

# Talk It Over

## Lamentations

### Week #4 - "Loss"

June 22-23, 2019



### Background

Lamentations is a historical book in the Old Testament which, technically, is anonymous; however, ancient Jewish and early Christian traditions believe it to be authored by the prophet Jeremiah. Lamentations is a poem made up of five chapters. Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 are laments that contain 22 verses, one for each of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 or the third lament is distinctive in that it is made up of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet used three times in a row for a total of 66 verses. It is believed that the poem may have been written by Jeremiah after the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem during the Babylonian exile around 586 BC. The prophet and his fellow Jews lament the devastation of their beloved city at the hands of the Babylonians. It is important to note that the author of these laments understands clearly that God allowed the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem. God, in his power, could have, at any time, saved Jerusalem yet He didn't.

### Read Lamentations 4

### Questions

1. What are the "gold" and "sacred gems" of verses 1-2? What is the difference between these items and the clay pots? What modern image is the equivalent of this comparison?
2. How is Judah's punishment worse than that of Sodom (vv. 6-10)?
3. Even as destruction approached, where did Judah look for help (v. 17)? Who is probably responsible for this "looking in vain"?
4. Have the people lost confidence in their king (v. 20)? Why or why not (2 Kings 25:1-7)?
5. What hope is given to "the Daughter of Zion" in verse 22? If you were one of the people of Judah, how would you feel at the end of the dirge?

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## Application

1. How does lamenting help us to find answers to our losses? Is it possible that an answer to our loss is to be still in the unanswerable? What does that mean to you personally?
2. Charles Spurgeon was an English Baptist preacher who died in the late 19th century. In terms of lamenting and loss, talk about this quote associated with him:
  - “God is too good to be unkind and too wise to be mistaken. When we cannot trace his hand, we must trust his heart.”
3. Suffering and loss are not the exceptions in this life. Is “death” at the heart of loss even if the loss is not the end of life as we know it? Is death the opposite of love? Is it possible that love is the extraordinary surprise that accompanies our grief/loss?

## Closing Prayer

*If in a group, pray the following together before doing your regular prayer time.*

“Dear LORD you are all knowing. You are the God that is ever present and has been forever. You have a view of the world that I will never have...knowing every person’s life intrinsically and how each one weaves together all for your good. It is hard, if not impossible, for me to see beyond my own losses, my own disappointments and commit myself to trusting in you and knowing that there is a purpose and plan for every moment of this life. You are so patient with me and for that I am grateful. Amen.”

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