

## I. The Book of Lamentations: A Sad Record

We are in the book of Lamentations this morning. Last week we looked at the book of Jeremiah, and I told you at that point that Jeremiah writes two books in the Bible. Of course, the first book he writes is the book of Jeremiah itself. The second book he writes is the book of Lamentations.

The difference between the two books is simply this: When he writes Jeremiah, he writes it before the exile. This is before Nebuchadnezzar comes down and takes them into captivity, and he writes that book before. But when it comes to the book of Lamentations, he writes the book of Lamentations during the time that the destruction is happening to Jerusalem, with Nebuchadnezzar coming down and doing the damage and the destruction that he does. So, one book is written before the fall; the other book is written during the fall and while it is all transpiring.

When I put Lamentations within the context of the whole Bible, I think that Lamentations is probably the saddest book in the Bible. If there is any book where you can see a man's heart and his brokenness for what is going on with his people, it is certainly the book of Lamentations. It records the death of the greatest nation the world has ever seen. On the face of this planet, there has been no greater nation than the nation of Israel. It also records the end of God's mission for them, at least temporarily. God had a plan, and we know what that plan was. We have talked about it many, many times coming through the Bible, and now that plan has been put on hold and canceled. We find that God had a plan and had a mission for the nation of Israel to take God's glory to the end of the earth within the Old Testament writings. That plan is now, as I said, foregone and put on hold.

## II. Israel: The Burning Bush

When you study the ancient writings, history breaks down into a number of different categories, and one of the categories they call ancient history. When you study ancient history, you will find that secular writers have listed what they commonly call the seven wonders of the ancient world. Those seven wonders were things that man did, things like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Great Pyramid of Cheops, and all of those places that the world stood in wonder at the time that they were made. It was really quite an incredible feat. But the greatest wonder of the world had nothing to do with anything that man ever made. The greatest wonder of the world was the nation of Israel.

In Exodus chapter 3, God begins to reveal Himself to Moses. Moses is going to be one of the great leaders that represents the law. Elijah is another great leader; he represents the prophet. That is why you find those two coming back in the Tribulation period. But when Moses is up on Mount Sinai in Exodus chapter 3, he sees a bush, and that bush is burning. When he goes to that bush, it catches his attention. That bush is not only burning, but it speaks to him. That bush is

burning, but it never got consumed. God was speaking to him through that burning bush and telling Moses what He wanted him to do.

With that idea and that concept of the burning bush, God was showing us a great principle about the nation of Israel. He says in Malachi chapter 3, verse 6, that Israel will never be consumed. That burning bush represents for us the nation of Israel from God's standpoint: a nation that down through the history of the world has been severely persecuted, a nation that has been totally picked on and tried to be wiped out by every nation on this planet, but a nation that has outlasted all the other ancient nations.

Do you realize that there is no other ancient nation on the face of this planet that is left from ancient times? The Babylonians are gone. They are all gone. The only nation that is left, the Egyptians are gone. There is not the same culture. They do not speak the same language. There is only one nation today that exists and speaks the same language that it did in the Old Testament times, and that is the nation of Israel. She surely is the bush that has been burned, but will not be and has not been consumed.

### III. History's Landmarks: God's Plan vs. Satan's Opposition

I told you before that all down through history, history is a very simple thing, and every Christian ought to be a student of history. I told you throughout our study, and I will continue to remind you of it and lay different aspects of it out, that history, as complicated as it is portrayed to be, is really pretty simple to understand when you take it from the Bible standpoint.

We talked about the Bible being broken down into two aspects: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven being the literal kingdom for the nation of Israel, the kingdom of God being the spiritual kingdom for the New Testament believers. Yet the book of Proverbs tells us that within those kingdoms there are landmarks. A landmark is something that a surveyor uses so he can find a point of reference, and from that point of reference, he can find whatever point he wants to find once he finds a fixed point. In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel is our fixed point. In the New Testament, the church is our fixed point. In other words, you can find God in history. You can find what God is doing in history if you can just find those two fixed points to start your survey.

I always thought it was interesting when you went to Bible college that they had a course in there that was called "Survey of the Old Testament." Then they had a course for the New Testament called "Survey of the New Testament." I always kind of thought it was hilarious that here is a man going to try to give a survey of the Old Testament when he does not even know where the landmark is to start, because you cannot do a survey accurately without a landmark to place to start. Of course, it is one of those things that most people do not understand.

History is very simple. Once you understand the landmarks, history breaks down simply like this. This is not new; I have told you this before, but I need to say it again to lay out the concept of where we are going here. History is nothing more than God moving in a direction to accomplish His plan, and the devil then moving in opposition to God to stop that plan. It is all it is. It is that simple.

You are going to find it throughout the Bible, and some of these we have looked at as we have come through.

- We saw in Genesis chapter 1 through 3, what did God do?
- We see in Genesis chapter 5, 6, and 7, just a few chapters on, Noah.
- I told you before, when you find God beginning to develop the nation of Israel, and you take the nation of Israel down into Egypt, they are down there for 400 years.
- I told you just a couple of weeks ago when we studied Second Chronicles, and we came through that time period, or the Times of the Gentiles, I told you how that for 400 years, when the Jews go into captivity, God shuts up heaven.
- Then you can take it even further; you can go through the book of Acts, and I can show you time after time in the book of Acts where he does it.
- I will give you another one.

#### IV. Why God Allows Opposition

Somebody asked me one time, and I have to answer this question, because it is probably going through some of your minds, and if it has not already at some point in your life, it will. Somebody asked me one time, "Why does God allow that? Why does God allow that to happen? I mean, as God is all knowledge, and God is all sovereign, and God is all powerful, why does God allow that?"

Because when you look at it, and I have been asked this question many, many times in Bible study, or working with people one-on-one, to tell you the truth, it looks like the devil stops God. It really does. It looks like the devil holds God up, or at least messes up with His plan. It looks like the devil really forces God to change and adjust His plan. When you step back and you look at it from a human standpoint, not understanding God and the Word of God and the overall concept, it really looks like, and you scratch your head and say, "Why does God allow that to happen? Why does God make a step this way, and then allow the devil to step this way to stop it?" It looks very frustrating. Honestly, it appears like maybe God is not totally in control. It appears like maybe the devil gets one up on Him every once in a while, and then an angel runs into the throne room and says, "Lord, you are not going to believe this, but guess what just happened?" I promise you, that scene never takes place in heaven.

