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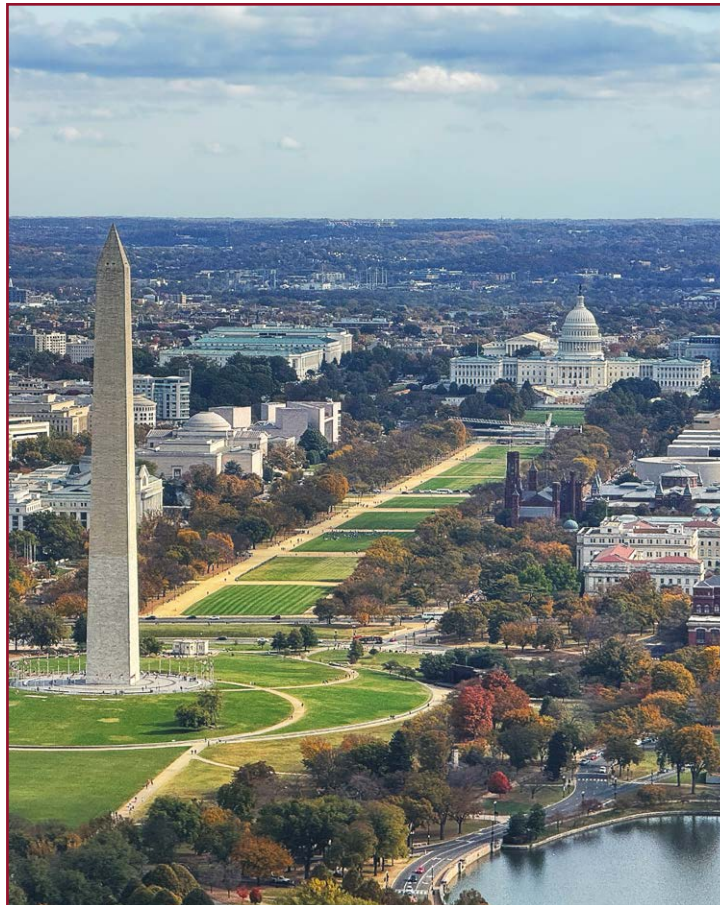


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# The Book of Lamentations as It Applies to America



The Old Testament (OT) book of Lamentations must serve as a wake-up call for America. The parallels are both uncanny and sobering. In view is God's long-suffering patience for a nation and the final giving way of that patience to His attribute of justice—due recompense.

America finds herself depending upon God's long-suffering patience. But when will that well of patience run out? In this Bible study you will find an overview of this five-chapter Old Testament book written by Jeremiah after ancient

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*The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.*

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

**White House Cabinet and Governors:** Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served

**Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

**House Members:** Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served



## PUBLIC SERVANT QUOTE

### Senate Majority Leader John Thune: CapMin Bible Studies Remind Elected Officials They Must Answer to God for Decisions



“The Capitol Ministries Bible Study for Senators in Washington, D.C., is where iron sharpens iron and where the truth in Scriptures is a powerful tool that helps people change their lives,” said John Thune, U.S. Senator and Senate Majority Leader, South Dakota.

“Ralph and Danielle are there to instruct, admonish, encourage, exhort, and inspire elected officials to lead their lives and conduct themselves in a way that brings glory to God, to remind us of what is important, what our priorities should be, and what we should be treasuring.

*Continued on page 4*

Israel had been devastated. My prayer is that this study will result not only in your familiarity with the book but also in earnest reflections and meditations, as a political leader, to the gravity of our situation here in America. May God use this Bible book overview as a motivation for your important job of steering America away from the future calamity from the Almighty. Such efforts, of course, begin in our own hearts.

Read on, beloved.

Ralph Drollinger

## I. INTRODUCTION

The later titling of the book of Lamentations relates to and stems from the Septuagint, an early Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, wherein was chosen a Greek word meaning “lament.” The Greek word was transliterated from the Hebrew word *ekah*, which appears as the first word of 1:1, 2:1, and 4:1 in the book itself. The Hebrew word means “loud cries.” The word could also be translated as “how,” in the sense of dismay, as is found in the above verses in most English translations. This book is literally titled *Oh! How Could This Have Happened?*

Note what had happened per Lamentations 1:1 and 2:15 respectively:

***How lonely sits the city that was full of people! She has become like a widow***

***who was once great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a forced laborer!***

***All who pass along the way clap their hands in derision at you; they hiss and shake their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, “Is this the city of which they said, ‘The perfection of beauty, a joy to all the earth’?”***

Right off the bat, you can understand how jam-packed with emotion the first word of this book is! There is no other entire OT book that is all about *Oh! How Could This Have Happened?*

Herein is a book of dirge—an entire book of dismay regarding the once beautiful city of Jerusalem.

This author is believed to be the one who prophesied Jerusalem’s coming





judgment, the one everyone totally ignored—Jeremiah—now looking back and writing with tears of anguish over a nation that had earlier failed to heed his munificent God-given warnings.

The parallels to America are not hard to see. But before going there, I must point out that this book is written specifically in relation to, and in memorial of, God's nation of His chosen people.

A critical, exegetical, theological distinction must be made at the outset of this study. In its tightest context, Lamentations is God's account of what happened to His chosen people, in this case a *theocratic nation* that lived in rebellion to their clearly stated purpose and calling. America is not similar in this regard: we are not a chosen, theocratic nation of God's set-apart people. Nor, in fact, can that be said of any other nation throughout history.

Lamentations examines the admonitions given to the theocratic nation of Judah. In the context of a non-theocratic nation like America, its proper application is to convey the principle that *believers within a secular nation need to be obedient to these admonitions*. This interpretive preamble is underscored by 2 Chronicles 7:14:

[If] *My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Note, *if My people* in the above listed passage: God's determinant for national judgment has to do with the obedience of His people (here stated as *My people*)

than the actions of the unregenerate in and around the nation itself. If His people *turn from their wicked ways* the stated basis in this passage as to whether He will heal or judge their land. Having made that very important distinction,<sup>1</sup> this follows:

**In any given secular nation, the obedience or disobedience of believers to the God of the Bible largely determines the course of that nation.**

First identifying the theocratic context of the Book of Lamentations is crucial; it determines what we may carry forward and apply today in a non-theocratic national setting. The timeless principle as seen throughout the whole of the Bible that determines the blessing or else the wrath of God on a given nation is the obedience of the believers in that nation to the precepts of Scripture. I daresay that if political leaders understood and agreed with this premise, it would greatly reshape their priorities while in office.

In terms of obedience to God, what believers sow in a secular nation largely determines what that nation will reap. Again, the informative, guiding light is 2 Chronicles 7:14 that states *God holds believers responsible*.<sup>2</sup>

In the New Testament (NT), this same principle echoes forth and is underscored—but only now in a non-theocratic context. First Peter 4:17 states the following:

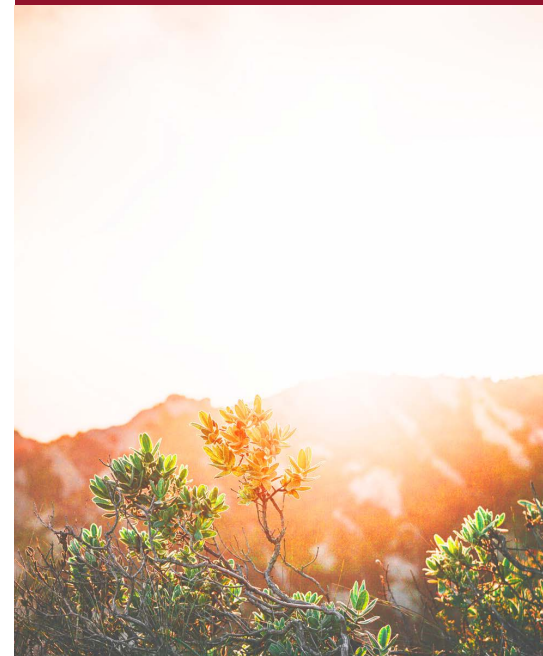
*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it*

VERSE OF THE WEEK



**Psalms 30:3–5**

*O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.*



This wonderful passage relative to knowing God is a great insight into the way He thinks and acts, and subsequently, how we should think.



