



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEYS

Lamentations

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simple truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then this booklet will have accomplished its task.

May the blessing of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

* Portions of these notes were downloaded from Quick Verse and Online Bible Study notes.

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LAMENTATIONS

The last chapter of the Book of **Jeremiah** should be read as an introduction to this book. The Greek Septuagint adds the intro: “And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity and Jerusalem was laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented this lamentation over Jerusalem and said..”

The Hebrew title of the book comes from the first word of **chapters 1,2,4**, “ekah”, which means, “How!” Halley's Bible Handbook puts it this way: “Lamentations is a funeral dirge for the city of Jerusalem. It is a tearstained portrait of the once proud Jerusalem, now reduced to rubble by the invading Babylonian hordes.”

Lamentations is one of the five “scrolls” read on feast days, and is located after **Proverbs** in the final division of the Hebrew Bible, which is called the “Writings”. Today it is read on the “Ninth of Av,” a fast day which commemorates the destruction of the temples of Solomon and Herod, as well as other major Jewish catastrophes. According to Jewish tradition, the Messiah would be born on this day (in July-August) and would turn mourning into rejoicing.

Jeremiah wrote the book of **Lamentations** shortly after the closing days of Judah's conflict with Babylon. The Babylonians laid siege to the city from January, 588 B.C. to July, 586 B.C. Therefore, the book must have been written soon after 586 B.C., the date of Jerusalem's final surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. The memory of what had taken place was still vivid in the mind of the prophet.

Lamentations is an acrostic poem built upon the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Acrostic means that each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in alphabetic sequence. This poetic form movingly depicts the sorrows that encompassed Jerusalem when its ruin came. The brief book consists of five poems, comprising the five chapters in English. Each chapter has twenty-two verses except **chapter 3**, which contains a multiple of twenty-two in its sixty-six verses. **Chapter 5** is the only chapter that is not acrostic, although it does have twenty-two verses.

The “weeping prophet”, as Jeremiah is known, is a picture of Jesus Christ, who 6 centuries later would cry out, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate” (**Matt 23:37,38**). Like Jesus, Jeremiah was a man acquainted with sorrow and grief over the sin of the people of God. In **chapter 3** we will see how even in wrath, God makes His mercy known to His remnant.

Chapter 1

1:1,2 The word “**how**” (“*eykah*” in Hebrew), as used here, expresses astonishment, sorrow, and dismay. This same word was sometimes used to introduce a funeral hymn, and here it is used to describe the grief and sorrow experienced by Jerusalem at the time of its destruction. It implies the act of wailing. Jeremiah weeps over the sins of the people, the sins that would eventually result in the destruction of Jerusalem. **Sin is no laughing matter because it steals, kills and destroys lives!**

The term “**solitary**” suggests desolation. Jerusalem sits as a widow following her fall. None is interested in her fate, and she is helplessly alone. It is a lonely thing to turn your back on Jesus! The reference to her “**lovers**” will be used again in **verse 19**. As we will see again and again in this book, there is no comfort at all whenever we look for love, acceptance, or meaning for life in anything but the Lord. Sin is the ultimate rip off! Sin will always take you further than you expected, and in the long run, it will cost you more than you anticipated.

1:3 The Hebrew word for “**rest**” here speaks of an inner peace and quiet. There is no rest when the child of God tries to fit in with the unsaved (**Psalm 1:1-6**). There is no rest in being unequally yoked with the world (**2 Cor 6:14-18**). There is no rest in trying to serve Jesus and mammon (**Matt 6:24-33**). The kingdom of this world does not provide rest for your souls.

Rev 14:11 ...and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

* Only by learning of Jesus, leaning upon Jesus, and living for Jesus do we find rest for our souls.

