

## 950805 The Message of Lamentations HLH

Sometimes, being a calculating mind, I thought how much the Church saved you from having to pay to hear this in Lagos or Johannesburg.

The churches around the world certainly reflect differences of emotion and culture.

I remember the first time we visited the brethren, Polynesians and the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific.

When there was a very special performance, there were chicken feathers in the hair and olive oil on the skin.

But how quiet the movements were.

There are people who respond as Thai brethren who in performance would be extremely reserved.

Maybe there is a reason of all the people named in the Bible, in the prophets, choosing one of a particular branch of the human family, God said that when the Messiah returns, one of the nations is going to quickly turn to Him.

The reference was to the children of Kush, translated in the authorized version as Ethiopia.

Some people express themselves in an emotional sense more than others are able to.

There are people who march across the lands of others.

Some who would never think to do that.

But God has made all kinds of human beings, and this past two weeks or so I've had the chance to be of some service to a responsibility that a few of you in this congregation and the other congregations here in the Pasadena area, or Glendora, have been of service.

There are ten young people, young men and young women, who were chosen on the basis of their academic accomplishments and talents who are in the months of July and August in preparation for visiting elsewhere and finishing their academic year, being now 15 and 16.

They will be 16 and 17 on average elsewhere in the country.

But presently I want to thank Mrs. Norma Wiles and a number of you and to those who are in other congregations who may not hear what I say, and of course to people who are not in the fellowship of the Church of God, Jewish and Christian, for their service in taking care of the educational needs, the experience of traveling of young people from Russia, Ukraine, the Utsbek and Turkmen republics of the former Soviet Union.

My wife and I volunteered to give them a tour through the Disconciled Gardens in Lakhanyada, Flint Ridge, and we were with them at the Huntington Gardens, the art and library area.

We walked mostly in the shade, in this weather, and in the buildings.

I thought you might like to have a feel of what it's like to think in English after you've thought in another language.

There were a few comments of interest that were transcribed for me personally by Mrs.

Norma Wiles, who lives on the border of La Crescenta in Tehunga.

There were a number of remarkable things that one learns about people who are speaking and writing in English to communicate their thoughts to people for whom that is the language that we have always spoken, except for our Spanish-speaking brethren and, of course, some recent immigrants into this country.

One young person said, I think Disconciled Garden is a unique area where you see many plants of the world growing on a small section of ground.

They were asked to comment, you see, on these two visits.

There will be comments on other visits in which I have played no role.

Close to each other, you can see plants from dry forest zones, the USA, and plants from Japan, we referred to the Chameleas.

All this almost incredible.

Incredible is spelled like some of you do, which means we all have to learn.

I like Disconciled Gardens very much and will tell about it to all my friends in Ukraine.

California oaks are very big, stout, and tall.

They have such form and bark that even fire cannot, and that was the end of the section.

I pointed up to them, you know, you don't touch everything where you go, but you can touch something.

You can touch the bark of the redwood tree.

And if you do, you really do understand why fire takes so long to penetrate the bark or why the redwood tree is a very important tree in terms of building and fire prevention.

They were amazed because they have never seen redwoods before.

Today we visited Disconciled Gardens as another person.

Very pleasant for me.

I have a lot of pictures from there.

Many things in the garden were lovely, but most of all I enjoyed the first part of the gardens, flowers and tropical trees.

We visited the interior of where an art display was, so that's the reference.

I was very surprised when I saw a fish in the lakes.

This illustrates what happens when you speak another language.

You see at Disconciled Gardens are ponds, but if you have never learned more than one word for a body of water, they thought of them all as lakes.

It's interesting to see how in learning a language we often don't learn just the thing we needed to say at a certain point.

So beautiful to see and the reference here was to lizards and, of course, the ubiquitous squirrel.

They were most impressed by the dry land area that Disconciled Gardens has developed with its native habitat, relatively new if any of you have not been there in a decade.

Very hot and dry climate.

We went up to that area out of the temperate zone rainforest area below.

That gives you some idea of how they responded to that visit.

They would have had no time to respond to the Huntington.

