

# *Grieving Prophets Complain*

## **David's Suffering**

David cried out to God often throughout the Psalms that life was not fair, that evil men prospered, that God was far off, or didn't hear and answer his prayers. He had good times but then suddenly the blessings ceased. His enemies pursued him. He lost his kingdom. His friends stabbed him in the back. The king tried to kill him again and again. His son turned against him. He was a fugitive and a wanted man. In his grief he cried out in deep anguish of soul in **Psalm 42**.

*"These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng. 5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and 6 my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon--from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. 8 By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me-- a prayer to the God of my life. 9 I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" 10 My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 11 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."*

## **Psalm 77:8**

*"Is his mercy gone forever? Does His promise fail for all time?"*

**1. I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. 2. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted. 3. I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint. Selah**

**4. You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. 5. I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; 6. I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired: 7. "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? 8. Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? 9. Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" Selah**

**10. Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High." 11. I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. 12. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. 13. Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? 14. You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. 15. With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Selah**

**16. The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. 17. The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. 18. Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. 19. Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. 20. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.**

## Jeremiah's Suffering

Jeremiah suffered greatly though he was called to be God's prophet from his mother's womb. I urge you to read Lamentations chapter three. It is Jeremiah's lament at the desperate nature of his troubles and the seeming lack of God's interest in answering him. I think it is worth listing his complaint to God and listening in on that harsh, bitter, and weeping lament. None is as articulate as Jeremiah in Lamentations where he describes God's injustices, even cruelty, to him personally. In his agony he cries, "*Why Lord? Where are you God? Why don't you answer me?*" There were 26 specific complaints to God about his dire situation. He was being honest with God and honest about his feelings.

### Jeremiah's Lament in Lamentations 3

1. *I have seen affliction (v 1)*
2. *I have been driven away (v 2)*
3. *He turned his hand against me (v 3)*
4. *He made my skin grow old (v 4)*
5. *He besieged me with hardships, bitterness (v 5)*
6. *He made me dwell in darkness (v 6)*
7. *He walled me in so I can't escape (v 7)*
8. *He weighed me down with chains (v 7)*
9. *He shut out my prayer (v 8)*
10. *He blocked my way with boulders (v 9)*
11. *He made my way crooked (v 9)*
12. *He mauled me like a bear (v 10-11)*
13. *He left me without help (v 11)*
14. *He drew his bow and shot me (v 12)*
15. *He used me for target practice (v 13)*
16. *He pierced my heart with sorrows (arrows) (v 13)*
17. *He made me a laughing stock, a joke (v 14)*
18. *He filled me with bitter herbs (v 15)*
19. *He has broken my teeth (v 16)*
20. *He deprived me of peace (v 17)*
21. *He trampled me in the dust (v 17)*
22. *He made me forget prosperity (v 17)*
23. *My splendor is gone (v 18)*
24. *My hopes are dashed (v 18)*
25. *My soul is downcast within me (v 20)*
26. *He covered himself with a cloud, so no prayer gets through (v 44)*

When he finished his complaint he turned his thoughts back to the Lord and said,

*This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, my soul says; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. (Lamentations 3:21-26)*

Take heart my friends. It's OK to pour your heart out to God. Tell it like it is. He can take it. He's heard it all before.

## **Habakkuk's Complaint –**

He is a contemporary of Jeremiah, living in the same culture of rebellion and sin soaked society that Jeremiah faced. In the first two chapters he complained to God in his private journal.

### **Habakkuk 2:2**

<sup>2</sup> How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not save?

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails.

The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

2:1 I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts;

I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? 14 You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler. 15 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.

### **2:2-4 The LORD's Answer NIV**

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD replied: <sup>4</sup>“See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the **just will live by faith.**

### **Habakkuk 3:17-19**

*Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: <sup>18</sup> Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup> The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*

# Paul's Sufferings

2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16,

2 Corinthians 6:3-10,

2 Corinthians 11:23-30

2 Corinthians 12:7-10,

## The Apostle Paul Excelled in Synonyms

### 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.<sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;<sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.<sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*

### 2 Corinthians 6:4-10

*Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;<sup>5</sup> in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;<sup>6</sup> in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;<sup>7</sup> in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;<sup>8</sup> through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;<sup>9</sup> known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;<sup>10</sup> sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.<sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**Romans 8:35-39** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress <4730>, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,<sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*