

PLAN 2: From desolation/hopelessness to fulfillment

25 days (roughly 25 minutes per day)

In this plan we will look at the Bible in a framework of going from desolation and hopelessness to fulfillment. We start with the story of Jeremiah, who was truly nobody and had no hope for his future. The Lord called him and used him to do great things. We will go through the details of the story in terms of how Jeremiah and his people were desolate and hopeless, all the way to how he found fulfillment through God. We will then do the exact same things for the Bible characters Moses and Amos. Then we will look at Isaiah chapter 53, which is the Old Testament's foreshadowing of the birth of Jesus. We will then look at Jesus's story as He ends our hopelessness and desolation and defeats the curse of sin. At this point we will look at the book of Acts and tell Paul's story in a way similar to what we did for Jeremiah, and then we will end this plan by looking at Revelation to show that Jesus is coming back to end the desolation.

Day 1: Jeremiah 1-5

Day 2: Jeremiah 6-11

Day 3: Jeremiah 12-17

Day 4: Jeremiah 18-23

Day 5: Jeremiah 24-29

Day 6: Jeremiah 30-35

Day 7: Jeremiah 36-40:6 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see here the story of Jeremiah's desolation. His long journey to prosperity is inspiring. His people, the people of Jerusalem, were held in captivity by the Babylonians, and things seemed hopeless. He was chosen as a prophet to a people that didn't listen to God (and the prophet's work was to give them messages from the Lord, so that's unfortunate). Jeremiah didn't even start as a prophet, either. He started as a nobody. Jeremiah 1:5-7: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you." - so despite Jeremiah being young and having poor speaking skills (which are seemingly fatal flaws for a man called to speak to others for the Lord), the Lord has plans for him BEFORE the womb, and God overlooked his situation because He had plans for Jeremiah, to bring him from this hopeless place in his life all the way to the proverbial Promised Land that He had in store for him. This is why in Jeremiah 29:11 He says "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - so even when it seems desolate and hopeless, God is allowing this temporary hardship to prosper us by building our character and storing our treasures in Heaven (but nothing "harmful" is a part of

God's plan, such as things with no eventual benefit like a murder or rape). And know that, even from a hopeless place, God has hope and a future in store for us. This is why, at the end of this story in Jeremiah 40:4, God announces to Jeremiah that "today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists." So whatever it is in your life, even if it's something like self-harm with the wrist, know that God wants to bring you from desolation to freedom. "Today." This is why He says in Jeremiah 29:12-13 that "I hear you when you pray to me, and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart." - so if you pray, God WILL hear you (even if the prayer is in your head or heart and not out loud, Romans 8:26), and if you truly look for God and seek Him with all your heart, whether that's in the music, in the conversation, in the Bible, whatever it might look like, you WILL find Him. But you have to be willing to seek Him with all your heart. He wants to bring you from desolation to prosperity. We now turn to a similar story in the life of Moses in Exodus.

Day 8: Exodus 1-7

Day 9: Exodus 8-13

Day 10: Exodus 14-20:21 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see here an incredible rise to fame in the life of Moses. Being an Israelite in Egypt meant total desolation - they were slaves in that nation for over 400 years. It was hopeless. The "promised land" hadn't even been promised yet, let alone how unrealistic it was. And yet Moses went from being a nobody in THAT situation, all the way to leading the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land as God parted the seas so they could walk through on dry ground. He's also the guy who recorded the famous 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai. Again, this guy was a nobody in a horrible situation, but this is the type of work that God can do when we face desolation. When we don't see it, that's when God's greatest plans are at work. This is why 2 Corinthians 5:7 tells us to live by faith and not by sight. We now turn to hear a similar story from a man named Amos.

Day 11: Amos 7:10-17 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: Amos was a farmer and that was pretty much all he did - he even added that he took care of trees almost as if he was trying to convince himself of his own self-worth because, on the outside looking in, he may not have had any. But that's who God chose to use and to work through. God took a kid off the farm and made him a prophet. And it goes to show that things can change. Amos was really good at what he did and he saw no real reason things would change, but then the Lord called him to be a prophet - something that he not only had no experience with, but also something that his father didn't do either. Being religious or a prophet wasn't in his lineage, wasn't a part of his upbringing, and yet God called him. I don't remember Amos for planting trees - I remember him for planting seeds, the Living and Enduring Word of God. Things can change, and God's purpose will never fail. I played baseball my whole life and never knew anything else. Then God called me into this area of life, and I felt unqualified and hopeless, I didn't understand technology. But you won't remember me for throwing the ball around - God willing, at the end of the day, you won't remember me at all because the Lord is Who you will remember. That's what a changed life looks like. Growing up you never would have seen this out of me. But God can do anything with anyone. Lean on that, live that out by being ready for Him and being the best host

possible (ready, willing, and grateful in all that you do). Ecclesiastes 3:1/11: "There is a time for every activity, a season for everything. God has made everything beautiful in its time." Proverbs 19:21: "For many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is only the Lord's purpose that prevails." We now turn to Isaiah 53, which will foreshadow the coming of the Messiah to end our desolation.

