

Dr. Leslie Allen, Lamentations, Session 10, Lamentations 3:52-66 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Allen, Lamentations, Session 10, Lamentations 3:52-66, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's Session 10 lecture focuses on Lamentations 3:52-66, interpreting it as a **grievance-based prayer lament from a mentor figure**. He suggests this prayer serves as a model for the congregation's own grievances against communal enemies. **Allen identifies two episodes within the lament: an earlier situation where God intervened, and a new episode of verbal abuse from enemies**. He explores the nuances of Hebrew verbs and the complex interplay of grief, guilt, and grievance, drawing parallels with Isaiah and personal anecdotes. **The lecture highlights the mentor's role in identifying with the congregation's pain and encouraging them to voice their grievances to God**. Allen concludes by examining the significance of God's positive response in the first episode as an incentive for the congregation to seek divine intervention.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Lamentations, Session 10 – 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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3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Lamentations 3:52-66

Briefing Document: Allen on Lamentations 3:52-66 (Session 10)

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and ideas presented by Dr. Leslie Allen in Session 10 of his lectures on the Book of Lamentations, specifically focusing on Lamentations 3:52-66. Allen analyzes this section as a grievance-based individual prayer lament, highlighting its role in encouraging the wounded congregation to bring their own grievances to God.

Main Themes and Ideas:

- **Grievance-Based Lament:** Allen identifies Lamentations 3:52-66 as a testimony from the mentor/speaker in his role as a "wounded healer." This testimony is rooted in grievance, distinct from the grief-based lament at the beginning of chapter 3. The mentor is sharing his personal experience of unjust suffering at the hands of enemies as a model for the congregation.
- Quote: "I take this section as another testimony, in this case a grievance-based individual prayer lament which includes hope. This closing testimony comes, I believe, from the main speaker, the mentor in his role as a wounded healer, and he speaks of his own experience as a help for the experiences and feelings of the congregation."
- **Individual vs. Communal Experience:** While the mentor's experience is individual, it's presented to encourage communal prayer about shared grievances stemming from the post-war occupation, including events like the rape of young women.
- Quote: "At the end of chapter 3, he says, I once went through a situation of unjust suffering at the hands of personal enemies, and I needed to bring an appropriate prayer about it to God. Here it is, and it's the path you need to take with your grievances against your communal enemies..."
- **Two Laments Rolled into One:** Allen argues that the passage consists of two distinct episodes. The first (verses 52-58) describes the problem and God's initial response, while the second (verses 59-66) is a request for God to address a renewed outbreak of trouble from the same enemies.

- Quote: "It's really two laments rolled into one, or episodes of which are expressed in a lament, the separate episode with the same enemies, and the first one is presented in verses 52 through 54, what the problem was, and then God dealt with that in verses 55 through 58, but trouble flared up again from the same enemies, and so in 59 to 66, there's this request for God to deal with the new bad situation."
- **Nuances in Language:** Allen highlights the importance of understanding the context to interpret the use of verbs like "see" and "hear," which have different meanings in the different episodes.
- Quote: "The verb see, for instance, we have it in verse 59, you have seen all their malice and all their plots against me. Well, that means that it's already come to your attention. That's the force of the verb see. But having said that, when we move on to verse 63, whether they sit or rise, see, I am the object of their taunt songs. There, that see, it's more used in the way it's been used earlier in the book, look and see, God, do something about it."
- **The Connection between Guilt and Grievance:** Allen connects the themes of guilt and grievance, referencing Isaiah 10, where Assyria acts as God's instrument of anger against Judah's sin, but oversteps its bounds, leading to grievance. He also provides a modern example of a patient experiencing grief, guilt, and grievance simultaneously.
- Quote: "And Assyria is the rod of God's anger. That's the way it starts. And God's anger is a response obviously to Judas sinning against him. And so that's one aspect. But the enemy went too far. The enemy went too far. And they went beyond God's own will and intention. And they were unnecessarily cruel. And so, this turns into a grievance."
- **Metaphorical Language:** Allen discusses the metaphorical language used in the passage, such as the image of being hunted like a bird and thrown into a pit. He suggests the "pit" could be interpreted as a cistern, possibly with a stone lid, emphasizing the feeling of confinement.
- Quote: "As often in laments, metaphors are used. And here is this hunting metaphor, tracking them down in persecution. And it goes on. They flung me alive into a pit and hurled stones at me. The water closed over my head."
- **God as Redeemer:** Allen explores the concept of God as a redeemer, drawing on the sociological term "redeem" from Leviticus 25, which refers to a family

member intervening to help another in crisis. He connects this to the Exodus and the promise of a second Exodus in Isaiah, as well as its theological significance in the New Testament.

