

Talk It Over

Lamentations

Week #2- "God"

June 8-9, 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 2

Questions

1. Compare verses 1:1 with 2:1. What is similar? What is different?
2. In verses 2:6-7, what has the Lord done to "his dwelling"? Why would he treat his own things that way?
3. Why is the poet without words of comfort for Judah (v. 13)? Has anything like this happened in her history before?
4. Where does the poet lay much of the blame for Judah's destruction (v. 14)? What false or misleading messages have the prophets spoken and why (see Jer. 14:13-16)?
5. What questions are especially troubling for Judah (v. 20)? What is she ultimately looking for?

Application

1. How could an allegedly good God allow evil to exist?
2. How would you answer — “Why didn’t God create a world where tragedy and suffering didn’t exist?” Could the answer to that be “He did”?
3. Read Romans 5:12. Where did suffering come from? What about tragedies or suffering that we didn’t cause?
4. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that God makes all things beautiful in his time. How does God transform suffering?
5. How can lamenting or crying out to God in our pain and suffering help us to trust in His plan, His power, and His presence?

Closing Prayer

You may read the following prayer together, followed by your regular prayer time of shared requests and thanks:

“Oh God, please help me to see that one day, suffering will cease. Evil will be shut down forever. We will see your new creation. We will see heaven meeting earth. We want to see it now. Please help us to believe that God’s love and compassion are the reason for the delay, not apathy or ineffectiveness.”

Portions of the content for this Talk It Over is adapted from Serendipity’s Interactive Study Bible, copyright 2001, P. 1320-1321.