

Jesus, guide us in the ways of light and truth!

2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23

Psalm 137:1-6

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

The princes, priests, and people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing abominations and polluting the Lord's temple. God's messengers were mocked, warnings were despised, and the prophets were scoffed at. There was no hope of the people listening and no remedy in sight and the Lord's anger was inflamed. Jerusalem was sacked and the Israelites were taken captive. This was prophesied by Jeremiah who indicated captivity would continue "until the land has retrieved its lost Sabbath." Eventually Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to Jerusalem.

The captive people wept in sorrow and could not come to even play their harps and sing joyful songs for their captives. All they could think about was returning to Jerusalem.

Paul tells his Ephesian brothers and sisters how rich in mercy, how great in love the Lord God is. All were brought to life in Christ, raised with him, and saved by the gift of grace which gives us our faith. We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works prepared for us in advance.

Jesus explains to Nicodemus that the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. The Son was sent into the world to save it, not to condemn it. Jesus is the light sent into the world but people prefer the darkness to light and in their darkness walk away from the light. Whoever lives the truth comes to the light and such works are clearly seen as done in God.

The Father lifted up the Son,  
And the Son lifts up the faithful.

The Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus.



In the Gospel Jesus says the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. Just as the bronze serpent was an agent of healing to the grumbling Israelites ( see Numbers 21:7-9) who were bitten by the serpents, the raising of the crucified Son is an act of healing bringing eternal life to all who suffer Satan's sting of death. In this way Jesus' last act on earth can be seen as his greatest healing, freely offered to those who accept grace and live in truth. If we see our world and its people bathed in the light of Christ, appearances will become considerably different.

Jeremiah warned the Israelites that they must retrieve the Sabbath before they would be released from captivity. Would he give us the same advice today? The word "Sabbath" designates in the Bible the weekly seventh day of festal rest which is a day of abstention from secular work. Jesus was a faithful disciple of Old Testament scripture and followed the custom of attending the synagogue each Sabbath although he did have conflicts with the religious leaders who criticized him for conducting healings at such times. For Jesus such activity was the introduction to the Kingdom of God on the "day of the Lord" where God manifests his healing and saving grace. During Lent give some special thought on how to redirect your Sabbath activities to show a greater respect for this special day of the week; ways that would be appreciated by Jeremiah and Jesus.