Matt 11:28 “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

1:4 When the temple was built, “**Zion**” was used to describe the hill on which the temple was located. Later, the name Zion would come to stand for the whole city. “**The roads to Zion mourn**”ed because there would no longer be throngs of pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Words that are used to describe any who forsake the Lord are: mourning, “**desolate**” (devastated, ruined), “**sigh**”ing and “**bitter(ness)**”.

Compromise and mourning go hand in hand, and don’t let anyone tell you differently. The world’s ways cannot make the true child of God better; they can only cause him or her to become bitter.

As **Proverbs 13:15b** says: “but the way of the transgressor is hard.” Only by godly sorrow, which produces repentance (**2 Cor 7:10a**), can a person be delivered and restored from a life of bitter-

ness and desolation to the place of fellowship and joy in the Lord.

- 1:5** This is the first of numerous references in **Lamentations** to the calamities of Israel, which occurred as a direct result of their sin against the Lord. What happened to Israel was precisely that which Moses had prophesied in **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**. Babylon was the instrument that God employed to chastise His rebellious children. The Lord will use the unsaved as instruments of chastisement upon his rebellious children, if need be. “For whom the Lord loves He chastens” (**Heb 12:6; Prov 3:11,12**). Note that the children of those who turned against the Lord went **“into captivity before the enemy.”** Fathers, mothers, we must make a quality decision that, “...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (**Joshua 24:15**) I personally believe that we have so many angry, rebellious children in this nation primarily because we have turned our backs on the Bible and the Lord. **2 Chron 7:14** “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”
- 1:6** **“All her beauty (splendor) has departed.”** Consider this amazing passage:
Psalm 39:11 When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity,
You make his beauty melt away like a moth; surely every man is vapor.
What a statement! Israel’s true beauty (as is yours and mine) was found in fellowship with the Lord, which, horizontally speaking, resulted in “the beauty of holiness” (**Psalm 96:9**). When a person or a church turns their heart away from the Lord, their beauty begins to fade. They lose His peace and joy, because there is no peace (**Isaiah 48:22, 57:21**) and joy in sin.
The phrase **“her princes”** refers to Zedekiah and his assistants, who deserted Jerusalem in her hour of greatest need (**Jer 39:4**).
- 1:7,8** Jerusalem sinned grievously, and as a result, she fell into the hand of the enemy, just like God said.
Lev 26:25 And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities, I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
The enemy **“mocked at her sabbaths.”** (Note: this is also translated, **“mocked at her downfall.”**) When a person or a church is walking contrary to the will of God, it gives to the enemies of the gospel an opportunity to mock Christ in His Church.

* May we purpose to live our lives in ways that do not bring reproach to the name of Jesus.

The words **“affliction”** and **“miseries”** are used to describe the ‘fruit’ of this falling **“into the hand of the enemy”**. It should also be noted that the enemies of God had **“seen her nakedness”**. This speaks of extreme humiliation. Israel had turned backward because she forsook **“the fountain of living waters” (Jer 2:13)** and turned to other gods.

1:9 **“Her filthiness”** (“uncleanness”) was a reference to her involvement in the pagan Canaanite worship, which constituted spiritual harlotry.

This same truth is echoed in the New Testament:

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

How we need to guard against all forms of filthiness (filthy thoughts, filthy language, filthy lusts, etc.) as the Bride of Christ!
2 Cor 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

* May the Lord give us clean hands and a pure heart to call upon His name! (**Psalm 24:3-5**)

Because of spiritual harlotry, Jerusalem **“had no comforter.”** There can be no comfort when a person is grieving the Holy Spirit (**Eph 4:30**), who is our “Comforter” (“Helper” - **John 14:26**).

Note: when we compromise, it is the enemy who is magnified.

Rather, may we have the same mindset as the apostle Paul:

Phil 1:20 “...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.”

1:10-12 The people of God became desperate and filled with **“sorrow”** upon sorrow. Did compromise make them happy? No! **“I am become vile.” (v 11)** When a person turns against the living God, he/she inevitably becomes vile (evil, depraved, awful) in lifestyle.

Rom 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions.

For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature:

:27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their

error which was due.

:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; whisperers,

:30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful;

:32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also have pleasure in those who do them.

In the midst of all of this ‘bummer’ account given by Jeremiah, the fact that there is a recognition of their condition due to sin is a good thing.

Prov 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

See also **Psalm 52** and **Luke 15:11-24** (the prodigal son).

1:13-15 Jerusalem’s suffering is portrayed using several metaphors: 1) fire from heaven; 2) a hunter’s net spread to trap animals; 3) an animal yoke fastened about the head of a person; and 4) the crushing of grapes in a winepress. Do not miss that the Lord is the active Agent in this ‘woodshed’ discipline of His children.

1:16-19 This is why Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. As he sees the damage that sin has wrought to the people of God, he weeps. He identifies with the sin of the people. Note however that Jeremiah does not fault God with what is going on, but boldly declares that **“The Lord is righteous”**. He realizes that we reap what we sow (**Gal 6:7**).

Psalm 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.

The term **“lovers”** used in **verse 19** refers to the Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, and other neighboring states who had become the spiritual companions of Judah, thus rendering Judah unfaithful to her husband, YAHWEH.

Perhaps you are thinking that what Jeremiah is writing about sounds like your life. You may be asking, is there any hope for me? Is there any way out of this vicious circle of sin and iniquity?

Dan 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

1:20-22 Compromise made life miserable both outside and inside the home. One last set of words to describe those that turn away from the Word of God in order to do their own thing: “**distress**”, “**troubled**”, a heart that is “**overturned**”. This chapter ends with the statement that “**my sighs are many and my heart is faint.**”

1 Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

:13 There has no temptation overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

:14 Therefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

* May we be fully convinced that Israel’s history does not have to be repeated in our lives. The world, the flesh, and the devil can only gain entrance into my life when I give them permission by refusing to submit myself to the Word of God. However, no matter how consecrated you and I purpose to live, we will never be beyond the arena of temptation. Our example for dealing with temptation is Jesus, who said, “It is written” (**Matt 4:4,7,10**).

Israel didn’t go spiritually sour overnight. They compromised a little bit here and a little bit there. Saints, a little leaven is all that it takes to leaven the whole lump (**1 Cor 5:6b**).

1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good manners.”

Remember, saints, the victory that overcomes the world system is our faith in Jesus Christ (**1 John 5:4**).

1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Chapter 2

God’s righteous anger with Jerusalem was all-encompassing.

- 2:3** The phrase “**horn of Israel**” symbolically indicates one’s authority, strength and power.
- 2:8** The clause “**He has stretched out a line**” indicates that God had measured and marked out Jerusalem for destruction.
- 2:11** The word “**bile**” refers to the seat of the emotions, and may be used to indicate painful agitation and excitement.

- 2:13** The statement “**for your ruin is spread wide as the sea**” suggests immensity, that which is illimitable and without exact dimensions.
- 2:14** **Jer 14:14** And the LORD said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.”
This “**deceptive**”ness was not limited to the prophets of ancient Israel, as Paul pointed out to Timothy:
2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
:4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
- 2:15** Jerusalem is not noted for its military prowess or invincibility, but an initial view of Jerusalem from any approach is always one of breathtaking “**beauty**”. Jeremiah laments that the most beautiful of all citadels (**Psalm 48:2**) is reduced to ashes.
- 2:17** The reference to “**His word, which He commanded in days of old**” is found in **Leviticus 26:14-45** and **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**.
- 2:16** The expression “**gnash their teeth**” points to intense anger and animosity. It depicts rage (**Job 16:9; Psalm 35:16, 37:12**).
- 2:20** The extent of the tragedy which befell Jerusalem is lucidly expressed in this verse. Women, pressed by starvation and pressure of siege, revert to cannibalism, eating their own babies (**4:10; Jer 19:9**).

