



“Equal-Opportunity Wrath ”

Lamentations 4:1-11

March 7, 2021

There are 2 ways God can and does use to stop believers from sinning:

1. **Preventative** (before the fact) – believers obey the Word and yield to the Holy Spirit.
2. **Corrective** (after the fact) – believers sin and because of the consequences of their sin, they confess, repent, and correct their behavior.

Lam 4:1-11

- 1 How dark the gold has become,
How the pure gold has changed!
The sacred stones are poured out
At the corner of every street.
- 2 The precious sons of Zion,
Weighed against fine gold,
How they are regarded as earthen jars,
The work of a potter's hands!
- 3 Even jackals offer the breast,
They nurse their young;
But the daughter of my people has become cruel
Like ostriches in the wilderness.
- 4 The tongue of the infant cleaves
To the roof of its mouth because of thirst;
The little ones ask for bread,
But no one breaks it for them.

1 How dark the gold has become, זָהָב zahab - gold that shimmers.
How the pure gold has changed! כֶּתֶם kethem - gold that is pure, like
The sacred stones are poured out when it comes from
At the corner of every street. the mine.

- The gold and precious stones that had decorated the temple no longer served that function.
- They were trampled in the city's dusty streets.



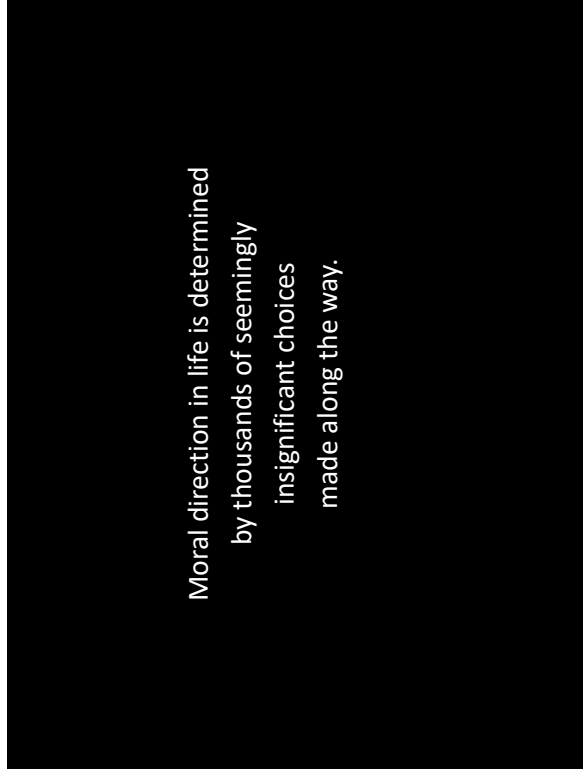


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- The gold and precious stones that had decorated the temple no longer served that function.
- They were trampled in the city's dusty streets.
- Pure gold does not tarnish. However if it is mixed with an impure alloy it will corrode and tarnish.
- Here is a picture of Israel: if Israel stays pure, she will shine with the glory of God. However if she mixes with sin, her brilliant shine will lose its luster and she will corrode.
- Brilliant and precious stones used in Solomon's Temple were dumped at street corners.
- This of course is where, in the streets, the starving children were found along with the young and the old who had died.
- Tarnish, corrosion, takes time. Israel spent centuries working on her "tarnish."
- Do you shine as bright for the glory of God as you once did?
- Has the tarnish of sin dimmed your spiritual luster?

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Moral direction in life is determined
by thousands of seemingly
insignificant choices
made along the way.

- 2 The precious sons of Zion,
Weighed against fine gold,
How they are regarded as earthen jars,
The work of a potter's hands!**
- The greatest destruction from sin is not to buildings but to people!
 - The best and the brightest were all taken from Judah and Jerusalem and only the poorest and least able were left behind.
 - Years of sinful indulgence eroded their effectiveness to the point where they were like gold that had lost its luster, an expression to stress the depths to which Jerusalem had fallen. The precious people of Zion, once highly valued, had become like ordinary clay pots.
 - The generation lost to Babylon would never be as valued there, as they would be in Jerusalem.
 - They were as cheap and lowly regarded as clay pots.
 - The people of Israel had changed from being immensely valuable to being castoffs. Pottery was one of those things that was so inexpensive in the ancient world that it could be tossed out without a second thought.
 - Any old potter could make it.
 - Note: That is the way Israel treated God – as a cast off, just another god.