*Continued from page 2*

“In a profession which relies so heavily on gaining the approval of men, it’s important for elected officials to be reminded that, ultimately, they must answer to God for their actions and the decisions they make.



“Ralph is committed to going deep in his Bible studies to help elected officials understand the Scriptures and how the Word of God applies to what we do here. This is a unique environment and one in which we need to have people of faith applying that faith in a real way.”



*begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

The Greek word for *first* is *protos*, which means “first in importance.” God looks *first* at believers whenever He acts on His attribute of judgment.

**Lamentations  
encapsulates this  
outcome in  
its negative sense—  
God’s inevitable  
judgment—of a nation  
whose believers were  
disobedient to  
God’s precepts.**

Lamentations is not a pretty picture, nor is its application limited: be it in the time of the OT or the time of the NT, no nation is immune to the outcomes Jeremiah has recorded! The book should strike a sense of profound fear in every individual but especially in those who lead a nation—and even more in those who name the name of Christ who lead a nation!<sup>3</sup>

Lamentations is a historical and theological book providing impetus for both personal and national righteousness among the followers of Christ. Here then is a good summary of an American application of this book:

**If we go so far as to  
declare that we are “one  
nation under God,” the  
believers in our country  
had better live like it!**

It follows, too, that Lamentations also provides much wisdom to believers relative to how to best channel their energies when it comes to attempting to turn an ailing nation around: God intends for this book to inform your priorities! Give your time and attention to prodding the nation’s believers to obedience more than trying to convince the unregenerate to act in ways pleasing to God (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1).

### II. THE PARALLELS TO AMERICA

God’s lonely and discarded prophet Jeremiah had foretold the coming wrath of God on Judah long before penning Lamentations. Lamentations then, shows the perspective of God’s judgment from the rearview mirror.

Jeremiah’s message was largely ignored by a callous, sinful nation. Called by God to be a nation of His followers, the land was increasingly filled with unbelief in Yahweh. In this general, overall sense today, America parallels Judah, as witnessed by the increasing secularization of our nation. One easily measurable, objective form of evidence of this (apart from all the other obvious signs) is that church attendance is declining as the population is increasing. The gross numbers of the former are going down, and the gross numbers of the latter are going up!

Having made this overall comparison and qualified the interpretive challenge of applying a book written to a theocratic nation to people not living in the same, let us now examine the more specific, delineated continual sins of Judah as outlined in Jeremiah 22 and ask the appropriately more specific question of whether *believers today* are in violation





of these indicators that triggered God's judgment on an entire nation. It follows if the believers are sowing these same kinds of disobedient acts that the nation may reap the wrath of God.

#### A. THE IDOLATRY OF BELIEVERS

Jeremiah states that God will judge the nation of Judah based on her worship of other gods. One symbolic, telling parallel in America is that for many years, America's political leaders who name the name of Christ have tolerated and actually plugged in the microphone for the syncretistic National Prayer Breakfast in D.C. and its equivalents in state capitols, with their potpourri of theology. "What false religion shall we support this year?" is the essence of the suggested course of action of its various event planners.<sup>4</sup> What is more revealing of the condition of believers in America is the nearly total lack of objection to such syncretistic breakfast gatherings! Most everyone I know has no problem with it—and attend regularly!

