

Lamentations 3 - Third Dirge: Jeremiah's Response

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Lamentations 3

III. Jeremiah's response (Lam 3:1-66)

(1) Jeremiah's grief (3:1-18)

(A) Afflicted (3:1-3)

- 1 I am the man who has seen misery Because of the rod of His wrath.
- 1 I am the man who has seen affliction Because of the rod of His wrath.
- 1 I am a man familiar with affliction— under the rod of God's anger.
- 1 I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.

- 2 He has driven me and made me walk In darkness and not in light.
- 2 He has driven me and made me walk In darkness and not in light.
- 2 He has led me—brought me into darkness, not into light.
- 2 He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.

- 3 Indeed, He has turned His hand against me Repeatedly all the day.

- 3 Surely against me He has turned His hand Repeatedly all the day.
- 3 He truly turned his hand against me, again and again, all day long.
- 3 Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.

(B) Besieged (3:4-6)

- 4 He has consumed my flesh and my skin, He has broken my bones.
- 4 He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away, He has broken my bones.
- 4 He made my flesh and skin prematurely old; he broke my bones.
- 4 My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.
- This man Jeremiah has seen and gone through great trouble. His health is wrecked because of his concern for Jerusalem. Jeremiah was not unmoved by the destruction he had seen come to the nation. He did not run around saying, "I told you so!"

- 5 He has besieged and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.
- 5 He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship.
- 5 He laid siege against me, surrounding me with bitterness and suffering.
- 5 He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.

- 6 He has made me live in dark places, Like those who have long been dead.
- 6 In dark places He has made me dwell, Like those who have long been dead.
- 6 He has forced me to live in darkness, like those who are long dead.
- 6 He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.

(C) Trapped (3:7-9)

- 7 He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy.
- 7 He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy.
- 7 He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he placed heavy chains on me.
- 7 He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.

- 8 Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer.
- 8 Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer.
- 8 Indeed, when I cry out, calling for help, he shuts out my prayer.
- 8 Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.

- 9 He has blocked my ways with cut stone; He has twisted my paths.
- 9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.
- 9 He impeded my way with blocks of stone, making my paths uneven.
- 9 He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.

(D) Persecuted (3:10-12)

- 10 He is to me *like* a bear lying in wait, *Like* a lion in secret places.
10 He is to me like a bear lying in wait, *Like* a lion in secret places.
10 He is like a bear that lies in wait for me, a lion in hiding.
10 He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places.
- 11 He has made my ways deviate, and torn me to pieces; He has made me desolate.
11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me to pieces; He has made me desolate.
11 He forced me off my path, tearing me to pieces and making me desolate.
11 He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate.
- 12 He bent His bow And took aim at me as a target for the arrow.
12 He bent His bow And set me as a target for the arrow.
12 He bent his bow, aiming at me with his arrow.
12 He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.

(E) Mocked (3:13-15)

- 13 He made the arrows of His quiver Enter my inward parts.
13 He made the arrows of His quiver To enter into my inward parts.
13 He caused his war arrows to pierce my vital organs.
13 He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins.
- 14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people, Their song of ridicule all the day.
14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people, Their *mocking* song all the day.
14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people, the object of their taunts throughout the day.
14 I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day.
- 15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink plenty of wormwood.
15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drunk with wormwood.
15 He has filled me with bitterness, making me drink wormwood.
15 He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.

(F) Rejected (3:16-18)

- 16 He has also made my teeth grind with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust.
16 He has broken my teeth with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust.
16 He broke my teeth on gravel, covering me with dust.

16 He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.

17 My soul has been excluded from peace; I have forgotten happiness.

17 My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness.

17 You have removed peace from my life; I have forgotten what prosperity is.

17 And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.

18 So I say, "My strength has failed, And so *has* my hope from the LORD."

18 So I say, "My strength has perished, And so *has* my hope from the LORD."

18 So I say, "My strength is gone as is my hope in the LORD."

18 And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:

(2) Jeremiah's hope in God (3:19-39)

(A) His permanent mercy (3:19-24)

19 Remember my misery and my homelessness, the wormwood and bitterness.

19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness.

19 Remember my affliction and homelessness— wormwood and gall!

19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.

20 My soul certainly remembers, And is bent over within me.

20 Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me.

20 My mind keeps reflecting on it, and I become depressed.

20 My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

The next 5 verses are the only bright spot in all of Lamentations. Jeremiah can see the hand of God's mercy: They would have been utterly consumed had it not been for the mercy of God. If they had received their just desserts, they would have been utterly destroyed—they would have disappeared from the earth.

21 I recall this to my mind, Therefore I wait.

21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.