Chapter 3

- 3:1** Here is a righteous man who has been faithful in serving the Lord, and he is suffering afflictions along with the unrighteous. The disobedience of the nation affected this man of God. **Ecclesiastes 9:18** says that “one sinner destroys much good.” (Adam!)
We must have a Biblical perspective when affliction comes our way. In God’s eye afflictions are actually beneficial. God uses them to humble us at times; at other times he uses them to wean us from the world. He certainly uses them to draw us closer to Him. What are all of our present afflictions when compared with those that our Redeemer Jesus endured for us?
2 Cor 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is

working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;
:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Heb 11:25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

- 3:2** The imagery of “**darkness**” in this verse represents adversity and God’s judgment.
Notice all of the “**He has**” in this chapter. Jeremiah acknowledged the sovereignty of God in his life even though he did not understand what was going on at all times.
- 3:4** The effects of the judgment of God had taken its toll on Jeremiah physically. This of course was coupled with the emotional effects he suffered due to the sin of his fellow man.
- 3:6** The hopelessness of the situation is conveyed by the words “**dark places**” and “**dead of long ago.**”
- 3:7** “**He has hedged me in**”. That is what sin does to you. It doesn’t free you, it restricts you. Jeremiah felt as though there was no way out of his predicament. God in His faithfulness will hedge you in, if need be, to get your attention or to protect you from further destruction.
- 3:8** On occasion, God had forbidden Jeremiah to pray for the deliverance of Judah. They had crossed that line where God knew in His heart that they were no longer listening for His voice, and thus He hardened their heart from that place of repentance.
- 3:9-11** A common practice of the Babylonians was to wall up prisoners in extremely confined places and leave them to die. Once again, we see how God uses a heathen nation to chastise His rebellious children.
- 3:12,13** **Job 6:4** For the arrows of the Almighty are within me... There are the “fiery darts” of the enemy (**Eph 6:16**) and the ‘faithful darts’ of the Almighty. One is the dart of poison to our souls; the other is the dart of purity for our souls. One is the dart of temptation; the other is the dart of sanctification.
- 3:14-18** Jeremiah was made the butt of scoffing and mockery. The adverse response to God’s Word was disturbing him, causing him to lose the peace of God. He had even gotten to the point when he

felt like resigning from ministry:

Jer 20:7 O LORD, You have deceived me, and I was deceived; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; everyone mocks me.

:8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, “Violence and plunder!” Because the word of the LORD was made to me a reproach and a derision daily.

:9 Then I said, “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.” But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with holding it in, and I could not.

3:19,20 No doubt Jeremiah was at one of the lowest points of his life here. It is important to note here that having difficulties with events in our life due to unpleasant circumstances does not mean that we have no faith at all. John the Baptist had dungeon doubts (**Matt 11:2-3**). There are those times in our lives where we may have difficulty knowing what God is doing. Those are actually the times when our faith has the opportunity to grow (**James 1:2,3; 2 Cor 5:7**).

3:21 There is a dramatic change as Jeremiah adjusts his thinking. The value of reading Scripture daily often pays its dividends when things go sour all around us. It was Jeremiah’s understanding of the nature of His God that pulled him through this dark time in his life. We can think ourselves into hopelessness and despair, or by “the renewing of (our) mind” (**Rom 12:2**) we can come into a whole new state of consciousness of God to attain victory and hope.

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

2 Cor 10:5 casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

3:22,23 Here at the heart of this book we find one of the greatest confessions of faith found anywhere in the Bible. Jeremiah had been dwelling on his sorrows and the sorrows of his people, but then the Spirit of God lifted his eyes to the Lord—and this was the turning point. In the midst of sorrow and ruin he remembered the mercy of the LORD.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity, and pass-

ing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. **“His compassions fail not.”** We have failed Him, but He cannot fail us. **“Great is Your faithfulness.”** We have fresh instances every morning that God’s compassions never fail.