- Quote: "Because redeem was used as a sociological term, where the family was concerned...and so redeeming is this sociological term that relates to a family member falling into difficulty and then somebody else in the family coming to their aid and saying, I can help you out."
- **The Nature of the Second Episode:** The second episode shifts from physical persecution to verbal abuse (malice, plots, taunts), which Allen emphasizes can be deeply hurtful.
- Quote: "It's not overt oppression now, this time. It's not being hunted like a bird, hunted down and persecuted in that outward way, but it's more insidious. It's verbal abuse, plotting taunts, taunt songs, verbal abuse, either in front of the mentor or behind his back. And this can be so hurtful."
- **Imprecatory Prayers:** Allen addresses the seemingly unchristian tone of the petitions for vengeance in verses 64-66, justifying them as an appeal for justice and fair play. He references Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 1:6 as a parallel.
- Quote: "Pay them back for their deeds, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. Give them anguish of heart, your curse beyond them, pursue them in anger, and destroy them from under the Lord's heavens. And you might say, well, that's not very Christian, is it? But why doesn't he forgive? You know, isn't the Christian way to forgive? Well not surpassed, because I think of Paul writing the second letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 1 and verse 6, it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you..."
- **Grievance as an Entry Point to Prayer:** Allen concludes by emphasizing that grievance is the easiest type of prayer for the congregation to engage in. It opens the door for God to take a side and offer help. The positive ending of the first episode (God's promise of help) serves as an incentive for the congregation to seek a similar experience.
- Quote: "And so, be prepared to pray this prayer. But grievance opens the door. A prayer of grievance opens the door for God to take one side. And so, if a grievance is rightly judged to be present, then it's a strong, persuasive argument. Pray this prayer. Pray this prayer. It's a strong argument for God's help."

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Lamentations 3:52-66

Lamentations 3:52-66: A Study Guide

Quiz:

1. What are the two types of prayer laments that the mentor uses in Lamentations, chapter 3?
2. According to Allen, what is the purpose of the mentor sharing his personal experiences of guilt and grievance?
3. What are the three trajectories, or pathways, Allen identifies in Lamentations? Which one does he believe would resonate most with the congregation in chapter 3?
4. Describe the two episodes within the prayer lament in Lamentations 3:52-66.
5. How does Allen interpret the different uses of the verb "see" in Lamentations 3:59 and 3:63?
6. How does Allen interpret the different uses of the verb "hear" in Lamentations 3:56 and 3:63?
7. Explain how the concept of "redeem" is used in Lamentations, drawing connections to Leviticus 25 and the story of Ruth.
8. In Lamentations 3:52-54, what metaphors are used to describe the speaker's persecution?
9. In the second episode (Lamentations 3:59-66), how does the nature of the persecution change?
10. How does Allen justify the harsh tone of the petitions in Lamentations 3:64-66, particularly the call for vengeance?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. The two types of prayer laments are grief-based and grievance-based. The mentor uses both to connect with the congregation.
2. The mentor shares his experiences to identify with the congregation's feelings of guilt and grievance, encouraging them to bring their own prayers to God.

3. The three trajectories are grief, guilt, and grievance. Allen believes that grievance would resonate most with the congregation because of the natural resentment it caused.
4. The first episode (3:52-58) recounts a past experience of persecution where the speaker was hunted and confined, but God intervened and rescued him. The second episode (3:59-66) addresses a new instance of persecution involving verbal abuse and taunting.
5. In 3:59, "You have seen" implies that God is already aware of the malice. In 3:63, "see" is a plea for God to take action and not just observe the taunts.
6. In 3:56, "You heard" implies God listened and acted upon the plea. In 3:63, "You have heard" means that the taunts have come to God's attention, but not necessarily that he has acted.
7. "Redeem" is used metaphorically, drawing on the sociological concept of a family member buying back property or rescuing a relative in distress. In Lamentations, it signifies God's intervention to rescue the speaker. This connects to Leviticus 25, which describes family redemption laws, and the book of Ruth, where Boaz redeems Ruth and Naomi.
8. The speaker is "hunted like a bird" to convey persecution. He is thrown into a pit, a cistern with water above his head.
9. The persecution shifts from physical violence to verbal abuse, including plotting, taunts, and whispers.
10. Allen references Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians and argues that the call for justice is rooted in the Old Testament truth that God will repay those who afflict the righteous, offering compassion to the persecuted.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the role of the "wounded healer" in Lamentations 3:52-66. How does the mentor's personal experience of suffering enable him to minister to the congregation?
2. Discuss the significance of the two-episode structure in the prayer lament of Lamentations 3:52-66. What does this structure reveal about the speaker's relationship with God and the nature of prayer?