But if you do not understand God and the Bible and the Word of God, I can see how that when you hear something like I just said, it would make you scratch your head and ask the question, "Why does God allow that?" It is like a lady that I am teaching the Bible to through a long Bible course over the phone. We have a Bible study. She asked me the question, and she is a sweetheart gal, really wants to learn the Bible, but she is like where a lot of you are at. She asked this

question a couple of Thursday nights ago. We were talking about the same thing. She said, "Bob," she says, "I do not understand that. Why does not God just press the fast forward button and get past all this stuff and get to the good stuff?" Many times I have been asked, "Why does God put up with this? Why does not God just put the fast forward button and get us past this and cut the devil out of it altogether?"

Well, there are a couple of reasons for that that you need to understand to put this thing in perspective.

1. First of all, let me just say this, that God never loses control. I want to tell you God has a plan, and God's plan is real simple. God's plan is not to establish a nation of Israel, though He is going to do that. God's plan is not to call out the church, though He is doing that. God's overall ultimate plan, and this is really the key, God's ultimate overall plan is to get honor and glory at everything on planet earth.

Now God, the Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs chapter 16, the Bible tells us that the devil, the guy who comes in opposition to God, he was created for a purpose. It was not one of those things where the devil just revolted one day and God found out about it the next day and said, "Oh my goodness, what am I going to do?" No, he was created with a purpose because the Bible clearly tells us that God has vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. The bottom line is simply this: God is supreme, God is all-knowing, God is all-powerful, and God Almighty is going to get honor and glory at everything on planet earth, whether it is for Him or against Him. It does not matter to God whether you are on His bus or the devil's bus; at the end of the day, God is going to get honor and glory at everything on planet earth. You can either be with Him or you can be against Him, but you are not going to stop, nor is the devil going to stop.

I will show you an example back in the Old Testament. Pharaoh, he goes down there in Egypt in Exodus, and Moses goes in and says, "Let God's people go." Pharaoh says, "I am not going to let them go." They go back and forth, and finally Pharaoh says, "I am going to let them go," and God moves. God begins to bring out His people and take them to a land, and then what does the devil do? The devil says, "I am going to stop that." So what he does is he puts in Pharaoh's heart not to let them go. Pharaoh comes after them. Now here is a classic example where God puts them in a direction and the devil comes after them to stop them and discourage them, and in the process they get wiped out. Somebody says, "Well, why did God even do that? Why did God even allow that? Why did He go to all that energy? Why did He go to all that trouble?" I will tell you why, because God got honor and glory out of the death of Pharaoh, the same way He would have got honor and glory out of the fact that a Pharaoh would have done nothing. The difference is all those other nations down there heard what God had done, and when those Jews go down through that land and they start coming through some of them nations, some of them other nations that would have been in opposition to them backed off and said, "Come right on through. We heard what your God did to Pharaoh, and we do not want Him doing it to us." You know what God did? God got honor and glory out of allowing the devil to do what the devil does, try to disrupt the plan of God. So the first thing we understand about that is the fact that God's ultimate goal is to get glory out of everything on planet earth.

2. Now the second reason God allows it, and here is a great story in John chapter 6. John chapter 6, verses 1 through 6, talks about a group of people that Jesus is preaching to. He preached for a long time, and the people are hungry, and then He calls one of His apostles in and He says, "I want you to go get food for all these people." The Bible says when you read the whole story, the gist of the story is simply this: He creates a scenario, and then He creates a scenario that is very troublesome because they do not have the wherewithal to accomplish what He wants them to accomplish. He says to them, "Go do what I am telling you to do," and then the Bible puts a parentheses in it and shows you the God behind the scenes, that He has an underlying purpose to everything that He does, because He put these people in a bad way, in a bad situation where here is a bunch of people that heard Him preach, need to be fed, and there is no money or no way to feed them. The Bible clearly says in that little parentheses that God said that to him to prove him. And then it says, "for he himself knew what he would do."

You see, God always knows what He is going to do, but sometimes God will allow us to be in the process to prove us, to see what we are going to do. I have said it before, the real test of your relationship with God is not when everything goes good. The real test with your relationship with God is not when you have everything you need. The real test of your relationship with God is not when life on planet earth is just rosy and peachy and everything is going your way. The Bible says the real test of your faith and my faith is when our world comes apart, that we find ourselves in a situation where the devil does come into opposition to what you are trying to do, and God allows it to prove us, to prove us. So He asked that young man and told him what to do, and the Bible says he did it to prove him, but He Himself knew what He was going to do.

You are going to find in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 21, for you and for me, the Bible says that we as Christians are to prove all things. Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, talked about our bodies being a living sacrifice that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. During this time right here, with all the going back and forth and throughout the Bible in the Old Testament, God is allowing the devil to do what he does without any interference of it stopping God in His total sovereignty and of what God is going to do. God is allowing the devil to disrupt what God's plan seemingly is so God can prove the nation of Israel to see how much they really trust Him. When we get to the New Testament, talking about these parallels, that is exactly what God is allowing in America today.

## V. The Fall of Jerusalem and Its Parallels

Jeremiah witnesses the failed test of the greatest nation and the greatest city as it is reduced to rubble. Jeremiah in this book expresses his horror and his helplessness of seeing the defeat and the slaughter and the ruination of his people. The horror that was so long promised but so frequently ignored has now arrived. At this time in the book of Lamentations, the judgment of the nation of Israel falls from the hands of the wicked Babylonians who are brutal and who are wicked and who stand for one thing, and that is the demise of the nation of Israel because they hate God and they hate God's Word and they hate the people of God. It is a clear testimony that when God gives you the Bible and gives you all the protection and He takes care of you, when

you dump Him, He gives you to your enemies. Oh, what a great lesson that is. We see this period of time is one of the blackest times in all the history of the world, a time when the greatest nation on the face of this planet ends, ceases to exist.

I do not know if you know your history or not, but Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem in January 588 BC. From January 588 BC to July 586 BC, two and a half years, he lays siege to the city of Jerusalem. Let me explain laying siege. Back in the Old Testament, when you had a big army and you wanted to conquer a city, you simply just took your troops, ringed them around the city because the city was dependent on the things that were being grown, the things that were coming in. Nobody can grow stuff to eat in a city. It is totally dependent on the stuff coming in. So what you do is you ring that city with your troops. Nobody comes out. Nobody comes in. You do not have to, and these cities were walled and they were very dangerous to attack, and you would lose hundreds of thousands of men. So Nebuchadnezzar just simply says this, "Time is on my side. I will just ring that city around and I will just starve them out. Nothing will go in, nothing will come out, and in time they will give up or they will find themselves in such a weakened position that they cannot fight."

