

Adult Bible Class

For Adults Ages 18 and Up



Winter Quarter

December | January | February

2026-27



Large-Print Edition

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WINTER QUARTER

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Managing Editors:
Michelle Birtasevic
James Frohlich, Ph.D.
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God's Love

BY TOM GREENE

This quarter, we will meditate on the wonderful theme of the love of God. Since God is love (1 John 4:8), understanding His love is crucial to knowing and understanding Him. Since God made us in His image, we are meant to reflect His image and are called to love Him and others.

The first unit focuses on God's great love in sending Christ. Our first lesson, however, begins in a surprising place. Centuries before Christ came to earth, as Jeremiah mourned the destruction of Jerusalem in Lamentations 3:1-3 and 19-39, he reflected that even in hardship, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. That key truth will undergird what follows in the subsequent lessons.

Our second lesson is from Isaiah 62:1-12, where the Lord declared His tremendous love for His people by using the imagery of a bridegroom rejoicing over his bride, along with other expressions of love.

Lesson 3 takes a step back and provides a wide-angle lens view of Jesus' entry into the world. It provides the cosmic background rather than narrowly focusing on Bethlehem in Judah. In the beginning, Jesus is with God and is God. He made all things, yet He willingly took on human form because of His great love.

Unit 1 concludes with Jesus' famous words to Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. Jesus explained to the confused teacher why God sent His Son into the world: not to condemn the world, but to save it. Further, Jesus declared that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have everlasting life. That was why

love sent a Savior! He came with the express purpose of dying on the cross for our sins.

Our second unit focuses on Jesus' love for the world. This unit presents passages with the perfect examples of love in action. Jesus, in human form, fully demonstrated God's love for us. Lesson 5 comes from John 10:1-18, where Jesus taught that He is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep to protect them.

Lesson 6 is from John 13:31-38. While sharing the Last Supper, Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: that they love one another. The commandment was both new and old. Deuteronomy 6 famously instructed Israel to love the Lord with all their heart, which Jesus called the greatest commandment in Matthew 22. It was new in that the disciples had now seen the Lord humble Himself and wash their feet, thereby providing His example of sacrificial love for them to follow. He urged them to do as He had done.

The second unit concludes by turning our attention to John 14:15-24 in lesson 7, a passage read as a reminder of Jesus' urging the disciples (and us) to keep His commandments. More than that, Jesus said that if we love Him, we *will* keep His commandments. Keeping His commandments reveals that our obedience (or lack thereof) is a litmus test for how sincerely we love Him. That marks a perfect transition to our third unit.

The final unit is titled "Living Out God's Love." Since God is love, we must love others as He has loved us. God not only models and inspires love

in us, but He also empowers us to love those who would otherwise be difficult, challenging, or even impossible to love.

In 1 John 2:3-17, which will be examined in lesson 8, the apostle John (who had been at the Last Supper) wrote about the new commandment—that was also old—to love one another. He echoed Jesus' words that the way we know if we love God is if we keep His commands. John added that if we love one another, we will walk in the light.

In lesson 9, from 1 John 3:1-10, John marveled at the fact that when Jesus comes again, we will be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. That does not mean that we will be omnipotent or omniscient but that our moral character will conform to His. Accordingly, no one who knows Him makes a habit of sinning. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.

Lesson 10 continues where lesson 9 left off, in 1 John 3:11-24. John reiterated that no one who hates his brother has eternal life. He also rhetorically asked, "How does God's love abide in him who does not help a brother in need?" The clear implication is that sincere love manifests itself in practical ways and helps others. John added the comforting note that when people's hearts condemn them, God is greater than their hearts.

Lesson 11 turns to 1 John 5:1-12 and reminds us that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. Furthermore, we know that we love God's children and love God when we keep His commandments. Love for God and for our brothers and sisters in Christ provides visible evidence of genuine internal change.