21 This is what comes to mind, and therefore I have hope:

21 This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

- Jeremiah is now looking back upon the past. He had predicted the judgment that came upon Jerusalem, and Jeremiah sits in the rubble and ruin of Jerusalem weeping as he writes this lamentation.

22 The LORD'S acts of mercy indeed do not end, For His compassions do not fail.

22 The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.
22 Because of the LORD's gracious love we are not consumed,
since his compassions never end.
22 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail
not.

23 *They* are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.

23 *They* are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.

23 They are new every morning— great is your faithfulness!

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I wait for Him."

24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

24 "The LORD is all I have," says my soul, "Therefore I will trust in him."

24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Deserved Deliverance?

No, it was all due to the faithfulness of God:

- He had promised Abraham that He would make a nation come from him—and this was the nation.
- He had promised Moses that He would put them into the land.
- He had promised Joshua that He would establish them there.
- He promised David that there would come One in his line to reign on the throne forever.
- The prophets all said that God would not utterly destroy this people but that He would judge them for their sin. God is faithful.
 - He has judged them, but He will not utterly destroy them.
- A faithful remnant has always remained, and ultimately they will become a great nation again.

(B) His promised deliverance (3:25-32)

25 The LORD is good to those who await Him, To the person *who* seeks Him.

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the person who searches for him.

25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

26 *It is* good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD.

26 *It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD.*
26 It is good to hope and wait patiently for the LORD's salvation.
26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

27 *It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth.*
27 *It is good for a man that he should bear The yoke in his youth.*
27 It is good when a young man carries the yoke of discipline in his youth.
27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 Let him sit alone and keep quiet, Since He has laid *it* on him.
28 Let him sit alone and be silent Since He has laid *it* on him.
28 He is to sit apart and remain silent, because the LORD has laid it upon him.
28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.

29 Let him put his mouth in the dust; Perhaps there is hope.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust, Perhaps there is hope.
29 Let him fall face down in the dust, so there may yet be hope.
29 He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.

30 Let him give *his* cheek to the one who is going to strike him; Let him be filled with shame.
30 Let him give his cheek to the smiter, Let him be filled with reproach.
30 He will endure being slapped in the face, bringing him public disgrace.
30 He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

31 For the Lord will not reject forever,
31 For the Lord will not reject forever,
31 Indeed, the Lord will not always reject us—
31 For the Lord will not cast off for ever:
- God is unchanging, compassionate and merciful. He wants to reveal His heart to Job—
and to us.

32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion In proportion to His abundant mercy.
32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.
32 though he causes grief, his compassion abounds according to his gracious love.

32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

(C) His perfect justice (3:33-39)

33 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of mankind.

33 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men.

33 For he does not deliberately hurt or grieve human beings.

33 For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

34 To crush under one's feet All the prisoners of the land,

34 To crush under His feet All the prisoners of the land,

34 When any of the prisoners of the earth are crushed underfoot,

34 To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth,

35 To deprive a man of justice In the presence of the Most High,

35 To deprive a man of justice

In the presence of the Most High,

35 when a person's rights are perverted in defiance of the Most High.

35 To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,

36 To defraud someone in his lawsuit— *Of these things* the Lord does not approve.

36 To defraud a man in his lawsuit— *Of these things* the Lord does not approve.

36 When a man is thwarted in his appeal, does the Lord condone it?

36 To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.

37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

37 Who can command, and it happens, without the Lord having ordered it?

37 Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both adversity and good proceed?

38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?

38 Do not both good and evil things proceed from the mouth of the Most High?

38 Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?

39 Of what can *any* living mortal, or *any* man, Complain in view of his sins?

39 Why should *any* living mortal, or *any* man,

Offer complaint in view of his sins?

- 39 Why should anyone living complain, any mortal, about being punished for sin?
39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

(3) Jeremiah's prayer (3:40-66)

(A) Invitation to repent (3:40-42)

- 40 Let's examine and search out our ways, And let's return to the LORD.
40 Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD.
40 Let us examine our lifestyles, putting them to the test, and turn back to the LORD.
40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

- 41 We raise our heart and hands Toward God in heaven;
41 We lift up our heart and hands Toward God in heaven;
41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven.
41 Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

- 42 We have done wrong and rebelled; You have not pardoned.
42 We have transgressed and rebelled, You have not pardoned.
42 As for us, we have sinned and rebelled; but you have not pardoned us.
42 We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.

(B) Consequences of sin (3:43-54)

- 43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger And pursued us; You have slain *and* have not spared.
43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger And pursued us; You have slain *and* have not spared.
43 Clothing yourself with anger, you pursued us. You killed without pity,
43 Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.
- 44 You have veiled Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through.
44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through.
44 You covered yourself with a cloud that prayer cannot pierce.
44 Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.
- 45 You have made us *mere* refuse and rubbish In the midst of the peoples.
45 *You have made us mere* offscouring and refuse In the midst of the peoples.
45 You have reduced us to scum and garbage among the nations.
45 Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.