Two and a half years siege. People starved to death. That was the most incredible, brutal time that you ever saw in your life. For two and a half years, that city laid under siege by Nebuchadnezzar, and no food came in. I am telling you, in a city of a million people, when you are dependent on everything, the grocery store shelf dried up pretty quick. There is nothing to eat. I am not talking about for two weeks. I am talking about two and a half years. Imagine the city you live in, nothing coming in or going out for two and a half years, and think how long you would get. You would be out with your buddy eating acorns in the backyard after about the first three months. It was a desolate time.

Then on July 19th of 586 BC, the city falls. On August 15th, the city and the temple are burnt to the ground. During that time, we find the most brutal murder, rape, the most unbelievable stuff goes on that you cannot even believe. There is nothing today in our world or our society that will rival those Babylonians. Not only were they Israel's enemy, you have to remember this, but they were running controlled by the devil who hated the nation of Israel more than any man on this planet. The revenge that they went in with was satanically designed and satanically controlled. I mean to tell you, you can read the accounts for yourself in any history books. It was a slaughter.

We find that the king's children, children of the seed, are taken captive into Babylon. Daniel is written during this time, and the Hebrew children. They are taken into captivity during this time simply because the devil wants to make sure that the king's seed never rises again and is polluted into the ungodliness of the Babylonian empire and all the things that go along with it that will destroy and wipe out and will guarantee that the nation of Israel never rises to the nation again that it once was. That was the devil's plan.

## VI. Structure of Lamentations and Its Application

With that in mind, let us begin to look at the book of Lamentations. Our study today is going to be a great study lesson for you of learning how to take the Old Testament, New Testament

principles and apply them to what we are looking at. This is going to be a great lesson today on how to take an Old Testament book, read stuff, find New Testament principles, and show you how to apply them back and forth. So pay attention to that as we come through the book of Lamentations.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for today. We love you. We ask you, Father, in a very special way to be with us today. We ask you, Lord, to open up our hearts, give us your Word, show us, make the things that we have to talk about today understandable and Lord, palatable, and be able to take them into our hearts and our lives. We love you, Father, and we just ask you to bless us now as we come to your Word. Give me clarity of thought and clarity of speech and help me, Lord, lay out this great book that we may see the values and the truths that you have for us. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, amen.

Lamentations and the name of the book is the key to the book. Lamentations breaks down into five chapters. It is different than the books that we have studied before because every chapter is a Lamentation. Every chapter is a different lamenting about something, and you have got five of them. Hence, you have got the book Lamentations. It is real simple. Each chapter, in fact, better than that, each chapter in the first verse in a chapter tells you what you are dealing with. It is real easy to study once you understand some things. The book of Lamentations breaks down, as I said, differently. It has only got five chapters, but each chapter is a particular Lamentation that he is lamenting over as he looks at this destruction.

- In chapter 1, he is lamenting over the destruction of the city and is mourning because this great city has been destroyed.
- In chapter 2, he is lamenting over the anger of Jehovah and how that they have broken the back of the people.
- In chapter 3, he is lamenting about his own affliction and what he is going through.
- In chapter 4, he is lamenting over the fact that the kingdom of heaven is gone now and it has been ruined.
- In chapter 5, he is lamenting over the fact that he is asking God to restore the nation of Israel and he is asking God for a faithful remnant that will stand true and bring about their repentance that God's mercy will be on them.

As we look at these five lamentings in the book of Lamentations, and we see and witness the sadness of the failure of Israel's mission, I am telling you, if you have any spiritual perception at all, you cannot miss the parallels between the Old Testament nation of Israel and the New Testament church. They are unbelievable.

Historically, we know that this is dealing with Israel in a historical situation in 606-587 B.C. We know that this picture is the coming time when the Antichrist, typified by Nebuchadnezzar, is going to come in and destroy Jerusalem in the Tribulation period. We know that. But inspirationally, you can never get away from the Old Testament of the parallels. Israel had a mission. The church has a mission. Israel had a calling. The church has a calling. You are going to have to understand that what happened to the nation of Israel is what happened to Christianity and the Laodicean church period, the church period that we are living in right now. When you

examine the parallels, it is so clear. It helps you and I grasp the situation where we are in today. Because I am telling you, God's people do not understand the situation we are in. You are going to see that before we come over.

So when he is lamenting the nation of Israel, as I read it, I lament over the body of Christ, the church, because what has happened to the nation of Israel has happened to the church. The things that God gave them, though theirs were literal, ours were spiritual, the same commission was given. They were to bring the whole world to see the glory of God in that temple. We were to take the temple to the whole world to show them the glory of God. In both cases, we have failed. The reason we have failed collectively is because we have failed individually. We need to understand that. I want to talk to you today about those great parallels.

## VII. Lamentations 1: The Destruction of the City

In chapter 1, and I said, verse 1 is the key to every chapter. In chapter 1, verse 1, we see the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Here is what he says:

*Lamentations 1:1*

*How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!*

"Tributary" is somebody that is second nature. You have a river, and the river splits off into what they call tributaries. It is a second. In other words, he is saying the greatest nation the world has ever seen, the nation that was great among the nations, princes among the provinces, has become second rate, has become solitary, and has become like a widow. What he is saying is, "How, how, how?" What he is asking is a question that we have got to look at today: "How did it happen?"

I sat this week with a young man whose wife wants to divorce him. A friend of mine that I have known quite a while, did not come to our church. He came over to see me, and I have talked to him. It is going to be one of those deals where I am going to try to use it to get him to come to church. He is not saved. But he sat there with me and, like so many times over the years, I have dealt with somebody who has had a tragedy befall him in their life. He sat there with his hands on his head. He said to me, "You know what, Bob, I do not know how this happened." How many times I have seen a Christian mom or dad, or I have seen a Christian man or Christian woman go through some tough time with their kids or their marriage, and something happened that really, really was a life-changing event. They have sat there in my office and literally put their hands in their head and say, "Bob, I really do not know how this happened." That is what you have got right here.