Not only is our God merciful, but Jesus is also “Faithful and True”. This is how He introduced Himself to the church at Laodicea in **Rev 3:14**. This how He will reveal Himself to the unbelieving world at the end of the great tribulation period, as prophesied in **Rev 19:11**. Paul assured the church at Philippi that He who began a good work in them would be faithful to complete it (**Phil 1:6**). This was not to be interpreted to mean that they could just kick back and wait for the Rapture. No, having that assurance, they were to **“work out”** their salvation **“with fear and trembling”** (**Phil 2:12**). **“Lamentations”** itself teaches this lesson. If you build your life on people or on the things of this world, you will have no hope or security; but if you build on Christ, the Faithful One, you will be safe forever.

He is *faithful to chasten*:

Psalms 119:75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
Praise God for His protection in our lives that comes in the form of chastening. “For whom the Lord loves He chastens” (**Heb 12:6**).

He is *faithful to forgive* when we do confess our sins:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He is *faithful to sympathize* when we have burdens and problems:
Heb 2:17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

:18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He is *faithful to deliver* when we cry out for help in temptation:
1 Cor 10:13 There has no temptation overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

He is *faithful to keep us* in this life and unto life eternal:
1 Tim 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

:16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

God in His mercy spared a remnant of Judah, protected and blessed them during their years of captivity, and then permitted them to return to their land once again. He enabled them to rebuild their city and temple; He protected them from heathen nations that hated them. How merciful God was to His people!

3:24 The various tribes were allocated land in Canaan. However, Jeremiah here doesn't lay claim to land, He lays claim to the Lord. Portions on earth are perishing things, but God is a portion forever. The prophet declared that the Lord was his "**portion**".
Psalms 73:26 My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

3:25 In times of trouble we need to imitate Jeremiah who looked away from himself to the Lord, and who waited on the Lord in patience and faith. Too often we look at our problems and ourselves and become so discouraged that we quit. Instead, we must 'look away unto Jesus' and seek His face.
Heb 12:1 Therefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
:2 looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Psalms 27:8 When You said, "Seek ye my face," my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, will I seek."
May we learn, like Jeremiah, how to wait on the Lord instead of

taking matters into our own hands. There is strength in waiting on God.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

- 3:27** Although God willingly saves people on their death bed, it is far better to surrender to Him earlier in life.
Eccl 12:1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them";
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
:30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.
- 3:30** This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ (**Luke 22:63-65**).
- 3:31,32** The forsaking of the Jewish people by God will not last forever. God told Jeremiah that as long as the sun shines during the day and the moon at night that the Jewish people would continue to be the apple of His eye (**Jer 31:35-36; Deut 32:9,10**).
- 3:33-38** It doesn't please God to have to "afflict" us. Anytime we rebel against God we make it hard on ourselves. Because God is faithful and loves us, He will chasten us.
Jonah 2:8 Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy.
Heb 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.
- 3:39** We are sinful men, and what we complain about is far less than our sins deserve! Matthew Henry has said that we should complain to God, and not of Him.
- 3:40-50** These verses are a call to self-judgment and confession. It is ridiculous to think that we can hide anything from the Lord. Confession is good for the soul. Our duty is to "search out and examine" our own ways that we may turn from evil to God.
Psalms 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.
Psalms 38:2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down.
:3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin.
:4 For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden

they are too heavy for me.

3:51 The more the prophet looked on the desolations, the more he was grieved. How important it is for us to remember that in all of life's trials and adversities, "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (**Rom 8:37**)

3:52-66 This is a description of Jeremiah's prison experience. He is reliving in his mind the cruel treatment that he faced while in the line of duty in serving his God. Like Paul, Jeremiah maintained his communion with his Lord. In the midst of all of his pain and suffering, the Lord whispered into his heart the words, "**Fear not!**" (v 57) "Fear not" is the language of the grace and love of God to those who are downcast and troubled in their souls. Do not be weary in well doing, saints (**2 Thess 3:13**). Your labors in the Lord are not in vain (**1 Cor 15:58**).

