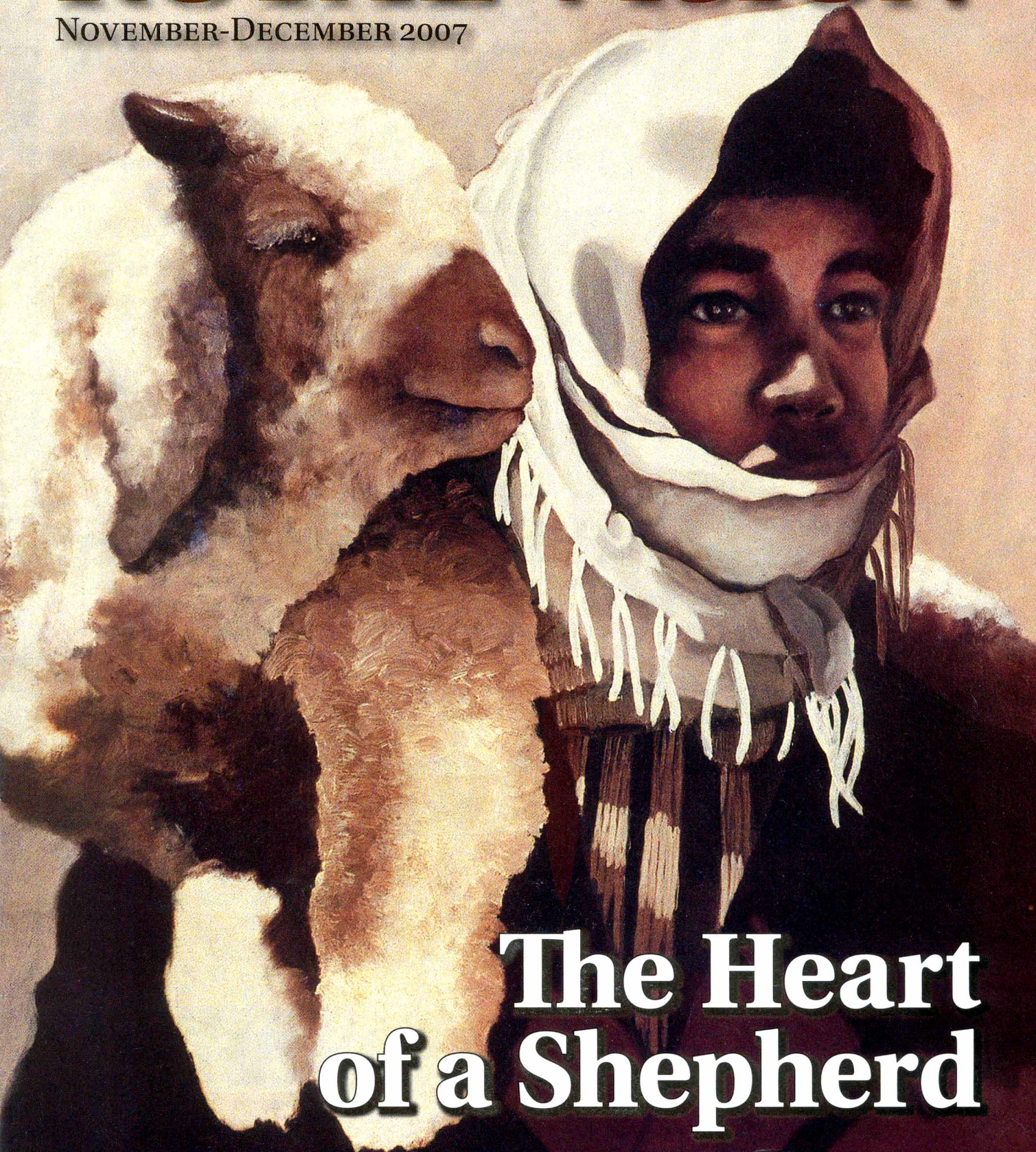


UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

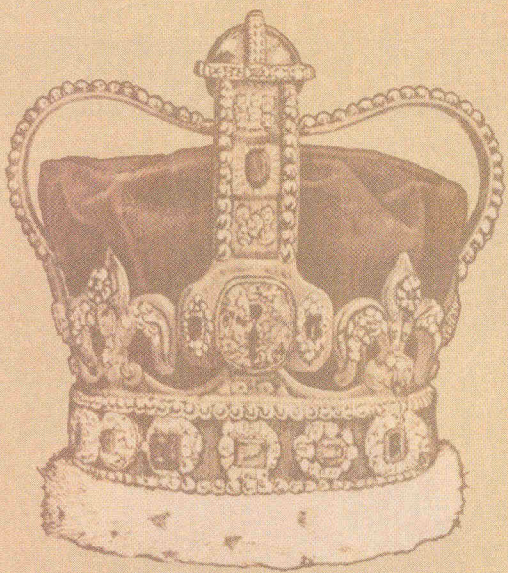
# ROYAL VISION

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007



The Heart  
of a Shepherd





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## IN THIS ISSUE

### FEATURES

1 Lamentations: A Book for the Latter Days

7 Help Yourself to Radiant Health

11 Is Smoking Sin?

14 Conquer Your Lions

16 The Heart of a Shepherd

Bringing Back Ancient Israel's History: Part Three

21 The Power of Grateful Prayers

22 Abraham: Walking With God

24 Flavius Josephus: On Abraham

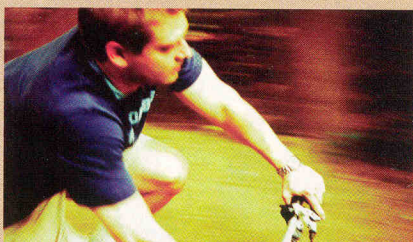
Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong

Chapter 12

27 Depression Strikes!



COVER STORY | Page 16



Page 7



Page 14

**ABOUT OUR COVER** The attributes that God has as a Shepherd are the same attributes He is building in His people today. (Original painting by Gary Rethford)

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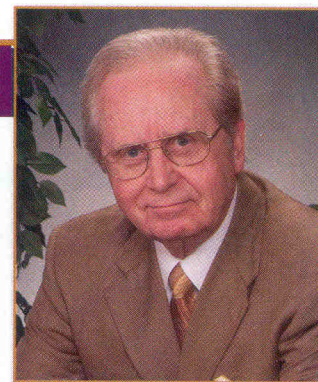
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# Lamentations:

## A Book for the Latter Days

*The joy of the whole Earth is destroyed, but the light of God's inspiring truth shines through. By Gerald Flurry*

### Part One

**THE HEBREW TEXT DOESN'T ACTUALLY HAVE A** title for the book of Lamentations. For many books, the Hebrew just uses the first word as the title. The first word in Lamentations is *how*, but according to the *Companion Bible* it can also mean *alas*, or an expression of pity and sorrow. Terrible things are happening in this book.

The Talmud calls Lamentations *kenoth*, which means *dirges* or *elegies*. A dirge is a song, hymn, grief or lamentation intended to accompany a funeral or a memorial rite. An elegy is a song or a poem expressing extreme sorrow or lamentation, especially for one or more who is dead. In a sense, the book of Lamentations is like a funeral dirge. It's about dying and death. But in that dying and death, we see the most inspiring hope ever!

The nations of Israel are going to die (Ezekiel 33:11). But this funeral dirge in Lamentations is far worse than that. The nations of Israel will be resurrected to life again (Ezekiel 37 and 38). That is not the case with spiritual Israel, or God's Laodicean Church. Fifty percent of the Laodiceans are going to die and *be resurrected into the lake of fire—eternal death!* They will be forever dead!

THAT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE SINGLE WORST FUNERAL DIRGE EVER!

The other 50 percent of the Laodiceans will repent in the Tribulation and be resurrected at Christ's Second Coming. They will then rule with Christ forever. The hope of God will fill the Earth forever!

This book of Lamentations is primarily for God's own Church and secondarily for the nations of Israel.

The book of Lamentations has five chapters, and you could say it is five elegies, each one a complete poem. It's a book with unusually bad news. But it also contains a lot of *good news* you *won't* see unless God is revealing this book to a childlike mind (Matthew 11:25).

If you look closely at Lamentations, you will discover that it is actually a detailed explanation of the prophecies of Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1, and Jeremiah 30:7. It describes the worst time of suffering in human history!

Ezra had this book read to Israel on the 10th day of the fifth month, Ab, because it marked the anniversary of the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. (The Jews today still read this book on the anniversary of the temple destruction.) "Now in the fifth month, *in the tenth day of the month*, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And *burned the house of the LORD*, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about" (Jeremiah 52:12-14). This fact should be of interest to all of us, because in A.D. 70 the temple was also destroyed on the 10th day of the fifth month. *That was not just coincidence.*

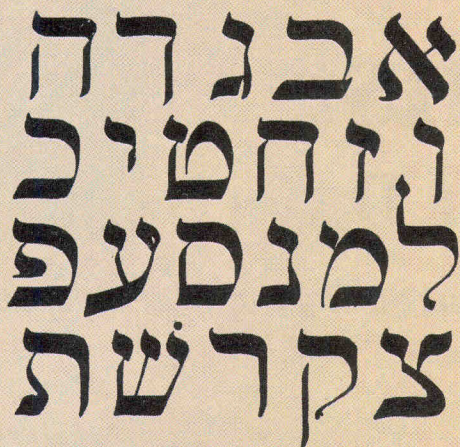
But that destruction was only a *type* of what is about to happen in this end time.

Lamentations is *primarily* about the destruction of *another* temple: the *spiritual* temple of God.

Spiritually, God says those people who turned away from Him were "The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth" (Lamentations 2:15). God had the greatest of praise for them! Yet look what happened. They turned away from being "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth," and turned toward sin and selfishness! The great God's own Work was destroyed. Never has there been such a powerful message delivered to this world by God through His Church!