They also commented on their visit to the Page Museum, which I will not cite here because I was not there, the Chinese theater, so you see the program is rather wide-ranging.

Today is very nice and a hot day, and we go to Disconciled Gardens.

I have the same in my native town.

This garden, that is, there is a garden setting like that in certain major communities around the world in different countries.

This garden consists of two parts, which we visited, there are more.

The first where the trees grow, which need a lot of water and a shrubbery beneath shade.

And another are plants, trees, and bushes, which grow in a desert-like or open place.

The expression is high in the mountains, but this is rather a rugged terrain bordering on La Cagnada in the Disconciled Gardens.

I pointed up to what extent it was a miniaturization of what it is like to be in the high desert of Southern California as distinct from an area where streams are and where trees and humidity exist.

And that's one of the remarkable things that these students noticed.

Some would have recognized an area in Central Asia much like theirs.

Some living in the Euro mountains or in Kiev would have thought of the other as more likely a description of the southern parts of Russia.

Anyway, I do appreciate seeing how young people express themselves.

One person commented very much in appreciating the early LA Los Angeles street area.

That's Oliveira.

So they've had a well-rounded picture of our area.

One person says, Disconciled Garden, very beautiful place.

I saw many kinds of flowers and trees.

Interesting to know about different plants.

I saw the bushes and then the animals.

I remembered the trees, the redwood in particular, the flowers and the squirrels.

And then there were camellias.

When we came to the exhibition, I saw a very big picture with flowers.

They were tulips.

My wife immediately on hearing me read that said, yes, the artist there certainly had a dramatic work of art on display.

I saw and then the other things that are described I have already commented on are mentioned.

Interestingly, I am able to read their script quite well when you consider the fact that it is an entirely different script than we would be familiar with.

I think that gives you some idea.

One of the fellows added an interesting note.

Welcome to Los Angeles.

But the Russian girls is better and more beautiful than American.

So that person presumably is in the mainstream of thinking.

I thought that was an end comment written by one of them with a very good Russian name.

Then I would say they were also very expressive.

Maybe this one is it.

We have not so big buildings in Bukhara, which is the Utsbek Republic, as she has seen in this area, which would be understandable.

Bukhara is old and small town.

In Bukhara does not leave different, I mean live, that's where it should be written.

In Bukhara does not live different nations, as in this great Los Angeles area.

You know where you have Latin Americans, people from African background, Asia, European, Pacific Islanders.

But because my town is small, but I like my mother town.

The trees in Bukhara are big.

And indeed, none of you I presume has been there, although if I were in Britain, there would be no small number.

Have any of you ever been to Bukhara in the Utsbek Republic in any travel? I would certainly welcome.

All right, thank you.

See me later.

Bukhara, for your information, Samarkand, that area was the leading area of astronomy until the 17th century.

In case you think this is a backwater area of the world, you might take note that the astronomical laboratories that set the standard for the world until the 17th century were found there.

Our peoples are kind too, but not smiling.

We have many different national foods, and I like them all.

Now this person gives a perspective from outside of European Russia.

This was from Central Asia.

So I want to thank all of you who have, in some way, participated in this help, because these young people will learn things and say things when they return to these four republics that they would never have thought to say or think if they had not had this opportunity to visit this part of the United States.

Now there are tours elsewhere.

These were selected to spend their summer vacation in this area.

I have one more assignment with them, which hopefully will be one of the most creative, and that is to visit next Thursday at the Southwest Museum, especially for those who come from Central Asia or from far northern Russia.

I would like to take a bit of time just to refer to an article which is very long to read, best broken up and read in sections, or simply sometimes to skip a section.

This is from the New Yorker, a magazine I do not normally use.

Their perspective is a little different, and if we were to write on the West Coast, their cartoons are something else.

This is called Double Mystery, and it appeared in the August 7th issue, now having been on the newsstand, and I presume next week will be a different one, August 7, 1995, New Yorker, page 45, Double Mystery by Lawrence Wright, W-R-I-G-H-T.

I thought you might be interested.

It is the latest research that is up to date, though long time coming into development, in the nature of twins, and it reverses many of our most fundamental convictions about why we are who we are.

