***Lamentations 3:46-66 All our enemies Have opened their mouths against us. 47Fear and a snare have come upon us, Desolation and destruction. 48My eyes overflow with rivers of water
For the destruction of the daughter of my people. 49My eyes flow and do not cease, Without interruption, 50Till the Lord from heaven Looks down and sees. 51My eyes bring suffering to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city. 52My enemies without cause Hunted me down like a bird. 53They silenced my life in the pit And threw stones at me. 54The waters flowed over my head; I said, “I am cut off!” 55I called on Your name, O Lord, From the lowest pit. 56You have heard my voice: “Do not hide Your ear From my sighing, from my cry for help.” 57You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, “Do not fear!” 58O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul; You have redeemed my life. 59O Lord, You have seen how I am wronged; Judge my case. 60You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me.***

***61You have heard their reproach, O Lord, All their schemes against me, 62The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day. 63Look at their sitting down and their rising up; I am their taunting song. 64Repay them, O Lord, According to the work of their hands. 65Give them a veiled heart; Your curse be upon them! 66In Your anger, Pursue and destroy them From under the heavens of the Lord.***

We’re back with Jeremiah tonight in Lamentations 3. We’ll pick up Lamentations 4 in January. So far, in the first third of this chapter, we saw that God’s mercies are new each day. In the second third, we agreed that God is our portion and He will provide. Now, in this last third, we see that God is also our protector and He will avenge. We need not worry about what is going on about us because we have a perfect God that sees all, hears all, understands all, not only in the present but in the future. Jeremiah

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Verses 46-47 *All our enemies Have opened their mouths against us. 47 Fear and a snare have come upon us, Desolation and destruction.* The enemies that used to fear Judah, serve Judah now mock, scoff, and reproach, shooting out the lip and sneering at the desolation. As a result, fear has come upon the nation. A snare has trapped the nation. A snare of pride and wickedness, of self-reliance and self-importance. The idea of these verses is that misery of all kinds has come upon the nation that was once blessed. God has withdrawn His blessing.

Verses 48-51 *48My eyes overflow with rivers of water For the destruction of the daughter of my people. 49My eyes flow and do not cease, Without interruption, 50Till the Lord from heaven Looks down and sees. 51My eyes bring suffering to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city.* ***My*** *eyes overflow with rivers of water-* Jeremiah is afflicted, weeping, and his weeping is in no small part due to what he is seeing in his country and among his people. These are his people that he has spoken Truth to night and day, suffered for, sacrificed for, and he sees that they do not hear. In Matthew 13:57 Jesus says - *A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.* Familiarity breeds contempt, but it also breeds deafness and blindness. Every parent has had the experience of giving very Godly counsel to a child, having it ignored, and later hearing that an unrelated person said the same thing and the counsel was taken. Israel had Godly men among them and refused to hear. America has Godly people and is refusing to hear. *My eyes bring suffering to my soul –* Grief and suffering wears down the soul. It was true then and it is true now. Jeremiah sees the wickedness and the godlessness all around him, hears the affliction and feels his health and his strength sapped. *Because of all the daughters of my city –* and he makes it clear why he is suffering and what is causing his grief. It’s not the Babylonians or the Assyrians. It’s his fellow Jews, those that should know better. The invaders are only the tool God is using to bring judgement on His people.