Almost everyone seems to accept these alliances, but such actions do not attract the blessings of Yahweh. In God's eyes, these associations are idolatrous and serve to curse our nation, not bless it. Notice Jeremiah 22:9 in this regard:

***"Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God and bowed down to other gods and served them."***

The surrounding context of Jeremiah 22 reveals that idolatry was one of the main reasons God judged the nation. The parallel in a non-theocratic country is this: God's determinate for judging a nation relates to the extent of the idolatry of the believers who live there. One of the

manifestations of idolatry is a believer's distancing his heart from the one true God Who has revealed Himself in the Bible and that believer's trying to fill the resulting void with anything other than Him. Mind you, the other things that fill one's heart are not necessarily sinful in and of themselves; rather, the distancing from God and the resulting lack of sensitivity to and obedience to His precepts connote sin. Further note this distinction in the following point:

#### B. THE DISOBEDIENCE OF BELIEVERS

Jeremiah 22:21 informs the reader that Judah was a materially prosperous nation like America, but the prosperity served to dull God's intended impact of His messenger and His message.

***"I spoke to you in your prosperity; but you said, 'I will not listen!' This has been your practice from your youth, that you have not obeyed My voice."***

Such is the case today in a vast number of American churches: most everyone is simply *playing* church, i.e., going through the motions. Why? Because in our satiated materialistic prosperity, very few are in desperate need of God as their only solution. Few cry out to Him from physical or spiritual poverty. Few of America's believers have any material needs today. (That fact is revealed by the predominance of medically related needs in the list prayer requests of any given church.) In the book of Revelation, the church of Laodicea serves as a representation of today's American church. Note Revelation 3:14–17: ***"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 'I know your deeds,***

#### MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

### VaShon Hampton

LGM Regional Director Southwest

LGM Ministry Leader  
Orlando, Florida



"Public policy makers may enjoy an elevated status in society, but they are no different from anyone else when it comes to their desperate need for God," says VaShon Hampton, CapMin's Local Government Ministries (LGM) southeast regional director.

Pastor VaShon Hampton is Capitol Ministries' LGM Southeast Regional Director, and as such, is responsible for growing Local Government Ministries (LGM) to city and county office holders in the states of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida.

Pastor VaShon also leads a discipleship Bible-study based ministry to members of the

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Orange County Board of County Commissioners in Orlando, FL. As part of his evangelistic work, he regularly meets with, ministers to, and prays for other county public servants, members of the police department, and the board of education, and invites them to attend the weekly Bible study. “Public servants hold a critical role in leading and guiding communities, yet they often face immense challenges and pressures,” Pastor VaShon said. “I believe that by ministering to them, I can offer the hope, encouragement, and guidance found in God’s Word to help them navigate their responsibilities with integrity and wisdom.”

Pastor VaShon is a church planter, has served as lead pastor, and has extensive experience in leadership positions with international ministries. In 2010, Pastor VaShon founded the Abundant Grace Christian Center, a nondenominational church in Denver, CO, where he served for eight years as senior pastor.

He currently serves as assistant spiritual disciplines coordinator for Wycliffe Associates, which is the intercessory prayer division of the international ministry of Wycliffe Bible Translators. In this position, Pastor VaShon

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*that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”*

The church of Laodicea and the church of America are parallels to ancient Judah in the time of the prophet Jeremiah; such similarities in attitude and in the condition of our country evidence a coming American earthquake:

**Sowing spiritual  
passivity inevitably  
reaps wrathful activity.**

It is not as if God will abandon our nation in terms of lifting His restraint, nor is it as if God will judge us with His cataclysmic wrath as much as it is His leaving us to our devices.<sup>5</sup>

### C. EXPLOITATION BY BELIEVERS

The third reason God judged Judah also ensued from the self-absorbed orientation of His people akin to the first two reasons listed here: Yahweh’s followers were engaged in various acts of exploitation of others. In America, thankfully, we have employment labor laws that by and large prohibit the abuse of employees by employers. Such a perspective finds favor with God. Like America’s cultural aversion to racism or slavery, a national sensitivity to labor exploitation is also ingrained in our nation’s fabric. Such a mindset is good and pleases God.

