

The Man of Sorrows

Jeremiah 37-38

WHAT WE FOUND

The darkest road in the book: arrested on a plausible false charge, beaten, dungeoned, and then, at the demand of the princes and with the most spineless royal sentence in Scripture, “the king can do nothing against you” (38:5), lowered by ropes into a cistern with no water, “only mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire” (38:6). The geography of the whole book collapsed into one pit: the people who forsook the fountain of living waters (2:13) threw its preacher into a broken cistern. And the rescue was led by a Gentile: Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, taking thirty men and old rags to pad the prophet’s arms (38:10-13), mercy with logistics, rewarded by God by name “because you have put your trust in me” (39:18).

Then we built the portrait this study has been painting for eleven weeks: known before birth; the priest’s son near Jerusalem; celibate by command; weeping for the slain of his people; preaching against the Temple and tried for it; plotted against by his hometown; “a gentle lamb led to the slaughter” (11:19); watched for his fall by familiar friends; bearer of the cup; handed to a mob by a ruler who would not resist. And we discovered we were not the first to see it: “Who do men say that the Son of man is?... others say Jeremiah” (Matthew 16:13-14), the only writing prophet the crowds named. Within the Gospel’s own record, the resemblance was named in real time, before the crucifixion, mid-ministry. In a prophet’s whole life, the Church has learned to see God sketching Another.

And the differences matter even more than the parallels. Jeremiah’s lament anticipates but does not exhaust his Lord’s mercy: Christ, who also wept and interceded, prayed from the cross “Father, forgive them.” Jeremiah was pulled from the pit alive; Christ was not rescued: He went all the way down, into death itself, and came up on the third day carrying its keys. The type is a sketch. Only Christ fills it, exceeds it, and pulls the rest of us up: “He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog” (Psalm 40:2) is now a family psalm.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Augustine · *Quoted at CCC 129*

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old is unveiled in the New. Jeremiah’s life is that rule in flesh: a real man, really suffering, whose true story God was simultaneously writing as the sketch of Another.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Melito of Sardis · *On Pascha, second century*

Christ was present in figure all through the old story: slain in Abel, bound in Isaac, sold in Joseph, persecuted in the prophets. The Old Testament is a sketchbook of the Passion, so that when the Suffering One came, His people might recognize the face.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) · *The Science of the Cross and her testament*

St. Teresa Benedicta taught that the cross is truly known only from within, by sharing it with Christ; in her testament she offered her life to God, an offering completed at Auschwitz. The pattern of Jeremiah did not end in the first century. It is the standing shape of prophetic love.

Live It This Week

- Be someone's Ebed-melech this week: identify one person sinking, and do one concrete, logistical act of rescue: the ride, the meal, the call, the errand.
- Pray Psalm 69 once this week, slowly, hearing it in three voices: Jeremiah's, Christ's, and your own.
- Reread Jeremiah 11:19 and Isaiah 53:7 side by side one evening, and end with a prayer of thanks to the Lamb who was not rescued so that you would be.

Memory Verse

"But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes." (Jeremiah 11:19, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Jeremiah 39 and 52, and Lamentations 3:19-33. The city falls. Come and see what survives it. Final session: we gather everything.

Catechism References

CCC 128-129 · CCC 601