

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Lamentations: Productively Learning From Sinful Failure

Part IV: Dirge III - Jeremiah's Personal Response

C. The Believer's Prayer Amid God's Discipline

(Lamentations 3:43-66)

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 3:43-66, the third part of Jeremiah's third dirge on Jerusalem's fall, expresses the believer's prayer amid God's discipline, informing us how to pray in such a situation, so we view it for our insight:

II. The Believer's Prayer Amid God's Discipline, Lamentations 3:43-66.

- A. First, Jeremiah acknowledged to God in prayer that the nation was suffering His discipline, Lam. 3:43-48:
 - 1. He noted that God had figuratively wrapped Himself with anger and pursued Judah's people, killing them without pity and also wrapping Himself in a cloud so that no prayer would pass through to Him, v. 43-44.
 - 2. Judah's people had also suffered humiliation and intimidation before their foes, Lamentations 3:45-46.
 - 3. Jeremiah acknowledged the destruction and grief Judah's people had suffered in God's discipline, v. 47-48.
- B. Nevertheless, Jeremiah exemplified how Judah's people were to pray until God responded, Lam. 3:49-51:
 - 1. He claimed that his eyes would flow with tears without ceasing until the Lord responds, Lam. 3:49-50.
 - 2. Those tears would rise from grief at the fate of the beloved people of his city, Lamentations 3:51.
- C. Jeremiah then expressed his awareness of the Lord's response to his people's prayer, Lamentations 3:52-63:
 - 1. God's prophet claimed that though Judah's people had been hunted like a bird by enemies without cause and nearly destroyed him (Lam. 3:52-54), he had called unto the Lord (like Jeremiah desired Judah's people to call unto the Lord) and God had heard him from the depths of despair, Lam. 3:55-56a.
 - 2. Accordingly, he urged the Lord not to close His ear to His people's cry for help, Lamentations 3:56b.
 - 3. God would then come near when they called upon Him, and the Lord would say, "Do not fear," v. 57.
 - 4. As personified in Jeremiah's words, God's people could then voice their petition, Lamentations 3:58-63:
 - a. They could acknowledge the fact that God had taken up their cause and redeemed their lives, v. 58.
 - b. They could express assurance that God had seen the wrong done to them and judge their cause, v. 59.
 - c. They could note how God had seen all their enemies' vengeance and plots against them and all their taunts and plots as well, Lamentations 3:60-61.
 - d. This matter of taunts was especially painful to handle, so Jeremiah expressed how God's people who realized God was hearing their prayer would fully acknowledge them so as to punish them, v. 62-63.
- D. Finally, Jeremiah asked God to administer vengeance on Judah's Gentile foes who administered cruel acts as agents of divine discipline in keeping with the Abrahamic Covenant at Genesis 12:3; Lamentations 3:64-66:
 - 1. The Abrahamic Covenant promised that God would curse those who cursed Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:3), so Judah's people who realized God was hearing their prayer were to express their confidence that God would administer just vengeance upon their foes who had badly mistreated them, Lam. 3:64.
 - 2. God would thus administer dullness of heard with His curse being upon them, Lamentations 3:65.
 - 3. Indeed, Jeremiah expressed his confidence that the Lord would pursue Judah's enemies in anger and destroy them from under the heavens, Lamentations 3:66.

Lesson: *In voicing their prayer to the Lord, Jeremiah exemplified how Judah's people were to acknowledge they were suffering God's just discipline for their sin and to pray their confession of sin until the Lord responded. Then, when God responded to their prayer, Judah's people were to acknowledge that divine response and God's comforting promises to help them and His call that they not fear, and express their petition that God deal out just vengeance to those who had wronged them.*

Application: *(1) If we face divine discipline for sin, especially as God used evil people to administer it, may we pray to God, acknowledging that He is disciplining us, giving our confession of sin until the Lord signals His response. When we are aware of God's response, may we acknowledge it, finding encouragement that He has responded, and voice the petitions we have for God's dealing with injustices we have faced. (2) Since Jeremiah did not withhold emotional expression in prayer, but claimed his eyes would flow with tears until the Lord responded (Lamentations 3:49-50), may we pray not only respectfully, but CANDIDLY to the Lord in prayer, cf. Psalm 34:17-18.*