

# Dr. Leslie Allen, Lamentations, Session 6, Lamentations 3:1-16 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Allen, Lamentations, Session 6, Lamentations 3:1-16, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's session focuses on Lamentations 3:1-16, viewing it as a testimony from a mentor. The mentor recounts a personal, guilt-related prayer lament. Allen highlights the unique acrostic structure of chapter three, emphasizing its significance in understanding totality of suffering and the prospect of hope. He identifies the speaker as a mentor figure, drawing parallels with earlier chapters. Allen introduces the concept of the "wounded healer," suggesting the mentor's past suffering enables him to guide others through their pain. The mentor uses vivid metaphors to convey extreme suffering, preparing the congregation to confront their situation and confess their sinfulness, ultimately paving the way for repentance and moving beyond their current state.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Lamentations, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Lamentations).**



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6.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 6, Lamentations 3:1-16

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Leslie Allen's Session 6 lecture on Lamentations 3:1-16.

#### Briefing Document: Lamentations 3:1-16 - Dr. Leslie Allen

##### Main Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. Chapter 3's Structure and Importance:

- Dr. Allen presents a structural breakdown of Lamentations 3:1-66, identifying different sections: a guilt-related lament (1-16), personal reflections on that lament emphasizing hope (17-24), a sermon integrating experience and expectation (25-49), a call for penitential prayer (40-41), a model prayer (42-47), emotional empathy (48-51), and another grievance-based testimony including hope (52-66).
- Traditionally, Lamentations 3 is considered the most important chapter due to its focus on hope, especially the line "Great is thy faithfulness." However, Allen cautions against over-emphasizing this section at the expense of the rest of the book.
- He also addresses the debate among scholars who argue against "privileging" chapter 3, suggesting it might be a later addition or that its positive aspects are contradicted by the closing lament. Allen argues that chapter 3 has a "self-privileging element."

##### 1. The Significance of the Acrostic Form in Chapter 3:

- Chapter 3 differs from chapters 1, 2, and 4 in its acrostic form. While the other chapters have twenty-two three-line stanzas (with a couple of four-line stanzas), chapter 3 has sixty-six verses, with each *line* of each stanza beginning with the same letter of the alphabet.
- Allen argues this "intensified acrostic" is significant. "It embraces disaster and distress, but it goes beyond it to new and positive prospects. And so, it enlarges the totality. Grief can come to an end, hopefully, and it points to hope as the way beyond grief."
- He suggests the acrostic form represents a "totality" of experience, encompassing both suffering and the possibility of hope beyond grief.

### 1. The Identity of the Speaker:

- Allen identifies the speaker in Lamentations 3 as the same "mentor" figure he believes speaks in chapters 1 and 2, as opposed to Zion who speaks in the first two chapters and stops at 2:22.
- He provides textual evidence, noting similarities between 3:49-51 and 2:11, where the speaker expresses grief and compassion for the suffering of the people: "My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees. My eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the young women in my city" (3:49-51). This echoes 2:11: "My eyes are spent with weeping, my stomach churns, my bowel is poured out on the ground because of the destruction of my people, because infants and babes faint in the streets of the city."
- He notes the use of the Hebrew word for "man" ('I am the *man* who has seen affliction' NIV) in 3:1, suggesting a male counterpart to Zion, acting as a male role model.

### 1. The Concept of the "Wounded Healer":

- Allen introduces the concept of the "wounded healer," drawing from Carl Jung and ancient Greek mythology. He describes two ways a therapist can be a wounded healer. One, is being wounded by listening to the patient's suffering. Two, is someone who is wounded can become a healer because they have been wounded.
- He suggests the mentor in Lamentations 3 presents himself as a "wounded healer," someone who has experienced suffering and can therefore guide others through their own pain. He points to the mentor's testimonies at the beginning and end of chapter 3 as evidence of this.
- He draws a parallel to Alcoholics Anonymous, emphasizing the idea that "it takes an alcoholic to help an alcoholic." Having been wounded, we can turn to healing others.

### 1. The Use of Metaphor:

- Allen emphasizes the abundance of metaphors in Lamentations 3:1-16, seeing them as generalizations of suffering that resonate with diverse experiences.

- He quotes C.S. Lewis on the importance of imagination and meaning over literal truth when analyzing metaphor. "Reason is the organ of truth. Imagination is the organization of meaning."
- He lists several metaphors from the text, including being driven into darkness (3:2), having bones broken (3:4), being besieged (3:5), sitting in darkness like the dead (3:6), being imprisoned (3:7), and being hunted by a bear or lion (3:10).
- He connects these metaphors to similar imagery found in the Psalms, showing a tradition of expressing suffering through vivid and imaginative language.