I have not read a more thorough article on that subject, and sometimes we have twins, some of you are twins, and what has been discovered that I had not known before is the fact that many singletons, whom we never think of as twins, simply are the survivor, each one is the survivor, of twinning near the time of conception, but only one survived, and it generally has not been known to medical science.

Twinning is far more common.

Twin births are not that common.

I think you would do well, just in terms of your general education in a town not unknown for education, known around the world for Caltech, for example, to take a little time and to consider the remarkable finds in this article.

Since I last spoke here, I had the privilege of being in Britain for a weekend, many of you may not know that, at the time of the board meetings.

I wanted to know the state of the work and the state of Britain.

I want to be able to be the kind of help that I can to Mr. John Halford and his new responsibilities in terms of the developments in Africa and the work in England that is interrelated.

And it certainly is significant to be there because it's no less than 11 years or so since I was there to see what London is like.

The London today is far, far more prosperous in terms of how you would see the world around you as distinct from what we would call the hidden wealth in bank vaults and great homes.

We're talking about the general prosperity of the nation as a whole.

Margaret Thatcher was correct when she said that prosperity inevitably would come if Britain would know how to trade with Europe, though she takes an entirely different view politically.

Some of you may have seen the first book kind of autobiography pertaining to her later years.

While I was in Britain, I picked up the second one that came out, which is the first part of her life.

Margaret Thatcher, The Path to Power.

I just simply took the cover, there's no use bringing the whole book.

On the back is a picture of herself when she was married early in her life.

She is a remarkable woman and she first began her political career without the name of Thatcher.

She was yet single.

It's the story of a woman who was greatly influenced by her father and certain educators, a woman in particular.

May I suggest that you would learn a lot about womanhood, British womanhood, common sense, and something about the British mind or minds.

If you were to read this particular volume, the other one had to do with her years in Downing Street.

This one is called Margaret Thatcher, The Path to Power.

I have heard her speak only once when she was addressing the audience at the time of the dedication of the Reagan Library here in Southern California.

She was very discreet.

She made no bones about her personal pleasure with having been available to President Reagan at the time, a Hollywood actor become president, thought of the words that brought the Soviet Union down faster than all the money the country has spent.

When he said of a nation that called other nations that were dominant in the world imperialists, he turned the mirror on in a different direction.

And he defined the Soviet Union as an evil empire.

If the imperialist powers had their sins, so did the evil empire.

And that term shook them because up to that time their words had gained victory in the minds of people.

And suddenly they realized that here was the catch phrase that opened up the reality that they knew existed there, those who were in leadership.

And my wife and I were in the Soviet Union visiting eight of the then fifteen republics in 1967.

One would never have been able to shake it in the same way.

It first had to be shaken from within by people who became cynical about their own system, the leadership.

And then when the magical words the evil empire defined the realities, there was no question that something was going to happen and what did occur went beyond even what Mr. Gorbachev thought would happen.

The Soviet Union has become a group of independent republics as distinct from a union of republics.

While I have mentioned the young people from that area of the world and Margaret Thatcher's life, a reminder of my visit and of your needs to pray about the spiritual and especially the financial welfare of this work in England.

Let me mention another book that should be of interest to you.

This is called The Conquest of a Continent.

We often think that the people who settled the thirteen colonies conquer the continent.

Let me tell you, between 1600 and, let's say, 1850, there was another group of people that conquered a continent.

The Russians moved from east of Moscow all the way to Vladivostok and Alaska, and even though not containing those territories, at least established trading ports so far south as Fort Ross in California.

This book is called The Conquest of a Continent, Siberia and the Russians, written by W. Bruce Lincoln, L-I-M-C-O-L-N, The Conquest of a Continent.

It's the story of why this land of Siberia has become what it is, and if you think of the disasters that occurred, there were other kinds of disasters that occurred in Siberia as occurred in the wild west of this United States as it was being built, and that are now occurring for that matter in parts of Brazil as the dominant peoples spread into the Amazon basin.

I will have these covers available after the services.

Today is the fifth of August.

You may or may not, or the sixth of August, depending on where you are in terms of the international date line.