Chapter 4

4:1,2 When the Babylonian army looted the "gold" of the temple, they also overturned all its huge "stones" in the city streets. Today in Jerusalem the stones of the temple from its destruction in 70 A.D. are still in the streets of the Old City. The place of worship had become a war zone, a cemetery.

In contrast, note that the Holy Spirit calls the sons of Zion, "**precious sons**". The people of Jerusalem were of more value to God than the temple.

Psalm 139:17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

:18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.

Elsewhere these people are referred to as "a special treasure to Me ... a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (**Ex 19:5, 6**). The bodies of the precious sons of Zion, like the gold and stones of the temple, were thrown out like broken pieces of "**clay pots**".

2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

* It is important to remember that we are simply earthen vessels in the hands of the Potter (**Isaiah 64:8**). May we purpose to be vessels of honor to our King Jesus! (**2 Tim 2:20,21**)

4:3,4 Even the animal kingdom displayed more care for their young than the backslidden people of God! When the hungry children asked for food, they were denied. Note that one manifestation of sin is selfishness with a corresponding lack of natural compassion.

Spiritually speaking, the young people of the present generation are hungry and thirsty. They may not be asking outright for Jesus, but the mere fact that they are turning to drugs, sex, or New Age beliefs is proof that they are empty inside and looking for Truth. How we need to bring to them the True Bread and Living Water (**John 6:35,51, 7:37**), Jesus Christ!

4:5 The word “**delicacies**” connotes luxury. The contrast is strong and shows the depth to which the nation had fallen. People who formerly could have eaten any delicacies they wanted were found searching for daily food in trash heaps during the terrible days of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. This parallels (to a point) the parable of the prodigal son, who chose to live after the world and ended up in a pigpen (**Luke 15:11-16**). Instead of staying faithful to Yahweh and enjoying the blessings of their Father in heaven, the Jewish people had sought after the world, and ended up “**desolate in the streets**”.

4:6,7 Note that this horrible judgment of God was “**punishment**” for the iniquities and sin of the people of God. “**Nazarites**” were men and women who specifically committed themselves to God for periods of special devotion. (See **Num 6:1–21**.) However, their devotion turned from God to the world and the results were disastrous.

4:8 The phrase “**blacker than coal**” means that every aspect of beauty and glory had departed from the fallen nation and people. Mark it down, when a person turns away from an earnest pursuit of Jesus, it is just a matter of time before the effects of living in darkness cause their beauty and fragrance of Christ to fade away. **John 15:6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. **Matt 13:6** And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. Note that a person who is not rooted in their faith will soon wither. Likewise a person who does not abide in Jesus Christ will wither. This should challenge us, the Church, to press in and press onward in Jesus Christ. Although we are told by Jesus not to make any religious vows per se (**Matt 5:33-37**), I do believe that we must make a firm decision to live like Nazarites, in the sense that we are to live totally and lovingly devoted to our Lord Jesus in all that we do (**Col 3:17**).

You may be feeling withered, spiritually fatigued, battle-worn. I

have good news for you! You have been sovereignly led here to be touched by the Lord Jesus and restored.

Mark 3:1 And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had a withered hand.

:2 And they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day, so that they might accuse Him.

:3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

:4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

:5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch forth your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

4:9 Being killed during the siege was better than living through all of its horrors. Think what it will be like during the time of the Great Tribulation when men will want to die for a five month period of time and will not be able to do so. Instead, they will suffer incredible torment (**Rev 9:1-6**).

* It may be more difficult to live for the Lord during difficult times than to simply die and be at home with the Lord.

4:10 This verse describes the horrible effects of the long siege that were alluded to in **2:20**. The mothers, who at one time were described as "**compassionate**", now "**cooked their own children**" for food during the siege.

