

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT/APOCRYPHA (Choose one)

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. For the Lord will not reject forever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

Wisdom 3:1-5, (6-8) 9

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of

immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; (like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever.) Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

Job 19:21-27a

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! Why do you, like God, pursue me, never satisfied with my flesh? “O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.

PSALMS (Choose one)

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; *
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; *
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his
Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; *
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of
mine enemies; *
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear? *
the Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?
One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, *
even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the
days of my life,
to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.
For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle; *
yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me,
and set me up upon a rock of stone.
And now shall he lift up mine head *
above mine enemies round about me.
Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with
great gladness; *
I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord.
Hearken unto my voice, O Lord, when I cry unto thee; *
have mercy upon me, and hear me.

My heart hath talked of thee, Seek ye my face. *
Thy face, Lord, will I seek.
O hide not thou thy face from me, *
nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.
I should utterly have fainted, *
but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in
the land of the living.
O tarry thou the Lord's leisure; *
be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart;
and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

Psalm 42

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, *
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; *
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
My tears have been my meat day and night, *
while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God?
Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself; *
for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into
the house of God;
In the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *
among such as keep holy-day.
Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul? *
and why art thou so disquieted within me ?
O put thy trust in God; *
for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my
countenance, and my God.

Psalm 46

God is our hope and strength, *
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved; *
and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof rage and swell, *
and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.
There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, *
the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most Highest.
God is in the midst of her,
therefore shall she not be removed; *
God shall help her, and that right early.

Be still then, and know that I am God; *
I will be exalted among the nations,
and I will be exalted in the earth.
The Lord of hosts is with us; *
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 90

Lord, thou hast been our refuge, *
from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever the earth and the world were made, *
thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.
Thou turnest man to destruction; *
again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday
when it is past, *
and as a watch in the night.
As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep, *
and fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green, and groweth up; *
but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.
For we consume away in thy displeasure, *
and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.
Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, *
and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
For when thou art angry all our days are gone; *
we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.
The days of our age are threescore years and ten;
and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, *
yet is their strength then but labor and sorrow,
so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.
So teach us to number our days, *
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Psalm 106

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, *
and his mercy endureth for ever.
Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, *
or show forth all his praise?
Blessed are they that always keep judgment, *
and do righteousness.

Remember me, O Lord, according to the favor that thou
bearest unto thy people; *
O visit me with thy salvation;
That I may see the felicity of thy chosen, *
and rejoice in the gladness of thy people,
and give thanks with thine inheritance.

Psalm 116

My delight is in the Lord, *
because he hath heard the voice of my prayer;
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, *
therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
The snares of death compassed me round about, *
and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.
I found trouble and heaviness;
then called I upon the Name of the Lord; *
O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; *
yea, our God is merciful.
The Lord preserveth the simple; *
I was in misery, and he helped me.
Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul, *
for the Lord hath rewarded thee.
And why? thou hast delivered my soul from death, *
mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
I will walk before the Lord *
in the land of the living.
I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people; *
right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills; *
from whence cometh my help?
My help cometh even from the Lord, *
who hath made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, *
and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself is thy keeper; *
the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;

So that the sun shall not burn thee by day, *
neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; *
yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 130

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; *
Lord, hear my voice.
O let thine ears consider well *
the voice of my complaint.
If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, *
O Lord, who may abide it?
For there is mercy with thee, *
therefore shalt thou be feared.
I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him; *
in his word is my trust.
My soul fleeth unto the Lord before the morning watch; *
I say, before the morning watch.
O Israel, trust in the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy, *
and with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel *
from all his sins.

Psalm 139

O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me. *
Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising;
thou understandest my thoughts long before.
Thou art about my path, and about my bed, *
and art acquainted with all my ways.
For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, *
but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before, *
and laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; *
I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit? *
or whither shall I go then from thy presence?
If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; *

if I go down to hell, thou art there also.
If I take the wings of the morning, *
and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there also shall thy hand lead me, *
and thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, *
then shall my night be turned to day.
Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee,
but the night is as clear as day; *
the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

LESSON FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT (Choose one)

Romans 8:14-19, 31-35, 37-39

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs with Christ, provided that we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies; Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, or anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to

God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:9

We do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in that tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

2 Timothy 4:5-8

As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

1 John 3:1-2

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever!

Amen.” Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 21:2-7

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

LESSONS FROM THE GOSPELS (Choose one)

John 5:24-27

Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. “Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

John 6:37-40

Jesus said, “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

John 10:11-16

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

John 14:1-6

Jesus said, “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.”