3. Explore the themes of justice and vengeance in Lamentations 3:52-66. Are these themes compatible with Christian theology, and how does Allen address this question?
4. Compare and contrast the first and second testimonies presented by the mentor in Lamentations chapter 3. How do these testimonies reflect the complexities of grief, guilt, and grievance?
5. Examine the use of metaphor in Lamentations 3:52-66. How do metaphors like being "hunted like a bird" or thrown into a cistern contribute to the emotional impact of the poem?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Grievance:** A real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially unfair treatment.
- **Guilt:** The fact of having committed a specified or implied offense or crime.
- **Grief:** Intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death.
- **Lament:** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow; a poem, song, etc., expressing grief.
- **Mentor:** An experienced and trusted advisor. In this context, a leader within the community who provides guidance and support during times of crisis.
- **Redemption:** The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. In the Old Testament, this also relates to the buying back of property or the rescuing of a family member from hardship.
- **Taunt Song:** A song or saying intended to mock, insult, or provoke someone.
- **Wounded Healer:** A concept where someone who has experienced suffering and has been healed is then able to help others who are suffering.
- **Trajectory:** The path followed by a projectile flying or an object moving under the action of given forces.
- **Exilic:** Relating to or characteristic of exile.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Lamentations 3:52-66, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text from Dr. Leslie Allen's session on Lamentations 3:52-66:

FAQ on Lamentations 3:52-66 According to Dr. Leslie Allen

1. What is the primary focus of Lamentations 3:52-66?

This section presents a grievance-based individual prayer lament, spoken by the mentor (possibly the main speaker of Lamentations) as a "wounded healer." It details the mentor's experience of unjust suffering at the hands of personal enemies and serves as a role model and encouragement for the congregation to bring their own grievances to God in prayer.

2. How does this lament differ from the one presented at the beginning of Lamentations chapter 3?

Unlike the earlier, grief-based lament which is reported in the third person and refers to God's wrath and underlying sin, this lament takes the form of a direct prayer, using second-person references ("you"). It focuses on the mentor's personal experience of unjust suffering.

3. Why does Dr. Allen consider this section (3:52-66) to be divided into two episodes?

Dr. Allen argues that this section presents two distinct yet related laments. The first (verses 52-58) recounts a past instance of persecution and God's favorable response, while the second (verses 59-66) addresses a renewed episode of trouble from the same enemies, focusing on verbal abuse and plotting.

4. How does the use of the verbs "see" and "hear" differ within these verses?

The verbs "see" and "hear" are used with nuanced meanings. "See" can mean God has already taken notice of something, while in other instances it is a plea for God to intervene. Similarly, "hear" can mean God has listened and acted, or simply that something has come to God's attention. The context clarifies the intended meaning in each instance.

5. What is the significance of the mentor sharing their personal experiences of both guilt and grievance?

By sharing experiences of both guilt (addressed earlier in chapter 3) and grievance, the mentor identifies with the congregation's complex emotions and provides a model for approaching God with both confession and requests for justice. The combination mirrors the themes in Isaiah 10, where God's anger (stemming from sin) is combined with the enemy's excessive cruelty (leading to grievance).

6. How does Dr. Allen interpret the metaphor of being "hunted like a bird" and thrown into a "pit" or "cistern"?

The metaphor of being "hunted like a bird" conveys the relentless persecution experienced by the mentor. Being thrown into a "pit" or "cistern" (potentially covered by a stone) symbolizes confinement, lack of freedom, and a feeling of being overwhelmed. The presence of water in the cistern intensifies the sense of despair and hopelessness.

7. What is the significance of the phrase "you redeemed my life" in verse 58?

The term "redeemed" draws from the sociological practice of a family member intervening to buy back property or rescue a relative from difficulty (as described in Leviticus 25 and the Book of Ruth). It theologically implies God acting as a "kinsman-redeemer," stepping in to rescue the speaker from a crisis. It also has echoes of the Exodus, where God redeemed the Israelites from slavery.

8. Why does the mentor end the lament with a call for retribution against his enemies, and how does this relate to a Christian perspective?

The mentor's plea for retribution ("Pay them back for their deeds") reflects a call for justice and fair play rooted in Old Testament theology. Dr. Allen connects this to Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 1:6, emphasizing that it is just for God to repay affliction to those who inflict it, indicating the possibility of justice being compatible with compassion for the persecuted.