

Read Lamentations 3

The greatest (if not only) note of hope in Lamentations comes in the middle of the middle chapter (Lam 3:21-26). Why does they writer cling to hope? List the ways the writer praises God in these verses? How would you sum up what the writer is saying?

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Lamentations is certainly the darkest book in the Bible. But the darkness of Lamentations only makes the light and hope of the cross shine more brightly. What would you want to say to the writer of Lamentations about the hope that comes through the death and resurrection?

While we continue to live in this world we will encounter hardship and maybe suffering and injustice. What can we learn from Lamentations about continuing as faithful followers of Jesus?

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the setting for the book of Lamentations

It is rare for a whole country to be overrun, but that is what happened to the people of Judah in 587BC. The northern half of the divided nation of Israel was taken into captivity in 722BC. And in 586BC the city of Jerusalem was destroyed ... invaded by the Babylonians ... the Superpower of the day ... and any useful people were taken off into captivity to Babylon to serve and work for the Babylonian empire. (The book of Daniel tells the story of those taken off to Babylon).

The book of Lamentations is made up of 5 poems. And the first 4 poems are acrostics. Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet (in the same way Psalm 119). It seems strange that there is such a clear structure and order to a book about chaos and destruction.

before we begin ...

But before we start ... to get a better feel for the Babylonian invasion **read 2 Kings 25:1-9**.
What would it be like to live through that? Can you think of any modern-day equivalents?

To appreciate the feeling of the people in captivity in Babylon **read Psalm 137**.

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Read Lamentations 1:1-11.

What words/expressions are used to describe fallen Jerusalem's condition?

What do you think it means when the writer says "Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her" (Lam 1:2b)

Read Lamentations 2

The writer is in no doubt who has destroyed Jerusalem ... and it is not the Babylonians. Who does he say (repeatedly) has caused the destruction of Jerusalem? Does the writer think that the destruction is justified?

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