* Never underestimate the depravity of man apart from the sovereign restraints of the Holy Spirit of God.

4:11-14 The priests and prophets were held responsible for the "**fury**" and "**anger**" of God that was poured out, because, instead of telling the people to repent and seek the face of the Lord with godly sorrow, they actually tickled their ears with carnal words that lulled them into a state of false peace and security. The very people who should have been agents of righteousness, the "**prophets**" and the "**priests**", became agents of sin. They were walking "**as blind men**".

* You can never pray too much for the leaders of your church.

4:15 The people of God are crying out with the warning sounded by the lepers (**Lev 13:45**). The message is clear: moral leprosy has infested the people.

Much of the terminology used in this book is very similar to the moral condition of this present age. The world system that we

live in is unclean. The Lord from cover to cover in Scripture calls His people out of the unclean system.

2 Cor 6:17 Therefore, “Come out from among them, and be separate,” says the Lord. “Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. (See **Isaiah 52:11; Ezek 20:34,41.**)

:18 I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says the LORD Almighty.

Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become the habitation of devils, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

:3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”

4:16,17 After the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., the survivors in Judah turned to Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt to deliver them, thereby breaking covenant with Nebuchadnezzar and the specific word of God. (See **Jer 42–44; Ezek 29:16.**) Again we find a picture of what happens when a person, church, ministry turns to the world (Egypt) for help, instead of to the Lord. It is called “**vain help**”.

4:18-20 The handwriting of God’s judgment was upon the wall. They were being hunted like wild animals. The heir to the Davidic line was “**the breath of our nostrils,**” or more literally, “the breath of life” to the nation. The King of the nation, (King Zedekiah at the time) was referred to as “**the anointed of the LORD,**” but he was captured while trying to escape, put in chains and blinded after watching his sons massacred, and marched off to Babylon to die (**2 Kings 25:1-7**).

I like the phrase, “**Under His shadow, we shall live among the heathen (or nations).**” What does that speak of?

Psalms 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (*Prayer*)

Psalms 36:7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. (*Protection*)

Psalms 57:1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.

(*Patience in times of trial*)

Song of Solomon 2:3 I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

(Peace in the presence of the Lord)

4:21,22 Note that God warns “**Edom**” that the cup of judgment is soon to come upon her as well. Her sins would be discovered. The outstanding sin that brought this cup upon Edom was “the pride of (her) heart (that) deceived (her).” (**Obad vv 1,3**)
Scripture says that we can be sure that our sins will find us out (**Num 32:23**).

Chapter 5

5:1-3 At this point in time the people of God, apart from a faithful remnant, were scattered to other nations or killed because of their rebellion against the Lord. In their present condition, the people of Israel seemed to be the most helpless of all peoples, “**orphans**”, “**fatherless**”, “**widows**”.

The Promised Land, which is alluded to here, was granted to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, back in the book of **Genesis (13:14-15, 26:1-4, 28:10-14)**. This land “**inheritance**” was a kind of ‘down payment’ on the future reign of God that would include the full restoration the Jewish people to the full extent of their Biblical homeland in the last days, prior to, and being completely fulfilled in the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ (**Isaiah 62**). We have seen the “birth pangs” of this prophecy fulfilled in our very lifetime (**Jer 23:7-8; Amos 9:13-15**)!

5:4-6 The survivors of the Babylonian siege were reduced to servitude, caught between the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Bondage and enemy captivity are always the fruit of compromise and sin. One aspect of the kingdom of darkness is the absence of true “**rest**”.

Lam 1:3 Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude; she dwells among the heathen, she finds no rest;

Rev 14:11 ...They have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

* The rest for the people of God is through faith in Jesus Christ.
See **Hebrews 3:14-4:11**.

5:7-11 It is so important for us as parents to see here how our sins do indeed effect and influence our children. Instead of being ruled by God under the spiritual leadership of the fathers, the children were being ruled by ungodly servants.