Lesson 12 focuses on 2 John 1:1-13, covering the entirety of this short epistle. "The elder" (widely understood to be the aged apostle John) wrote to "the elect lady and her children" (a local church) and rejoiced that they were



walking in the truth. Once again, John repeated the command to love one another and the admonition to walk according to God's commandments. John warned that deceivers had gone out into the world and that anyone who denied Jesus' coming in the flesh was a deceiver and an antichrist and was not to be aided. Although appearances and names change over time, old heresies persist today, and we must beware of anyone who denies Christ's bodily coming.

Our final lesson comes from 3 John 1:1-14. The elder John wrote to a man named Gaius, rejoicing that he was walking in the truth. He also contrasted the respected Demetrius with the arrogant Diotrephes, who refused to help other believers.

As we study God's love with this quarter's lessons, pray that God will help you follow His commandment to love Him and others in thoughts, words, and deeds. Great blessings are in store for those who love and obey His Word!

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

LAM. 3:1 I *am* the man *that* hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.

2 He hath led me, and brought me *into* darkness, but not *into* light.

3 Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand *against me* all the day.

19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.

20 My soul hath *them* still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

21 This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

22 *It is of* the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 *They are new every morning:* great *is* thy faithfulness.

24 The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

25 The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him.

26 *It is* good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD .

27 *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne *it* upon him.

29 He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.

30 He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

31 For the Lord will not cast off for ever:

32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

33 For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

34 To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth,

35 To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,

36 To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.

37 Who *is* he *that* saith, and it cometh to pass, *when* the Lord commandeth *it* not?

38 Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?

39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

NOTES

The Lord's Compassion

Lesson Text: Lamentations 3:1-3, 19-39

Related Scriptures: Psalm 130:1-8; Lamentations 3:4-18, 40-66;
2 Corinthians 4:7-12; Hebrews 12:4-11

TIME: about 585 BC

PLACE: Jerusalem or Egypt

GOLDEN TEXT—"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Lesson Exposition

THE GRIEVING MAN'S CONFESSION—Lam. 3:1-3

Jeremiah described himself as the man who had seen suffering. He knew that centuries of covenant-breaking had led to destruction and exile from the Promised Land (Deut. 28). God's forewarned response to sin was wrath, not a frivolous or wild anger. Jeremiah pictured God's wrath as a rod (Lam. 3:1). The shepherd imagery may remind readers of Psalm 23, where the rod comforts, but Jeremiah knew that both the rod of comfort and the rod of discipline came from the same hand.

Next, Jeremiah described his journey. He had been cast out of his nation. His journey was through darkness.

THE GRIEVING MAN'S REMEMBRANCE—Lam. 3:19-21

If Jeremiah had lived in an age of mental health awareness, he might have sought counseling to deal with the memories of what he had seen. When the Old Testament talks about memory, it is not just referring to the life of the mind. When God remembered His covenant in Exodus 2:24-25, it did not mean that it had slipped His mind but that He would act on it.

Jeremiah asked God to intervene in his bitterness and homelessness. His home was likely destroyed. In addition, he had been taken to Egypt against his will (Jer. 42—43).

His memories caused him deep sadness, so he began to think about God's character. The change in his thoughts brought something new: hope. His hope was in waiting for what God said He would do—healing and restoration.

THE GRIEVING MAN'S INHERITANCE—Lam. 3:22-24

Why did Jeremiah have hope? He remembered God's message in Scripture. He used words from Exodus 34:6-7. Israel had invited God's judgment after making a covenant with Him (Ex. 32). Moses interceded for Israel.

Then Moses asked to see God's glory. In response, God passed by Moses and proclaimed His attributes. He told Moses that He is merciful. Jeremiah remembered that attribute, noting that God's mercies are why Israel did not end as a nation.

Moses' era did not exhaust God's mercy, nor did subsequent periods of rebellion. There was enough mercy left for Jeremiah and Jerusalem's ruins. Like

the manna God gave Israel every morning, God's mercy kept arriving and getting Jeremiah through the day.

