

Human sorrow! Many of us experienced it this year, and probably will during this next year. I know few who didn't experience grief of some sort this past year. These times of brokenness, pain, pressure, confusion, tragedy—Christians aren't exempt! Lamentations was written by a broken man who hadn't done anything wrong; in fact, he had been doing everything right! Lamentations was written by this broken man who was either sitting in the smoldering ruins of the city of Jerusalem or walking through the devastated city. As we follow this man through the empty streets of Jerusalem, there was loneliness, groaning, anger, emptiness, desperate pleadings, deep hurt. The city was in ruins and the people were gone—either through being starved or slaughtered or through being dragged away into captivity. The traditional writer is Jeremiah, and he is lamenting, which means to wail, cry out in grief, mourn aloud; what you might hear at an emotional funeral service. **Lam. 2:11-12** says, “**My eyes fail because of tears, my spirit is greatly troubled; my heart is poured out on the earth because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, when little ones and infants faint in the streets of the city. :12 They say to their mothers, ‘Where is grain and wine?’ as they faint like a wounded man in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers’ bosom.**” Charles Swindoll writes, “Most of us have never been involved in a mop-up scene after a battle or after a calamity of one kind or another. But those who have been involved testify that it is one of the most painful and pathetic experiences a human being can endure.” For us it's any situation where people feel distressed, abandoned, lonely, facing great adversity, grieving not only for ourselves but also for others. Where is that place for you? Yes, grief, great and crushing, is an unavoidable part of human life. To one passing through such an experience, **Lamentations** may speak its word of comfort in ways that no one else can. Why? Because at the peak or high point of the book, the writer remembers God and His character. And, although the circumstances don't change, the writer does! In our pain and grief, let us remember God—who He is, what He's done, what He's said.

THE HISTORY In 605 B.C., the Babylonians (or Chaldeans) began controlling the nation of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar (who would soon become king of Babylon) entered the city of Jerusalem, received tribute, a promise of obedience, and took some of her best young men (including the prophet Daniel). But, Judah rebelled again in 601 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar returned in 598-597 B.C. He took Jerusalem again, this time taking the Temple vessels and thousands of the skilled men (including the prophet Ezekiel) back to Babylon. Zedekiah was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. In 589-588 Judah rebelled once more. Nebuchadnezzar came a third time. It took about two years for total victory. The last one and a half years was a terrible siege of Jerusalem. “Within the city the ever-tightening siege by Babylon's armies began unraveling the fabric of society. Starving mothers ate their own children (**2:20, 4:10**). Idolatry flourished as the people cried out to any and every god for deliverance. Paranoia gripped the people until they were willing to kill God's prophet as a traitor/spy just because he spoke the truth. The long siege ended abruptly on July 18, 586 B.C. The walls were then breached and

the Babylonian army began entering the city.” So horrifying was Jerusalem's destruction that the facts are recorded in four OT chapters: **2 Kings 25, Jer. 39:1-11, Jer. 52, and 2 Chron. 36:11-21**. The siege of Jerusalem; the famine in the city; the breaching of the city walls; the flight of the army and the king (he was eventually captured, his children were brought before him and then killed; he was then blinded and taken captive to Babylon); the execution of the leaders; the looting of the temple; the burning of the temple, palace, and city; the Babylonians so broke down the walls and terraces that restoration was impossible; the collapse of the expected foreign help; the exile of the populace. **Lamentations** mourns the fall of the city. Someone said that even to this day the book is read by Jews on the anniversary of the temple's destruction.

