** is a prayer for God to restore what has been lost.
- Lamentations is a vivid description that God's judgment does come upon any person or nation who continues to rebuff his ways, means, and purposes. But **it's also a grand book to remind us that God is faithful even in destruction**. He is always ready and willing to extend grace and mercy to people who are broken and ready to receive him. Plus, God always wants to restore what has been stolen and broken. For that is who he is. That's his character.
- Read the reality of Lamentations through the lenses of great hope!

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## Ecclesiastes:

- Many think the author is **Solomon** because of the first verse in the book, though it's still debated today. This book is about the despair of a man who had everything: fame, riches, women, wine, and good times were all his. But, he still lived in discouragement. It is perhaps the best book in the Bible to address the despair so many around us face today in the American social order.
- Two phrases: "vanity of vanities" and "chasing after the wind," dominate the book. It's a man (Solomon) at the end of his life, looking back, thinking life seems useless. Purposeless. It's also a commentary on living with wisdom versus foolishness. **Chapter 12** is especially powerful, as the preacher/author adjures all to remember the God of their youth. Only in him do we find true purpose and meaning in life. The book ends with a note of hope, that God sees all and will judge justly.

## Esther

- Esther is among the **historical books**. It was written sometime after the Medo/Persians had overtaken the Babylonians as the world power. Most think this story happened around 480 BC.
- Esther is a Jew living in the Persian Empire, formerly Babylon. There is a plot to exterminate the Jews – yet another historical example of anti-semitism (it's on the rise today again!).
- For many years, some Jewish scholars did not think Esther should be canonical (in the 37 books of authority in the OT). That's because the name "God" is not actually ever mentioned. Yet, the sovereign hand of the Father is seen throughout the book. His overarching providence is what guides the entire story. From Queen Vashti's rebellion...to the "Miss Persia" pageant, where Esther is discovered and made the new queen...to Haman's hatred of the Jews and his attempt to exterminate them (another example historically of an attempt to eliminate the Jews from the face of the earth)...to God raising up Mordecai, a Jew, to thwart an assassination plot against the king and him being lifted up...to Mordecai, the faithful uncle who raised Esther, challenging her to appear before the king with the request to thwart Haman's hateful plans...to Haman being thwarted and hung on the gallows he'd prepared for Mordecai to swing from (75 feet high!)...to the festival of Purim happening, God saving the Jews from slaughter, a

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festival celebrated to this day by the Jews.

- Just a fabulous story. It's one you dads should teach to your kids. And, especially to those of you with daughters: it's how God wants to use women in leadership/government and power for his purposes.

You will finish the book of Esther this upcoming week and you'll also read Daniel, back to the prophets. The first six chapters are a wonderful storyline of Daniel and the people surrounding him. He is one of the few biblical characters whom no one can find any flaws! **Chapters 7-12** have prophetic overtones, especially 7, 9, and 12. They have end times implications.

Read and enjoy! God's Word is true.

Grace to you all,  
David