

They are new every morning

Lamentations 3:18-26

18. And I said, “*My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord:*

19. *Remembering* (Zə-kār-talking to God) *mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.*

20. *My soul has them still in remembrance* (intensity and continuous action) *and is humbled in me.”*

21. This I recall (I cause these next truths to return to my heart) to my mind, therefore have I hope.

22. **It is of the Lord's mercies** (lovingkindness-steadfast love) **that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.**

23. **They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.**

24. The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.

25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.

26. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Lamentations 3 is distinctive within the book for its three-line acrostic structure like we covered last week in Psalm 111, & 112, where each set of three verses begins with the same Hebrew letter, emphasizing *order amid chaos*. The triple structure demands that the speaker slow down. It prevents him from spiraling into chaotic, unbridled rage. This chapter moves from despair to hope, illustrating a spiritual journey from feeling abandoned to trusting in God's mercy.

Completeness of Suffering:

Verses 1-20 depict intense affliction, using vivid imagery such as being “a target for arrows” or “as a bear lying in wait” to convey vulnerability and persecution.

Jeremiah's suffering is both personal and representative of the nation, showing how corporate suffering impacts individuals. He cannot just mention a trial and move on; he must linger on it.

The text emphasizes that affliction is often a form of divine discipline, intended to correct and refine rather than merely punish.

God's Faithfulness and Hope:

Verses 21-24 mark a turning point, where Jeremiah recalls God's mercies: “They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness”. In English, “mercy” or “lovingkindness” can sound like a fleeting feeling or a mood. But *chesed* is deeply rooted in **covenant law and commitment**

It refers to a loyal, binding love that refuses to let go, even when the other party breaks the agreement. This section highlights that even in despair, remembering God's character. The chapter encourages patient waiting, silent reflection, and trust in God's salvation.

It Imposes Restraint and Discipline:

Verses 25-39 With hope restored Jeremiah's thoughts shift from emotional processing to quiet theological reflection. He re-evaluates the purpose of his suffering, recognizing that God does not punish out of malice.

Communal Repentance and Appeals for Justice that Transitions from "Me" to "We":

Verses 40-66 provide guidance for the afflicted: to bear discipline, remain silent under suffering, and wait quietly for God's deliverance. It also calls for self-examination (v40) and vindication (v59). While the pain is vast, it has a boundary, it has an end, and it is entirely held within God's sovereign order.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven* (1Cor 10:13)

Lamentations 3 Context

Lamentations 3 serves as a profound example of biblical lament, combining raw honesty about suffering with a steadfast focus on God's mercy. It teaches that acknowledging, *not receiving*, pain and remembering God's faithfulness, while waiting patiently are essential for spiritual resilience, offering both comfort and guidance for individuals and communities facing adversity.

It was written in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem, right as the Babylonian captivity was beginning. You can think of Lamentations as an eyewitness, front-row seat to the smoke, rubble, and raw grief of Israel's greatest national tragedy.

The Exact Timeline (Around 586 B.C.)

The Bitter Siege: The Babylonian army under King Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem for 18 agonizing months. By the end, the city was entirely out of food, plagued by disease, and driven to absolute starvation. And in the summer of 586 B.C., the Babylonians breached the walls. They burned down Solomon's Temple (the center of their entire faith) to the ground, smashed the city walls, and executed the leadership. The majority of the surviving population was chained up and marched away into the Babylonian captivity.

Where is Jeremiah in Chapter 3?

Jeremiah was one of the few people left behind in the ruins. When he writes Lamentations 3, he is literally **sitting in the charred, smoking rubble of his hometown**.

He isn't looking back on the exile as a distant historical event years later. He is writing while the dust is still settling. The tragedy is raw, the air smells like smoke, and his heart is completely broken.

This wasn't written by someone sitting in a comfortable office on a good day. This was written by a man sitting in the ash-heap of his destroyed life. If God's love can be called 'steadfast' and 'new every morning' in the ruins of 586 B.C., it can certainly handle whatever we are facing in 2026.

In biblical literature, Lamentations 3 is not just the chronological middle of the book; it is the structural, theological, and architectural pinnacle of the entire masterpiece.