THE MAN Jeremiah was one of the prophets of Judah during the dark days leading to her destruction. God called him to be a prophet. He thought he was too young, too inexperienced, with an inability to speak well. The Lord touched his mouth and said, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.” And that's what Jeremiah spoke for 42 years—God's words! Speaking during the reigns of five kings (four of them rotten), Jeremiah boldly proclaimed the Lord's truth to each but all he saw was refusal to listen. One of the kings took his written words, tore them to shreds, and burned them. And the people of Judah also refused to repent. They plotted Jeremiah's death; he was put in stocks; people laughed at him; they called him a traitor; the people he loved hated him. Rejected, beaten, imprisoned, suffering, given the death penalty. Even his family abandoned him. During these dark days Jeremiah wrote the book of **Jeremiah**. **Lamentations** is the PS to the book of **Jeremiah**.

Yet even when his prophecies finally proved true, he mourned with the people and the city and the nation. Yes, he understood that God was acting because of Judah's sin, but he was still overwhelmed by the greatness of her ruin. Yes, he understood God's justice, but he still wept. He's been called the prophet with the broken heart. He was angry at the sinful priests and false prophets and upset at the nations which overthrew Jerusalem or failed to come to her aid. But mostly, Jeremiah is sad. He is grieved at the loss of Jerusalem and the scattering of God's people. By now an aging, weary man, sometimes in **Lamentations** he speaks from a personal viewpoint; other times he expresses the nation's voice. Nothing left—*except God and His Word*. Everything Jeremiah could see had been torn from him; *but, God was there!* Even with a broken and lonely heart, he would wait on Yahweh. He sits in the rubble and ruin of Jerusalem weeping as he writes five separate laments, like funeral poems or songs.

THE BOOK The Hebrew title is “**How...!**” It's not a question but an exclamation! It expresses a deep sense of dismay and anguish over the tragic events. These chapters are sad beyond description. The entire city had been demolished, slaughter had touched every part of society; the best of Jerusalem's people had been dragged off into exile hundreds of miles away. The temple had been destroyed; their religious system of worship had come to an end. **Lamentations** is the funeral service of the once beautiful city of Jerusalem, the city of God, the city of David, where the Temple was.

In chapter one, Jeremiah speaks in place of the city; we see Jerusalem's devastation, desolation, and misery. Swindoll says, "Screaming out in agony, there was no relief from the pain, no dignity in her shame, no companionship in her barren nakedness." In chapter two, we see Yahweh's anger with His people, the reasons for God's destruction of the city and people. In chapter three, we hear Jeremiah himself speaking, first his grief expressed, then the hope he has. Although the Lord is just in His judgment, He is still a God of grace and love and mercy. These verses in chapter three are the heart of this book. *Turning to Yahweh created hope for the future.* In chapter four, we see the contrast between Jerusalem's past glory and her present misery. All the things that seemed so valuable, so worth pursuing and possessing, are now seen as empty, worthless. All the things that promised hope and fulfillment were gone. In chapter five we see Jeremiah representing the broken nation, asking God for mercy: "**Remember us, restore us, renew our days.**"

IMMEDIATE CONTEXT Darkness, disease, bitterness, physical pain leading to frustration, humiliation. Jeremiah's hopelessness reaches its climax in chapter three. He's ashamed; he's in despair. One thought though crowded out the hopelessness that threatens to overwhelm him. Yahweh's lovingkindness! He remembers God; he focuses on the character of God. It was Yahweh's Word he rejoiced in. **Jer. 15:16** says, "**Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Yahweh God of hosts.**"

Although your time of brokenness may not be a result of sin (Jeremiah's certainly wasn't!), this book ministers to us in deep ways. God promises to be with us, to see us through—all the way to the end. We need this word regardless of age, whether young or old, immature or mature, male or female. If possible, learn these lessons while you're young.

Please take the time right now to **read Lam. 3:1-20** to set up **:21-26**. As someone wrote, "This bright passage [referring to **3:21-26**] framed on both sides with deep darkness, makes God and His character stand out even more." Now let's look at **:21-26, This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. :22 Yahweh's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. :23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. :24 "Yahweh is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." :25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. :26 It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of Yahweh.** In these verses we see that "Yahweh is loving, compassionate, faithful, my portion: therefore I have hope in Him." This description sounds like **Ex. 34:6-7**.

