

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Lamentations: Productively Learning From Sinful Failure

Part IV: Dirge III - Jeremiah's Personal Response

B. The Believer's Hope In The Midst Of God's Discipline (Lamentations 3:19-42)

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 3:19-42, the second part of Jeremiah's third dirge on Jerusalem's fall, expresses the hope the believer has in the midst of God's discipline, so we view the passage for our insight and application as follows:

II. The Believer's Hope In The Midst Of God's Discipline, Lamentations 3:19-42.

- A. Personifying Judah's sufferings, Jeremiah noted how burdensome were his sufferings, Lamentations 3:19-20:
 - 1. He claimed he remembered his affliction and wandering, the bitterness and the gall of his sufferings, v. 19.
 - 2. Indeed, his soul continually recalled his sufferings, causing it to be bowed down within him, v. 20.
- B. Regardless of this depressive suffering, Jeremiah recalled an important truth that gave him hope, v. 21. That great truth was the fact that due to God's great loyal love [in keeping His Abrahamic Covenant], the people of Judah were not consumed even in God's severe discipline, for His compassions never failed, Lam. 3:22. In fact, those divine compassions were new every morning: God's faithfulness was great, Lam. 3:23.
- C. Jeremiah then explained the edifying application Judah was to take from this truth, Lamentations 3:24-42:
 - 1. God's prophet claimed that the Lord was his *heleg*, his "share of land" or "inheritance" (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1236; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 293), Lam. 3:24a. Like the Levites who inherited the Lord instead of parcels of land (Deut. 10:9; Num. 18:20; *Ibid.*), the Lord became the actual Source of their livelihoods as He would cause the other tribes in Israel to provide for the Levites' material needs. Thus, Jeremiah taught that the God Who severely punished Judah was also her Source of life and blessing, so he would wait on God to deliver the nation from the trauma of His discipline, Lam. 3:24b.
 - 2. The Lord was thus good to those whose hope was in Him and who thus sought Him in worship, v. 25. It was thus good to wait quietly for the deliverance of the Lord even from His severe discipline, v. 26. It was good for a man to bear the yoke of such suffering, waiting for the Lord's deliverance in faith while he was still young, giving him great advantages in his later years in this life, Lamentations 3:27.
 - 3. Thus, the believer who suffered God's discipline was to sit alone in silence, figuratively burying his face in the dust of suffering, offering his cheek to one who would strike it and filling him with disgrace, for God had laid the burden on him and God was his hope of deliverance from God's own discipline, v. 28-30.
 - 4. In addition, Jeremiah knew that believers are not cast off forever by the Lord in His discipline, for though God brings grief, He will yet show compassion due to His great loyal love, Lamentations 3:31-32.
 - 5. Besides, God does not willingly bring affliction or grief to man, crushing underfoot all vulnerable prisoners in the land, denying a man his rights before the Most High or depriving him of justice, Lam. 3:33-36a. A just God sees such wrongs and addresses them in perfect righteousness, Lamentations 3:36b.
 - 6. Nevertheless, God was sovereign, and He sovereignly determines both calamities and good things to occur in one's life, so no living man in Judah should complain when he was being punished by God for his sins, Lamentations 3:37-39. Since God's discipline had arrived due to Judah's sins, Jeremiah called for his countrymen to examine their ways and to test them, and thus to return to the Lord, Lam. 3:40. He called for Judah's people to lift up their hearts and hands in true repent prayer to God in heaven and say, "We have sinned and rebelled and you [O Lord] have not forgiven," Lamentations 3:41-42. (brackets ours)

Lesson: Amid Judah's intense sufferings of God's severe discipline for sin, Jeremiah recalled the important truth that God's loyal love [in keeping His Abrahamic Covenant] kept Judah's people from being completely consumed in God's discipline, that the Lord's compassions were new every morning as His faithfulness to His covenant was great. Judah was to learn to respond to God's great discipline by recalling that the God Who severely punished her was also her Source of blessing, that she thus wait patiently for His deliverance from His discipline! God was just, He would not forever express His wrath against His people, but He was sovereignly administering His discipline and would do so until His people acknowledged their sin and confessed it to Him for His restoration.

Application: May we view our disciplining God as also our delivering God and confess our sins for His restoration.