I thought you would be advised to know that in a situation such as today we ought to give some significant thought to what it means to be in this month.

This is the month, this is the day on the Hebrew calendar in which we find the destruction of the First Temple and of the Second Temple in the days of Titus the Roman Emperor commemorated in Jewish tradition.

It is a national holiday much as our Fourth of July, or Memorial Day.

The ninth of August represents something most remarkable, even though the destruction of a building and of a center like Jerusalem may take a period of time, the fact remains one day was chosen out of four in which the destruction occurred.

On the ninth of August the commemoration occurred in Jewish tradition, and the astounding thing that Josephus the phariseic priest of the house of Aaron said about the destruction of the temple in the days of Titus, it was a turn of events so remarkable because by accident that Second Temple was also destroyed on the same day.

Whether by design or not the Jews were finally ordered expelled from Grenada in Spain on the ninth of August.

My first experience with any Jew whose descendants came from that exile occurred at the first festival of Tabernacles en route there to Belknap Springs in Oregon where I stopped to make a purchase and as the bill was being counted up the man who certainly wasn't a Mexican and wasn't Latin was counting in Spanish.

Where I might now say Ladino, I asked him where he was from and he said I am from Turkey.

Well now a person who lives in America coming from Turkey speaking Spanish is not a Greek and he's not an Englishman and he is not a Mexican.

He is a Jew.

For centuries even those of that exile have remembered that remarkable event and strange as it is, Cristóbal Colón chose the ninth of August to sail from Spain to the New World and took upon his ship some Jews to sail with him across the Atlantic West.

The date of their arrival you will find interesting also with respect to the Hebrew calendar.

Cristóbal Colón or Columbus was an unusual person from Genoa and Italy.

The language of the family was not Italian, it was Spanish.

In fact the form of his name was the typical form that Jews from Spain before the exile used when migrating from Spain to Italy in their commerce and trade.

I would like to remind you today in place of an elaborate sermon to think about what this day means by taking some time to do a little reading.

To remember a national disaster that ended the story of the independent kingdom of Judah which had up to that time been in the possession of the revelations of God to man through kings and judges and prophets and songwriters and priests.

And they went into exile and even though a minority came back, that minority once more went into exile in the days of the first century when Emperor Titus, he was not then Emperor, his father was, ultimately took the city and the accidental burning which almost certainly seems to have been an accident of the temple occurred.

A kind of judgment that followed on that nation 40 years after the Messiah had warned what would happen to a people who would do what they were doing, who had lost sight of the way to think about God's divine instruction.

I would like to read you just briefly a section or two, let me point up what you might like to put in your notes, you will find quite useful.

On the ninth of Av, this is the day on which traditionally certain readings occurred.

The Jeremiah 8.13 through 9.23, that is 8.13 to the end of the chapter or hyphen and 9.23 the last verse in the ninth chapter.

Another section is Isaiah 55 verse 6 to 56 verse 8, that is Isaiah 55.6 the end of the chapter or hyphen to 56.8.

Give me at least take note of what Jeremiah says in one case here.

The Lord replied in 9.12, because they forsook the teaching I am reading from the Tanakh or the new Jewish Publication Society translation according to the traditional Hebrew text.

Because they forsook the teaching, it is a mistake sometimes to limit ourselves to the sense of law, because Torah is much greater than that.

It is fatherly divine instruction that I have set before them.

They did not obey me, they did not follow it, but follow their own willful heart as their fathers had taught them.

So what they had was the consequence of their mistakes.

I will scatter them among nations, they and their fathers never knew.

I will dispatch a sword after them until I have consumed them.

I happen to have made the acquaintance of a man who was served in the government of Los Angeles from the Jewish community.

He is also one who is interested in Buddhism.

We had a meeting one day in the philosophical library related to the area of North Hollywood.

I was looking through a volume on the causes of the migrations of a significant number of people from Southern Germany to the colonial area, now known as the Eastern United States.

And he was examining another question.

I made a comment and his comment I thought was quite interesting.

He said the first thing a Jew plans to do when he arrives in a new land is where, is how to go to some other place next, because he knows he will not long be welcomed.

That is by the nature of the history of the people.

