

He Will Not Cast Forever

Lamentations 3:31-33

Thesis: God does not afflict willingly. He gets no delight in the chastening of His children, but because He loves us. He is faithful and will chastise in order to share in His righteousness.

Introduction:

1. Of all books in the Bible two stand out as the saddest:
 - a. Job - personal tragedy
 - b. Lamentations - national tragedy, horror of God's judgment against His people. (Mackie and Collins)
 1. Lamentations 2:20; 4:10; Dt. 28:53-57
 2. Lamentations is read every year on the 9th of Aviv (July-August), Lamentations 3:21-23 is sung as a remembrance of the 2 times Jerusalem was destroyed: 9th of Aviv by the Babylonians and on the 9th of Aviv 70 AD by Titus. (Pawson)
2. Matthew 16:13ff - There are several similarities between Jeremiah and Jesus
 - a. Both were had family who did not believe in them or their ministry (Jer. 12:6; John 7:5)
 - b. Both were plotted against by their own hometown (Jer. 11:21; Lk. 4:28-30)
 - c. Both were hated by the religious elite (Jer. 20:1; John 11:49ff)
 - d. Both were compared as a lamb taken to the slaughter (Jer. 11:19; Is. 53:7)
 - e. Both often wept over Jerusalem (Jer. 9:1; Lk. 19:41)
 - f. Both were whipped and flogged (Jer. 20:2; Matt. 27:26)
 - g. Both foretold about the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31; Matt. 26:28)
 - h. Jeremiah's Grotto, Jesus at Golgotha
 1. "And it came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, *that* Jeremias sat weeping, and lamented *with* this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said"¹ (Jer. 1:1 preface)
 2. Jeremiah's Grotto (Smith)
3. God's children had suffered and would continue to suffer in exile, but it was not God's desire that this happen. That is the message of our scripture in this lesson. Lamentations 3:31-33.
4.
 - i. The rejection will not last forever (vs. 31)
 - A. A description of the horrors that Jeremiah described would seem like the suffering would never end. (Jeremiah 25:11)
 1. It would seem like their relationship with God would be cut off forever as they learned to live in a new the new "worlds" of Babylon and Egypt.
 2. It lasted about 70 years, but most of the original adults never saw the return.
 - B. Almost every page of the O.T. mentions sin in some fashion, and almost every page in the N.T. mentions grace and salvation in some form. (Pawson)
 - C. There is hope - in the New Covenant when God will return with compassion for all nations
 1. Jeremiah 31:31

¹ Brenton, L. C. L. (1870). *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: English Translation* (La Pro:1). London: Samuel Bagster and Sons.

2. Hebrews 8:6-13
 3. The immediate Jewish hope was within 70 years when they returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah, ultimately and permanently it was with the coming of the Messiah for them and for all.
- II. God does cause grief (vs. 32)
- A. God raised up the Babylonians to punish (Hab. 1:6). Some believe that God only allows punishment to happen, but the Scripture is clear that God raised Babylon to punish, to grieve His children.
 - B. "He will have compassion according to his abundant and steadfast lovingkindness. Though God has caused the grief He will also cause relief according to His love and over-flowing cup of blessings. (Psalm 79:38; 106:43-45)
- III. "**FOR**" He does not afflict or grieve from the HEART (willingly) (vs. 33)
- A. vs. 32 says He causes grief, vs. 33 says He does not afflict from the heart...is there a contradiction?
 1. No contradiction, but an amazing and moving characteristic of God.
 2. In other words: It doesn't please God to have to deal in such stringent ways with His children. (Smith)
 3. When we rebel against God we will make it harder on ourselves.
 4. When Jonah fought against God he suffered (God prepared a great fish - Jonah 1:17)
 5. As a result of man's struggle against God, He will discipline us in order for us to share in His righteousness (Hebrews 12:9-11)
 - B. God's heart's desire:
 1. Was for Adam and Eve to obey and live in Paradise...
 2. Was for the children of Israel to live in the Promised Land...
 3. Is for us to live in the Heavenly Zion for all eternity, and He has made all the preparations for us to do just that.

Conclusion:

1. Lamentations' only section of hope is found in the 3rd chapter, especially 22-23
2. The book of laments ends with a question, ends with an unknown ending...
 - a. "Why do You forget us forever? Why do You forsake us so long? Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored; Renew our days as of old, Unless You have utterly rejected us *And* are exceedingly angry with us." (Lam. 5:20-22)
 - b. On this side of the cross we know the answer. We know that our Messiah died on the cross, resurrected and is at the right hand of the Father.
3. Eventually the Jews returned to Jerusalem, but it was never the same. Later on during the times of Jesus and the church, Jerusalem was destroyed again. The Jews found themselves as sojourners and aliens, again. This should remind us that even Abraham, who possessed the entirety of the Promised Land lived in tents and never set down roots in an earthly home because he was looking for a heavenly home. (Hebrews 11:9-10). We, too are aliens just passing through looking for our Jordan to cross over into the heavenly sunlight.

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Smith, Chuck. "Lamentations." *Calvary Chapel*, vol. 3, no. 14, 1965, calvarychapel.com/pastorchuck/c2k/lamentations. Accessed 17 Apr. 2021. There is on the site of Golgotha a cave that is called Jeremiah's Grotto. This cave known as Jeremiah's Grotto comprises a part of the face of the skull; hence the name Golgotha. Because as you look at the cliff, with these caves that are there in the cliff, they take the appearance of a skull. One of these caves is called Jeremiah's Grotto. It is interesting that from those caves there on the site of Golgotha, you have a tremendous view of the city of Jerusalem, for Golgotha is actually the top of what was once Mount Moriah. And it looks down over the city of Jerusalem.

Tradition declares that Jeremiah sat in this grotto when he wrote the book of Lamentations, and there he wept and cried over the desolation of the city of Jerusalem as he saw its ruins, as he saw the walls destroyed, as he saw the buildings leveled. And from this vantage, he wrote this book.

In the Septuagint, which is a translation of the Scriptures into Greek that was done by seventy Hebrew scholars about 200 B.C., they prefaced the book of Lamentations with these words, "And it came to pass, that after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented this lament over Jerusalem and said, 'How doth the city sit solitary.'" So, they have that as a prologue to the book of Lamentations, and it was picked up and put in the Vulgate..

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