I think that the church today, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I think the body of Christ, when they begin to realize the price that Christ paid, when they begin to realize the importance of the Word of God, when they begin to realize, just like the nation of Israel, it was too little, too late. They are going to stand there at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and they are going to look at each other. Husbands are going to look at wives, wives are going to look at husbands, pastors are going to look at their people, people are going to look at their pastors, and they are going to say

to themselves as they realize they are going to be naked and realize that they have lost their millennial inheritance. When they had a Bible that told them how, when they should have had a church, should have had a pastor, should have had everything that they needed, they are going to stand there just like the mom or the dad or the husband and wife who has the Word of God now, who should know better, and they are going to sit there when tragedy now falls, when reality hits us. "Oh, that hurt. I am a little off now, but I will be all right." Boy, I get into my illustrations. Anyway, reality is going to hit them. "How did this happen? How did this happen?" Sitting down after your fall and saying to yourself, "How in the world? I should have known better. I have got the Bible. I am saved. I have got the Holy Spirit of God."

What you see here during this period of time is when Jeremiah writes, he writes that Israel as the greatest nation, as the Prince of the Provinces, have now come to the bottom rung of the ladder who are now suffering at the hands of their enemies, and them sitting there saying the reality come in. "Why did this take place?" Yet at the same time, I see Christianity at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I see how Israel came from David to Zedekiah. I see how the church came from Ephesus, the church that was fully purposed, to Laodicea. Yet I want to tell you the answer for that is real simple. This is not a complicated message. The older I get in the Word of God and the older I get with God and walking with God, the reality sets into me how easy life really is. Life is not complicated when you just follow the Bible. It is when we get out of the Bible and we do not follow the principles.

That is why when you start to get out of fellowship with God, and we all do, you know the first thing that goes? It is your Bible reading, your Bible study. I know it is true in my life. The first thing that happens to me when I start to get out of fellowship with God is I do not read the Bible anymore, or I do not study it with the intensity or not at all. That is the worst thing because you see that is the only thing you have that is the absolute truth that keeps you on track. When you allow the devil to take that first step to take that truth out of your life, then you are going to not have the absolute standard to make the judgments on, and you are going to have to make them on your own, and you are going to make the wrong ones. You are going to make the wrong ones. Then it is just a compounding effect after that that leads you right down the garden path to the world. That is why it is so subtle. The first thing that happens, the devil is you just say, "Well, I do not feel like reading it today." What it takes is determination to feel like you read it when you do not feel like it. You have got to have the determination in you that you know what is best for you, even when that is why you do not stay out of fellowship. Everybody gets out of fellowship, but do not step across the line any more than a second. I mean, I am telling you, you do not let it stay there. You do not linger there. You do not enjoy it. If you are in, you get out and you come right back to God because the bottom line is sin will destroy you. It starts so steadily by just taking your reading out of your life. Now you have no principles that you are operating by and the rest is history.

This is taught for us in the book of Judges, Judges chapter 13 through Judges chapter 16, in the life of a man by the name of Samson. Samson is a picture of the nation of Israel. Samson is also a picture of the body of Christ. He is also a picture of any man who falls for the trap that I just told you about, that when he gets out of fellowship with God, or woman, when they get out of

fellowship with God, that they surround them with things in their life that they do not want to get back to the Bible. You know what happens to Samson? He gets taken captive by the Philistines and he winds up a spiritual suicide. Now that does not mean that everybody that gets out of fellowship with God and goes back to the world that God is going to kill. That is not the point. You can be dead and still be walking the streets. You understand what I am saying? You could be dead spiritually if you are not doing anything for God, and even though you are alive, you are dead.

Now we see the great example of Samson, and this is the example that shows you, and it is very simple. I have a message that I preach on this, but it is simple. The three points of the outline are simple. It simply says this: Samson comes to the point where he gets so far out of touch with God, he gets hanging out with the world, and in the process of that, you know what? His sin and getting out of the Word of God blinded him. That is what happens. Once you say, "I am not reading my Bible anymore. Oh, I do not feel like reading it." Once you forsake the one absolute standard of truth that you have got, your sin is going to blind you. Then in the process of time, it is going to do exactly what it did for Samson. Your sin is not going to only blind you, it is going to bind you. In time, as you go on, your sin is not only going to blind you, it is not only going to bind you, but it is going to turn you over to your enemies, this world, and sin is going to grind you. It is real simple. It is real simple. I do not have to sit down with you with a big chair and you lay on my couch and you tell me your feelings. I do not have to sit down and talk about the inner you and what are you really dealing with today and who has abused you and who did not listen to that. Let me tell you something, sin comes real quick, real easy, and the Bible never pretends it for a second that you cannot define it very quickly. It is simply like this: When you get out of the book, when you do not want to read it, when you throw your life preserver away of this sea of life, when you say, "I do not want to read it, I do not want to get in it," your sin is going to blind you, in time it is going to bind you, and in time it is going to grind you.

What happened to Israel? That is what happened to the church. The book of Revelation tells us that there are seven periods of church history. You know the first one is the church of Ephesus. That church, Ephesus means fully-purposed. It was a church that was absolutely fully-purposed. Yet, the only, it is a good church, it holds the line, it does everything, but the Bible says in Revelation chapter 2, verse 4, that the problem it has is the same problem you and I have. It wakes up one day and says, "I do not feel like reading today." The Bible says it left its first love. It forsook the book that God gave them, and it was just a spiral staircase down from there.

We see in Israel's case David and Solomon, the two greatest leaders that turned him to God, and then what happens? Solomon writes Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, to his son, Rehoboam. Rehoboam rejects the Word of God. Rehoboam does not read his Bible, and he takes the counsel of the young guys versus the counsel of the old guys, and it is just a spiral staircase down from there. Boy, in chapter 1, he is asking himself, "How did this happen?" I am telling you, it happened because somebody took the number one thing out of their life that gives them the truth and makes life simple.

## VIII. Lamentations 2: The Anger of Jehovah

Then chapter 2. Chapter 2 talks about the anger of Jehovah, anger of God, and the brokenness of God's people. He says in Lamentations 2:1, like I said, every chapter, first verse is all you need.

*Lamentations 2:1*

*How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!*

I want to tell you something. The Bible says, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion in a cloud?" You see, once you get out of the Word of God, and you do not have a Word of God, you cannot see clearly anymore. You are in a fog. It is like driving in the foggiest night you ever saw in your life. You can turn your headlights on as bright as you have got, and you know what? It just illuminates the fog, and you can see even less. There is only one thing in this world that will cut through the fog, and that is the Word of God. There is only one thing in this world that will give you the clarity of sight, the clarity of thought, and the clarity of understanding. That is the Word of God. Israel had it, and they lost it. The church had it, and they lost it. They had it, and they lost it because they went with something else, and when you sat there with your head on your hands and say, "How did this happen?" I will tell you how it happened. You got in a fog, and Israel lost the beauty. Israel lost the favor of God.