#### 1. **The Tone of the Lament and the Portrayal of God:**

- Allen addresses the question of whether the lament expresses accusation against God, acknowledging that some commentators see God portrayed as cruel or despotic.
- He notes the mention of "the rod of God's wrath" (3:1) and connects it to the emphasis on Zion's sin in chapters 1 and 2. He also discusses if God's wrath in this context is related to human wrongdoing.
- He argues that the negative portrayal of God aligns with certain psalm laments, where individuals express feeling punished or afflicted by God. He gives examples from Psalms 32, 38, 39, and 51.
- He shows examples of ways this is expressed: "For day and night your hand was heavy upon me" (Psalm 32); "O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath for your arrows have sunk into me and your hand has come down on me." (Psalm 38: 1-2)
- He states: "I have been where life hurts the most and cuts the deepest and hits the hardest. Therefore, listen to me," and he believes that is the mentor's intention in chapter 3.

### 1. Purpose:

- Allen believes that the purpose of chapter 3 is to pave the way for the mentor's call for them to pray a prayer of repentance, and to confess their own sinfulness.
- He argues that this is the starting point but by no means the way he's going to finish. But he's going to use it as the rational basis for moving on and moving beyond what he's just said.

### Key Quotes:

- "Great is thy faithfulness"
- "...it embraces disaster and distress, but it goes beyond it to new and positive prospects. And so, it enlarges the totality. Grief can come to an end, hopefully, and it points to hope as the way beyond grief."
- "My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees. My eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the young women in my city"
- "My eyes are spent with weeping, my stomach churns, my bowels are poured out on the ground because of the destruction of my people, because infants and babes faint in the streets of the city."
- "Reason is the organ of truth. Imagination is the organization of meaning."
- "I have been where life hurts the most and cuts the deepest and hits the hardest. Therefore, listen to me."

### Implications:

- Dr. Allen's analysis offers a nuanced understanding of Lamentations 3:1-16, highlighting the importance of its structure, speaker, metaphors, and the broader theological themes of suffering, hope, and the potential for healing.
- The concept of the "wounded healer" provides a valuable framework for interpreting the mentor's role and the book's overall message of resilience and transformation.
- Allen's caution against oversimplifying the chapter's message and ignoring the complexities of grief is a crucial reminder for readers seeking easy answers to difficult questions.

## 4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 6, Lamentations 3:1-16

### Lamentations 3:1-16 Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Allen, what is the traditional and popular understanding of Lamentations 3?
2. What are some of the ways contemporary academic scholars view Lamentations 3?
3. What is unique about the acrostic structure of Lamentations 3, and what might this signify?
4. Who does Dr. Allen identify as the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16, and what evidence does he offer for this interpretation?
5. Explain Carl Jung's concept of the "wounded healer."
6. How does the "wounded healer" concept apply to the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16, according to Dr. Allen?
7. Why does the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16 use so many metaphors?
8. What is the tone of the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16?
9. According to Allen, how do the Psalms relate to Lamentations?
10. How does Lamentations 3 prepare the way for a prayer of repentance?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Traditionally, Lamentations 3 is valued for its section on hope and is often condensed into the quotation, "Great is thy faithfulness." This perspective narrows the focus of Lamentations to a positive outlook, mainly ignoring the rest of the book.
2. Contemporary scholars often caution against privileging Lamentations 3 over the rest of the book and examine the role of chapter 3 in the text as a whole. Some suggest it was written later or contains contradictions, arguing against its dominance in interpretation.

3. Lamentations 3 intensifies the acrostic structure by repeating the initial letter in each line of the first three stanzas (A, A, A; B, B, B, etc.), which reflects a totality of suffering and points to hope beyond grief, enlarging the scope of disaster and distress.
4. Dr. Allen identifies the speaker as the mentor figure from chapters 1 and 2. He supports this claim by noting similarities in the speaker's personal reactions to the fall of Jerusalem, particularly in 3:49-51, which echo sentiments expressed in 2:11.
5. The "wounded healer" is someone who can heal others because they have experienced suffering themselves. According to Jung, the therapist can be wounded by being overwhelmed by the patient's suffering, or someone who has been wounded can become a good healer.
6. Dr. Allen sees the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16 as a wounded healer because he shares his own past suffering. By offering testimonies of his own experiences, he shows that he can connect with the congregation on a deeper level, establishing a rapport and affinity.
7. The speaker uses many metaphors to generalize suffering, making the lament applicable to various types of pain and experience. This allows the congregation to relate personally to the speaker's experience and the reality of God's wrath.
8. The tone is seen by some as an accusation against God, depicting Him as cruel. However, Allen notes that the tone is similar to that found in some Psalm laments, where the speaker expresses extreme suffering and God's negative intervention.
9. Allen states that the Psalms often provide illustrations of wild animals where human enemies are often portrayed as wild animals in the Psalms. Lamentations shares features with some psalm laments and thanksgivings, including references to God's negative interventions and expressions of suffering.
10. Lamentations 3:1-16 paves the way for a prayer of repentance by presenting the speaker's individual lament as stemming from his own guilt and deserving God's wrath. This establishes a rational basis for the congregation to confess their sinfulness and acknowledge their need for repentance.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the acrostic structure in Lamentations 3. How does it contribute to the overall message and impact of the chapter within the context of the entire book?
2. Explore the concept of the "wounded healer" as it applies to the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16. How does the speaker's personal testimony of suffering contribute to his role as a mentor and guide for the congregation?
3. Analyze the use of metaphors in Lamentations 3:1-16. How do these metaphors contribute to the emotional impact of the lament and the understanding of suffering?
4. Compare and contrast the speaker's portrayal of God in Lamentations 3:1-16 with portrayals of God in the Psalms. How does this depiction contribute to the overall message of Lamentations?
5. Discuss the ways in which Lamentations 3:1-16 prepares the audience for a prayer of repentance. How does the speaker's individual lament contribute to this transition?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Acrostic:** A literary device in which the first letter of each line, stanza, or section spells out a word, phrase, or the sequence of the alphabet.
- **Lament:** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow, often in the form of a poem or song.
- **Metaphor:** A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.
- **Providential:** Relating to divine care or guidance; suggesting that God is in control.
- **Testimony:** A formal statement or declaration of fact or belief; in this context, a personal account of experience.
- **Wormwood:** A bitter-tasting plant (*Artemisia*) used in ancient times as a herbal treatment, often associated with bitterness and suffering.
- **Wrath:** Intense anger, often attributed to God as a response to human wrongdoing.
- **Mentor:** An experienced and trusted advisor or guide.
- **Guilt-related prayer lament:** The expression of sorrow or grief due to the speaker's own wrongdoing, for which they deserve punishment.
- **Grievance-based testimony:** The expression of sorrow or grief over perceived wrongs or suffering caused by external factors or others.

