

# A Promise of Return

(Lamentations 3:1-33)

Yearly Theme: *“Peace is...”*

Series Title: *“A Return to Peace”*

July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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## Something to think about:

In the midst of difficulty and abandonment, hopelessness often takes root leaving us desperate and depressed. In great darkness we can't often see a way out, and so we grapple and thrash about in an attempt to vacate the premises of pain. Even more difficult and confusing is when the one who has allowed us to experience the pain and sorrow is GOD Himself.

As we begin a new series today entitled, “A Return to Peace,” we start in a small book in the Old Testament called Lamentations. Lamentations is a book of poetry (only 5 chapters long), that describes the raw emotion of GOD's judgment and punishment on His own people, the people of Judah, who have been overtaken and exiled by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. As its name suggests, Lamentations is the outpouring of a guttural response to GOD's judgment. It expresses the weight of sheer brokenness and lostness. But right in the middle of this poetic tragedy springs a few words of hope and a reminder of GOD's character in a foreshadowing of good things to come; a remembrance of the promises of GOD and the essence of His personality.

Let's pick up in chapter 3 today...

Turn in your Bibles to: **Lamentations 3:1-33**

Though there is a lot to unpack here, the key point and takeaway from this passage is this:

**Key Point:** *“God's people are not abandoned forever.”*

In the author of Lamentation's distress, a glimmer of hope shines through as he remembers the heart, the character, and the promises of GOD. Let's take a closer look at what that is:

- GOD's turning away is temporary.

*Lamentations 3:31 (NLT), For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever.*

- Though GOD brings sorrow, His compassion and love are unfailing.

*Lamentations 3:32 (NLT), Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love.*

- It's not GOD's will to afflict people, but He does it for good.

*Lamentations 3:33 (NLT), For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.*

## Something to take home:

Though GOD does punish and afflict, He does so out of love rather than hate. As a loving Father, GOD's desire is for good not harm, for hope not abandonment. A return to peace is a return to the promises of God who promises not to abandon His people forever. Discipline and judgement are GOD's means of correction and love. Consider the words from Proverbs:

**Proverbs 3:11-12 (NLT), <sup>11</sup> My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. <sup>12</sup> For the LORD corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.**

**Proverbs 12:1 (NLT), To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction.**

**Proverbs 13:1 (NLT), A wise child accepts a parent's discipline; a mocker refuses to listen to correction.**

The discipline of GOD brings hope and wisdom, and it reminds us that...

**Key Point:** *“God's people are not abandoned forever.”*