

The School of Hard Knocks: from the Book of Lamentations

The touching significance of this book lies in the fact that it is the disclosure of the love and sorrow of Jehovah for the very people whom He is chastening – a sorrow wrought by the Spirit in the heart of Jeremiah (Jer. 13.17; Mt. 23. 36, 38; Rom 9. 1-4). I think this introduction by Schofield serves best to introduce my series on this book.

A moving commentary on the character of JEHOVAH – on one hand He loves His people but on the other hand He disciplines them so that they will eventually be drawn to Him. Each chapter reveals His character in contrast to his people's disobedience.

1. God is Righteous. (The Depravity of Zion). Key Verse 1:18.
2. God is Sovereign. (The Destruction of Zion). Key Verse 2:17.
3. God is Merciful – He is Faithful. (The Despair of Zion). Key Verses 3:22, 23.
4. God is Justice. (The Discipline of Zion). Key Verses 4:11, 22.
5. God is Immutable. (The Deliverance of Zion). Key Verses 5:19, 21 (cf. 4:22).

Lesson aim: in Zion's darkest hour there was hope – not because of who and what Zion was but because of who and what JEHOVAH is – eternally. The purpose of this series is to show that all believers are held accountable to his LORD. If he makes a ruin of his life the LORD will assuredly discipline him but always with the view to turning the errant believer back to Him. In this visceral portion of God's Word we see His character observed from a unique viewpoint: from the eyes of a prophet to a people who had completely rejected the LORD but nonetheless were His people.

The lesson is clear to today's believer: we need to learn and obey God's word. There is no alternative life for the believer. To disobey God is to learn from His School of Hard Knocks.