

# From Despair to Hope

The Book of Lamentations expresses the despair of God's people following the destruction of Jerusalem and exile of the people to Babylon in 587 BC. Many scholars believe it was written by Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was about 17 when he began to prophesy in Judah...He prophesied for 39 years during the reign of 5 different kings...He called on Judah to repent, (which they ignored) and eventually prophesied about their destruction and exile into Babylon (Jer 25)....In Hebrew the book is called **HOW**

## First word "HOW" (not a question "how did it happen", but an exclamation "how awful")

- Lam 1:1 ESV **How** lonely sits the city that was full of people! **How** like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.
- Lam 2:1 ESV **How** the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger.
- Lam 4:1-2 ESV **How** the gold has grown dim, how the pure gold is changed! The holy stones lie scattered at the head of every street. 2 The precious sons of Zion, worth their weight in fine gold, how they are regarded as earthen pots, the work of a potter's hands!
- Lam 4:10 ESV The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food during the destruction of the daughter of my people.

## Jeremiah was alive and experienced the fallout of the fulfillment of these prophecies

- Lam 3:1-3 ESV I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; 2 he has driven and ***brought me into darkness without any light***; 3 surely against me ***he turns his hand again and again*** the whole day long.
- Lam 3:7-8 ESV He has walled me about so that ***I cannot escape***; he has made my chains heavy; 8 though I call and cry for help, ***he shuts out my prayer***;
- Lam 3:15-18 ESV He has ***filled me with bitterness***; he has sated me with ***wormwood***. 16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; 17 my ***soul is bereft of peace***; I have ***forgotten what happiness is***; 18 so I say, "My ***endurance has perished***; ***SO HAS MY HOPE from the LORD***." 19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! 20 ***My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me***.

## The power remembering who God is

Lam 3:21-26 ESV But ***this I call to mind***, and ***therefore I HAVE HOPE***: 22 The ***steadfast love*** of the LORD never ceases; ***his mercies*** never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; ***great is your faithfulness***.

- You choose what you meditate upon - and KNOW that it affects the soul,
- (**calling to mind** = to ***retreat to a former position***) restored hope (from perished v 18 to revived v 21)
- Remembering and acknowledging the truth about God
  - His love is steadfast love (mother's love for the womb) --- His love never ceases --- His mercies (kindness) NEVER come to an end --- Great is HIS faithfulness

## The power of the priority of my relationship with God both NOW and in the FUTURE

24 "The LORD is ***my portion***," says my soul, "therefore I will ***hope in him***." 25 The ***LORD is good*** to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

- Acknowledge some things about yourself
  - The LORD is ***my portion says my soul*** (I have lost all but I have the most important - HIM)
  - **My Hope** is IN HIM
  - The LORD is good to those who WAIT (wonder what God will do in this situation)