Oh, he says in chapter 2, verse 18:

*Lamentations 2:18*

*Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.*

Oh, by the way, right there with tears running down, this is where the wailing wall comes in. You will see those Jews over there in Jerusalem right now, they are standing up against that wall. That wall is the original wall back there in the Old Testament, and they are standing there, and they are reading their things and their wailing. That is the wailing wall. That wailing wall comes into being, it is not in the Bible. It is not a biblical thing, but it comes into effect right here when the Jews go back to the original walls the way when Israel had its glory, and they wail because of the lost glory. You do not have a wailing wall. You have a wailing altar. You get on your face before God in your bedroom, in your living room, in your church, wherever you bow your neck and open up your heart and you wail to God, say, "Oh God, I am sorry for the way I am."

But then the application, verse 19 says:

*Lamentations 2:19*

*Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.*

Somebody is starving to death. I told you they are under siege for two and a half years. Somebody is starving to death. My Bible says in Amos chapter 8, verse 11, there is a famine

coming. There is a famine here. There is not a famine of bread, but a famine of the Word of God. I am telling you something, just as the nation of Israel's little kids starved physically back in this time of this siege, when the devil laid siege to the greatest city, the devil has laid siege to the greatest city, New Jerusalem, the body of Christ today, and God's people, God's little children, God's moms and dads, God's little kids, brand new Christians are starving to death today during this siege.

He says there in verse 2, "and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel." During this time, Israel gets cast down. The kingdom of heaven is gone and the glory is given to the Gentile nations. Yet the Bible says in Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 and 16, about the Laodicean church, God spews them out of His mouth. Incredible parallels. Just as Israel was covered with a cloud because of their rejection of the Word of God, you and I in the church are covered with a cloud. The only thing that gives you the clarity is the Word of God that allows you to see things the way they really are.

## IX. Lamentations 3: Affliction and American Complacency

Then chapter 3. Chapter 3, he says:

*Lamentations 3:1*

*I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.*

Chapter 3 teaches a tremendous truth, a tremendous truth. He says, "I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." Now, what I am about to say here, I do not say to scare you, but I say to prepare you. If there is anything that showed where America was and how America is, it is what took place on 9/11 when we were savagely attacked at the World Trade Center and over 3,000 people lost their lives. Men said of that time, "Life in America changed." I think probably life in the world changed, but certainly life in America changed. America at that point entered into a war which she has never had to fight a war like this before.

Yet at the same time, I see a real problem with Americans. I see the same problem with Christians, but I want to make the parallel here because America does not want to be inconvenienced by a war. It is amazing to me that when it happened, this whole country stood shoulder to shoulder behind the President of the United States. What is it? Three years later now? Really, it is three years later, but you could have got these numbers two years ago or a year ago. No nation stands behind him now. You know why? We do not want to be inconvenienced in America by a war. We want our nice things. We do not want to have to worry. We do not want to have to deal with, and we want it to go away. We want to get back to our nice, easy lifestyle. We do not want to be inconvenienced. We do not want to be threatened. We want to enjoy our ballgames, our malls, our open-air activities. We just cannot conceive in America the fact that somebody out there wants to kill us, and the only thing those terrorists are sorry about on September 11 is they did not kill 300,000 of us instead of 3,000 of us. The first chance they get, they will kill 300,000.

America does not want to deal with that. America wants to step back and say it is not real. It is not true. There is no threat. You know what? We can worry. We can do this. We can do that. America does not understand that she is in a fight for her life. Three quarters of the world population will stand against her, and they live for one thing: that is to get rid of Israel and get rid of us. Israel because of the Bible, us because of the crusade. But the bottom line is they want us out of the way. We do not want a war. We want a war that everybody goes and fights but nobody gets killed on our side. That is what we want. We want a war where yes, we are fighting but nobody dies. Nobody pays the price.

I am a student of history. I am an intense student of history because I believe that in history lies the answers when you come to the Bible. I have watched America, I am 54 years old. I have watched America in the 54 years of my life, but I have watched America even beyond that. I have watched America come to this position. Back in the 1750s, 1760s, when this country was founded, we know the country was founded on the principles of the Word of God. The idea back there was we were going to throw off tyranny from England. A man stood up and you have all studied him in school. His name was Patrick Henry. Patrick Henry gave his famous speech when he simply said, "Give me liberty or give me death." When he made that statement, he simply said this: liberty is so important to me. The freedom that we have as a country is so important to me than any oppressor, whether it be England, whether it be Saudi Arabia, whether it be Iraq and Iran or the Taliban or anybody else. My liberty is so precious to me because I know that that liberty is grounded and promised in the Word of God as me as a believer. That liberty is so precious to me that if I do not have it, I will die preserving it. Now that is a statement. That is a statement.

250 years later, during the 1960s and the 1970s, the slogan changed. Men like Martin Luther King, men like that led this country into liberal like Kennedy, not Jack, but Ted and all the rest of them. They changed the slogan in the 60s and the 70s and they just said, "Give me liberty." We fought the Civil War over giving somebody liberty, not fighting it. I am just saying we did. Up through the 60s and the 70s, it was liberty, liberty. We had the hippie movement. It was peace, love, liberty, liberty, "Give me liberty." And now in the 1980s and the 1990s and up the 2000 time we live in, it is not "Give me liberty or give me death." It is not "Give me liberty." It is just simply "Give me, give me." That is where we are at today. "Give me, give me what I want. Do not ask me to lay down my life for my country. Give me, give me this free, give me healthcare, give me a job, give me money, give me this, give me that."

Christians are falling into the same trap. Christians fall into the same trap. It is "Give me this, give me this, give me this." They go to church to get. That is all it is. Get what you need. "Give me, give me." Yet I am telling you, our enemy in a nation understands that weakness and will exploit that weakness. Anytime your enemy sees a weakness in you, especially somebody like the Iraqis or the Muslims, when they see a weakness in America, that America has no gut to fight, that America loves her, that is why they do not love, they hate the Western culture. They call it decadent. It is decadent because it destroys, because it brings in all the wealth and all the things that you have and you get complacent. Pretty soon you do not want to do anything but enjoy your things. So when your life is shaken, you do not want to be bothered. You may be

bothered for a little bit, but you want to go back to sleep. By God, you better give me a president that will let me sleep. Do not give me a president that tells me the threat out there. Do not give me a president that is fighting the war. You give me somebody that will let me go back to my niceties. You get me somebody that I do not have to worry about a bomb going off and my little trinkets falling off the wall. You give me somebody that is nice that I do not have to worry about my kids going to school and somebody blowing them up. You give me somebody, and the bottom line is it does not exist today. It only exists in your mind. America will never come out of this fog because America has lost the clarity of view. You know what? God's people are in the same boat. They do not see with clarity today the urgency of the hour. They do not see it. They do not see it.