## Elegant Poetic Device



**INTRICATE ACROSTIC** *Four of Lamentations' five chapters are written in an alphabetic acrostic form, meaning each stanza begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet (pictured above, reading right to left). Chapters 2 and 4 switch the order of two letters. Chapter 3, which has 66 verses, uses each letter of the alphabet. Chapter 5, though it has 22 verses, abandons the acrostic format.*

God emphasizes “the joy of the whole earth” during the worst suffering ever on Earth!

That description is also a prophecy of what will happen in the World Tomorrow: God’s people will once again be “the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.” What a beautiful prophecy.

If you go through the book of Lamentations line by line, word by word, you’ll see that God’s spiritual temple, those people of God, are completely *shattered*. No people have ever been punished more than those who are discussed in this book. Their falling away was a spiritual disaster of astonishing proportions.

Still, the central theme of this book is an expression of hope—a people waiting for God’s “perfection of beauty.” The light in all of that black, black darkness is that God is getting His people ready for a marriage! Sometimes, it’s very difficult to do that, but God knows what His people need. He will do *everything* He can to bring them into His Family.

### THE BIBLE’S MOST ELEGANT POETRY

All the way through the book of Lamentations, *Lange’s Commentary* refers to the author as “the poet.” The Bible doesn’t say *for sure* who wrote it, but most scholars believe Jeremiah did. I believe the Bible clearly shows us that Jeremiah was the author. He could have directed his scribe, Baruch, to do much of the writing. Perhaps Baruch was a great poet.

Lamentations is the most elegant poetry in all the

Bible. *Lange’s* describes it as “The most perfect product in regard to the external artistic structure of the Old Testament scriptures.”

*Adam Clarke’s Commentary* says, “The composition of this poem is what may be called very technical. Every chapter, except the last, is an acrostic. ... The third chapter contains 64 verses, each, as before, formed of three hemistichs, but with this difference, that each hemistich begins with the same letter, so that the whole alphabet is thrice repeated in this chapter. ... I HAVE CALLED THIS AN INIMITABLE POEM [*inimitable* means it can’t be imitated!]; better judges are of the same opinion. ‘NEVER,’ says Bishop Lowth, ‘was there a more *rich* and *elegant* variety of *beautiful images* and adjuncts arranged together within so small a compass, *nor more happily chosen and applied*’” (Volume IV, emphasis mine throughout).

This is worth thinking deeply about. WHY would God invest so much into this book, making it the most poetic book in the Bible? *The answer to that question is deeply moving.* We must see it from God’s point of view.

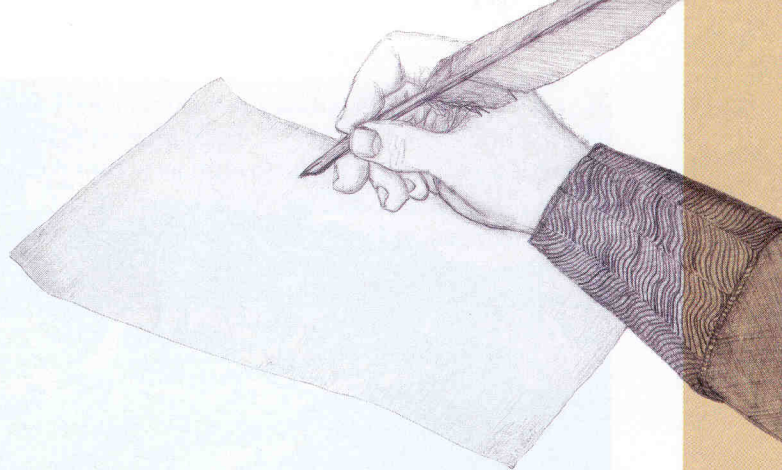
Most scholars, past and present, agree that the book of Lamentations was finished shortly *after* the fall of Jerusalem, around 585 B.C. But what most scholars do *not* understand is that this book is addressed to ALL the nations of Israel in the end time. “The Lord hath swallowed up ALL the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof. *He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel:* he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and *he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about*” (Lamentations 2:2-3). This is addressed to “the habitations of Jacob” (or the nations of Israel) and to “all the horn of Israel.” Israel had already been in captivity over 100 years. *So it couldn’t have been written for ancient Israel!* Why can’t more Bible students see this?

Most Bible prophecy is dual. Write for our free booklet about Jeremiah. You will see that the book of Jeremiah is primarily for this end time. The same is true of Lamentations. This book is a PROPHECY of what is to happen in God’s Laodicean Church today and to three nations of Israel: the United States, the British peoples and Judah.