God's massive commitment is the centerpiece of Jeremiah's hope. Goodness, mercy, and faithfulness are the gifts that the book of Exodus gave to Jeremiah when he meditated on it.

Those attributes of God caused Jeremiah to say something surprising. Jeremiah had no earthly portion, but he declared that the Lord is his portion. He would probably never see his broken homeland again, but God was his home.

God was enough for Moses when he could not enter the Promised Land, and He was enough for Jeremiah even though he would probably never return to the Promised Land.

THE GRIEVING MAN'S WAIT— Lam. 3:25-27

Hope is future-oriented, but what about Jeremiah's present situation? His simple answer in verse 25 was that God is faithful and good to those who trust Him.

Verses 25-27 all start with the Hebrew word for "good." Jeremiah explained two human postures that invite the experience of God's goodness: waiting (synonymous with hope in verse 24) and seeking the Lord.

Seeking the Lord in the Old Testament includes praying (cf. Ps. 34:4), meditating on Scripture (cf. Ezra 7:10), depending on Him throughout the long journey of life (cf. Ps. 105:4), and obeying Him (cf. 119:2). Jeremiah waited for deliverance.

Jeremiah offered advice to younger believers. Jerusalem's fall was not Jeremiah's first brush with suffering. Mocked, beaten, imprisoned, and left for dead, Jeremiah had earned a doctorate in suffering.

So to those reeling from that grim moment in Judah's history, he presented a lesson in suffering.

THE GRIEVING MAN'S LESSON— Lam. 3:28-30

Jeremiah taught that there are different kinds of suffering: suffering in innocence, as punishment, and even suffering because of the sins of others. He began his lesson by counseling his audience to silently acknowledge that God was indeed disciplining Judah. This was regardless of their role as individuals in the collective discipline. Years later, Daniel exemplified that posture well. In Daniel 9:1-19, Daniel read Jeremiah's prophecies, thought deeply about them, and then humbly asked God to restore Judah.

Lamentations 3:29 directed its readers to the dust. Dust, in texts like Job 42:6, is an image of humbly trusting in God's difficult plans.

Humility is where hope grows (Lam. 3:29). When God restores people, He does so with humble believers, not with those who arrogantly avoid introspection.

In verse 30, Jeremiah urged his followers not to resist Babylon. As Jesus would later teach in the Sermon on the Mount, Jeremiah advised that Judah should accept disgrace from Babylon on the cheek. Verse 66 asserts that it was God's role to judge Babylon (and He would). Trusting that vengeance belongs to the Lord enabled Jeremiah to learn from his pain.

THE GRIEVING MAN'S FUTURE— Lam. 3:31-39

Jeremiah's hope (Lam. 3:31-33). Jeremiah explained his counterintuitive advice to accept suffering: God's heart. God's judgment does not last forever (vs. 31). How did Jeremiah know this? He knew the Scriptures. Alluding to Exodus 34:6-7, he explained that God is full of compassion, goodness, and mercy (Lam. 3:32).

Another reason judgment would not last forever is, as Ezekiel 33:11 as-

serts, God does not take pleasure in judgment on the wicked. Jeremiah expressed that beautifully. Lamentations 3:33 asserts that the Lord does not afflict willingly.

Jeremiah's case (Lam. 3:34-36). Jeremiah then reviewed why God punished Judah. In verse 34, Jeremiah used a word from Isaiah 3:15 to describe how prisoners were beaten and crushed, which Isaiah blamed on civil leaders. Jeremiah experienced those things during an unjust imprisonment (Jer. 38).

The next reminders that Jeremiah provided allude to Amos 2:6-8 and Habakkuk 1:3-4. In Lamentations 3:35, Jeremiah described manipulation of justice by bribery. In verse 36, he described corruption in the court of law. According to Lamentations 3:35, those sins were done "before the face of" the Lord. What the perpetrators thought was covered up was actually seen, assessed, and judged by the highest authority.

Using a word that can also be translated as "to see," Jeremiah wrote about how the Lord did not approve of His people's behavior. The Lord's "sight" often refers to His gracious attention (cf. Ps. 34:15). But their track record for sin invited His just judgment.