:21 This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope—Jeremiah thinks of the things that are always true about God; he reviews God's Person and character. And, the tone of his thinking changes dramatically. He doesn't deny or minimize what he and the people are going through, but these realities are transformed when the mind is turned to God. We see that it's a choice, in what direction we're going to let our minds go, what we're going to recall. "May our confidence and hope be in You alone." Because of God's Person and character, Jeremiah dares to hope. What are you recalling; what are you filling

your mind with? Hope comes from letting our minds dwell on Yahweh alone!

:22 Yahweh's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail—"Yahweh, You have a steadfast, enduring love that NEVER ceases." The Hebrew word *khesed* is used about 250 times in the OT, referring to God's kind of love. It's not so much an emotional word (such as compassions would be) but a freedom-of-decision kind of love. God is free to extend His lovingkindnesses, and He does!! They never cease! The word *khesed* includes love/grace/mercy/goodness/forgiveness/truth/faithfulness. Though pressed to the point of despair, Jeremiah had hope in Yahweh's lovingkindnesses. God would not stop loving him or the nation. Even His judgment was a witness that He had not abandoned His people. His lovingkindnesses NEVER cease! **For His compassions never fail**—the word *compassions* comes from the word 'womb'. In the NT the word translated *compassion* means "moved to your innards!" They NEVER fail. "Lord, this shows You are compassionate, gently yet intensely concerned for those who belong to You." Let us never forget this. **3:32** says, **For if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness.** God's compassion exceeds the grief of all mankind. His deep, tender love. "For His compassions NEVER fail!", no matter your circumstance or feelings.

:23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness—"Father, vital parts of Your character, Your lovingkindness and compassion, are always fresh, ready to be known and proved again." God offers a fresh supply every day to His people. The inexhaustible supply, morning by morning, EVERY MORNING! **Great is Your faithfulness**—any deliverance would come, not because someone was faithful to God but because GOD is faithful. "Your faithfulness is unchanging; it is beyond measure." Jeremiah appeals to God for mercy, based on the confidence that God is faithful. GOD IS FAITHFUL!

And then here is what I treasure in these verses: **:24 Yahweh is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. Yahweh is my portion**—in **Num. 18:20**, Yahweh told Aaron that he would receive no portion of the land, but then He said, "I AM your portion and your inheritance." Just think, Yahweh would be Aaron's portion, Yahweh would be Jeremiah's portion, and Yahweh will be our portion. Just the right portion; Yahweh is it! "Because of who You are and what You're like, I am content that YOU(!) are my portion!" Yahweh is the sum of all Jeremiah's desires. In **Ps. 73:25-28** the writer Asaph says, "**Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. :26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. :27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. :28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made Yahweh God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.**" Think of where Jeremiah is sitting, and what he's left with—*nothing but Yahweh!* And He's enough!! **Says my soul**—from everything within me, a thorough conviction. **Therefore I have hope in Him**—Therefore my hope (& rejoicing) is in Him alone. "I know who You are; I know what You will do is best, based on Your character and love."

:25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.

:25, :26, :27 each begin with ‘good’. ‘Good’ is Yahweh, ‘good’ it is that..., ‘good’ it is for.... *Good* is Yahweh! In **Ps. 86:5**, king David says, “**For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.**” Someone wrote, “God’s goodness makes such submission man’s highest good.” And according to **:27**, the time of youth is when such submission should be established. **Wait for Him—waiting in hope in Him is the idea. To the person who seeks Him—**Since God is like **:22-25**, good it is to seek Him (not run from or ignore Him)! To anyone, you, me, in spite of our circumstances.

