

Lamentations: "O Jerusalem, Who Can Heal You?"

Great Is His Deliverance

Lamentations 3:42-66

Great is His faithfulness!

Perhaps you will remember my reference to John Bunyan's main character in **Pilgrim's Progress**. Christian was stuck in the *Slough of Despond*, his heavy burden on his back, and no way to pull himself up and out. He was helpless to deliver himself... But just then Help came along, and Help pulled him up and out. And Help came to the rescue because of the theme of Lamentations 3, **great is His faithfulness**.

I also referred to a couple of the psalms. **Psalm 40:1-2**: "I waited patiently for the LORD; *he inclined to me and heard my cry*.² He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and *set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure*." And **Psalm 46:1**: "God is our refuge and strength, *a very present help in trouble*." Or an alternate reading: "God is...*a well proved help in trouble*." Is He a *well proved help* to you? That verse reminded me of a NT equivalent in **Hebrews 4:16**: Since we have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, "let us then *with confidence* draw near to the throne of grace, *that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*."

Jesus stands ready to dispatch Help to our aid when we need it because **great is His faithfulness**. As a child of God, is that your experience?

There are a couple conditions to being pulled up and out of our most serious troubles. We've already recognized one of them: _____—We must have faith to confidently draw near for His help. The other condition is _____—When we draw near *with confident faith* as ones who are *forgiven*, **great is our deliverance because great is His faithfulness**.

Great is God's deliverance because great is His faithfulness:

1. The city's troubles (42-47):

- They are _____ (42).

Notice the connection between *transgression* and *unforgiveness*. The people of Jerusalem made a consistent choice to consistently persist in their rebellious transgressions against God. Consequently, He is not able to forgive them.

- They are _____ God's anger (43).

They have fallen so far into the abyss of sin that repentance is *impossible without* severe judgment.

- Their prayers are _____ (44).

That is an important lesson for us. Even for believers in Jesus, it is useless to pray while knowingly persisting in sin. H. A. Ironside speaks to every generation of believers when he says, "The person who does not seek to walk with God has no _____ to expect anything from Him." **Psalm 37:4:** "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." **John 15:17:** "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." The key to answered prayer: Repentance. A full-on return to God's favor.

- Their treatment was _____ (45).

- They are _____ (46-47).

All of this fallout from the city's fall fell on them because they refused to forsake their sin and turn back to God. And when Jerusalem finally realizes what she's done, she will finally turn back. And when she does, **great will be God's deliverance because great is His faithfulness.**

2. The prophet's trials (48-54):

- He is _____ (48-51).

Jeremiah is weeping over his people and praying for them, and will continue to grieve and pray until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven to restore Jerusalem and Judah as He promised. According to **Deuteronomy 30:2**, when Israel calls on God from Babylonian captivity, "and return[s] to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey

his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul,³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.”

- He was _____ (52-54).

Jeremiah 26:8-9: In the house of the LORD,⁸ when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die!⁹ Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

A bit later, his enemies were enraged at him, they beat him, and threw him into prison for many days (**Jer. 37:11-16**). And also, near the end of Babylon’s siege of Jerusalem, he was cast into a cistern, what he calls in verse 53 “the pit.” Jeremiah sank down into the mud, they cast stones at him, and left him to die of starvation and hypothermia (**Jer. 38:4-6**).

3. The Lord’s intervention (55-66):

- He _____ him (55-58).

The Lord delivered Jeremiah from the pit. Why? Because he was God’s prophet. He belonged to God, and God does not desert His own, but delivers. God sent Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, who was in the king’s house, to rescue Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 38:7-13**). He knew the prophet would die of hunger and exposure in that cistern. So after he got permission from the king, Ebed-melech took 30 men with him, threw down a rope, and pulled the prophet up and out of the pit!

- He _____ him (58-66).

I’m reminded of two things: a Psalm of David and the Words of Jesus. **The Psalm of David:** Vindicate me, O LORD, *for I have walked in my integrity*, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.² Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.³ For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness (**26:1-3**). **The Words of Jesus:** “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (**Acts 9:4**) The point:

Don't mess with Jesus' people! You mess with them, with us, you are messing with Jesus, *and He will take up our cause*. And in His time, He will deliver us, and He will vindicate us!

This world, because of rebellion and sin, is truly a terrible place to live. But **don't despair**, child of God, for the Lord will intervene. And when He delivers you, **great will be His deliverance!**

Don't despair!

God **will** deliver you! And you'll probably be very surprised by His timing and in His unexpected way of deliverance. But you will know and say in the end, **great is His deliverance!**

Do you feel like you need a harbor? You've got Jesus, you've got a harbor. In Jesus Christ, you, like Jeremiah, may have ongoing confidence of deliverance and vindication in the midst of your terrible trouble. There is an extraordinary answer to your godly prayers on its way. It may be soon, it may be later, but it will never be late.

So, since we have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, let us then *with confidence* draw near to the throne of grace, *that we may receive mercy and find grace to **help** in time of need*. But remember the two conditions to being pulled up and out of your most serious troubles: Faith and _____.