However, we do not possess a national sensitivity toward the exploitation of the most indefensible of all individuals—the unborn. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, and thereby ended decades of federal government sanctioned abortions. However, the ruling did not abolish abortions, it left those life and death decisions up to state legislatures. Such heinous, continued practices of exploiting the sacred womb—the private residency of an innocent child—coupled with the callousness of “Christian” political leaders and judges who do little about it evokes the fury of the Almighty! I cannot imagine a “Christian” citizen or political leader being pro-abortion—siding with the shedding of innocent blood. It follows that a pro-choice stance by “believers” invokes the judgment of God. Notice Jeremiah 22:3 and 22:17 respectively in this regard:

*“Thus says the LORD, “Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place.””*

*“But your eyes and your heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain, and on shedding innocent blood and on practicing oppression and extortion.”*

**The continued shedding  
of innocent blood  
by “believers” is yet  
another national sin  
that renders the book of  
Lamentations applicable  
to America today.**





There is at least one more reason for the relevance of Lamentations to America, but this principle is not found in Jeremiah 22. Nonetheless, this requirement of God, when overlooked, is expressly determinant of a nation falling out of His favor.

#### D. A LACK OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL BY BELIEVERS

Genesis 12:3 states: *“And I will bless those who bless you [Israel], and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*

Genesis 12:3 is a timeless requirement that applies to every nation of the world. A nation’s support or lack thereof for Israel has clear national and personal consequences.

Historically, America has possessed a strong alliance with and support of Israel as a nation. This affinity has evoked God’s abundant favor on our nation, and as many conservative theologians think (as do I), this coalition is the single reason why God has delayed manifesting our nation’s otherwise overdue recompense.<sup>6</sup> But whether our nation’s executive leadership is pro-Israel, the determining factor as to God’s either blessing or judging our nation is the principle aforementioned in 2 Chronicles 7:14 and 1 Peter 4:17. Accordingly, more important in God’s mind is the attitude of American believers relative to Israel than the whole of the secular nation; God’s judgment has much more to do with believers in America turning their backs on Israel than the position of its president or other national leaders.

Most alarmingly in this regard is the theological strain within Evangelical-

ism that proffers an anti-Israel point of view. Woe to those who name the name of Christ yet do not support Israel.<sup>7</sup> Are you not playing with a determining factor in the mind of God relative to His sowing and reaping (consequential) wrath?

In summary of the four aforementioned parallels, the book of Lamentations must inform your thinking as a political leader who names the name of Christ. For the preceding reasons, the book of Lamentations has shocking and sobering application to American believers and should be understood as a huge warning, motivation, and catalyst for those who are His chosen in our nation. Any believer who is in violation of any one or all four of these needs to repent immediately.

Second Chronicles 7:14 and 1 Peter 4:17 underscore the principle of God’s chosen ones being the guiding force by which God determines to bless or ignore a nation. Take careful note of this profoundly insightful OT book my beloved friend. As believers go, so goes the nation.

#### III. AUTHOR AND DATE

The author of Lamentations is not specifically identified in the book, but most scholars believe the prophet Jeremiah was used to record the words. The internal and historical evidences heavily indicate this conclusion. For instance, in Jeremiah 7:28–29, authored by the prophet, Scripture records God’s saying the following to him:

*“You shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God or accept correction;*

organizes teams of prayer intercessors in nations around the world who pray for the specific needs of translators serving in their nations, especially for protection from persecution and intimidation. He has helped organize teams in Africa, Russia, and India and recently, Pastor VaShon was instrumental in the completion of a major project to establish a prayer team to cover Bible translators in prayer throughout Eurasia.



