

## August 15-21

### **Lamentations 3      Hope in the midst of affliction**

In Jeremiah's darkest moment, his hope was strengthened with this assurance: God had been faithful and would continue to be faithful. Jeremiah saw both God's judgment and God's steadfast love. In the time of judgment, Jeremiah could still cling to God's love, just as in times of prosperity he had warned of God's judgement.

In the original Hebrew, the first four chapters of Lamentations are acrostic poems. Each verse in each chapter begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 has 66 verses rather than 22 because it is a triple acrostic: the first three verses with the equivalent of A, the next three with B, and so on. This was a typical form of Hebrew poetry. Other examples (Psalms 37, 119 and 145, and Proverbs 31:10-31)

Verses 27-33: "submit to the yoke" come under God's discipline and learn what He wants to teach.

Verses 52-57: At one point in his ministry Jeremiah was thrown into an empty cistern, and he was left to die in the mire at the bottom. But God rescued him. Jeremiah used this experience as a picture of the nation sinking into sin. If they turned to God, He would rescue them.

### **Lamentations 4      God's anger is satisfied**

This chapter contrasts the situation before the siege of Jerusalem with the situation after the siege. The sites and sounds of prosperity were gone because of the people's sin. The chapter gives graphic description of how horrible it got in Jerusalem during the siege, dead bodies lying in the streets, people eating their own children to survive.

Verses 11-12 God's anger satisfied. The people thought Jerusalem was invincible. God proved to them that was not the case.

Edom was Judah's archenemy, even though they had a common ancestor, Isaac. Edom had actively Babylon in the siege of Jerusalem. As a reward Nebuchadnezzar gave the outlying lands of Judah to Edom. Jeremiah said that Edom would be judged for her treachery against her brothers.

## **Lamentations 5      Jeremiah pleads for restoration**

At a time of grief, the true believer should turn to God in prayer. Here Jeremiah prayed for mercy for his people. At the end of his prayer he wondered if God had “utterly rejected” his people because of his great anger toward them.

Lamentations gives us a portrait of the bitter suffering the people of Jerusalem experience when sin caught up with them and God turned his back on them. Every material goal they had lived for collapsed. But although God turned away from them because of their sin, He did not abandon them – that was their great hope. Despite their sinful past, God would restore them if they turned to him. Hope is found only in the Lord. Thus, our grief should turn us toward Him, not away from him.

## **Ezekiel 1      The Vision of the Living Beings**

Ezekiel, born and raised in the land of Judah, was preparing to become a priest in God’s Temple when the Babylonians attacked in 597 B.C. and carried him away along with 10,000 other captives. The nation was on the brink of complete destruction. Five years later, when Ezekiel was 30 (the normal age of becoming a priest), God called him to become a prophet. During the

When Ezekiel received his vision, he was far away from the Temple in Jerusalem, the physical symbol of God’s presence. Through this vision, he learned that God is present everywhere and that God’s activities in heaven are shaping the events on earth.

## **Ezekiel 2      Ezekiel’s call and commission**

Verse 2 says Ezekiel listened carefully (God had his undivided attention!)

God tells Ezekiel he is sending him to the nation of Israel with a message they won’t want to hear, but to keep giving them the message whether they like it or not.

God emphasizes the rebelliousness and stubbornness of his people.

## **Ezekiel 3      Continuation of the call and commission**

God emphasizes that the message is for Ezekiel’s own people and He continues to encourage Ezekiel not to be fearful.

Ezekiel is told to take the message into his own heart first. Before he takes it to the people.

When the Spirit took him away, it moved him about 40-50 miles.

Then God appointed him a (Watchman for Israel). He was commanded to give whatever message God gave him to the people immediately, or he would suffer the consequences. Chapter 3 is the first occurrence where God says (some will listen).

#### **Ezekiel 4      A Sign (Model) of the coming Siege**

Ezekiel is commanded to build a model of Jerusalem and act out the siege in front of the people. The 8 oz. portion of food was the common ration for a city under siege. Cooking over dung was a sign of Israel's spiritual uncleanness.

#### **Ezekiel 5      Another Sign of coming Judgement**

Shaving one's head and beard signified mourning, humiliation and repentance. God told Ezekiel to shave his head and beard and then to divide the hair into three parts, symbolizing what was going to happen to the people in Jerusalem. The few strands of hair Ezekiel put in his robe symbolize the small remnant of faithful people God would preserve. But even some from this remnant would be judged and destroyed because their faith was not genuine.

#### **Ezekiel 6      Judgement against Israel's Mountains**

This is the beginning of a two part message. Remember that Ezekiel could speak only when giving messages from God. The message in chapter 6 is that Judah's idolatry will surely call down God's judgment. The message in chapter 7 describes the nature of that judgment – utter destruction of the nation. Nevertheless God in his mercy saves a remnant. Ezekiel prophesies against the mountains of Israel because mountains were sites of pagan shrines used to worship idols.

# EZEKIEL

Jeremiah  
becomes a  
prophet  
to Judah  
627 B.C.

Daniel  
taken  
captive to  
Babylon  
605

Ezekiel  
taken  
captive to  
Babylon  
597

Ezekiel  
becomes a  
prophet  
to exiles  
593

Judah  
falls;  
Jerusalem  
destroyed  
586

Ezekiel's  
ministry  
ends  
571

Babylon  
overthrown  
by Cyrus  
539

First  
exiles  
return  
to Judah  
538