

Hope

Jeremiah Loses and Regains Hope

Foundation

Bible passage : Lamentations 3.1-3 & 16-30

Jeremiah became a prophet when “the word of the Lord came to him” in about 626BC (Jer 1.2). This ministry led to him being mistreated by the people of his hometown and members of his own family and he ended up in Jerusalem. He prophesied warnings of destruction during the latter half of the reign of the godly King Josiah. Josiah’s attempts to reform the nation seem to have produced outward change, but not in the hearts of the people. When Josiah died Jeremiah lamented bitterly knowing that trouble was coming. As a result within a few months, he was being threatened with death for being unpatriotic.

Although some wanted to hear what Jeremiah said most did not and he was told to hide himself to avoid being killed. A scroll was later made of some of the prophesies and read before King Jehoiakim. However, as each column of the scroll was read the King cut it off and burnt it in a brazier (used for keeping warm).

Later, when the Babylonian army attacked Judah, Jeremiah was telling people this was the work of God. Inevitably some were worried by this whilst others got upset, captured Jeremiah and dropped into a bor. This like a well but pear shaped. It was muddy at the bottom rather than full of water and Jeremiah sank in and was stuck. An Ethiopian who worked for the King of Israel helped Jeremiah escape.



Eventually the disasters Jeremiah warned about came true; Israel was defeated and Jerusalem destroyed as part of God’s judgement on the sin of the people. When this happened Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations, which are poems mourning someone who had died. In this case the deceased was the city of Jerusalem.

He describes his despair and says “*My strength and **my hope** have perished from the LORD*” (v18). Despite saying this he soon saw it is not true. He remembers that “*the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end...*” (v22) and when he called this to mind

said “*therefore **I have hope***” (v21) and so he had hope in the Lord (v24) and could say “*It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD*”.

“The steadfast love of the LORD
never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end”

Jeremiah had hope but did not live to see that hope fulfilled. In this he is a model for Christians who look to the promises of God for the future but therefore have a sure hope because the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.



Events caused Jeremiah to say he had lost hope, but when he remembered God’s love and mercy his hope revived