The fact that Lamentations was finished *after Jerusalem’s fall* sets it apart from other biblical books: Jeremiah was clearly an *eyewitness* to much of the tragedy in Jerusalem! *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* states: “The poems belong unmistakably to the last days of the kingdom, or the commencement of the exile .... They are written by one who speaks, with the vividness and intensity of an eyewitness, of the misery



*Lamentations is the most elegant poetry in all the Bible. Lange's describes it as "The most perfect product in regard to the external artistic structure of the Old Testament scriptures."*



which he bewails." The Jews were under siege by Nebuchadnezzar for 19 years before Jerusalem fell. Jeremiah was imprisoned by the last Jewish king, Zedekiah. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, Jeremiah was released. (For more information, request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.) Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, undoubtedly experienced some or all of that 19-year siege with Jeremiah. Clearly, *someone* was an eyewitness to much of that suffering. God's in-depth revelation and that *eyewitness* account are what make Lamentations such a powerful book! What description there is, particularly if you really understand poetry! You won't find anything quite like it in the Bible.

It is clear that the author of Lamentations wrote the book *when Judah had reached the point of no return!* The nation could no longer escape God's wrath because of its many transgressions.

Have most of God's Laodiceans today reached the point of no return?

Clarke's says, "Misery has no expression that the author of the Lamentations has not employed." It also quotes a man named Dr. South as saying of this book, "One would think, that EVERY LETTER WAS WRITTEN WITH A TEAR; EVERY WORD, THE SOUND OF A BREAKING HEART: that the author was compacted of sorrows; disciplined to grief from his infancy; one who never breathed BUT IN SIGHS, nor spoke but IN A GROAN."

Lamentations is the expression of PROFOUND GODLY EMOTION! That is because most of all it is about God *reaching out to His own Spirit-begotten children*, whom He loves with a Father's love, and who have turned away from Him! The book of Lamentations is about the seven thunders and the lion's roar of the little book. GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE, and He'll use *everything He possibly can to reach out to His family members!* God will do *all He can* to touch them with a powerful message!

The Laodicean rebellion is probably the worst spiritual disaster ever in God's Church. God has prophesied that *half* of the Laodiceans won't make it. But the other part of the picture is, half of the

Laodiceans *will* make it! And that doesn't include those who repent *before* the Tribulation. Clearly, God *still* wants the Laodiceans to repent SO HE CAN PREPARE THEM TO MARRY HIS SON!

Jeremiah went to the nation of Judah just before it fell in 585 B.C. He warned the people of Judah and wrote the warnings in a book—which he addressed *to all Israel*. Since the book of Jeremiah is clearly an end-time message for all Israel, it is logical that Lamentations is as well. But there is a difference.

The book of Jeremiah gives the overview of Israel's fall. Lamentations gives the horrendous *details* of what the fall and enslavement are like.

### **"AS A WIDOW"**

The book of Lamentations uses *Jerusalem* and *Zion* interchangeably. *Zion* in prophecy refers to God's Church. Here, Jerusalem also refers to God's Church; Galatians 4:26 describes "Jerusalem which is above" as "the mother of us all," which is the Church. It is mainly about the Church.

Notice this in the first verse: "How doth *the city* [that is, *Jerusalem*] 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!" (Lamentations 1:1).

You will see as we proceed that this is a book of *end-time* prophecy. Where do you see a WIDOW in this end time?

This is talking about a woman who once had God's protection, was once led by God, was protected and watched over by God—who was, in fact, the very *Wife* of God! Only those few who receive God's Spirit during this present age are considered Jesus Christ's Bride (e.g. Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 19:7-8). That unparalleled honor will NEVER be extended to anyone else.

But something happened with this Bride: She became as a widow! Jerusalem—that is, God's Church—was "full of people," or Spirit-begotten Church members, and then became *as a widow*. THIS IS ABOUT THE FALLING AWAY OF MOST OF GOD'S





JUPITER IMAGES

CHURCH MEMBERS—THE BRIDE OF CHRIST!

There is good news there, however. Notice it says she is become “as a widow.” It is worded that way because she still has the potential to get back and be the Wife of Christ! Half of the Laodiceans *will* repent and make it back.

There is even better news. There was a small remnant Bride who remained loyal to her Husband. She is delivering this painful message of Lamentations for Jesus Christ. That is the best news of this book, which is often overlooked.

Nobody would even understand the book of Lamentations if God did not have an obedient, very elect. This elite group will be rewarded by serving from headquarters with Christ forever. The Laodiceans who repent in the Tribulation will lose that inspiring reward.

Remember, Lamentations applies *first of all* to the Spirit-begotten people of God; it also depicts the suffering to occur in the nations of Israel, of which Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Israel, is a *type*. This first verse also warns us that soon the great cities of our nations will become desolate through a nuclear holocaust. The cities that once were full of people

*The destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was only a type of what is about to happen in this end time. Lamentations is primarily about the destruction of another temple: the spiritual temple of God.*

and successful with much commerce will be destroyed and the people slain. Those who survive will become an enslaved people.

#### WEEPING IN BITTERNESS

Notice immediately the mourning and woe in the book of Lamentations. “She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies” (Lamentations 1:2). During the night, when she ought to be getting rest, this widow weeps sore. No Husband was there to comfort her. The picture here gets worse and worse.