I am telling you, Jeremiah laments in chapter 3 because he has to go through the affliction, being a good man, just like Israel has to go through because they are bad men. I am telling you, modern Christianity is just like America, but I wanted you to understand this. There is a good chance. There is a very good chance as God's judgment falls on this nation that God's people will have to go along with the judgment and be part of the judgment just like Jeremiah did. People look at that and again, they do not like that. God's people do not like that. They cannot conceive like it is in Israel where they walk out every day. Moms and dads say goodbye to the kids and they never know the bus is going to blow up. They never know if there are going to be a bomb at a checkpoint. They never know for sure. They live with it every day, every day. Yet, you know what? We look at that same thing and we cannot understand. We do not understand that that is where Israel has got their toughness from.

Do you ever stop and think about this that the nation of Israel is smaller than the size of Texas? All the other Muslim countries in the world are like, they are like a drop in the bucket. They are surrounded by millions and millions and millions and millions of Muslims. The land masses around them, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran, Turkey, Europe, every nation around them is against them. Yet, why are not those nations just rolling over them and wiping them out and taking them? I will tell you why. They hate them, but they fear them. Because Israelis are not afraid to stand up. You know what their thing is? When somebody blows up somebody in America or somebody kills somebody over there, we jockey around over here and we make a political thing out of it. You know what the Israelis do? They just simply say this, "Look, you kill one of ours, we kill 10 of yours. We have already figured it out on a computer. You are going to run out of people that way before we do." The Arabians, the Iraqis, they know it is true. They know it is true. They know they will do it. It is not like somebody coming up and when you bomb something in our United States, I mean, when they blew up the Cole, what did we do? We did not even use harsh language. We allow those things to take place and after a while our enemy knows America does not want a war. She will not fight. She will not stand. "I will use her own fear against her." That is exactly what the Bible says the devil does. That is exactly what the devil does. The Bible says perfect love casteth out fear. The Bible says that when you do not have that perfect love in the Word of God and you do not see it clearly, I am telling you, I am telling you that devil will use that against you. I am telling you, you better get set because it is probably going to happen. We are the only generation of Christians down through those seven periods of church history that have never paid a price for what we believe. It is either going to go

one way or the other, ladies and gentlemen, but that church was told in Revelation chapter 3, verse 18, to buy gold tried in the fire, and it is going to go one or two ways. It is either that we are going to get our persecution at the end before we go out or it is going to go even worse and we are not going to get any persecution and we are going to get raptured up and we are going to stand there as the only people in the history of the New Testament church that never lifted a stick for persecution for Christ. The tragedy that is, there is probably about 90% of God's people out there praying for the second one.

## X. Lamentations 4: The Dimming of Gold and Loss of Authority

Chapter 4. Chapter 4, he says this, oh chapter 4 is so good. He says:

*Lamentations 4:1-2*

*How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street.*

*The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!*

Ruined kingdom for the nation of Israel, ruined church for the body of Christ. Verse 2 says simply this, "the gold changed the clay." Early in this mission I asked the question, "How did this happen? How did it happen to Israel? How did it happen to the church?" Here comes the answer, real simple. The answer is found in verse 1 in one little phrase. Look what it says: "How has the gold become dim and how is the most... watch it very carefully... most fine gold changed."

Here is a lesson for you. We know that gold in the Bible is a picture of deity. If you go over to Song of Solomon chapter 5, verse 10, we just talked about it a couple of weeks ago. We found when it was described in the Lord Jesus Christ, it says that his head, his head, his head was most fine gold. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 3, "the head of man is Christ." It says they changed the most fine gold. You know what it says? You know what it is saying? It says, if the head is Christ and the most fine gold is Christ, it is talking about His authority. These people changed the authority of the most precious fine gold that God gave them, the Word of God.

Romans chapter 1, verse 25, it talks about that they changed the glory, they changed God's Word. In Romans chapter 1, verse 23, it talked about him changing God's glory. In Ezekiel chapter 5, verse 6, it talked about them changing God's judgments. Now in Lamentations 4, verse 1, it talked about changing God's authority. "We just made this thing the way we want it to be. We just made this thing the way we want it to be."

You know, back in 1 Samuel chapter 4, there is a story and Israel is in a bad way. This woman has a baby and this woman names this baby Ichabod. It tells you in that verse in chapter 4, verse 21, that Ichabod means "the glory is departed from Israel." That is what the name means. Then it adds a little postscript to it and it says, "the glory is departed from Israel because the Ark of God has departed." Now I do not know if you know it or not, and I am not going to get into a

theological thing today, I am just going to tell you what this is all dealing with here. That Ark of the Covenant is a picture of Christ. That picture of Israel losing that Ark back there is a picture of the church losing Christ. Losing Christ in the sense of the Laodicean church where the Bible says He is on the outside knocking on the door of the church trying to get back in and we are all playing church on the inside and kicked Him right out the door. That is what I am talking about, being out. When the nation of Israel lost the Ark of God, it is a picture of them losing their relationship with God and Christ. Now for us, that Ark represents the person of Christ that lives inside us.

I do not know if you ever studied or not, but there are three things that are in that Ark back there. There are three things that the Jews were told to put in that Ark that represent Christ, and those are the three things that you and I lose in the Laodicean church when we lose our concept of who Christ is.