## 5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 6, Lamentations 3:1-16, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

### FAQ on Lamentations 3:1-16

#### 1. Why is Lamentations 3 traditionally considered an important chapter, and how is that view being challenged today?

Traditionally, Lamentations 3 is seen as the most important chapter because its central section focuses on hope, offering a positive perspective amidst tragedy and leading to the famous hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." However, contemporary scholars caution against "privileging" this chapter over others, arguing that it contains contradictions, that it may have been written later, and that it is important not to ignore the return to suffering in later chapters like chapter 4. The overall message of Lamentations does not give a "slick" answer to the problem of grief.

#### 2. What is unique about the acrostic structure in Lamentations 3, and what significance does this have?

Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of Lamentations use an acrostic structure where each stanza begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. However, in chapter 3, each *line* within a stanza begins with the same letter. This intensifies the acrostic form, suggesting that chapter 3 wants to emphasize something special. Dr. Allen argues that this intensified structure represents not only the totality of suffering but also a movement beyond it, embracing positive prospects and hope, indicating that grief can come to an end.

#### 3. Who is the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-16, and what is the significance of their identity?

Unlike chapters 1 and 2, where Zion (personified as a woman) speaks, chapter 3 features a male speaker, whom Dr. Allen identifies as a mentor or guide. This mentor gives a personal testimony, reporting his own past prayer lament. The mentor serves as a male counterpart to Zion, providing a male role model and demonstrating that both men and women experienced immense suffering in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem. This allows the mentor to act as a wounded healer.

#### **4. What is the concept of the "wounded healer," and how does it apply to Lamentations 3?**

The "wounded healer" is a concept drawn from psychology, popularized by Carl Jung, and based on Greek mythology. It suggests that someone who has experienced suffering can become a healer in two ways: by being wounded by listening to the suffering of others and by drawing on their own past wounds to help others heal. In Lamentations 3, the mentor is presented as a wounded healer, sharing his past suffering to create affinity and rapport with the suffering people and to demonstrate his credibility as someone who understands their pain and can guide them.

#### **5. How does the use of metaphor contribute to the message of Lamentations 3:1-16?**

The first 16 verses of Chapter 3 are replete with metaphors that vividly depict the speaker's suffering. These metaphors, such as being driven into darkness, having broken bones, being besieged, and being imprisoned, generalize suffering, making it relatable to a wide range of experiences. According to C.S. Lewis, metaphors belong to the world of imagination which helps us to understand the reality behind it, giving meaning to experience rather than simply dealing with truth or falsehood. The use of metaphor is dramatic and sensational, meant to capture the congregation's attention and encourage them to internalize the mentor's explanation of suffering.

#### **6. Is God portrayed in a purely positive light in Lamentations 3:1-16?**

No, God is not portrayed in a purely positive light. The speaker describes experiencing God's wrath and negative intervention, using imagery of a bear lying in wait, a lion in hiding, and an archer shooting arrows. This negative portrayal aligns with some psalm laments where individuals express being punished by God. This helps the people acknowledge the reality of their current situation, where God is experienced not as a friend but as an enemy.

#### **7. What is the significance of the mentor's testimony regarding his experience of God's wrath?**

By sharing his experience of God's wrath and negative intervention, the mentor establishes a common ground with the suffering community. It sets the stage for the mentor's later call for the congregation to confess their own sinfulness and pray a prayer of repentance. The mentor shows that his experience in similar matters makes him qualified to advise on these matters.

**8. How does Lamentations 3:1-16 prepare the way for the call to penitential prayer later in the chapter?**

The mentor's testimony of suffering, particularly his experience of God's wrath, presupposes his own guilt and deserving of divine punishment. This creates a rational basis for the mentor's call to the congregation to engage in penitential prayer and confess their own sinfulness. He has experienced a negative intervention of God's wrath, thus making his message of prayer a serious one.