Verse 3 speaks of *Judah*. Elsewhere in Scripture, God describes His people as being of the tribe of Judah *spiritually*—or *spiritual Jews* (e.g. Romans 2:28-29; Revelation 3:9). The reference to *Judah* in verse 3 is *primarily* about God’s own people who turned away from Him: “Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: *she dwelleth among the heathen*, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits.” They are in captivity before and during the Great Tribulation. God’s people find no rest when they *should* be finding rest.



Lamentations 1:4 specifically mentions *Zion*—again, God’s own Church. “The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts ....” “Solemn feasts” is talking about God’s annual holy days, which His faithful people observe year after year to this day. But here it says no one is coming to these festivals. The Laodiceans have *lost* God’s solemn feasts! Most of them don’t even *observe* God’s holy days anymore, and those who do certainly don’t keep them the way God commands, or with the understanding that God gave His Church through Herbert W. Armstrong.

God is addressing the outer court, *not* the inner court of His temple, or Church (Revelation 11:1-2). The Laodiceans have rejected or watered down these holy days and refuse to enter the inner court where God dwells. Christ leads the inner court to keep His *solemn feasts* His way. None of the Laodiceans come to where God is! This is how God shows them that they are rebelling against His *solemn feasts*. So in all this bad news, we see the shining hope of God’s very elect.

Lamentations 1:4 also says that “all her gates are desolate.” The Laodicean churches have opened their doors to allow *anybody* to come in. They are trying to love the world by allowing the world into God’s holy temple. (Verse 10 in this chapter also describes the same problem.) These people heard for *years* that God simply does not operate that way at this time, and they ought to *know* that! But they feel they have a better way than what God’s apostle taught them—and their gates are desolate.

Look at the result of such policies: “... her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness” (verse 4). These people should be full of *festal joy*—the joy of God’s feasts! The very elect of God’s people who continue to build their lives around God’s holy days are filled with joy! But this woman who has become as a widow instead sits afflicted and in bitterness. Here God portrays His own people being caught in the terror of the Great Tribulation and in the worst mourning ever! The ministry is sighing, the Church’s young people have been physically harmed, and the entire Church is in bitterness. Why? Because they think God has forsaken them. In reality, they have forsaken God. God must use the Tribulation to teach them this lesson.

### HER BEAUTY IS DEPARTED

“Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy” (verse 5). God is about to afflict the Laodiceans for the multitude of their *sins*—rebelliously breaking His law. This verse shows that even the young children of the Laodiceans will be taken into captivity and experience the horrors of the holo-

caust because of events taking place within “Zion.” It is all extremely tragic. Church members will have to watch their own little children suffer. They all should be protected by God.

In verse 6, we see that “from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed.” What a towering calamity!

Do you realize how *beautiful* God’s faithful people are to God? The obedient remnant *retains* “*all her beauty*.” What makes God’s Church beautiful? Its way of life and character. Yes, we have our trials and tests, but **HOW BEAUTIFUL WE ARE TO GOD!** It is only when Christ’s Bride *turns away* that this precious beauty departs.

That is just what happened to most of God’s people. As God looks at it, they are no longer beautiful as they once were. They had spiritual beauty but it “is departed.” They have forsaken God’s truth! Watering down doctrine does not produce the beautiful character that God desires. The Church has become spiritually ugly.

Verse 6 concludes, “her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.” In the Tribulation, the Church’s princes, or ministers, those who led the way in weakening the people, will become as deer who have been weakened by starvation. Then the “harts” are easily caught by the hunter—they cannot save themselves from destruction!

“Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had *in the days of old* ...” (verse 7). Yes, “in the days of old” she had pleasant things—all the wonderful truths that God gave His people through Mr. Armstrong. But they let those things slip long ago. They have a terrible punishment awaiting them as a result. Their misery is excruciating because while they suffer, they can remember the “good times” when God did help them.

The good news is, this punishment will cause a large number of them to return to God. But will you heed God’s warning *now* so you don’t have to *experience* such suffering?

### THE WIDOW SPEAKS

As you read this chapter you can begin to feel the mental anguish of the people. They struggle with the question *why? Why is all this happening to us?* God begins to show them in verse 9.

“Her filthiness is in her skirts,” He says. Their sin is so great, it is like filth that has been ground into clothing—so much so that it has become part of the cloth.

This verse continues, “she remembereth not *her last end*; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter.” God also shows them that they didn’t consider the end of all their ways. Where there



is no vision, the people perish. A lack of repentance brought them to this point, and remains the real issue with the Laodicean Church (Revelation 3:17). Since the Laodiceans would not hear Christ knocking (Revelation 3:20), they must experience extreme suffering from the enemy.

At that point comes this statement: "... O LORD, behold my affliction ..." (Lamentations 1:9). This is the voice of the "widow." The second half of this chapter is mostly her words—God's Church prophetically speaking for herself in the midst of her future tribulation.

Verse 11 shows that things become so bad that the people die of starvation. The people are willing to give up their "pleasant things"—meaning their silver and gold—for bread in order to stay alive. The expression "to relieve the soul" means to bring back to life. The people become diseased and sick because they lack food. They realize they have become vile.