He has a long-standing passion to reach public servants with the Word of God that began when he was a student at Colorado Christian University. There, he was selected to represent the student body at the Colorado State Capitol where his mission was to share his faith and build relationships with legislators, legislative aides and others. Pastor VaShon earned a bachelor’s degree

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in Old and New Testament studies and an associate's degree in psychology at Colorado Christian University. Pastor VaShon has been married to Tia since 2009. The couple has a blended family of 10 children—eight adults and two teenagers—and four grandchildren.

“I am drawn to Capitol Ministries because of its unwavering commitment to sharing the Gospel and fostering discipleship within the unique and influential community of public servants,” Pastor VaShon said. “I admire the ministry’s vision of bringing biblical truth to leaders who shape the direction of our society. Being a part of this mission aligns deeply with my calling to serve others and to support their spiritual growth in meaningful and impactful ways.

“My heart is to see public servants grow in their faith, find strength in their relationship with Christ, and let biblical principles shape their decisions and actions. It is a privilege to come alongside them, support their spiritual journey, and contribute to a more Christ-centered leadership in our nation.”

*truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. Cut off your hair and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.”*

In the book of Jeremiah, God is instructing Jeremiah to have a spirit of lament for the nation of Judah. As stated at the start of this Bible study, the word lamentation recorded in the book of Jeremiah is the Hebrew word *qinah*, meaning “dirge or elegy” (“a mournful, melancholic, or plaintive poem; a funeral song”). This same internal spirit that God instructs Jeremiah to possess is reflected in Lamentations 3:48–49 when its author says the following:

*My eyes run down with streams of water because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eyes pour down unceasingly, without stopping.*

Furthermore, the author of Lamentations is said to have been an eyewitness during or soon after Jerusalem’s fall in 586 B.C. In mid-July of that year, the city fell to Nebuchadnezzar, and by August the temple was burned. Jeremiah, after prophesying and being rejected for years by his people, evidently witnessed firsthand the destruction of the walls, homes, palaces, and the temple itself before being forced to leave for Egypt in 583 B.C. (cf. Jeremiah 43:1–7). Lastly, evidence of Jeremiah’s authorship of Lamentations is revealed by the similar writing style to the book of Jeremiah.

#### IV. BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The first prophecies regarding theocratic Jerusalem’s eventual destruction (relative to her idolatry) go all the way back

to Joshua, 800 years before the actual event (cf. Joshua 23:15–16). More recently, Judah had been warned by God for 40 years prior by His spokesman Jeremiah. The nation could not plead ignorance. For sure the nation was not ignorant of his message; Jeremiah’s loud and recurrent heralds had been met with scorn. His opponents characterized his message as one of being overly negative for consistently preaching doom and gloom.

When the day of God’s judgment finally arrived, as we have already witnessed, Jeremiah’s attitude remained one of great sorrow and compassion for his fellow stubborn and obstinate people. Instead of condescension and self-righteousness, Jeremiah was broken and compassionate for and with his fellow exiles. It makes sense that Lamentations would follow Jeremiah since the book poetically illustrates the realities foretold in Jeremiah. In chapters 1–29, Jeremiah had year after year predicted the wrath of God. In fact, Jerusalem’s downfall is also recorded in two other OT books: 2 Kings 25 and 2 Chronicles 36:11–21.

#### V. HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES

At least five takeaways can be gleaned from the study of Lamentations.

##### A. GOD STEPS BACK FROM NATIONS WHEN BELIEVERS SIN

Of the five takeaways, I’ve concentrated thus far on God’s eventual consequential judgment that occurs when that nation’s believers turn their backs on Him. This is the redounding principle that es-





pecially every Christian political leader must profoundly understand from this book in ways unmistakable.

It follows that if God does not hesitate to judge His own people in the Old Testament, He would not hesitate to judge His own people in the New Testament—and God’s wrath toward individual believers redounds to their respective nation(s) as well. Deuteronomy 32:21–22 states regarding God’s sinning saints:

*“They have made Me jealous with what is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, for a fire is kindled in My anger, and burns to the lowest part of Sheol, and consumes the earth with its yield, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.”*

**In today’s world, God’s consequential judgment on a nation has more to do with the disobedience of believers than it does the foolishness of the unregenerate.**

#### **B. GOD OFFERS HOPE AND COMPASSION**

In addition to the aforementioned major purpose of the book, Lamentations also conveys hope that is related to God’s attribute of compassion. Note 3:22–24 in this regard.

