

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

Great Is His Anger

Lamentations 4

Is God angry with us?

More personally, **Is God ever mad at _____?** Over the years, Christians within our church family have asked to speak to me about that very question, for they believe God has to be angry at them. That person doesn't *feel* saved. He or she doesn't *feel like* they are in a relationship with God. Can you relate to that at all? There was a time in your life when you sincerely made a profession of faith in Jesus—"Jesus, I believe in You, please save me!"—but you don't *feel saved*, you wonder if God is mad at you, and that perhaps you remain under His anger.

In that case, I usually discover that the person either doesn't have a clear understanding of theology—of who God is to them and how He thinks and feels about them—or they are out of fellowship with him because of known sin in their lives. And being out of fellowship with God can *feel like* being out of relationship with Him. But it's not same.

For a born-again believer in Christ, present sin *does* separate us from God...*in fellowship*, but *not in relationship*. Think of Jesus and His original 12 disciples. As I thought through the gospels this week, I couldn't think of any time when Jesus was angry with them.

As we begin this message on the great anger of God, if you are a true believer in Jesus, if you have been saved by grace through faith and not of yourselves, then don't apply His anger toward Jerusalem to you. If God is your Father through faith in His Son, then His holy demands have been satisfied in the person of Jesus. Chris Tiegreen wrote, "Abandon the image of the stern, distant God. His wrath toward us, though entirely legitimate, was poured out on Jesus. It has been _____ satisfied. Our only response is to be _____ satisfied in Him." Are you a true believer in Jesus? Are you through faith a child of God by His amazing, marvelous grace? Then know without a shadow of a doubt that God is not mad at you. You are His forever child, so punishment and condemnation have passed.

So listen: Your heavenly Father will not punish you—Your punishment fell on your substitute, Jesus Christ. Punishment means judgment,

condemnation, and poured out wrath. But not us. Disciplined, yes, and corrective in nature always, not punitive ever. **Got it?** If you are saved by grace through faith, abandon the image of a stern, distant Father.

As we turn in our study to **Lamentations 4**, know that the Lord is pouring out His anger on His “people” who are _____ longer His people. He didn’t abandon them. They abandoned Him. They fully traded in Yahweh worship with idol worship, and aligned themselves with the pagan nations around them. No longer were they separate, other, and holy. They were just like all the rest of the nations.

Now, how does God turn them back from their wicked idolatry and spiritual adultery to believe and trust in Him alone? They have given Him only one option. Punishment. Judgment. Full on wrath. So, let’s look at it together. **The Lord pours out His fierce anger on His unbelieving people as the _____ measure to win them back.**

The Lord pours out His fierce anger:

1. The horrors of the siege:

(Note: verses 7-11 parallels verses 1-6)

- _____ **no longer (1-2; 7-8).**

Verses 1-2: For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, once precious as gold, their glory has past. Now they are as common as dirt, earthen pots of clay. Now, verses 7-8 are parallels with verses 1-2 (**7-8**).

- _____ **no longer (3-5; 9-10).**

It doesn’t get worse than that, does it? But the real tragedy is that it all could have been avoided if they would’ve only listened to Jeremiah, God’s passionate and compassionate voice...

- _____ **no longer (6; 11).**

Remember, this isn’t corrective discipline. This is holy judgment. God’s people—who are God’s people no longer—took their all-out rebellion lightly. God did not. His utter holiness demanded judgment.

2. The reasons for the siege:

- **The _____ of the leaders (12-16).**

From a human perspective, Jerusalem was impregnable. **But God...**

- **The _____ trust of the people (17-19).**

Surrounded by the Babylonians, Jerusalem looked especially to Egypt for help. But in vain, she watched for a nation that *could not* save her, because they misplaced their trust. Only God could save them, but being unrepentant, as per usual they looked elsewhere.

- **The _____ of the king (20).**

The people of the city and Judah were in this mess because the disobedient, wicked king led them here, even after Jeremiah warned him. **Jeremiah 38:17:** Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: **If** you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, **then** your life shall be spared, **and** this city shall not be burned with fire, **and** you and your house shall live. ¹⁸**But if** you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, **then** this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, **and** they shall burn it with fire, **and** you shall not escape from their hand.” Wow!

But do you know what is truly amazing? God’s utterly amazing mercy and grace! For the truth of the matter is, God will not remain angry with Israel forever! Even though the Lord pours out His fierce wrath on deserving Jerusalem, there is hope.

3. The future hope while under the siege:

- **Edom rejoicing how—but _____ later (21).**

- **Jerusalem judged now—but _____ later (22).**

After the promised seventy-years of captivity, the Jewish people who were God’s people, but became God’s people no more, once again became God’s people, and were returned to their city and their land. God saved them from His wrath. In other words, God saved them from God! And that is our great hope. Yes, **Great was His anger.** But because of the substitutionary sacrifice of His great Son...

Great is our hope!

The **good news gospel** begins with bad news: Because of our sins, the wrath of God remained on us. Are you still unforgiven because of your sins? In that case, you remain under His awful wrath. But God stands ready in Christ to _____ you from God. God the Father poured out His wrath on God the Son, so that God could save you from God!

Is this your great hope? It is if you by faith believe in Jesus, in that you believe He took your place on the cross. Said another way, He took the full-on blow of our deserved sins upon Himself. And He descended into hell, so you don't have to! Simply believe in Him, and you will be saved!

Jerusalem's prophets, priests, and kings utterly failed them. But the **Divine Prophet, Priest, and King**, the Lord Jesus Christ, is **our great hope!** As **Prophet**, He is the Word of God through whom the Father speaks. As **Priest**, He is the Mediator between God and us who wholly satisfied the holiness of God. We are even told that our High Priest unceasingly prays for us, His beloved people for whom He died. As **King**, He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and there **will** be a day when every knee **will** bow, and every tongue **will** confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! In the meantime, He is my King. Is He your King?

If He is your **Prophet, Priest, and King** because you are covered by His blood, because you are a child of God through His Son, because you believe in the Son unto eternal life, **then** the wrath of God no longer remains on you. He'll never ever be mad at you again. And once you are His, you are forever His. Let's close with this *secure* Word from God.

Romans 8:35-39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."