### A GRIEVOUS REALIZATION

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (verse 12). As God afflicts the Laodiceans, they're going to be asking, *Is there any sorrow like my sorrow? Is there any pain like mine?*

The entire world was shocked by the photographs that came out of the Nazi concentration camps. YET THE SCENES FROM LAMENTATIONS ARE FAR WORSE! As Matthew 24:21 states, there was not a time, nor will there be again, like this. Can any human mind imagine anything worse than the Nazi concentration camps? Yet, God says here that things will get far worse! Verse 12 states there is no "sorrow like unto my sorrow"!

This is the last time ever that God's own Church or the nations of Israel will be punished like this. Christ is going to rule and stop the rebellion. This is a hope that is endless and soon to be reality.

Why do the Laodiceans suffer pain as no other group? Because they knew God's truth and prophecies. Theirs is a sorrow unparalleled—and not just because of the grievous nature of the punishment, but because they will recognize exactly what is happening! They should have escaped the Great Tribulation. But they rebelled against God. They *know* the prophecies about the Tribulation that Mr. Armstrong taught them—and they realize they could have avoided this punishment completely if only they hadn't rejected that instruction.

And realize: God is doing the afflicting! God will use Germany and a united Europe as a club in His hand. It is the day of HIS FIERCE ANGER (Isaiah 10:5-6).

BUT THERE IS HOPE! THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO *REALIZE* THAT GOD IS DOING THE AFFLICTING.

### ELOHIM AND ADONAI

Note that the Hebrew word for "Lord" in Lamentations is *Adonai*, which means THE GOD THAT RULES. The word *Adonai* is used 14 times in Lamentations. God is teaching those caught in this sore trial that HE IS GOING TO RULE HIS CHURCH AND NATION! He will do *anything* to bring His people under His rule so that He can bring us into His Family! THE LAODICEANS HAVE REJECTED *ADONAI*—"THE GOD THAT RULES"!

Here is a quote from the *Anchor Bible Commentary*: "The Lord Adonay [Adonai] occurs 14 times in Lamentations .... Rather STRIKINGLY, Elohim, 'God,' does not occur at all."

There is a horrendous warning in that omission.

*Elohim* is a plural noun like church or family, with more than one member. *Elohim* is the word we associate most of all with God's Family and honoring the Father. The Laodiceans are condemned for not honoring their Father (Malachi 1:6). They rejected the Head of the Family.

I think it is also rather *striking* that Lamentations uses the word *Adonai* exactly 14 times. The number seven is the number of completion in the Bible. Here we have double completion. It's as if God says, *Teach the Laodiceans a strong message about how Adonai rules. Then double that message and hammer it home! Only heeding this message can save them.*

Perhaps the strongest warning in this book is what is *not* stated. Normally, *Elohim* would be used numerous times in this book. It is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament. But here it is not mentioned one time. Why? The *Elohim* name for God shows us that God is a Family. This understanding is the heart of the gospel: the good news of the coming Kingdom, or Family, of God, which administers the government of God.

The Laodiceans have lost the gospel (or good news). They have lost the thirst of what the whole Bible is about and why they were created.

*Elohim being omitted from the book of Lamentations is universe-shaking!* The Laodiceans are headed for the lake of fire. Only the Great Tribulation will save 50 percent of them.

What warning could be stronger than the omission of *Elohim*?

This understanding helps us to see how God rewards in-depth Bible study and how deep the Bible truly is! We need to know what the Bible says—and often what it does *not* say!

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how searchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). Paul clearly taught about God's astonishing depth and how shallow mankind is apart from God.

*continued on page 29 ►*



# Help Yourself to Radiant Health

By Wayne Turgeon

**DO YOU HAVE VIBRANT, RADIANT HEALTH?** Perhaps you are handicapped or sick, or have some other physical ailment that prevents you from truly enjoying life. Perhaps you are young, enjoying the blessing of youthful vitality and dynamism. Or are you feeling lethargic, tired and physically uninspired? Whatever your current state of physical health, this article is meant for you! From the most physically fit, to those anchored by health trials, God wants us to understand deeply the importance of a key law of health: exercise.

This article will give you seven reasons why exercise is so important to God, plus demonstrate how it can help you live a happier, healthier life. While some of us may not be able to readily apply some of the practical elements included in this article, hopefully it can help us all to become more effective teachers in the World Tomorrow.

## THE NEED FOR EXERCISE

Perhaps you have read 1 Timothy 4:8, which states, "For bodily exercise profiteth little ...." Sometimes this verse is quoted as an argument against exercise. The correct rendering of this verse, however, is "For bodily exercise profits *for a little time*." The Apostle Paul is really saying that exercise indeed **PROFITS**, but compared to godliness, its benefits are temporary. Now that is a wonderfully positive statement about both godliness **AND** exercise! Certainly bodily exercise indeed profits for a little time—the time we are physical human beings! The Apostle John wrote in 3 John 1:2, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Obesity is the second-leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is increasingly linked with diabetes. It is also a major cause of heart attacks. In the United States, 64 percent of Americans, or 127



INDEX OPEN

million, are overweight.