3. You know what the first one was? The first one was the Ten Commandments. You know what the Ten Commandments represent? It represents moral stability. This country was great for a lot of years even though it was not even a Christian nation. It revered God and revered the Book, and because of that it had a morality that a nation that does not believe the Bible will not have. Those Ten Commandments do not stand for salvation. Those Ten Commandments stand for moral stability. That is why they put them in courthouse rooms. The thing they wanted those jurors to see, the thing that they wanted people coming into court to see, that this court was fair. It was built on absolute principles. Now we take it out. That is why they had them in schools. That is why every government office had them. That is why they wrote the Word of God on top of the League of Nations and the United Nations up there out of the Old Testament because they wanted people to know that they were founded on it. Whether they believed in Christ or not, they recognized the authority of the established principles that was absolute. Now we do not. We have lost that stability.
4. The second thing that was in there was a pot of manna. I will not even get into the fact that it was a tithe of the manna. We will not even get into that. But the manna was put in there. That manna is a picture of the complete Word of God for the New Testament believers, for Christians. That is for you and for me. That manna was a sustaining food that God gave them that kept them in the wilderness and it was in that ark.
5. The third thing it was in was Aaron's rod. Aaron's rod, the priestly rod that the Bible says in the book of Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 4, that it budded. It shows the fruitfulness of the priesthood.

All of those things were in that ark. They all represent something in our lives as believers that when you lose Christ, like the Laodicean Church and lost Christ, it is no wonder the Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, the judgment of Christ for you and for me, is called the terror of the Lord. Because we have lost the central ingredient that the church needs to have to be productive. We, like Israel, have lost the ark. We have lost the ark. We have lost the ark.

## XI. Lamentations 5: Prayer for Restoration and Holding the Line

Then the last thing, chapter 5, he says in verse 1:

*Lamentations 5:1*

*Remember, O Lord, what has come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach.*

"Remember, O Lord, what has come upon us," prayer for restoration. Look at verse 16. You want to see a parallel? Here is one for you. And another great contraption comes out of the midst of this dark. Look at verse 16:

*Lamentations 5:16*

*The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!*

Israel's crown has fallen from off their head. Yet the Bible says in Revelation chapter 3, verse 11, to the Laodicean Church:

*Revelation 3:11*

*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

Israel lost the crown off its head. The church lost its crown off its head. I am telling you, you are in a no-spin zone, brother, when it comes to the Word of God as far as Israel's problems and our problems. How you want to find out what happened, what took place. You want to put your hands on your head and say, "Oh, how did this happen?" It happened the same way it happened to Israel. That is why the Bible says that those things were examples and are ensamples. The moment you start to live your life based on your homespun philosophies and principles, based on nice little biblical things, but not concepts that are absolute and concrete, you are on your way down the spiral staircase.

Yet in this great chapter, the Bible says that Israel is the bush that burned that was not consumed. One of the things that has amazed me about the Bible, the thing that has amazed me about the Bible, once I stand back now, and maybe you can see it more clearly like we talked about this morning. Maybe you can see it more clear now. The thing that amazes me about the Bible, no matter how black it gets, no matter how bad it gets, and for me this is the silver lining. I told you that the prophets were the gloomiest, doomiest books you ever saw in your life. Now let me give you a little light in that cloud. The greatest thing is this. The greatest thing I learned about it, once I understand that the devil is part of God's plan, once I understand how this thing all works out, once I understand how all history is broken down as God moves, the devil moves, and I see that God's old plan, and I know it is a choice, and life is full of choices, and I know the bad things make my character, and they help me, and I look at all the things in life, and I do not make all the excuses, you know, blaming everybody else for everything that goes on. I realize that the church got themselves into this mess just like Israel did. I am in the church, and I might get it in the neck along the way, and just because I believe the book, just because I trust God, because I believe that thing upside down, does not mean that when it all falls, you and I will not get killed in the process. You know what? So what? Does not make any difference. I deal with all that, but here is what I see. Here is the light. I see this thing from Genesis to Revelation. I see it in every dispensation. I see it everywhere, and I see that Jeremiah sees it. Jeremiah is praying for

restitution. He is praying for God to forgive him. He is praying for God, and all the time Jeremiah knows and understands this great principle, no matter how dark it gets, no matter how black it gets. God's always got His faithful few that are willing to stand up and take the shots no matter what.

- Genesis chapter 5 and Genesis chapter 6, when the whole of the Bible says that not only was the earth wicked, that man was wicked, that every thought of his imagination was wicked, and four billion people were on this planet. You know what? He did not have many, but God had eight righteous men that got on that ark, or eight righteous people. God always had His faithful few. One of them had preached for 120 years.
- I look in Genesis chapter 12, verse 18, when the whole world was busy doing what it wanted to do, and God came down and was looking for a man to find, to build His nation. He found one man in the whole world that God said, "I can trust this guy. I can trust him." He had His faithful man.
- I look back in the book of Judges, when God wanted to bring the great battle against Midian. Old Gideon comes down with 33,000 plus guys, and God says, "Too many. I am going to teach you a principle here, Gideon. Send everybody home with 300," and he does with 300 men what an army of 33,000 probably could not have got done, because they were lined up with the world.
- Oh, I look at the blackest time in Israel, a time which is contemporary of where we are at. First Kings and Second Kings, with Ahab and Jezebel, when the whole nation of Israel is steeped in Baal worship. I mean, there is not anybody that wants God. There is not anybody that believes God's Word anymore. I mean, even Elisha is down in the mouth, and he is down there, and he is feeling like he is the only one left, and God slapped him alongside the head, and says, "Hey pal, I have got news for you. I have got 3,000 men that have not bowed the knee to Baal. You just do not know where they are at." You know what? God's always got His faithful few. Always does. Always does. Always get into the Tribulation period, God will have His remnant.
- Down through the Dark Ages of church history, when it looked like the word was overrun by the black darkness of Rome, God had His Waldensians, He had His Albigensians, and He had His Huguenots.

I am telling you, I do not care how black it gets, I am telling you, I read this stuff and I see it, and I understand it. I understand how Israel got in the problem, but I understand how the church got in the problem, but the bottom line is, I believe today, maybe there are not many, and I do not know how all these numbers figure in. Maybe there are just a few, I do not know, but I know today, I know for me anyhow, and my family anyhow, that there are people who will still believe, who in this darkness will be the night fighters or the Laodicean church, that will do whatever needs to be done, that will stand faithful, no matter what comes. You understand God is God, judgment is coming, you understand the depravity and why we are in it. I do not walk around with my hands on my head and say, "How did this happen?" I do not have a cloud over my head. I see it clearly. I am telling you, that is what this church has to be about. That is what it has to be about.

I was going through some books this last week, and I am done now. I am just going to tell you this story, and we are going to go home. We are going to go home, watch the Chiefs get whipped again. I was reading through, I was going through a bunch of my junk, looking through stuff, and I found a book, and I have got a bunch of these books. I have got a bunch of video tapes on it too. Over the years, I have always collected books about great men, heroes, that are real heroes. I got reading through this thing here, and I had marked in here years ago, back in the 70s, it was marked in there. I got reading in here, and I found a story, and God gave it to me because I needed it to finish this stuff to illustrate my point today.

