

# Lamentations

Why Has God Turned Against Me?



**Lament:** verb to mourn aloud: WAIL; noun a crying out in grief WAILING, DIRGE, ELEGY, COMPLAINT-Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

As you read the book of Lamentations, what do you think? How does it make you feel? When was the last time you read it? Is it one of those books you skip because... (reasons)? Does the book contain anything of value for us today or is it just "filler" God placed in His Word to meet some editorial requirement?

The book is only five short chapters. You can read it in 20 minutes, if you read slowly. It reminds me a little of the book of Proverbs. It's a book with the central idea of the 'glass being almost empty'; rather, there are only one or two drops in the bottom and those drops taste like dish soap. Although, it has several central themes, it has a series of refrains which can be pondered individually (within the context of those themes) to provide wisdom.

What are those themes:

- affliction
- wasting away
- being entrapped
- being 'target practice'
- despair/ despondency
- dullness
- loss of status
- being pursued, no rest/ peace/ privacy

of course, you may see others as you read it. Write them down so you can ponder them. These are those which came to my mind as I read the book. I tried not to be repetitive, however there is some overlap in these subjects.

Where do we start in our pursuit of the knowledge of God? I have no idea where you are, spiritually speaking of course. I also have no idea where you are physically speaking either, unless I do. Let's begin with things that should be common to all of us. What are those things?

I'm simply living my life; going about my business; providing for my family and trying to do what's right. And yet...

Something seems to be "off". Something seems out of sync. Something is just not right. What is it? I don't necessarily know.

- Why does it feel like I'm being afflicted?
- Why do I feel like I'm simply wasting away?
- Why do I feel entrapped?
- Why does it feel like God is using me for target practice?
- Although I'm reasonably content, why do I have a sense of despair/ despondency?
- Why do I feel dull?
- Why am I losing status?
- Why do I feel pursued, not being able to rest or be at peace or have privacy?

Lamentations was written after the Israelites had been sent into exile as punishment by God for their ongoing disobedience. The book proposes the idea this state of being (as listed above) is a result of not being in a right relationship with God. Whereas Paul in the letter to the Philippians chapter 4 verses 10-13 states he's been able to be content regardless of his circumstances- including hunger and when he had to "suffer need". How can one possibly be content when one doesn't have enough? That makes no sense! Or does it?

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.-*Philippians 4:10-13 (NKJV)*

Lamentations has several central themes. One of those being a nation becomes weak and “vile” in God’s site because of its ongoing rebellion against Him. Because the nation/ group/ individual plants the seeds of rebellion they eventually reap a harvest of what has been sown (by their own doing): treachery, fear, insecurity, subordination to enemies, etc.

Another theme in the book is that of God inverting the internal workings of the nation which continues in its rebellion against Him. This will be evidenced by those who are unqualified ruling over those who should be qualified (the servant being dominant over the master and the like). It will be shown by a nation being overrun with foreigners, something which will not be well received today since the “immigrant” is celebrated as a sinless celebrity who must be worshipped. Another sign is that the citizens of a country (in this case Israel) will be required to pay for things they would not normally i.e. bread and water, indicating severe financial upheaval. Instead of trying to list each example here, simply pay attention as you read. The examples are abundant and will be easy to identify if you focus on the pattern being presented.

A third theme referenced briefly is the complicity of the religious leaders in allowing the moral downfall of the nation.

Your prophets have seen for you

False and deceptive visions;

They have not uncovered your iniquity,

To bring back your captives,

But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.-[Lamentations 2:14 \(NKJV\)](#)

The prophets, who were the moral guardians of Israel (pastors in the modern Church) are not true to God. This can be known by the fact their visions were false and deceptive thus they could not have come from God. Also, they were working to cover-up/ hide sin as opposed to exposing it. This could not be more relevant today. On a personal level we need to examine ourselves to see if we’re exposing our sin to God or if we’re trying to hide/ cover it.

The last theme in Lamentations I want to mention is: **IF** we return to God, **THEN** he will relent and forgive.

25 The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him,

To the soul *who* seeks Him.

26 *It is* good that *one* should hope and wait quietly

For the salvation of the LORD.

27 *It is* good for a man to bear

The yoke in his youth.-[Lamentations 3:25-27 \(NKJV\)](#)

40 Let us search out and examine our ways,

And turn back to the LORD;

41 Let us lift our hearts and hands

To God in heaven.

42 We have transgressed and rebelled;

You have not pardoned.- [Lamentations 3:40-42 \(NKJV\)](#)

Lamentations, as mentioned, is a short book. It doesn’t require a lengthy discussion. What it requires is lengthy reflection. Please use the themes and questions as a guide to do that. We need be honest with ourselves even if we don’t like what we discover.