

God Loves You Anyway

Chapter 8

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #68



Objective: To understand the message of the book of Lamentations.



This I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

—Lamentations 3:21-26

The book of Lamentations is a sequel to the book of Jeremiah. It is a lament over the land that has been conquered and the people who have been massacred or taken captive. It also expresses grief over the fact that God's people were separated from their holy city and could no longer be near His temple.

Not only is Lamentations an expression of God's heart for His people, it is also a masterpiece of poetry. It contains five poems, four of which, in the original language, are acrostic—each line begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. Though it is a beautiful piece of literature, its inspired message is what earns it a place in God's Word. Even in the midst of despair, Jeremiah delivers a message of hope. In the middle of this sad book, he reminds us of the Lord's great love and that His compassions never fail. His chastisement is a sign that we are His children, and His mercies are new every morning.



1. True or false? Because God loved Jeremiah for his faithfulness, He spared the prophet from having to witness the horror of Jerusalem's downfall.
2. True or false? When Lamentations was written, Jerusalem was essentially a pile of rubble with very few people left in it.
3. True or false? Many people believe that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations on the same hill where Jesus was crucified centuries later.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. What is an acrostic poem?
 - a. A poem in which every line rhymes with the previous line
 - b. A poem about death and destruction
 - c. A poem in which each successive line begins with its corresponding letter of the alphabet
 - d. A prophetic poem that foretells the future
5. What is the most important feature of Lamentations?
 - a. Its literary quality
 - b. Its inspired message
 - c. Its graphic descriptions
 - d. Its hopelessness
6. In what way is Lamentations like the book of Job?
 - a. In the middle of all its sadness, there is a message of hope.
 - b. They are the same length.
 - c. Job is also an acrostic poem.
 - d. Neither book acknowledges the faithfulness of God.
7. What does it mean that God's compassions never fail?
 - a. God never lets His people suffer.
 - b. Whenever God has to judge His people, He will find someone else to have compassion on.
 - c. He makes sure His people always have some kind of hardship so He can express His sympathy for them.
 - d. God always loves us, even when we have failed.
8. What does the Bible mean when it says "God is love"?
 - a. Wherever we see any kind of love, God is the source of it.
 - b. God is the perfect expression of love that is patient, kind, selfless, forgiving, unconditional, and indestructible.
 - c. "God" is just another word for love.
 - d. God would never chastise His people.

9. How was Jeremiah vindicated by the destruction of Jerusalem?
- a. His prophecies came to pass.
 - b. It fulfilled his desire for Babylon's king to reign.
 - c. It satisfied his anger.
 - d. The enemy gave him great wealth and promoted him to a very high position.
10. What aspect of God's character did He demonstrate by chastising His people and allowing them to suffer?
- a. His bad temper
 - b. His always-changing mind
 - c. His unreasonable standards
 - d. His great love for His children
11. What message from Jeremiah does Hebrews 12 confirm?
- a. God punishes everyone the same.
 - b. God loves everyone and never would chastise those He loves.
 - c. God's love can not be understood.
 - d. God chastises those He loves.



What does it mean that God's love is unconditional? How does that love inspire you? Do you have that kind of love for anyone else?



Thank God that even in your greatest difficulties, you can depend on His love and that His love will never fail. Ask Him to help you experience that love and also demonstrate it to others.



Going Deeper

1. The greatest passage in Lamentations is chapter 3: 21 - 26. How do you apply that passage to your life and personal journey of faith? _____

2. The Living Bible Paraphrase captures the essence of this passage when it has God saying to Israel through Jeremiah, "I have never stopped loving you!" How does this essential truth about God's love apply to you personally? _____

3. Since the hope expressed in this passage applies primarily to the promised return of Israel to their land, how does the message of hope and waiting on the Lord apply to you personally especially in times of difficulty, when God may be chastising you? _____

4. Why did Jeremiah follow his prophecy, which has been called "A Series of Sobs," with more crying? As you answer this question, show how Lamentations describes the substance of the message of Jeremiah. In other words, show how this book of Lamentations graphically profiles the horror that Jeremiah saw coming. _____

5. Show how the fact that Jeremiah was writing these Lamentations on the hill of Calvary means that God was telling Israel through Jeremiah that He was not only pouring out His unconditional love for Israel there, but that one day He would pour out His love for the whole world on that spot. _____

6. Relate the 12th chapter of Hebrews to this basic message of the book of Lamentations that God loves us when He is chastising us. _____

7. How did the conquest of Jerusalem and Israel validate Jeremiah as an authentic prophet? ____