I read the story of Gunnery Sergeant Jimmy Howard. He was in the early part of Vietnam. He was in the Marine Corps. He had already been in the military 16, 17 years when he went to Vietnam. I read that story, and I had forgotten about the story, and it flooded back memories how they did. That story motivated me so much when I read it as a young man, because I saw the parallels. I have always looked at this, and I have always amazed myself at here is a man, just one of many, who will lay it on the line like these guys did. I read stories about young men that, as privates in the Marine Corps, privates in the Army. I know in 1968, and John knows this too, I think I made \$228 in 1968 a month. Was it not, John, something like that, where it was nothing. Yet I watched guys sacrifice their lives, and I watched a guy lay their life down, come back with a limb blown off because they were helping somebody. I watched the story of a guy that threw himself on a hand grenade, and for \$228 a month. I saw God's people get in one business meeting and get their nose bent out of joint and never come back to church again. Those things amaze me. Those things amaze me.

I read the story over again, and I thought to myself, "Wow, wow," because this is it. If there is any message today, if there is any cry today in the Laodicean church, it has to be this. Gunnery Sergeant Jimmy Howard had 18 men with him in a Marine recon. They were down in a valley with a hill, Hill 488, I believe it was. They were down there, and they were calling in artillery on truck movement to the VC. He had 18 guys that were on this little, and they got up on top of this little hill. It was like 1,500 feet higher of all the surrounding ground. The NVA found out, however, that they were up on that hill. They got a radio call in that a whole NVA battalion was coming down on them. There was no way that they were going to get support into them. There was no way that they were going to get anything that could help them. Every man in that position knew what the situation was.

Jimmy Howard, he said he put his boys into a tight perimeter about 20 yards across with every man. He only had 18 guys. He said when they started to come in, and the NVA hit him from all sides, he said they were fired. He said they were literally, literally bodies being piled up out there. He had five of his own guys that were killed. They were down through there, and he was holding, they were firing, and bodies were falling everywhere. They were calling in airstrikes on their own position. They were calling in gunships and everything. But there was no relief coming. There was no way they were going to get any reinforcements to them. They could not get there in time. They called the radio operator. They said, "Well, with all the situations that we have got, it is going to be probably sometime tomorrow night before we can get you any bodies in there." He said, "Do not bother them. We will all be dead by then." They were up there, those

18 boys with Sergeant, and he was wounded in the back. He crawled around encouraging his guys.

In the course of the story, the command came down that every combat soldier does not want to hear. It is the last command, because when you hear this command, you know nobody is coming to get you. You are on your own, and you are going to have to stand in place, and you are going to have to fight, or you are going to die there today. Jimmy, after all the things were going down, and they would keep coming over, and he knew there was no, there was nowhere to go. They were surrounded on all sides. Nobody was bringing troops in. The command came down that every soldier does not want to hear. The last line of defense, the last thing, the word came down to those boys from Jimmy saying, "Hold the line." When you hear "hold the line," that means you stand in place next to your pal. Nobody moved. There is nowhere to go. You stand, and you die in that place, and you fight in that place. In the middle of that battle, the story goes that they were talking, and a guy would be afraid, and he would cry out, "Hold the line," and somebody else would cry, "Hold the line." Jimmy was wounded in his back, would crawl along and tell him to "hold the line." When it was all bodies were stacked up, they ran out of grenades, they threw rocks. When it was all over, they only had eight rounds of ammo between those guys. But when the sun came up in the morning, and the battle was over, they held the line. They held the line.

I am telling you, if there is a cry for the Laodicean church, if we are supposed to be soldiers in a warfare, when we are surrounded, and no help is coming to the rapture, you are not going to get any help from here, help from there. The only cry you can hear today is "hold the line." When you get discouraged, tell somebody, "Hold the line." When you get down in the dumps, and you get attacked, cry out, "Hold the line." Because that is what we have got to do. We have got to hold the line. Nobody else is going to hold it. Nobody else. We have got to put our perimeter. Yes, we win people to Christ. Yes, we do everything in the world. Yes, we occupy the way come, but you understand there is no cloud in our mind. We see the condition, and it is your kids that are at stake. It is your own souls. It is your own marriages. It is your own family. There is no help coming until Jesus comes. We have got to hold the line. We have got to encourage each other to hold the line when we get afraid. Hold the line when it is overwhelming. Hold the line that we stand there. When one goes down, you pick them up. There were men that linked their arms firing with one hand. Because they were holding the line for \$240 a month. God has given us the riches and glory. God has given us and made us the aristocracy of heaven. God has given us the being a joint heir with Jesus Christ. There is no room for pettiness in Christianity. There is no room for your nose being bent out of joint. There is no room for your stupid little stuff that you grumble about. There is no room. All we have got to do is hold the line until Jesus comes. That is what we have got to do.

Jeremiah looked down through his nation that was devastated. He says to himself, "Why God? Why did this happen?" We look around today and we see Christianity in a mess that it is in. We do not have to ask why. We know why. The ark is departed and across Christianity in heaven. The angel that represents that churchman spewed out of God's mouth and across that seat where that angel sat. There is the name Ichabod. The glory of God is departed. We may get it along with everything else because judgment comes. It is indiscriminate. I told you God brings judgment to

bad men because of their evilness. But good men get caught in that judgment but it builds their character. When the napalm comes close, when the bullets come strafing down, when God's judgment falls, all we can do is link arms and hold the line because He is coming. He is coming. If there is anything that is clear in that Bible, it is that God's always got His faithful few that will always hold the line when nobody else does.

I cannot speak for any family in this church except mine. I cannot speak for anybody except my boys and my girls and my wife. I am just telling you this. I do not care what you all do. I do not care if you all leave. I do not care if everybody gets mad and afraid, and I do not think you are going to. But I am just saying to my heart is we will hold the line and God will give us men and women that will hold the line with us and we will link arms that we have to. When somebody starts to go down, cry out, "Hold the line." When somebody gets hit, cry out, "Hold the line," pick them up, hold them up, stay online. We have got to fight in position. We cannot go back because there is nowhere to go. We have got to hold the line. We have got to hold the line till Jesus comes.

Let us pray. Father, thank you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for your love and for