This is what the effects
of walking in sin
look like. →

←
This is what godly
living looks like.



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Like ostriches in the wilderness.**

- Nature's worst nurturers--jackals and ostriches--were more caring than God's people!



How do Jackals treat their young?

- They are a wild dog.
- They have a long lasting “pair-bond”.
- They raise their young together and are dedicated to feeding their young.
- They may be away 40% of the time just to look for food for them.
- The point: The Jewish women were less kind than the Jackals to their young.



How do ostriches treat their young?

- 8'; 330 lbs; largest living bird;
- Run up to 40 mph;
- They will swallow about anything, iron, stones, etc..
- They are polygamous (1 male to 3/4 females);
- Egg - 3 lbs.
- Male sits on eggs at night, female by day.
- Females are not very maternal – she often leaves the eggs on her shift. Less than 10% of the eggs survive. After hatching the male care for the chicks, female abandons and only 22% of the chicks survive.
- The point – The Jewish women were showing cruelty by leaving their young abandoned.

Job 39:13-16

13 "The ostriches' wings flap joyously
With the pinion and plumage of love,

14 For she abandons her eggs to the earth
And warms them in the dust,

15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may trample them.

16 "She treats her young cruelly, as if they were not hers;
Though her labor be in vain, she is unconcerned;

3 Even jackals offer the breast,

They nurse their young;

But the daughter of my people has become cruel!

Like ostriches in the wilderness.

- Nature’s worst nurturers--jackals and ostriches--were more caring than God’s people!
- The women of Jerusalem have become cruel and pay no attentions to their children’s pitiful cries. Like the ostriches they are cruel and heartless, because they forsake their young at the least alarm.
- Like ostriches that do not care for their offspring, these women had abandoned and even eaten their children. They behaved worse than jackals, which at least nurse their young.
- The horrors of the siege of Jerusalem had turned the once-compassionate women of Judah into selfish creatures, unwilling to give of themselves for the welfare of their young.

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- At a time of extreme thirst, the tongue cleaves or sticks to the roof of one’s mouth.
- Starving children begged vainly for food, but adults consumed whatever was available . Infants in Jerusalem during the siege did not have enough to drink or eat because their parents were looking out for their own needs first.
- How can God do this to them?
- More importantly, how could Israel turn to idols?
- This is how offended God is.

“The pathetic scenes of young children begging in vain for food seems to have etched themselves deeply on the mind of the author, who must have witnessed the events described here and in the first two dirges.”

- Everett Harrison

**5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those reared in purple
Embrace ash pits.**

- Now we turn to the adults.
- No one was safe from the judgment that came upon Jerusalem, and those once high were brought very low.
- **“delicacies”** - מַדְּלִיקוֹת *ma'adan* - dainty, delicate, delightful, pure pleasure
- People who had been raised in luxury, now could not find the necessities of life.
- Those shopping at Neiman Marcus were now shopping at the local dump.

“embrace” - חָבַק *chabaq* - to hug, to throw your arms around.

“ash pits” - אֶשְׁפוֹת *ashpoth* - dung, filth, trash.

5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those reared in purple
Embrace ash pits.

**6 For the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the sin of Sodom,
Which was overthrown as in a moment,
And no hands were turned toward her.**

7 Her consecrated ones were purer than snow,
They were whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy in body than corals,
Their polishing was like lapis lazuli.
8 Their appearance is blacker than soot,
They are not recognized in the streets;
Their skin is shriveled on their bones,
It is withered, it has become like wood.

