

A Dishonorable Discharge

In the day of the Lord's wrath, no one is immune. The later generations, as unfair as it may seem, suffer for the sins of the former. I guess that's because it's His way of making sure the false teachings of the former generations end and don't continue to influence the future.

Lamentations 2 (NIV)

¹How the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud of his anger! He has hurled down the splendor of Israel from heaven to earth; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. ²Without pity the Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob; in his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of Daughter Judah. He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonor. ³In fierce anger he has cut off every horn of Israel. He has withdrawn his right hand at the approach of the enemy. He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire that consumes everything around it. ⁴Like an enemy he has strung his bow; his right hand is ready. Like a foe he has slain all who were pleasing to the eye; he has poured out his wrath like fire on the tent of Daughter Zion. ⁵The Lord is like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel. He has swallowed up all her palaces and destroyed her strongholds. He has multiplied mourning and lamentation for Daughter Judah. ⁶He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden; he has destroyed his place of meeting. The LORD has made Zion forget her appointed festivals and her Sabbaths; in his fierce anger he has spurned both king and priest. ⁷The Lord has rejected his altar and abandoned his sanctuary. He has given the walls of her palaces into the hands of the enemy; they have raised a shout in the house of the LORD as on the day of an appointed festival. ⁸The LORD determined to tear down the wall around Daughter Zion. He stretched out a measuring line and did not withhold his hand from destroying. He made ramparts and walls lament; together they wasted away. ⁹Her gates have sunk into the ground; their bars he has broken and destroyed. Her king and her princes are exiled among the nations, the law is no more, and her prophets no longer find visions from the LORD. ¹⁰The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence; they have sprinkled dust on their heads and put on sackcloth. The young women of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground. ¹¹My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city. ¹²They say to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?" as they faint like the wounded in the streets of the city, as their lives ebb away in their mothers' arms. ¹³What can I say for you? With what can I compare you, Daughter Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, Virgin Daughter Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you? ¹⁴The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The prophecies they gave you were false and misleading. ¹⁵All who pass your way clap their hands at you; they scoff and shake their heads at Daughter Jerusalem: "Is this the city that was called the

perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" ¹⁶All your enemies open their mouths wide against you; they scoff and gnash their teeth and say, "We have swallowed her up. This is the day we have waited for; we have lived to see it." ¹⁷The LORD has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word, which he decreed long ago. He has overthrown you without pity, he has let the enemy gloat over you, he has exalted the horn of your foes. ¹⁸The hearts of the people cry out to the Lord. You walls of Daughter Zion, let your tears flow like a river day and night; give yourself no relief, your eyes no rest. ¹⁹Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at every street corner.

[Jeremiah's Prayer]

²⁰ "Look, LORD, and consider: Whom have you ever treated like this? Should women eat their offspring, the children they have cared for? Should priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord? ²¹ "Young and old lie together in the dust of the streets; my young men and young women have fallen by the sword. You have slain them in the day of your anger; you have slaughtered them without pity. ²² "As you summon to a feast day, so you summoned against me terrors on every side. In the day of the LORD's anger no one escaped or survived; those I cared for and reared my enemy has destroyed."

So what happens next? Who can know? Historically there always seems to be a small "remnant" of people the Lord preserves and sets-up to start over. But who wants to go through all that.

I really believe that our best chance for a blessed future, for us as well as for our descendants emerging out of a fallen society, is to be positioned to be counted among that remnant. And to that goal, I'm reminded of a saying I really love:

"We cannot direct the wind; but we can adjust the sails!"

I hope and pray that you have an amazing day!!

- Jack