Day 12: Isaiah 53 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: I love how the first verse says "who has believed us?" Because truthfully, nobody believed in the Messiah's coming. Things were hopeless, and deliverance seemed like a fairy tale, not a reality. But Isaiah 53 foreshadows the coming of the Messiah. He would take our sins, which required a real punishment for the forgiveness to be authentic, and He would take that punishment on the cross. He saved us from desolation. Every time we sin and are stuck in sin, we remember that we are forgiven by Him and don't have to live like this anymore. Anytime that we are stuck in life, we remember that His Earthly life wasn't very prosperous either. He totally saved us from desolation. Now, the Jewish people wanted Him to save them from Roman oppression, but truthfully they needed to be saved from sin. In the same way, maybe today being delivered looks different than what we would have been looking for. But He came to save us from our desolation. We now turn to the life of Jesus.

Day 13: Matthew 1-6

Day 14: Matthew 7-12

Day 15: Matthew 13-18

Day 16: Matthew 19-24

Day 17: Matthew 25-28 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see here that our Messiah has officially come. In Matthew 1:23 He is called "Immanuel (which means God with us)" and in Matthew 28:20, the final verse of Matthew, He says "Surely I will be with you until the very end." So we see from the beginning all the way to the end of Matthew that God is with us and that we are freed from the desolation and curse of sin. Every time we sin and are stuck in sin, we remember that we are forgiven by Him and don't have to live like this anymore. Anytime that we are stuck in life, we remember that His Earthly life wasn't very prosperous either. He totally saved us from desolation. Now, the Jewish people wanted Him to save them from Roman oppression, but truthfully they needed to be saved from sin. In the same way, maybe today being delivered looks different than what we would have been looking for. But He came to save us from our desolation. We now turn to the book of Acts, which tells the story of the Actions of Early Church leaders after the death of Jesus.

Day 18: Acts 1-6

Day 19: Acts 7-11

Day 20: Acts 12-16

Day 21: Acts 17-22

Day 22: Acts 23-28 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: The Apostle Paul, known first as Saul, was a very religious man who knew the Bible (which at the time what they had was the Old Testament) very well. In the way he lived, though, he was far from God. He persecuted the Christian Church because he thought they were incorrect religiously. Things were desolate for him, no real future lined up and he wasn't on the right path. Eventually he had an encounter with Jesus and became not only a Christian but a strong Christian leader. The passage where this takes place is Acts 9:18, which describes "something like scales falling from his eyes." He was blinded by himself and by what he thought was a good religious way. You can't see the work of God when you're blinded - his encounter and ultimately relationship with/devotion to Christ set him free from himself and from his sins (this is what it is to be "saved"). Paul went on to write the Bible books Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and his final book Philemon, doing great work for the Lord. God worked redemption in the life of the biggest enemy of Christianity. It would basically be if God turned Satan into a priest. But God didn't choose Satan, he chose Saul, a human being, and in fact a religious man. The sinner God chose to highlight as in need of change wasn't the Devil, but a religious man. That's who needed redemption. Don't overlook this. It's why in Philippians 3:13-14, after having been converted to Christianity and written a few books of the Bible, Paul says "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it (his goal for who he should be). But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." - so even the redeemed man, the man who had come so far, even at that point Paul had room to improve and needed to "pressed on" and moved forward in pursuing it - we must do the same. Whether you're Saul, or Paul, or anything in between, there is room to grow in your life and faith, and you must. God saved Paul from his desolation, and He turned what looked like nothing into something beautiful - He can do the same for us. We now turn to Revelation, the final book of the Bible, to receive the final warning from God and see that Jesus is returning to end our desolation.

Day 23: Revelation 1-8

Day 24: Revelation 9-16

Day 25: Revelation 17-22 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see here Revelation, the final book of the Bible, where we received the final warning from God and saw that Jesus is returning to end our desolation. He is coming soon, as the passage at the end indicated. He will end our desolation, and we will spend our eternity either with or without Him. The choice is ours. Where do we go from here? We are forgiven, and how we live with the time that remains will determine where we spend our eternity. God is good and faithful, and Jesus will return one day to end all the desolation - keep it in mind and live like it. The desolation that

Satan causes on earth will not last forever, as the passage Revelation 21:4 stated: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Thanks for reading.