

Proverbs Week #104 (11:10,11)

“When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.”
Proverbs 11:10,11

To Learn: Let’s learn a little bit about cities in the Bible. We will start with the City of Cities, Jerusalem is the place where God Himself has chosen to place His name (1 Kings 11:32). The first mention of Jerusalem in the Tenach is in Joshua 10:1(although some suggest that Salem is the same city – the home of Melchizedek). A king named Adoni-zedek was king of Jerusalem and when he heard that Joshua had captured Ai and utterly destroyed it he greatly feared. Gibeon had made peace with Joshua and the sons of Israel, so the king of Jerusalem decided to attack Gibeon. He met with kings from the surrounding area and they went to war. Jerusalem would become the place where Solomon built the first temple. It is a city that sits on a hill and it stands today as a sign of God’s work in the earth.

Now this last week some of us read through the book of Lamentations as part of the observance of the 9th of Av. In it Jeremiah speaks of terrible things that happened when God removed His protection from this city. The people living there suffered greatly because of their failure to be faithful to God. They had received great blessings from God’s hands and misused them. The city that once knew joy, singing, dancing, and celebrations was torn down.

To Discern: How can we make the wisdom of these verses more real to us? I think we need to understand that there is a difference between things and people that are wicked/evil and things that we just don’t like. We may not always get what we want and sometimes even our friends may not be nice to us. People may say bad things about us and even sometimes say those bad things “right in our face!” I also want to make a distinction between things we really like that make us feel good (like new books, ice cream, or cookies) and things that cause us to rejoice. The birth of a new baby, two people joined in marriage, or hearing of someone’s salvation experience are times that I think classify as times of rejoicing!

Finally, I think we need to be careful in how we understand this proverb and what it teaches us about rejoicing “when the wicked perish.”

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him. Prov. 24:17,18

To Impart: As adults we must apply the wisdom of these verses to help our children discern the differences that these verses expect us to know. I think that the rejoicing that we have “when the wicked perishes” is because we are praising God for His faithfulness and grace not because we are gloating over the suffering and punishment of others. If we consider the triumph of our Messiah in raising from the dead, we rejoice because of the awesome work which God accomplished.

The joy we see when the upright can bless God and build up the city is because of how they are living out God’s designs and desires. The building plans of God include saving individuals, reconciling families, and even the building up of cities and nations. The good news of the gospel is the power of God for salvation. May God continue to change our hearts that we will be free to sing, rejoice, and make joyful shouts as we see Him working in our lives.

Psalms 33:1 Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming to the upright.

Psalms 33:2 Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.

Psalms 33:3 Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Psalms 33:4 For the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness.

Psalms 33:5 He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.