The book of Lamentations is meticulously engineered using a literary device called a **chiasmus** (a symmetrical, mirror-like structure). This design purposefully forces the reader's eye and heart directly to the center of the book - Chapter 3.

Then in Lamentations Chapter 5 it completes the Structural Symmetry (The "Mirror" Effect)

As we looked at in the chiasmus layout, Chapter 5 pairs directly with Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 looks at the tragedy from the **outside** - it describes Jerusalem as a lonely, weeping widow, rejected and ruined.

Chapter 5 looks at the tragedy from the inside - it is written from the perspective of the actual survivors remaining in the ruins, cataloging their everyday misery (lack of water, physical exhaustion, loss of leadership).

2. The Great Shift: From "Me" to "We"

In Chapter 3, we watched a single man wrestle through his personal despair. In Chapter 5, that individual counseling session turns into a corporate congregational prayer.

The voice changes entirely to the plural: "Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old" (Verse 21).

The personal breakthrough of hope achieved in Chapter 3 is now being taught and applied to the entire traumatized community.

3. Why It Breaks the Alphabetical Acrostic Pattern

Chapters 1 through 4 are strictly bound by the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 5 completely drops the acrostic structure. However, it leaves behind a brilliant structural clue: it still has exactly 22 verses (the exact number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet).

Scholars believe this intentional design choice serves two powerful purposes:

Grief overflows the boundaries: The first four chapters used the alphabet to try and "contain" the grief within orderly boundaries. By Chapter 5, the pain is so overwhelming that it breaks the structure entirely. The alphabet is gone because the speaker is too weary to keep up the poetic discipline.

An unfinished ending: By keeping 22 verses but dropping the actual letters, the writer creates a sense of "expectation without fulfillment." The poem is structurally incomplete, mirroring the fact that Jerusalem is still waiting for God to answer and rebuild them.

4. It Ends with a Brutally Honest Question

Instead of ending with a neat, happy bow, Chapter 5 fits in by forcing the reader to sit in the tension of a prolonged trial. The book closes with a desperate cry for restoration, immediately followed by a haunting question:

"Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old - unless you have utterly rejected us and remain angry with us beyond measure." - Lamentations 5:21-22

By ending here, Chapter 5 ensures that the book remains a true lament.

The hope of Chapter 3 is still true, but Chapter 5 proves that holding onto hope in the midst of ruins is messy, fragile, and ongoing.

If you removed Chapter 3, the book of Lamentations would be an unrelentingly dark, claustrophobic spiral of despair and 1, 2, 4, & 5 contain virtually no hope - only weeping, rubble, hunger, and questions.

The Matching Pairs: Chapter 1 mirrors Chapter 5 (describing the tragic state of the people), while Chapter 2 mirrors Chapter 4 (focusing on the fierce reality of God's judgment).

The Peak: Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 all stand at 22 verses each. Chapter 3 deliberately explodes to 66 verses, physically making it the longest, heaviest, and most prominent pillar of the entire book.

Chapter 1 has 22 verses (Single Acrostic) The Outside World: Jerusalem's desolation and grief.

Chapter 2 has 22 verses (Single Acrostic) The Wrath of God: The destruction described.

Chapter 3 has 66 verses (Triple Acrostic) The Focal Point: Crisis, Hope, and Mercy.

Chapter 4 has 22 verses (Single Acrostic) The Wrath of God: The aftermath & comparison of the past.

Chapter 5 has 22 verses (No Acrostic) The Inside World: A communal prayer for restoration.

Morning Renewal and Faithfulness:

Psalms 5:3 "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up."

Psalms 63:1 "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water."

Psalms 90:14 "O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!"

Psalms 143:8 "Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, for in You do I trust; cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You."

Psalms 30:5 "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

Psalms 86:15 "But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth."

Psalms 89:1-2 "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, 'Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.'"

Psalms 103:10 "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities."

Isaiah 33:2 "O Lord, be gracious to us; we have waited for You. Be their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble."

Zephaniah 3:5 "The Lord is righteous in the midst thereof; He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame."

Nehemiah 9:31 "Nevertheless in Your great mercies You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; for You are a gracious and merciful God."

Micah 7:18-19 "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore, you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."

Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."