:26 “Good it is” that he waits silently for the salvation of Yahweh. Remember Yahweh’s character and His actions: loving, merciful, to those who wait for Him and seek Him. Jeremiah is willing to be solitary and silent in suffering, recognizing God is at work even here. So “**Good it is**” to both hopefully and silently (submissively, without complaint) wait. For the salvation of Yahweh—He gives *Himself* to us! It’s HIS salvation, and HE is the Savior. Wow! Jeremiah was able to place his and his people’s afflictions in proper perspective by remembering God’s Person, character, words, works, and His covenant with His people. ‘Good’ are You, Lord!

Jeremiah ends this section of Lamentations by “**Let us examine our ways...return to Yahweh (:40).**” Let me share something though: Jeremiah NEVER saw positive results; his circumstances never changed. Eventually he was taken captive to Egypt. Making the godly choices doesn’t guarantee everything will change, that everything will turn out like we’d desire. We may be the only thing that changes, but we can rest in Him (**James 1:2-4**).

Lamentations makes us realize that we’re not the first to pass through despair and darkness. This book encourages us to face problems which seem impossible to face. Yes, the apostle Paul says, “**For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**” (2 Cor. 4:17), but, it still hurts! There’s still pain and sometimes loneliness and frustration and brokenness. Jeremiah experienced all of these, yet he had hope in Yahweh because of who He was and what He was like. His hope was in Yahweh alone. May our hope be the same!

For the Christian, in the midst of any suffering there is hope, because of who God is and the character He has—loving, compassionate, faithful. These are most important truths about God. Yes, He is just, rightly so (Jeremiah concluded that even the Babylonians were mere human agents of God’s discipline and that God Himself had destroyed the city and the temple), but even more, God is merciful. You see this loving, compassionate, faithful mercy and grace throughout the history of Israel. You see it during the earthly ministry of Jesus. Based on who God is and what He is like, “I choose to believe that who You are and what You have chosen to provide at this moment are all I need. I’ll place my trust in You, I’ll wait hopefully and silently for how You choose to work in my present situation.” **For these days, based on this passage, what will you choose to believe and do? What thoughts would you like to express to our Lord as a result of this study?**

Human sorrow! Many of us experienced it this year, and probably will during this next year. I know few who didn't experience grief of some sort this past year. These times of brokenness, pain, pressure, confusion, tragedy—Christians aren't exempt! Lamentations was written by a broken man who hadn't done anything wrong; in fact, he had been doing everything right! Lamentations was written by this broken man who was either sitting in the smoldering ruins of the city of Jerusalem or walking through the devastated city. As we follow this man through the empty streets of Jerusalem, there was loneliness, groaning, anger, emptiness, desperate pleadings, deep hurt. The city was in ruins and the people were gone—either through being starved or slaughtered or through being dragged away into captivity. The traditional writer is Jeremiah, and he is lamenting, which means to wail, cry out in grief, mourn aloud; what you might hear at an emotional funeral service. **Lam. 2:11-12** says, “**My eyes fail because of tears, my spirit is greatly troubled; my heart is poured out on the earth because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, when little ones and infants faint in the streets of the city. :12 They say to their mothers, ‘Where is grain and wine?’ as they faint like a wounded man in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers’ bosom.**” Charles Swindoll writes, “Most of us have never been involved in a mop-up scene after a battle or after a calamity of one kind or another. But those who have been involved testify that it is one of the most painful and pathetic experiences a human being can endure.” For us it's any situation where people feel distressed, abandoned, lonely, facing great adversity, grieving not only for ourselves but also for others. Where is that place for you? Yes, grief, great and crushing, is an unavoidable part of human life. To one passing through such an experience, **Lamentations** may speak its word of comfort in ways that no one else can. Why? Because at the peak or high point of the book, the writer remembers God and His character. And, although the circumstances don't change, the writer does! In our pain and grief, let us remember God—who He is, what He's done, what He's said.