46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.
46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.
46 All our enemies jeer at us with gaping mouths.
46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

47 Panic and pitfall have come upon us, Devastation and destruction;
47 Panic and pitfall have befallen us, Devastation and destruction;
47 Panic and pitfalls beset us, along with devastation and ruin.
47 Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.

48 My eyes run down *with* streams of water Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

48 My eyes run down with streams of water Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

48 My eyes run with rivers of tears over the destruction of my cherished people.

48 Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

- In v48 Jeremiah abruptly shifted from the plural to the singular

— Verses 48-51 provide a transition: from the people's confession (v41-47) to Jeremiah's example (v52-66)

49 My eyes flow unceasingly, Without stopping,
49 My eyes pour down unceasingly, Without stopping,
49 My tears pour down ceaselessly; I am far from relief
49 Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,

50 Until the LORD looks down And sees from heaven.

50 Until the LORD looks down And sees from heaven.

50 until the LORD bends down to see from heaven.

50 Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.

51 My eyes bring pain to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city.

51 My eyes bring pain to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city.

51 What I see grieves my soul because of all the young women of my city.

51 Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.

52 My enemies without reason Hunted me down like a bird;

52 My enemies without cause Hunted me down like a bird;

52 My enemies hunted me like a bird, viciously and without justification.

52 Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.

- Jeremiah's ministry during Judah's final days created many enemies: the people from his own hometown plotted to kill him (Jer 11:18-23) and everybody at the temple demanded that he be executed (Jer 26:7-9); he was beaten and thrown into prison as a traitor (Jer 37:11-16); and was later, near the end of Nebuchadnezzar's siege, lowered into a muddy cistern to starve to death (Jer 38:1-6).

53 They have silenced me in the pit And have thrown stones on me.

53 They have silenced me in the pit And have placed a stone on me.

53 They dumped me alive into a pit, sealing me in with stone.

53 They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.

54 Waters flowed over my head; I said, "I am cut off!"

54 Waters flowed over my head; I said, "I am cut off!"

54 Water closed over my head, and I said, "I'm a dead man."

54 Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.

(C) Desire for divine vengeance against adversaries (3:55-66)

55 I called on Your name, LORD, Out of the lowest pit.

55 I called on Your name, O LORD, Out of the lowest pit.

55 I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the Pit,

55 I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon.

56 You have heard my voice, "Do not cover Your ear from my *plea for relief*, From my cry for help."

56 You have heard my voice, "Do not hide Your ear from my *prayer for relief*, From my cry for help."

56 You heard my voice— don't close your ear to my sighs and cries.

56 Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry.

57 You came near on the day I called to You; You said, "Do not fear!"

57 You drew near when I called on You; You said, "Do not fear!"

57 You drew near when I called out to you. You said, "Stop being afraid"

57 Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

58 Lord, You have pleaded my soul's cause; You have redeemed my life.

58 O Lord, You have pleaded my soul's cause; You have redeemed my life.

58 Lord, you have defended my cause; you have redeemed my life.
58 O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.

59 LORD, You have seen my oppression; Judge my case.
59 O LORD, You have seen my oppression; Judge my case.
59 LORD, you observed how I have been wronged; now make your ruling in my case.
59 O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause.

60 You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me.
60 You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me.
60 You examined their plans for vengeance, all of their plots against me.
60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.

61 You have heard their reproach, LORD, All their schemes against me.
61 You have heard their reproach, O LORD, All their schemes against me.
61 LORD, you listened to their insults— all their plots against me,
61 Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, and all their imaginations against me;

62 The lips of my assailants and their talk *Are* against me all day long.
62 The lips of my assailants and their whispering *Are* against me all day long.
62 the whisperings of my opponents, their scheming against me all day long.
62 The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day.

63 Look at their sitting and their rising; I am their mocking song.
63 Look on their sitting and their rising; I am their mocking song.
63 Watch! Whether they sit down or stand up, they mock me with their songs.
63 Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their musick.

64 You will repay them, LORD, In accordance with the work of their hands.
64 You will recompense them, O LORD, According to the work of their hands.
64 Pay them back, LORD, according to their actions.
64 Render unto them a recompence, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.

65 You will give them shamelessness of heart, Your curse will be on them.
65 You will give them hardness of heart, Your curse will be on them.
65 Give them an anguished heart; may your curse be upon them!
65 Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.

- 66 You will pursue them in anger and eliminate them From under the heavens of the LORD!
- 66 You will pursue them in anger and destroy them From under the heavens of the LORD!
- 66 Pursue them in your anger and destroy them from under the LORD's heaven.
- 66 Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.