

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR NOVEMBER 17, 2024

Daniel 12:1-3

- Michael is mentioned three times in Scripture.
 1. In Daniel 10 and here in Daniel 12, he appears as a great prince, the protector of God's people – as the only one what can contend against the princes of Persia. Especially in the passage in Daniel 12, he appears when the end of time is about to occur.
 2. In Revelation 12, Michael with the angels defeat the dragon and cast him out of heaven. Though this is often taken as the story of Satan's fall from heaven, its use in Revelation makes it unclear whether this event is happening at the beginning of time, the end of time, or during all of time.
 3. In Jude 9 – the only time Michael is referred to as an archangel – we hear the apocryphal (= not found in the Bible) story of how Michael contends with the devil over the body of Moses.
- Daniel was likely written around 160 BC, in the time of the Greek emperor Antiochus Epiphanes, who sought to make all the Jewish people give up their practices and worship the Greek gods. By bringing together a series of stories about Daniel and his three friends during the Babylonian Exile (Daniel 1-6) and supplementing those stories with a series of visions that speak about the persecutions during the reign of Antiochus (Daniel 7-12), the book encourages faithfulness – even unto death – in the midst of persecution. The last chapter emphasizes that in the end the faithful will be rewarded to everlasting life.
- This is the only place in the Old Testament that speaks of a resurrection from the dead.

Psalm 16

- What does it mean to you to “set the Lord always before” you? What can you do to help your heart teach you “night after night”?
- When the psalmist declares, “My boundaries enclose a pleasant land,” he declares that what we have is sufficient. He encourages us to see that we already have more than enough; we have a “rich inheritance.”
- We use this psalm this week, because of verse 10 with its promise that “you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the pit.” One way of understanding this verse is the trust that we have in God that God will be with us beyond this life.

Hebrews 10:11-25

- Here as elsewhere in Hebrews, the writer speaks about how Jesus as high priest has sacrificed himself so that no sacrifice is necessary again for the forgiveness of sins.
- This sacrifice of Jesus through his faithful life ushers in for us “a new and living way.” No longer is God contained in a Holy of Holies, but we have access to God always. Because of this, we are encouraged
 - to “approach with a true heart full assurance of faith.”
 - to “hold fast to the confession of hope without wavering.”
 - And to “provoke one another to love and good deeds.”What an incredible way to think of “provoking one another”! How is your provoking going?
- Hebrews 10:25 is often used as a way of encouraging our gathering in worship. Note how we are meant to encourage one another, not make others feel guilty.

Mark 13:1-8

- This passage follows the passage about the widow with the two coins. Remembering that she gives in the Temple for the Temple, Jesus implies that giving to the Temple is fruitless since it will not last. By undermining the confidence of the disciples in the Temple structure, Jesus challenges them to keep their focus on God. What might this say to us and what we think about buildings and structures?
- Though Jesus proceeds to talk about signs of the end, he states that we cannot know the time of the end. The destruction of the Temple does not mean that the end is here. In this discourse Jesus will say later, “about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13:32)