

There is a hint of the Lord's passion in this passage:

¹ **I am the man who has seen affliction Because of the rod of His wrath.** Lamentations 3:1 (NASB)

Compare this with Psalm 22 and we can draw back the veil of the Lord's passion for His people as He allows Zion to be put into complete subjection to the very people He condemns (see Isa 50). In Psalm 22 the Messiah cries out in His pain – In Lamentations 3, Jeremiah completely identifies with the pain of Zion. A few references:

- Verse 1. Jeremiah had suffered not only here in the cave but earlier he had suffered in the cistern of Malkijah – while prophesying the Lord's word he had suffered much but still he felt passion for his people
- Verse 2. Darkness / Light refers to calamity / prosperity. Whereas once Zion was living in prosperity now there is nothing but calamity

I must say that while this is not a messianic passage many parallels can be drawn between Christ's identification with man and the pain He felt and Jeremiah's empathetic suffering.

- Verse 3. **"Surely against me He has turned His hand Repeatedly all the day."** Certainly not specifically against Jeremiah – he had the favor and protection of God but again, the empathy can be felt here
- Verse 4. Compare this with Psalms 22:14 (NASB) "I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me." Jeremiah certainly had felt the pangs of hunger during the siege but stayed true to God's word – Christ suffered in His agony on the cross so that the sins of all mankind might be atoned for.

Again, I am not asserting that this is a messianic passage – rather, I *am* asserting that the Lord's prophets and the Messiah certainly convey the passion that He has for His people especially in their suffering.

- Lamentations 3:5 **"He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship."** Refers to the mounds and ramparts that were used during the siege of Jerusalem. This becomes a picture of the oppression Jeremiah felt for his countrymen.
- Lam 3:7 **"He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy."** I could go on but these metaphors serve to highlight the passion Jeremiah felt for his countrymen and so the Lord's passion is communicated for His people.

The Hopelessness of Zion's Circumstances Compared with the Hope That the Lord Gives

¹⁸ So I say, "My strength has perished, And so has my hope from the Lord."¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. ²⁰ Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me. ²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Lamentations 3:18-21 (NASB)

There is tremendous turmoil going on in the heart of Jeremiah. On one hand, he grasps the utter completeness of the destruction of Zion but on the other hand, he cannot help but call to mind the promise of the Lord to bring an end to her devastation. This is the lesson to be learned. Although we can be literally carried away with the hopelessness of our situation yet the Lord has promised to care for His children

God is Faithful¹

²² The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23 (NASB)

These two verses refers to the very core of the Lord's passion for man.

- **Lord's never ending lovingkindnesses** – *chesed* – translated mercies elsewhere – Mercy (*chesed*) speaks of God's Grace in action. The picture in the original is that of someone bending the knee in order to help.
- **For his Compassions** *rachem* that are never consumed. His Compassions (*rachem*) refers to the mother's tender feelings she has for her unborn child – can never be consumed. This along with verse 23 is most powerful.
- **His Faithfulness** refers to His infinite fidelity – the core of His nature – that of never changing – always dependable. It is the coin of the realm in redemption. Were it not for the Lord's infinite fidelity – faithfulness we would have no hope of eternal life nor could we have trust in Him in our darkest hour.
- **The word "Great"** is a most superlative measure of his Faithfulness. It is best defined by the mathematical symbol for infinity.
- **"They are new..."** His faithfulness is fresh every morning – the basic measurement of time. There is much that can be read into this reference but most clear to me is that we all have a fresh start every day and no matter what has happened and no matter how much we may have failed Him, He is there. I like the ever-presence of the Lord as depicted in Psalm 139:1-3: ¹ **O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.**

This passage is most eloquent in depicting our Heavenly Father's love for us.

He Alone Is Worthy of Our Trust.

²⁴ **"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."** ²⁵ **The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. ²⁶ It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the Lord.** Lamentations 3:24-26 (NASB)

Interesting that Jeremiah should refer to the Lord as his inheritance or share. I think we can translate this over to our own world as where is your investment? Do you trust wholly in the works of your hands? Is the promise of another man your hope – or is your investment in the Lord alone? Go back to Jeremiah's day – the king of Judah had trusted in treaties with his pagan neighbors only to be tragically disappointed.

Wait on the Lord

Waiting here means to look for – the image that comes to my mind is the father who was looking for his wayward son: **"...But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."** Luke 15:20b.

- It is good to wait
- it is good to wait silently (no griping)
- Deliverance will come to those who wait for the Lord.

Deliverance is on the way

²⁷ It is good for a man that he should bear The yoke in his youth. ²⁸ Let him sit alone and be silent Since He has laid it on him. ²⁹ Let him put his mouth in the dust, Perhaps there is hope. ³⁰ Let him give his cheek to the smiter, Let him be filled with reproach. ³¹ For the Lord will not reject forever, Lamentations 3:27-31 (NASB)

The youth is characterized by unbridled optimism – normally. But in the extraordinary time of difficulty even the youth are impacted. We all should be willing to carry our load – and the burden of others who are weaker or going through very difficult times. Putting one's mouth in the dust is a statement of great humility. Jesus was willing to be humiliated for us – we should be willing to accept humiliation and be ready to help others. Giving one's cheek is reminiscent of Jesus Christ's willingness to turn His cheek to those who were taunting Him during His trial.

Endnotes begin here.

1. Great is Thy faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Refrain

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain