**Lamentations 5**

**I. Text Of Chapter 5 – “Remember and Restore, O Lord” (2 min. to read)**

*A. Introductory Comments* (Humphries, 576)

1. This chapter differs from the previous four as it is not an acrostic. It also differs in that it is a prayer rather than a dirge. *“Since it is more strictly a prayer than a lament, its spontaneous and personal character may have made it less than amenable to a stylized acrostic arrangement than the preceding laments.”* (Harrison, 238)

2. This chapter has a national confession of sin & a recognition of God’s abiding sovereignty (cf. Dan. 9:3-19; Neh. 9:5-38; Ps. 74:2, 18, 23).

*B. “We Are Worn Out & The Joy Of Our Heart Has Ceased” (vv. 1-18)*

1. This section vividly describes the extent of Judah’s affliction in an effort to persuade God to remove their humiliation and desecration (v. 1).

2. They are as widows and orphans in that they had lost their inheritance and had become objects of pity (vv. 2f).

3. They struggle with little to no food and the food they can get comes at a huge financial or personal cost (vv. 4, 6, 9, 10). They cannot get an alliance with anyone and are attacked and invaded to be stripped of any little that they do have. *“A real threat to livelihood came from marauding bands (9), whether of Babylonians or Bedouin Arabs, who preyed upon unsuspecting villagers attempting to obtain a little food from nearby fields.”* (Harrison, 239)

4. The imagery of their enemies being at their necks suggests two images: 1) The heavy yoke of Babylon (cf. Jer. 27-28; see also Symmachus); and 2) the ancient practice of a victor placing his foot on the neck of a prostrate enemy (e.g. Josh. 10:24; Is. 51:23; etc.). Some take the reference to Assyria as a literary surrogate for Babylon (cf. Jer. 2:18).

5. An appeal is made to God to remove these consequences of their father’s sins (cf. Ezek. 18:1; Jer. 31:29f; Ex. 20:4f; Dt. 5:9f). While some of them had actively participated in sins, over course of the 70-year captivity, most would be suffering for sins they had not themselves done.

6. Their humiliation is shown by several images and facts: their rulers were once slaves (v. 8; cf. Jer. 34:8-11; 52:16; Prov. 19:10; 30:21f; Eccl. 10:7), their women had been raped (v. 11; cf. Dt. 28:30; Jer. 8:10; 2Chron. 36:17; Isa. 3:16-4:1; 32:9-11), their princes are hanged by their hands (v. 12), their young men and children are subjected to hard labor (v. 13; humiliating for young men – Judg. 16:21), & elders were disrespected (v. 14; Lev. 19:32; 1Kgs. 12:8, 13).

7. They had been stripped of all their privileges and lay low in the ashes. The glory of Zion had become a haunt for jackals (Mic. 3:12; Lev. 11:27).

*C. A Plea For Restoration (vv. 19-22)*

1. After acknowledging faithlessness of Judah & error of their ways, Jeremiah praises the unchanging faithfulness and sovereignty of God’s throne.

2. Half a century more of this servitude and situation seems like an eternity (cf. Jer. 25:11f). Several prophets either deal with this prophetically or directly (cf. Isa. 40:27-31; Ezek. 37:11-14; Hab. 2:3).

3. Jeremiah ends with a prayer that God would restore the glory of Zion based on his conviction that God has a sovereign purpose for His covenant people (cf. Ezek. 28:25f; 36:8-15, 33-38; Isa. 58:12; 61:4; Jer. 31:38-40; 32:13-15, 44). The taking away of Zion’s glory has been the primary theme of each preceding dirge.

4. The prayer ends with a recognition of God’s exceeding anger and the interrogative “Have you rejected us forever?” *“Several Old Testament prophecies conclude on a negative or inauspicious note (cf. Ec. 12:14; Is. 66:24; Mal. 4:6), as does Lamentations. Consequently, in synagogue readings it became customary to conclude such compositions with a repetition of the preceding verse, so that under these circumstances verse 21 would be read again after verse 22.”* (Harrison, 240)

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 5**

A. Sin must inevitably result in what?

B. In what sense did Judah bear the iniquity of their ancestors? (verse 7) Is this an example of inherited sin?

C. If we are faithless, what does God remain? (2Tim. 2:13)

D. Joy was gone now, but what would happen in the future? (cf. Neh. 8:10; 12:43)

**III. Applications For Chapter 5**

A. *“While the children do not bear the guilt of their fathers’ sins, they do bear the consequences of their fathers’ sins. The failure of parents to properly teach their children and to set before them the right kind of example places an obstacle in their path that the children sometimes do not overcome (cf. Lev. 17:1-2). Many children suffer terribly because of the sins of their fathers.”* (Humphries, 578)

B. *“Though evil dwells in high places and may be used by God at times in order to carry out his purposes (Isa. 47:6; Jer. 25:8-11), it does not occupy the throne of the almighty God—it is not supreme. The throne of God rules over all governments ‘that the nations may know themselves to be but men’ (Pss. 9:19-20; 47:7-9). Evil nations are under the controlling government of God (Dan. 4:17, 26, 35). Righteousness and justice will, therefore, be ultimately upheld in the world (Ps. 97:1-3). The wrongs that a nation commits against another nation will eventually be addressed by the eternal throne above (Isa. 26:9). Furthermore, the evil actions of one nation against another nation are sometimes used by God for a greater good (Isa. 10:5-7)—the ‘greater good’ being the glory of God and the chastening of his people (Exod. 15:6; Jer. 31:18-20). Certainly God will neither forget nor forsake His people.”* (Humphries, 581)

C. *“Lam. 5:19: The frailty of mankind when compared to the permanence of the Lord would cause all men to humbly yield themselves to Him ‘in whom we live, move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Furthermore, we should take confidence that He is able to sustain those who serve Him faithfully (cf. James 1:17; Matt. 6:19- 34).”* (Harkrider, 141)

D. *“Indeed, the ultimate restoration and renewal are through the blessings of the Messiah (Isa. 11:11, 15-16; Ezek. 37:24-28; Zech. 1:12-17; Isa. 55:3; Acts 13:34; 2 Cor. 5:17), who makes his appearance in the ‘latter days’ and the ‘fullness of the time’ (Mic. 4:1; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10).”* (Humphries, 582f)