Verses 52-58 *My enemies without cause Hunted me down like a bird. 53They silenced my life in the pit And threw stones at me. 54The waters flowed over my head; I said, “I am cut off!” 55I called on Your name, O Lord, From the lowest pit. 56You have heard my voice: “Do not hide Your ear From my sighing, from my cry for help.” 57You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, “Do not fear!” 58O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul; You have redeemed my life.* ***My*** *enemies without cause Hunted me down like a bird.* Verse 52 describes Jeremiah being thrown into a pit. Remember from Jeremiah 37, that Irijah seized Jeremiah for no good reason. Zedekiah and the princes ordered Jeremiah thrown into a pit or dungeon. Then Zedekiah had him pulled out and asked, “Any word from the Lord?” When Jeremiah responded, “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Zedekiah imprisoned him again. Later, in Jeremiah 38, he again tells them that Babylon would conquer them. They threw him in the dungeon again. Every opportunity was taken to punish Jeremiah for speaking the Truth, rather than heeding the Truth and repenting. ***They****silenced my life in the pit And threw stones at me.* He was thrown into the dungeon and had stones cast at him and then had the pit covered up with stones, thus burying him alive. He is cut off from human contact. Much like our society today tries to silence those that do not hold the wicked agenda – only we call it cancel culture and cut people off from being able to communicate through twitter, Facebook, and other media platforms. *The waters flowed over my head; I said, “I am cut off!”* Despair hit Jeremiah as he sank into the mire at the bottom of that dungeon, which is widely believed to have been an empty water cistern in the ground. Any rain would have cause water to flow over his head. A rainstorm meant certain death. *I called on Your name, O Lord, From the lowest pit.* Jeremiah called to God, Jehovah, in his distress. God hears us no matter where we are. He heard Hagar cry out in the desert, Elijah sitting in silence in a cave, Jonah in the belly of a great fish, and Jeremiah in that pit. He hears us too. Psalm 130:1-2 says *Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; 2 Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications*. ***You*** *have heard my voice: “Do not hide Your ear From my sighing, from my cry for help.”* Jeremiah begged God not to ignore his prayers, his very sighs for help. Some theologians argue that the Hebrew means more like dying gasps – that God heard Jeremiah as Jeremiah breathed his last gasps… regardless, we know God hears. We are never too far gone to cry out in repentance. *You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, “Do not fear!”* God drew near and Jeremiah felt His Presence. God tells us to draw near to Him and He will draw near to us. Jeremiah cried out, sighed in prayer, and God answered – Do not fear. Isaiah 41:10 *says - Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’* God is present to calm our spirits with His Grace. We need not fear nor be dismayed. God will fight our battles, when we are faithfully serving Him. We may not always understand the battle plan, but we can be confident in the One leading the battle. *O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul; You have redeemed my life.* Jeremiah is acknowledging that God made the case for his salvation. Nothing Jeremiah has done saved him. It's only through the Providential Grace and Mercy of God. God has rescued him from the literal pit, where his feet sink down, and from the spiritual pit where sin will take us all.

Verses 59-63 *59O Lord, You have seen how I am wronged; Judge my case. 60You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me. 61You have heard their reproach, O Lord, All their schemes against me, 62The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day. 63Look at their sitting down and their rising up; I am their taunting song. O Lord,* ***You*** *have seen how I am wronged; Judge my case.* Jeremiah now appeals to God’s righteousness. He has done nothing more than prophesy what God sent. Yet, he has been ill-treated. He appeals to God’s omniscience and perfect justice. *You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me.* Jeremiah points out that they are taking vengeance when he has done no wrong. He points out that God knows this and also sees all the evil plans that they are making against him because he won’t bow his knee to their wickedness. Sounds a lot like today. *You have heard their reproach, O Lord, All their schemes against me.* Jeremiah trusts that God not only knows the plans, but also knows all the words spoken, the devices to be used, the lies being told, the charges being levied. *The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day.* God sees who is speaking against Jeremiah, both out loud and in their mind and heart. Nothing is hidden from God. *Look at their sitting down and their rising up; I am their taunting song. O Lord –* See at all times, O Lord, how they taunt me and make me the target of their torment.

Verses 64-66 *Repay them, O Lord, According to the work of their hands. 65Give them a veiled heart; Your curse be upon them! 66In Your anger, Pursue and destroy them From under the heavens of the Lord.* ***Repay*** *them, O Lord, According to the work of their hands.* The prophet now asks God to repay these plans in His perfect justice. Jeremiah 11:20 *says - But, O Lord of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause.* Jeremiah then adds - *Give them a veiled heart; Your curse be upon them!* God protects his own. We must be faithful and allow Him to veil hearts, recompense evil, and judge ways. *In Your anger, Pursue and destroy them From under the heavens of the Lord.* In Your wrath God, pursue those that have sought to do harm to Your Kingdom. Destroy them from under heaven.

And so we finish with Lamentations 3, leaving Jeremiah sighing for the vengeance of the Lord to take place… and it does take place. Zedekiah is given into the hand of the King of Babylon, Judah is conquered, and the captivity begins. All that Jeremiah prophesied came to be, just as God promised. God’s wrath fell upon the tormentors of Jeremiah. Likewise, God will avenge His saints, His children, found in Revelation 6 – Luke 18:7 *And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.* God heard then. God hears now. We trust in His judgements.