Tommy Thompson of the Department of Health and Human Resources said, "Americans need to understand that overweight and obesity are literally *killing us*" (emphasis mine throughout). According to a report from the Centers for Disease Control published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, fully 400,000 deaths, or 17 percent of all deaths, in the United States in 2000 were related to poor health and physical inactivity. Only tobacco use killed more Americans. In Canada, Australia and Britain the story is the same: Much of their populations are overweight. According to the *Economist* magazine, as of 2003 there were 300 million overweight people worldwide—roughly the populations of Canada, Australia, South Africa, Britain, France and Germany combined! Truly, obesity is a global pandemic, one which we all, young and old, can struggle with.

Alarmingly though, all the diets, nutrition systems, and exercise plans being splashed across television screens proclaiming the latest *quick slim fads* are not solving the problem! Most fail to equip the general public with the right knowledge of *how* to live in good health. Thankfully, God has given His people this knowledge. Each of us has a wonderful opportunity to reverse the horrible health trends plaguing society.



# Benefits

Anaerobic and aerobic are the two basic types of exercises. Generally, anaerobic activities build muscles, and aerobic activities strengthen the cardiovascular system. A typical anaerobic exercise is weight lifting, as there is typically little *continuous* deep breathing (though anaerobic activity can be done at such a rapid pace so to encourage this type of breathing). One of the benefits of weight-bearing exercise is the fact that it strengthens bones, something women who tend to lose a lot of calcium (osteoporosis) should be mindful of. But it is *aerobic* activity that Herbert W. Armstrong strongly encouraged, because this kind of exercise is vital in building and maintaining our cardiovascular system—our heart, lungs and liver. Typical aerobic exercises would be jogging and brisk walking.

Just how important is aerobic exercise to your health? Consider how hard it is for you to repeatedly open and close your hand. By repeatedly clenching, opening, clenching, and opening our fist, we can simulate the repetitive action of our heart. However, our heart doesn't tire anywhere near as easily as our hand does. Our heart contracts and dilates at an average rate of 72 times a minute, 100,000 times a day, and close to 40 million times a year! No wonder King David said, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ..." (Psalm 139:14).

Aerobic activity strengthens your heart, making it vital to your ongoing health. The heart, the most important life-sustaining organ, needs aerobic exercise to operate at peak performance. *Adult Physical Fitness* notes that the "needs of the human body have not changed. Muscles are meant to be used. When they are not used, or not used enough, they deteriorate." Indeed, inaction demands a penalty. Eventually, if we don't exercise, our heart becomes smaller and less efficient, pumping less blood; meanwhile, the bloodstream slows, delivers less oxygen to tissues, and eliminates less waste.

Exercise can turn fat into fitness, fatigue into vitality, and worry about health into abundant, joy-filled living! For these reasons, and so many more, aerobic exercise is vital to our ongoing well-being. Almost immediately, the volume of our blood will increase. Also, reviving tired blood, our blood flow will increase by about eight to ten times. Fatty substances in our blood (cholesterol and triglycerides) will be reduced, lessening danger of arterial blockage. Plus, our cells will convert food and oxygen into energy more rapidly. Exercise will also firm up muscles, improve posture, contribute to a better physical appearance, reduce minor aches and pains, headaches, stiffness, and help to make joints more flexible. Exercise will also increase the efficient use of energy in physical and mental tasks. As the YMCA says, exercise may not add years to your life, but it may add life to your years.

# Which Kinds?

But what exercises are most beneficial for us, and how should we do them? Before we answer this question, consider the following. If you have any questions about whether you should exercise, it may be wise to get a physical check-up to determine how much and what type of exercise would be suitable for you—especially if you're handicapped or ill. The gospel writer Luke was a physician and would have been well-versed on the natural, physical laws of God that govern the human body (Colossians 4:14).

Remember, if we have broken God's physical laws—which is physical sin—and become sick, we should obey the command in James 5:14 to call upon a minister to be anointed and God will heal the sickness. Exercise is not a replacement for God forgiving physical sin. Nevertheless, even if we have been anointed, consider the benefits of exercise in improving your overall health. Physicians have found that in many cases, exercise helps to combat many chronic problems, such as arthritis, asthma, diabetes, emphysema, and other physical ailments.

Other points to consider before starting any type of exercise program would be to start gradually; to begin with a warm-up period and end with a cool-off period; to stretch and relax two often overlooked but vital components to building flexibility; to exercise daily or at least several times a week. The general rule of thumb is 20 to 30 minutes of exercise three times a week. However, if need be, work up to this kind of pace.

Regarding what kind of exercise would be beneficial, keep in mind that anything is better than nothing. If all we can do is walk briskly, that is fantastic. If we can add more, or strive for more, then consider doing so as long as you don't place your health at risk by going to extremes. Generally, though, there are three types of exercises to keep in mind: warm-up, conditioning and circulatory exercises.

