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# Lamentations: The least read book of the Bible?

## Lamentations & Isaiah 53

In the five chapters of Lamentations, there are a number of recurring themes.

1. The Bible does not try to sanitize the sorrow, grief and calamity that Judah is facing. God gives us permission to 'tell it like it is,' without feeling a need to put a positive spin on genuinely difficult things.
2. The defeat of Judah is not attributed to the power of the surrounding nations but, perhaps surprisingly, to God himself. He brings about the conquest of Judah in order to see His people change their wayward heart and return to Him.
3. Lamentations, unlike many other books in the Bible, doesn't end with a 'God-breaking-in-moment.' In fact, it is a long time (hundreds of years) before we see the answer to the anguish expressed in this book.

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**John Piper** ('The Pleasures Of God'): *'Redemptive history is like a symphony with two great themes: the theme of God's passion to promote His glory; and the theme of God's inscrutable electing love for sinners who have scorned that very glory. Again and again all through the Bible these two great themes carry along the symphony of history. They interweave and interpenetrate and we know that some awesome Composer is at work here. But for centuries we don't hear the resolution. The harmony escapes us, and we have to wait... In the death of Jesus the two themes of God's love for His glory and His love for sinners is resolved.'*

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In this life, we have an opportunity to repent and to follow Christ, but a day will come where everyone will have to face God. We will all be held responsible for how we have responded to Christ. Either the wrath of God will be on us, as it was on Judah at the time of the exile, or it will have been spent in full at the cross of Jesus.

**John 3: 36:** *'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.'*

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## Questions

- How can Lamentations help us, or people we are pastoring, when we're facing deep sorrow and difficulty? Do you think there is a tendency among Christians to avoid talking honestly about really hard circumstances?
- Do you think God was 'stricter' and more of a disciplinarian in the Old Testament? Do you think the God of the New Testament differently? Given that God does not change, what did?
- Why is Christ the answer to the anguish we see in Lamentations? What did he accomplish that the exile could not? Discuss the John Piper quote above.
- Pray together in groups that those who do not yet know Christ would turn before it is too late.



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