This day is a story of a people that were scattered and have seldom been welcomed at length in any land.

Some lands have been much more favorable.

And if we think of what happened to the Jews, the consequence of their having lost sight of the real intent and purpose of the divine instruction, we might remember other nations also.

The Indian tribal nations of this land and of Latin America where the problem has not at all been resolved politically.

The people, some of whom have profited from the opportunity of education and also had difficulties in the area in which the Russians expanded.

Not every expansion of a dominant people is all good or all evil.

People now in that realm speak one of the great languages of the world with one another, who to for would never have been able to communicate or learn about the rest of the world.

There are people in the new world for whom the same may be said of the three major languages as well as French, but Spanish and Portuguese and English I have referenced too.

Not to mention the impact of the British in Africa or the British and French and Dutch in other areas of the world.

But I think if you would examine these particular verses that are read, not to forget also the sad story in the third division of the Old Testament as the Jews have preserved the Bible and the writings, the book of Lamentations, and it would probably be useful to you not to read it in an old language, but in a modern language where you have a sense of modern terminology rather than archaic expressions.

Because we need to be reminded that this is not a beautiful world.

We were supposed to have a legacy of peace following the end of the Cold War, but since that we have had the disaster in Europe in the former Yugoslavia, the disaster in two the most beautiful countries in Africa, one in particular Rwanda.

Burundi has suffered significantly over the years.

I've had the privilege in times past of being in Rwanda and Burundi in 1957.

Together with Uganda, I thought they were among the most beautiful areas of the world that one could ever visit.

There are political disasters, moral disasters, not to mention the tragedy that has beset Zaire where we have brethren.

I think we need to realize if you think there are problems in the Church in such areas as we have where there is peace, what must it be like to be a member of the Church of God in Rwanda, in Uganda, in Zaire, in Burundi, or for that matter in Slovenia and Croatia.

Because I have met the members from those republics of the former Yugoslavia.

I think brethren that what we should do is remember in part what the Jews do.

They normally do not fast on the seventh day of the week, and since the ninth of Av falls on the seventh day of the week, their fast traditionally is postponed until the next day.

The reason for that is they wish to treat the seventh day of the week in a special way, and since the destruction occurred throughout the period of the seventh to the tenth of the month in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar in 587, there can be no doubt that they did they are learning individually from the experience of such voluntary fasts in their custom, just as we should think seriously, perhaps in

the opposite direction, in our festival of Thanksgiving in this country, where we have much to be grateful for, as the Jews have much to be sorrowful for.

They also reflect by prayer on what it means to be where they are today in other lands where the majority live outside of the state of Israel because of mistakes their ancestors have made.

Because people make mistakes in their own land and suffer for them in their own country.

We can never imagine having to send the Chinese into exile, 20% of the world this would be un- simply not possible, but what the Chinese suffer from they often have brought on themselves historically are approaching a time in our history when we compare what our nation has become from what it should be that we need also to seriously think the consequences that can happen elsewhere.

We never know where a spark may arise.

No one would have thought that the Germans in the French in World War I would be facing each other in the trenches, including the British and Americans because of something that happened in the town of Sarajevo in Bosnia, Herzegovina, where many of you saw pictures on television of the Winter Olympics.

One would not have guessed that we would have fought Japan and Americans would have been in Italy, the British in Africa and the Channel Crossing because of an argument over a corridor of land between Germany through Poland to the free city of Danzig.

We need to take note, while we have the freedom to hear and to think, the problems can arise from places we may not guess.

And we move very quickly from the assassination of an archduke in Sarajevo in 1914, late June to the guns of August, which began at this time of the year.

You all need to pray for the brethren wherever they may be and especially for the financial needs of our brethren in Britain and for the health of not only Joseph W. Tkach as a pastor general, Clayton Steep, but many others whom we could name, and for one another.

For things that you know and things that you don't know because not everything that comes to our ears do we say or should we say.

But it is good to ask that God would forgive as we are willing to forgive and to acknowledge our debts as the Jews are having to learn this day and tomorrow and to be willing to forgive those who have trespassed against them.

You have some reading to do this weekend yet.