

IN REMEMBRANCE, I BOW DOWN

(LAMENTATIONS 3)



The cries of Lamentations' writings detail the sufferings of Israel's people when taken away as captives by Babylon. "How solitary sits the city that was full of people!... all Zion gates are desolate... all her people groan and sigh seeking for bread; should and shall women eat the fruit of their own bodies, the children whom they have tended and swaddled with their hands?" (Lamentations 1,2).

Calamity had come to the city of Jerusalem-Judah and its people for their sins were grave before the Lord. Israel had been warned by Moses when yet in the wilderness of the consequences if they deviated from obeying the commandments of the Lord. The prophets also warned them of the coming judgment if they continued in their idolatry. But Israel's heart was hard toward the Lord. "Jerusalem has grievously sinned; therefore, she has become an unclean thing and has been removed...her filthiness was in and on her skirts; she did not consider her final end (1:8a,9a).

In 589 BC Nebuchadnezzar II laid siege to Jerusalem; In 587 BC the culmination of the destruction of the city and temple happened. The Jewish people were then deported to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends, who God used mightily to change the heart of the King; He used Daniel to serve as prophet for the Jewish nation. God, in His love and mercy, allowed seventy years of captivity for the Jewish nation for having failed to keep seventy Sabbath years. It is written in the book of Leviticus that a Sabbath year comes every seventh year: But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord, you shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap and the grapes on your uncultivated vine you shall not gather, for it is a year of rest to the land...and you shall number seven sabbaths or weeks of years for you, seven times seven years, so the total time of the seven weeks of years shall be forty-nine years (Lev. 25: 4-8). The number seventy is embed in the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9:24: Seventy weeks [of years, or 490 years] are decreed upon your people and upon your holy city to finish and put an end to transgression, to seal up and make full the measure of sin to purge away and make expiation and reconciliation for sin to bring in everlasting righteousness... When the disciples asked YAHSHUA how many times should one forgive, He gave them the answer found in the period of 490 years given the Jewish people in the prophecy of Daniel, illustrating the validity of Daniel's prophecy's time frame given them for forgiveness.

The Jewish people were allowed to settle in towns along the Chebar River, which according to ATS Dictionary, was a river which rises in the northern part of Mesopotamia, and flows first southeast then south and southwest into the Euphrates. It was on its fertile banks that Nebuchadnezzar located some of the captive Jews, and there the sublime visions of Ezekiel took place (Ezekiel 1:3; 3:15; 10:15; 43: 3). Although with opportunities to farm and earn income, even to prosper and become wealthy, the Jewish people missed home. We read this in Psalm 137;1-6: **By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willow trees in the midst of Babylon we hung our harps, for there they who led us captive required of us a song with words, and our tormentors and they who wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember you not, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!**

Here the writer of Lamentation is lamenting the sufferings that took place in the lives of his people and the destruction of the city and the temple. Judah was dispersed, some killed and few were left in the city. But amidst his cries, he remembers something very important which he considers and changes the tune of his writings. But this I recall and therefore have I hope and expectation: It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great and abundant is Your stability and faithfulness; the Lord is my portion or share, says my living being; therefore, will I hope in Him and wait expectantly for Him... It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord; it is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth; let him sit alone uncomplaining and keeping silent, because [God] has laid [the yoke] upon him (3:21-24, 26-28). He continues by saying, Let us test and examine our ways, and let us return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven; we have transgressed and rebelled and You have not pardoned (vs. 40-42).

In remembrance of his spiritual condition the writer bowed down before the Lord and repented. When trials come to us, before we complain and lament our situation, it is good to seek the Lord with humble heart and penitence. It is good to acknowledge Him as a just and holy Father, Who desires from our inmost being, righteousness and a contrite heart. David said in his repentant Psalm that God did not delight in sacrifice of burnt offering, but in a sacrifice of a broken spirit; such O God You will not despise (Psalm 51: 16-17). In your trials, remember God's holiness, then bow down to Him. He will never reject your heart, but leave you with the blessing of forgiveness and healing. Then blessed you will be having your transgressions forgiven! Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long, for day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide, I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord then You forgave me the guilt and iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32: 1-5).

When infirmities were the cause of someone's disease, our Lord YAHSHUA rendered forgiveness first and then physical healing. True healing starts in the soul of men; a healing that starts from inside out. "Why does a man sigh? [and

why does] a man complain for the punishment of his sins? Let us test and examine our ways, and let us return to the Lord!" (Lam. 3:40). My friend, if you are experiencing the bed of infirmity, acknowledge your sins to the Lord and confess all to him and you will be free, free indeed!

THINK ABOUT IT