THE HISTORY In 605 B.C., the Babylonians (or Chaldeans) began controlling the nation of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar (who would soon become king of Babylon) entered the city of Jerusalem, received tribute, a promise of obedience, and took some of her best young men (including the prophet Daniel). But, Judah rebelled again in 601 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar returned in 598-597 B.C. He took Jerusalem again, this time taking the Temple vessels and thousands of the skilled men (including the prophet Ezekiel) back to Babylon. Zedekiah was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. In 589-588 Judah rebelled once more. Nebuchadnezzar came a third time. It took about two years for total victory. The last one and a half years was a terrible siege of Jerusalem. “Within the city the ever-tightening siege by Babylon's armies began unraveling the fabric of society. Starving mothers ate their own children (**2:20, 4:10**). Idolatry flourished as the people cried out to any and every god for deliverance. Paranoia gripped the people until they were willing to kill God's prophet as a traitor/spy just because he spoke the truth. The long siege ended abruptly on July 18, 586 B.C. The walls were then breached and

the Babylonian army began entering the city.” So horrifying was Jerusalem’s destruction that the facts are recorded in four OT chapters: **2 Kings 25, Jer. 39:1-11, Jer. 52, and 2 Chron. 36:11-21**. The siege of Jerusalem; the famine in the city; the breaching of the city walls; the flight of the army and the king (he was eventually captured, his children were brought before him and then killed; he was then blinded and taken captive to Babylon); the execution of the leaders; the looting of the temple; the burning of the temple, palace, and city; the Babylonians so broke down the walls and terraces that restoration was impossible; the collapse of the expected foreign help; the exile of the populace. **Lamentations** mourns the fall of the city. Someone said that even to this day the book is read by Jews on the anniversary of the temple’s destruction.

THE MAN Jeremiah was one of the prophets of Judah during the dark days leading to her destruction. God called him to be a prophet. He thought he was too young, too inexperienced, with an inability to speak well. The Lord touched his mouth and said, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.” And that’s what Jeremiah spoke for 42 years—God’s words! Speaking during the reigns of five kings (four of them rotten), Jeremiah boldly proclaimed the Lord’s truth to each but all he saw was refusal to listen. One of the kings took his written words, tore them to shreds, and burned them. And the people of Judah also refused to repent. They plotted Jeremiah’s death; he was put in stocks; people laughed at him; they called him a traitor; the people he loved hated him. Rejected, beaten, imprisoned, suffering, given the death penalty. Even his family abandoned him. During these dark days Jeremiah wrote the book of **Jeremiah**. **Lamentations** is the PS to the book of **Jeremiah**.

Yet even when his prophecies finally proved true, he mourned with the people and the city and the nation. Yes, he understood that God was acting because of Judah’s sin, but he was still overwhelmed by the greatness of her ruin. Yes, he understood God’s justice, but he still wept. He’s been called the prophet with the broken heart. He was angry at the sinful priests and false prophets and upset at the nations which overthrew Jerusalem or failed to come to her aid. But mostly, Jeremiah is sad. He is grieved at the loss of Jerusalem and the scattering of God’s people. By now an aging, weary man, sometimes in **Lamentations** he speaks from a personal viewpoint; other times he expresses the nation’s voice. Nothing left—*except God and His Word*. Everything Jeremiah could see had been torn from him; *but, God was there!* Even with a broken and lonely heart, he would wait on Yahweh. He sits in the rubble and ruin of Jerusalem weeping as he writes five separate laments, like funeral poems or songs.

THE BOOK The Hebrew title is “**How...!**” It’s not a question but an exclamation! It expresses a deep sense of dismay and anguish over the tragic events. These chapters are sad beyond description. The entire city had been demolished, slaughter had touched every part of society; the best of Jerusalem’s people had been dragged off into exile hundreds of miles away. The temple had been destroyed; their religious system of worship had come to an end. **Lamentations** is the funeral service of the once beautiful city of Jerusalem, the city of God, the city of David, where the Temple was.