*The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning;*

*great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I have hope in Him.”*

Psalm 30:3–5 underscores the relationship and balance between the wrath and loving-kindness of the Almighty. This wonderful passage provides a great insight into the way God thinks and acts and, subsequently, how you should think relative to your personal understanding and knowledge of God.

*O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.*

One insight into His nature is this phrase: *For His anger is but for a moment.* Such must be a guiding principle as to how we treat others! God is compassionate and forgiving; we should be too; we are not to hold grudges against others. Be characterized as a gracious, forgiving person—not someone who is self-righteous, always angry and acting holier than others. That’s not God’s way of behaving. His judgment *is but for a moment; His favor is for a lifetime!*

#### **C. GOD USES SURROGATES TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSES**

A third point to be gleaned from the study of Lamentations is God’s use of surrogates to enact His judgment. How this theme is illustrated in the book of Jeremiah versus the book of Lamentations is interesting. The book of Jeremiah mentions Babylon at least 150 times;

Roger Sherman



*“God commands all men everywhere to repent. He also commands them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and has assured us that all who do repent and believe shall be saved. ... [G]od ... has absolutely promised to bestow them on all these who are willing to accept them on the terms of the Gospel—that is, in a way of free grace through the atonement. ‘Ask and ye shall receive [John 16:24]. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely [Revelation 22:17]. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out [John 6:37].”*

— Roger Sherman, signer of the Declaration of Independence, signer of the U.S. Constitution, “Master Builder of the Constitution,” judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, U.S. senator.

*Correspondence Between Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins* (Worcester, MA: Charles Hamilton, 1889), 9, from Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins, June 28, 1790.



John Jay



“Condescend, merciful Father! to grant as far as proper these imperfect petitions, to accept these inadequate thanksgivings, and to pardon whatever of sin hath mingled in them for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior; unto Whom, with Thee, and the blessed Spirit, ever one God, be rendered all honor and glory, now and forever.”

— John Jay, president of Congress, diplomat, author of *The Federalist Papers*, original chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor of New York.

William Jay, *The Life of John Jay* (New York: J & J Harper, 1833), Vol. I, 518, Appendix V, from a prayer found among Mr. Jay’s papers and in his handwriting.

## The Book of Lamentations as It Applies to America

therein revealed, it was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who worked the destructive calamity that resulted from the sin of God’s people. In Lamentations, however, Babylon is never mentioned—only the Lord is mentioned as the One Who will deal with Judah’s sin. The conclusion is that Babylon was the surrogate instrument of Yahweh to achieve His ultimate purposes.

This insight more than suggests that God uses other individuals and other nations whom He also dislikes to invoke His wrath. In accordance with this insight, consider the following:

**It is well within the realm of possibilities that God could use America’s most detested enemies to manifest His just wrath on our nation due to disobedient believers.**

That is the application of this surrogate principle; it is often His way of accomplishing shame, total humility, and repentance. Likened to Babylon’s ransacking of Jerusalem, such godly actions bring the greatest disgrace—embarrassment that is both warranted and intended by the Lord for our good.

### **D. GOD IS A GOD OF FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION**

In concert with God’s zeal for restoration of wayward sinners, the book of Jeremiah assures the restoration of Israel. Note a sampling of these three chapters from Jeremiah:

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ... But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them’” (33:14, 26).*

Lamentations seems at first glance to be a recount of God’s sweeping judgment—a judgment that will forever end the hope of both Israel’s salvation and the fulfillment of His earlier promises and covenants to the nation (cf. Genesis 12:1–3). But indeed, God did restore Israel to the Promised Land after the severe chastisement of Babylonian captivity!