* Mothers, fathers, you are the only biological parental example of living for Jesus Christ that your children will ever have so

make an impact on them for Jesus! If you are not parenting your children in the Lord, then who is parenting them, and what are they being taught?

Another of the tragedies during the fall of the city was the sexual abuse of Judah's women at the hands of the Babylonian conquerors. Sin and sexual abuse often go hand in hand.

5:12,13 The suffering of Jerusalem left no one unscathed. The judgment of sin is no respecter of persons.

5:14 Ordinary, daily activities or enjoyments were no longer seen in the city of Jerusalem.

5:15,16 When sin takes over a person's life, the **"joy"** of the Lord turns **"into mourning"**. It is ironic that one way or another, a person mourns for their sin. You can mourn for sin due to judgment of it, or you can mourn for sin because of what Scripture says about it, and then be comforted (**Matt 5:4**). When you fall into sin, you lose the joy of walking with Jesus.

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

* There is no sin or pleasure that is worth forfeiting the joy of the Lord.

Neh 8:10 ... the joy of the LORD is your strength.

* No matter how tough it gets stay faithful to Jesus! For those who hold their course in Christ, look what awaits your faithfulness in the future:

Matt 25:21 ... "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

"The crown has fallen from our head" expresses the loss of Judah's position of honor. This is the part of temptation that Satan will never remind you of — the morning after, the painful consequences, the loss of "the crown of life" (**James 1:12**). The people were not saying, 'Yeah, for we have sinned!' They were saying, **"Woe to us, for we have sinned!"**

5:17 So desperate was the condition of the people that they even despaired of life itself. Their sin took the heart out of them.

5:18 The idea of **"foxes"** roaming the holy city where the people of God once came to worship was the final disgrace. In our personal lives, Solomon wrote that it is "the little foxes that spoil the vines" (**Song 2:15**). What are the 'foxes' in your life that prevent

you from enjoying fellowship and worshiping your King Jesus? Are you detecting in your life that there are times that used to be set aside for the things of the Lord, but are now run over with ‘foxes’ of some sort?

5:19 Situations and circumstances undergo rapid change, but God is eternally on His **“throne”** (**Psalm 9:7**). Therefore, there is cause for hope. In a world that is full of uncertainties and change, how we need to build our lives upon the Rock Jesus Christ and His wonderful Word.

Matt 7:24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

:25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”

5:21 The one word **“turn”** (**1:13; 3:40**) can summarize God’s message to His rebellious people. In one of Jeremiah’s earlier messages, he had proclaimed God’s repeated exhortation to the people to turn back to Him (**Jer 3:12,14**). Jesus’ first words in Mark’s gospel are, “Repent,” (turn away from sin and turn to God) “and believe the gospel.” (**Mark 1:15**)

There is the request here for spiritual renewal. **“Renew”** can also mean to repair what is broken. The Lord Jesus is in the business of making all things new (**Rev 21:5**). He is the Master Repairman and has the right tool to fix whatever is broken in your life.

5:22 As a closing note, St. Louis Cardinal pitcher Darryl Kile was found dead in his Chicago hotel room one Saturday morning. The door was locked and bolted from the inside and there was no evidence of alcohol or drugs. Kile was 33 and a world-class athlete. His death reminds us of an important truth: “It is appointed for men to die once, and after this the judgment.” (**Heb 9:27**) Jesus told a parable of a rich man who had great plans for the future. “But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your soul will be required of you ...’” (**Luke 12:16-20**).

Are you ready to meet your Maker should He call you tonight in your sleep? Are you hanging on to the things of this world and by doing so letting go of the things of the Kingdom of God?

The gospel’s “Good News” is that God has not **“utterly rejected us,”** but sent His Son to redeem us, and by His grace, “made us accepted in the Beloved.” (**Eph 1:3-7**). Therefore, let us “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (**Matt 6:33**).

NOTES

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