In chapter one, Jeremiah speaks in place of the city; we see Jerusalem's devastation, desolation, and misery. Swindoll says, "Screaming out in agony, there was no relief from the pain, no dignity in her shame, no companionship in her barren nakedness." In chapter two, we see Yahweh's anger with His people, the reasons for God's destruction of the city and people. In chapter three, we hear Jeremiah himself speaking, first his grief expressed, then the hope he has. Although the Lord is just in His judgment, He is still a God of grace and love and mercy. These verses in chapter three are the heart of this book. *Turning to Yahweh created hope for the future.* In chapter four, we see the contrast between Jerusalem's past glory and her present misery. All the things that seemed so valuable, so worth pursuing and possessing, are now seen as empty, worthless. All the things that promised hope and fulfillment were gone. In chapter five we see Jeremiah representing the broken nation, asking God for mercy: "**Remember us, restore us, renew our days.**"

IMMEDIATE CONTEXT Darkness, disease, bitterness, physical pain leading to frustration, humiliation. Jeremiah's hopelessness reaches its climax in chapter three. He's ashamed; he's in despair. One thought though crowded out the hopelessness that threatens to overwhelm him. Yahweh's lovingkindness! He remembers God; he focuses on the character of God. It was Yahweh's Word he rejoiced in. **Jer. 15:16** says, "**Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Yahweh God of hosts.**"

Although your time of brokenness may not be a result of sin (Jeremiah's certainly wasn't!), this book ministers to us in deep ways. God promises to be with us, to see us through—all the way to the end. We need this word regardless of age, whether young or old, immature or mature, male or female. If possible, learn these lessons while you're young.

Please take the time right now to **read Lam. 3:1-20** to set up **:21-26**. As someone wrote, "This bright passage [referring to **3:21-26**] framed on both sides with deep darkness, makes God and His character stand out even more." Now let's look at **:21-26, This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. :22 Yahweh's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. :23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. :24 "Yahweh is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." :25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. :26 It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of Yahweh.** In these verses we see that "Yahweh is loving, compassionate, faithful, my portion: therefore I have hope in Him." This description sounds like **Ex. 34:6-7**.

:21 This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope—Jeremiah thinks of the things that are always true about God; he reviews God's Person and character. And, the tone of his thinking changes dramatically. He doesn't deny or minimize what he and the people are going through, but these realities are transformed when the mind is turned to God. We see that it's a choice, in what direction we're going to let our minds go, what we're going to recall. "May our confidence and hope be in You alone." Because of God's Person and character, Jeremiah dares to hope. What are you recalling; what are you filling

your mind with? Hope comes from letting our minds dwell on Yahweh alone!

:22 Yahweh's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail—"Yahweh, You have a steadfast, enduring love that NEVER ceases." The Hebrew word *khesed* is used about 250 times in the OT, referring to God's kind of love. It's not so much an emotional word (such as compassions would be) but a freedom-of-decision kind of love. God is free to extend His lovingkindnesses, and He does!! They never cease! The word *khesed* includes love/grace/mercy/goodness/forgiveness/truth/faithfulness. Though pressed to the point of despair, Jeremiah had hope in Yahweh's lovingkindnesses. God would not stop loving him or the nation. Even His judgment was a witness that He had not abandoned His people. His lovingkindnesses NEVER cease! **For His compassions never fail**—the word *compassions* comes from the word 'womb'. In the NT the word translated *compassion* means "moved to your innards!" They NEVER fail. "Lord, this shows You are compassionate, gently yet intensely concerned for those who belong to You." Let us never forget this. **3:32 says, For if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness.** God's compassion exceeds the grief of all mankind. His deep, tender love. "For His compassions NEVER fail!", no matter your circumstance or feelings.

:23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness—"Father, vital parts of Your character, Your lovingkindness and compassion, are always fresh, ready to be known and proved again." God offers a fresh supply every day to His people. The inexhaustible supply, morning by morning, EVERY MORNING! **Great is Your faithfulness**—any deliverance would come, not because someone was faithful to God but because GOD is faithful. "Your faithfulness is unchanging; it is beyond measure." Jeremiah appeals to God for mercy, based on the confidence that God is faithful. GOD IS FAITHFUL!