It follows that if America is beginning to experience God’s consequential reaping and sowing forms of judgment, if believers repent from their various forms of idolatry, He could restore the nation to her earlier greatness (2 Chronicles 7:14). God is a God of forgiveness and restoration!

### **E. LAMENTATIONS IS A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST**

As in every Old Testament book, which in some way foreshadows the coming Messiah, Lamentations serves as an illustrative precursor, illuminating at least one facet of the coming Savior, Jesus Christ. As Jeremiah wept over the sin of Jerusalem (Lamentations 3:48–49), so too would Jesus. Matthew 23:37–39 serves to indicate this parallel reality:

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,*





*and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"*

This NT passage, when read back into Jeremiah and Lamentations, suggests Lamentations serves as a “type” of Christ. Theologically, a “type” is a person or thing in the OT that is believed to foreshadow another in the NT. Even though God was the judge and executioner of Judah’s wrath, like Christ He found no pleasure in it. Likened to a parent who anguishes in the disciplining of his child, God grieved over the pain He had to administer to His own. Ultimately such actions are good for their growth and maturation (cf. Hebrews 12:3–11). In Isaiah 63:9, the prophet speaks of the already present second member of the Trinity, the coming Messiah. He says this of Jesus from the OT:

*In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.*

Jesus is seen throughout the OT books of the Bible, and Lamentations is no exception. The good news is that God will one day wipe away all the tears when sin shall be no more (cf. Revelation 7:17; 21:4).

## VI. SUMMARY

The book of Lamentations is a sad look through the rearview mirror from the one who drove home the clarion message for years—a message that unfortunately fell on deaf ears! May that not be

the case with Americans who name the name of Christ—especially among our political leaders.

Jeremiah could have snidely said, “Well, I told you so!” But he didn’t. Like Jesus, Jeremiah was sickened over God’s due recompense relative to the sins of his people. Our attitudes need to be similar. How about you? Do you lament as you proclaim the righteousness of God to our dying nation?

**Will you continue to persevere as did Jeremiah for more than 40 years—lovingly, inalterably, and faithfully delivering God’s message to America—or as a “believer,” are you one who fosters God’s wrath via disobedience?**

I wholeheartedly believe that you will be faithful to God’s precepts. And for that reason, I thank God for each of you in our various Members Bible Studies.

1. Bible students understand that what is written in the OT is in the context of an amalgamated “church and state” so to speak. Wherein Ancient Israel, institutionally speaking was Israel was a theocracy. Today, in the NT times in which we live, God has institutionally separated the church from the state (but that is not to imply in any way an influential separation of the church from the state). It stands to reason that this OT distinction must be taken into consideration when attempting to properly interpret Lamentations properly and making applications correctly for today.
2. See Genesis 18:23–32. Herein this principle is again in view: God said to Abraham that he would not destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if there were just ten believers to be found living there.

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3. If abandonment wrath exists with individuals (and Romans 1 declares that) and a nation elects a president who God has abandoned, or who He has removed His restraining grace from, then that nation will reap what its leader has sown—that form of God's wrath. But this is quite different from national abandonment wrath.
4. The National Prayer Breakfast is controlled by a theologically syncretistic group called *The Fellowship*.
5. See my study on *Is God Judging America Today?* Therein I detail the different forms of God's wrath as found in Scripture. I conclude that sowing and reaping wrath relate to individuals and nations today, but abandonment and cataclysmic wrath do not.
6. The United States was blessed with a very strong pro-Israel leader in President Donald Trump. While many presidents promised but failed to do so, President Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and in 2018, moved the U.S. embassy there.
7. This is called Replacement Theology, the idea that God is finished with Israel and the Church is the replacement of Israel. But to hold to such a view one has to change his interpretive hermeneutic when reading all the OT prophetic passages, as well as much of the book of Revelation that clearly state God will bring Israel back to Himself and belief in the Savior Jesus Christ in the end days.

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