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“It is pity that any child of God, washed in Christ’s blood, should bedabble his scarlet robe in the stinking guzzle of the world’s dunghill; that anyone who hath heretofore soared as an eagle should now creep on the ground as a beetle, or wallow as a swine in the mire of sensuality.”

- John Trapp

**6 For the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the sin of Sodom,
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And no hands were turned toward her.**

- Sodom was overthrown suddenly; Jerusalem’s sufferings were prolonged. Hence it is inferred that Jerusalem’s sin was greater than Sodom’s.

Ezek 16:46-51

46 "Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.
47 "Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they.
48 "As I live," declares the Lord God, "Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done.
49 "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.
50 "Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.

• Sodom's punishment was direct from God. Jerusalem's was indirect.

• Jerusalem's punishment would also be greater. It would be more prolonged and agonizing, as opposed to Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment.

• Sodom's inhabitants were in health and strength.

- Much like Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1), Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5).

• Jerusalem fell by a lingering, prolonged suffering for their sin.

- Like the believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:30), or the believer in James 5:14-16.

• Her men were partly destroyed by the sword, and partly by famine.

• **"no hands were turned toward her"** -a human army did lay a long siege on Sodom like Jerusalem.

• Note: We often judge the sin of homosexuality to be one of the worse sins. However idolatry is ranked at a much higher level and is punished accordingly (more severely).

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• Some of the residents had dedicated themselves to the Lord and were of the highest quality of people.

• Ruddy – healthy vibrant color .

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- Some of the residents had dedicated themselves to the Lord and were of the highest quality of people.
- Ruddy – healthy vibrant color.
- However, even they had become victims of the siege, and had suffered terribly along with the ordinary citizens. Their fine complexions and healthy bodies had become black and shriveled.
- They go unrecognized in the streets. The great and mighty and noble cannot be recognized on the streets because famine has reduced all the citizens of Jerusalem to a common level of physical waste.

lapis lazuli



"This chapter is one of the most graphic in the book in its description of the physical suffering of the people of Jerusalem, and what makes it especially vivid is the use of color. In fact, color is one of the striking features of the chapter: gold and purple (vv. 1, 2, 5), white, red, sapphire, black (vv. 7, 8). Bright colors represent the earlier conditions; as the famine progresses, the colors are erased from the picture and all that remains is dullness and blackness."

**9 Better are those slain with the sword
Than those slain with hunger;
For they pine away, being stricken
For lack of the fruits of the field.**

10 The hands of compassionate women
Boiled their own children;
They became food for them
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.
11 The Lord has accomplished His wrath,
He has poured out His fierce anger;
And He has kindled a fire in Zion
Which has consumed its foundations.

**9 Better are those slain with the sword
Than those slain with hunger;
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- Some of the people had died in battle, but others had starved to death.
- Those who had died by the sword were more fortunate, because a swift death is better than a gradual one.
- With no food to eat, they waste away.

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- Note: These are normal compassionate women.
- Starvation turned them into cannibals.
- How could they do this? Just like they sacrificed their children to the idol Molech and burned them alive on a red-hot metal statue?
- We look back and think how horrible this was but today many mothers are having abortions, actually murdering their babies.
- God has made us capable of having babies and when one has been conceived, it is His intention for that child to come into the world. The moment the child is conceived, he is a person and to abort a pregnancy is murder of a human being.
- Jeremiah warned that this would happen -

Jer 19:9

- 9 "I will make them **eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters**, and they will eat one another's flesh in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life will distress them."
- These are people who had been nursed in the lap of luxury and thought this could never happen to them.

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- “accomplished” **כִּלְיָהוּ** *kalyahu* - to finish, all is spent. God had an amount of wrath to spend and He spent it equally. No one escaped.
- Jeremiah thought of Jerusalem and Judah completely devastated. and could see the fierce anger of God fulfilled.
- Like a fire, His anger burned among His people. Ironically, He consumed the city with fire.
- If you burn the foundations of a city, you burn the entire city.

The wrath of God was fully spent on

Jesus Christ, who, on the cross,
absorbed all of God’s wrath for those who
would trust in Him for salvation.