And then here is what I treasure in these verses: **:24 Yahweh is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. Yahweh is my portion**—in Num. 18:20, Yahweh told Aaron that he would receive no portion of the land, but then He said, "I AM your portion and your inheritance." Just think, Yahweh would be Aaron's portion, Yahweh would be Jeremiah's portion, and Yahweh will be our portion. Just the right portion; Yahweh is it! "Because of who You are and what You're like, I am content that YOU(!) are my portion!" Yahweh is the sum of all Jeremiah's desires. In Ps. 73:25-28 the writer Asaph says, **"Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. :26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. :27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. :28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made Yahweh God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works."** Think of where Jeremiah is sitting, and what he's left with—*nothing but Yahweh!* And He's enough!! **Says my soul**—from everything within me, a thorough conviction. **Therefore I have hope in Him**—Therefore my hope (& rejoicing) is in Him alone. "I know who You are; I know what You will do is best, based on Your character and love."

:25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.

:25, :26, :27 each begin with ‘good’. ‘Good’ is Yahweh, ‘good’ it is that..., ‘good’ it is for.... *Good* is Yahweh! In **Ps. 86:5**, king David says, “**For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.**” Someone wrote, “God’s goodness makes such submission man’s highest good.” And according to **:27**, the time of youth is when such submission should be established. **Wait for Him—waiting in hope in Him is the idea. To the person who seeks Him—**Since God is like **:22-25**, good it is to seek Him (not run from or ignore Him)! To anyone, you, me, in spite of our circumstances.

:26 “**Good it is**” that he waits silently for the salvation of Yahweh. Remember Yahweh’s character and His actions: loving, merciful, to those who wait for Him and seek Him. Jeremiah is willing to be solitary and silent in suffering, recognizing God is at work even here. So “**Good it is**” to both hopefully and silently (submissively, without complaint) wait. For the salvation of Yahweh—He gives *Himself* to us! It’s HIS salvation, and HE is the Savior. Wow! Jeremiah was able to place his and his people’s afflictions in proper perspective by remembering God’s Person, character, words, works, and His covenant with His people. ‘Good’ are You, Lord!

Jeremiah ends this section of Lamentations by “**Let us examine our ways...return to Yahweh (:40).**” Let me share something though: Jeremiah NEVER saw positive results; his circumstances never changed. Eventually he was taken captive to Egypt. Making the godly choices doesn’t guarantee everything will change, that everything will turn out like we’d desire. We may be the only thing that changes, but we can rest in Him (**James 1:2-4**).

Lamentations makes us realize that we’re not the first to pass through despair and darkness. This book encourages us to face problems which seem impossible to face. Yes, the apostle Paul says, “**For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**” (2 Cor. 4:17), but, it still hurts! There’s still pain and sometimes loneliness and frustration and brokenness. Jeremiah experienced all of these, yet he had hope in Yahweh because of who He was and what He was like. His hope was in Yahweh alone. May our hope be the same!

For the Christian, in the midst of any suffering there is hope, because of who God is and the character He has—loving, compassionate, faithful. These are most important truths about God. Yes, He is just, rightly so (Jeremiah concluded that even the Babylonians were mere human agents of God’s discipline and that God Himself had destroyed the city and the temple), but even more, God is merciful. You see this loving, compassionate, faithful mercy and grace throughout the history of Israel. You see it during the earthly ministry of Jesus. Based on who God is and what He is like, “I choose to believe that who You are and what You have chosen to provide at this moment are all I need. I’ll place my trust in You, I’ll wait hopefully and silently for how You choose to work in my present situation.” **For these days, based on this passage, what will you choose to believe and do? What thoughts would you like to express to our Lord as a result of this study?**