

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Lamentations: Productively Learning From Sinful Failure

#### Part IV: Dirge III - Jeremiah's Personal Response

#### A. Understanding The Afflictions Of God's Discipline (Lamentations 3:1-18)

##### I. Introduction

- A. In times of spiritual failure followed by God's discipline, the believer is ripe to learn from his failure, what constitutes the burden of the prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1207-1208)
- B. Lamentations 3:1-18, the first part of Jeremiah's third dirge on Jerusalem's fall, voices the response of Jeremiah as representing Jerusalem's plight with a lesson on understanding the afflictions of God's discipline:

##### II. Understanding The Afflictions Of God's Discipline, Lamentations 3:1-18 ESV.

- A. This section of the third dirge presents Jeremiah "as Judah's representative" suffering "at the hand of God's wrath," so it offers insight on **identifying** the sufferings of God's discipline, Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1217.
- B. Accordingly, we note the following experiences of suffering typical of divine discipline as personified in the case of Jeremiah who represents the people of Judah, Lamentations 3:1-18:
  - 1. Likening himself to the city that has come under the rod of God's discipline (Lam. 3:1), Jeremiah claimed God had driven and brought him into darkness without any light all day long (Lam. 3:2-3), an expression of feeling **confused** "as he watched God seemingly reverse His past attitudes and actions," Ibid.
  - 2. Jeremiah claimed he suffered **brokenness** in both physical and spiritual realms: God had figuratively made his flesh and skin waste away, breaking his bones in poor health, leaving him experiencing bitterness, tribulation and darkness like the dead of long ago, Lamentations 3:4-6; Ibid.
  - 3. The prophet felt **trapped**, being walled about so that he could not escape, that his chains of restriction were heavy, though he cried for help, God shut out his prayer, blocking his pathway with obstacles and making his pathways in life difficult and crooked, Lamentations 3:7-9; Ibid.
  - 4. Jeremiah claimed God's actions seemed to make him like a special **target** of His **wrath**, Lam. 3:10-13:
    - a. God to him was like a bear lying in wait or like a lion hiding to attack him, Lam. 3:10.
    - b. The Lord had then turned aside his steps and torn him to pieces, leaving him desolate, Lam. 3:11.
    - c. God had bent His bow and set Jeremiah as a target to repeatedly pummel him with arrows, Lam. 3:12.
    - d. The arrows of the Lord had been driving into his kidneys, typically a figurative reference to one's **emotional structure**, implying God had tried to inflict especially emotional pain on him, Lam. 3:13.
  - 5. God's prophet told of the **humiliation** he faced in becoming the laughingstock of all Gentile peoples around him, the object of all of their taunts consistently given all day long, Lamentations 3:14.
  - 6. Jeremiah was overrun with **negative emotions**, filled with bitterness and satiated with wormwood, v. 15.
  - 7. The prophet expressed a feeling of **abhorrence** likened to his teeth being made to grind on gravel, v. 16a.
  - 8. Then, Jeremiah claimed God had made him **cower in ashes**, to suffer intimidation at the abundance of his woes that left him wrung out of optimism, Lamentations 3:16b.
  - 9. The prophet **lacked peace**, his life being overrun with calamity, Lamentations 3:17a.
  - 10. Jeremiah had **forgotten** what **happiness** was due to the intensity of his sufferings, Lamentations 3:17b.
  - 11. The prophet added that he had **no more endurance**, Lamentations 3:18a.
  - 12. In the end, he had **run out** of **hope** from the **Lord**, having given up due to his sufferings, Lam. 3:18b.

***Lesson:*** In a startling description of the **EFFECTS** of God's **DISCIPLINE** on Judah, Jeremiah clarified that they experienced **CONFUSION**, **BROKENNESS** in **BODY** and **SPIRIT**, the feeling of **ENTRAPMENT**, feeling as if they were a special **TARGET** of God for destruction, **HUMILIATION**, **NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**, **INTIMIDATION** and the **LACK** or **LOSS** of **PEACE**, **HAPPINESS**, **ENDURANCE** and **HOPE** in the **LORD**.

***Application:*** (1) If we face trials in life where we experience confusion, brokenness in body and/or spirit, feelings of entrapment, feeling as if we are a special target of God for destruction, humiliation, negative emotions, intimidation and the lack or loss of peace, happiness, endurance and hope in the Lord, we need to examine our lives in view of Scripture to see **IF** we have sinned before the Lord so as to **REPENT** for restoration! (2) Note: Not all intense suffering automatically implies sin as in the case of Job who was blameless and upright, who revered God and turned away from evil, cf. Job 1:1-13. However, **IF** we face such trials, we need to **CHECK** God's Word to see **IF** sin is the problem, and **IF** so, to address it.