Jeremiah's questions (Lam. 3:37-39). Jeremiah concluded this section with three rhetorical questions. First, the leaders of Judah spoke and acted to build a culture that padded their pockets, but their words did not have the final say. Neither corrupt Judah nor conquering Babylon would decide the fate of Jerusalem because the Lord is the great King.

The second rhetorical question is whether good and calamity are both permitted by God. The answer is yes. It is not always clear why He allows certain conditions at certain times, but believers can know that nothing

occurs without His permission. That equips believers to endure the good and the bad.

The final rhetorical question asked why anyone who is disciplined by God would complain about it (vs. 39). Readers may think that Jeremiah was complaining throughout his book and wonder whether he was contradicting himself. He was not. There are good and bad complaints found throughout God's inspired books of the Bible.

It can be entirely valid to raise our open hands to God in a plea for mercy or understanding. Like Jeremiah, believers under God's discipline can cry out to Him, expecting Him to hear their prayers and use His power to repair their lives.

—Matthew Swale

QUESTIONS

1. How did Jeremiah understand why the people suffered?
2. What does it mean that God "remembers" something (Lam. 3:19)?
3. What happened to Jeremiah's thinking as he reflected on God's character?
4. What was Jeremiah's portion?
5. What does it mean to seek the Lord?
6. What other prophet read the writings of Jeremiah?
7. How did Jeremiah counsel his followers to respond to Babylon's domination?
8. How did Jeremiah know that God's judgment would not last forever?
9. How did Jeremiah personally experience oppression?
10. How can believers experiencing discipline respond to God?

—Matthew Swale

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The Lord's wrath can be so overwhelming that we feel deep darkness, and we feel far removed from His presence (Lam. 3:1-3).
2. No matter the bitterness of our affliction, we are not without hope (vss. 19-21).
3. God's wrath may bring despair, but His great love keeps us from being utterly consumed (vs. 22).
4. On our worst days, God is ever faithful (vs. 23).
5. We should humbly accept God's punishment for our sins (vss. 28-30).
6. God's people have no reason to complain when they are punished for their sins (vss. 31-39).

—James M. Leonard

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why would God discipline people so harshly that they feel driven away from His presence (Lam. 3:1-2)?
2. Are there ways to discern if your hardships are punishments for your sins?
3. What value is there in ruminating and reflecting on your painful hardships (vss. 19-20)?
4. How does God's great faithfulness encourage you through bitter trials and tribulations (vss. 22-23)?
5. How does the reality that "the Lord is my portion" (vs. 24) lead someone to hope or wait for Him?
6. How does knowing that all calamities come through the hands of the sovereign God help us cope (vs. 38)?

—James M. Leonard

Golden Text Illuminated

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

The prophet Jeremiah saw a city in smoking ruins, the temple destroyed, homes ransacked, and lives shattered. The wrath of God fell on a rebellious people in the form of captivity.

Yet, in the darkest seasons of life, God's message of mercy shines through. Those words, penned amid catastrophe, reveal three unshakable pillars of hope that still stand firm.

The first pillar is found in the words "we are not consumed." God can save or destroy; those are His divine prerogatives. He did not destroy the nation of Israel but put them in exile for seventy years instead. God's judgment, though severe, was tempered by mercy. Like a refiner's fire that purifies rather than destroys, the Lord's discipline aimed to restore, not annihilate, His people. Even in our own lives, how often have we deserved judgment but received God's mercy instead?

The second pillar of hope is the concept that God's mercies are "new every morning." This speaks to the renewable nature of God's compassion. Watching darkness give way to light and knowing that each sunrise brings fresh mercies from our Lord's inexhaustible supply encourages us and fills us with hope.

The third pillar of hope is the pinnacle of Jeremiah's statement "Great is thy faithfulness." You do not have to live too long in this old world to realize that man's faithfulness is faulty at best. Yet God is faithful.

—Gene Kissinger