Warm-up exercises stretch and limber up muscles while also speeding up the action of the heart and lungs. They also prepare the body for greater exertion and reduce the possibility of unnecessary strain. Bends and stretches, knee lifts, arm circles, head and shoulder curls and ankle stretches are just a few of the exercises



## "THERMOMETERS ON THE WALL"

At this time Roger Babson once again was the guest speaker in the Morrison Hotel Cameo Room Association of Commerce luncheon.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "you will remember that a year ago I warned you that within one year we would be in the throes of the worst depression our generation has ever seen. I noticed many of you smiling unbelievably then. Well, that year has rolled around, and here I am again, and here is the depression with me."

Chicago business leaders were not smiling now. Mr. Babson then proceeded to explain why he knew what was coming and business executives did not.

"It is now mid-winter," he said. "If I want to know what the temperature is, *now*, in this room, I go to the wall and look at the thermometer. If I want to know what it has been, up to now, and the existing *trend* as of the moment, I look at a recording thermometer. But if I want to know what the temperature in this room is going to be, an hour from now, I go to the source which *determines* future temperatures—I go down to the boiler-room and see what is happening down there. You gentlemen looked at bank clearings, indexes of business activity, stock car loadings, stockmarket quotations—you looked at the *thermometers on the wall*; I looked at *THE WAY* people as a whole were dealing with one another. I looked to the *SOURCE* which *determines* future conditions. I have found that that *source* may be defined in terms of 'RIGHTEOUSNESS.' When 51 percent or more of the whole people are reasonably '*righteous*' in their dealings with one another, we are heading into increasing prosperity. When 51 percent of the people become '*unrighteous*' in their business dealings with their fellows, then we are headed for *BAD TIMES ECONOMICALLY!*"

I have never forgotten Mr. Babson's explanation. I hope my readers today may remember and profit by it, too.

I paid with the loss of my business to learn the lesson!

Every one of my big-space advertisers in the tractor and similar industries went into economic failure in that flash depression of late 1920. It wiped out my business and source of income—literally!

I was not a quitter. I had learned, now, not to give up. But I had not learned that a *dead* horse is *DEAD!* For two years I stayed on in Chicago vainly attempting to revive a dead business. ■

## Lamentations from page 6

No strongly corrective book of the Bible is more precisely structured than Lamentations. We must comprehend this message, or we will suffer as nobody has ever suffered.

I BELIEVE THERE IS AN ALARMING MESSAGE IN THE NUMBER OF TIMES GOD INSPIRED THE WORD *ADONAI*. His own Laodicean Church has refused to be ruled. God will receive nobody into His Family that He can't rule!

How about you? And me? Do we love Adonai? Do we love God's government that enforces His law?

There is a strong warning for all of us in the word *Adonai*. God is going to rule His creation and His *Family*.

Lucifer rejected Adonai. He refused to administer God's rule on this Earth and was rejected forever. Now you and I have the opportunity and honor to be ruled by Adonai. Now we have the potential to replace Satan's rule over this Earth—if we will allow Adonai to rule us. Then we can rule the Earth with Christ.

What a mind-bending opportunity we have! Do we comprehend how awesome this is? And how much suffering we can avoid by submitting to Adonai now?

### NO COMFORTER

The Laodiceans' crying out continues in Lamentations 1:16: "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me ...." What are they talking about? Jesus Christ referred to God's Holy Spirit as "the Comforter" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The Laodiceans know, in the midst of the Tribulation, that the Holy Spirit is not there to comfort them—as it should be! They're not being comforted because God's Holy Spirit is far from them. Lamentations 1:9 says, in fact, that they have "*no* comforter." God only gives His Spirit to them that

obey Him (Acts 5:32). By failing to obey, the Laodiceans quenched the Spirit that God had supplied to them (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

God's *faithful* people ought to truly *rejoice* because we do have that Comforter! When we pray and ask God for help in facing our trials and problems, we have this Comforter. We *know* God works miracles in our lives. What a blessing to have the Comforter working in your life!

Lamentations 1:16 continues, "... my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed." This is God warning of a truly tragic aspect of their punishment: the fact that they will have to see their little children experience lamentations, mourning and woe! And all because of *their own* disobedience! *They* are the cause of that misery! They are guilty.

There is hope contained within these lamentations. In verse 17, the Laodiceans realize that God has commanded this punishment, and begin to repent. The widow says, "The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment .... I have grievously rebelled ..." (verses 18, 20). This punishment from God brings many of God's people to *repentance*. They recognize where the correction is coming from, and they submit to it. They tell God that they have rebelled against His commandments. They recognize that they rejected God's end-time type of Elijah, Mr. Armstrong. They begin to realize that *Malachi's Message* was a warning sent from God (Malachi 2:4). They recognize that they have "grievously rebelled" and that their just punishment is death.

Now notice verses 21-22 of Lamentations 1. The Church also begins to warn its enemies to take caution because the punishment that came onto the Church will soon come upon them. The Gentile nations have also sinned and God will punish them too.

Thus ends the first of the five elegies of the book of Lamentations. ■