



# LAMENTATIONS

Learning to Lament  
in a culture of denial

*Week 3: Anger & Hope*



# LAMENTATIONS

*geloer*  
*The strong man*

*“I am a man who has seen misery,  
under the rod of his wrath.”*  
*Lam 3:1*

# LAMENTATIONS

1

22 three-line verses  
(66 lines) Acrostic

2

22 three-line verses  
(66 lines) Acrostic

3

66 one-line verses  
(66 lines) Acrostic

4

22 two-line verses  
(44 lines) Acrostic

5

22 one-line verses  
(22 lines) No pattern

### 3 *The Strong Man's Dilemma*



The Narrator & Daughter Zion  
both disappear

A new character, called a 'geber'  
appears (vv 1, 27, 35, & 39).

His is the voice of a soldier / defender

3

## *A new witness to the carnage*

At the book's centre the intensity '*ramps up*'



Poems 1, 2 & 4 are acrostic  
with each verse beginning with the next  
letter of the Hebrew alphabet

Poem 3 is also acrostic but now each of the  
66 lines begins with a letter of the Alphabet.

3

66 one-line verses

Speaker: 'geber'

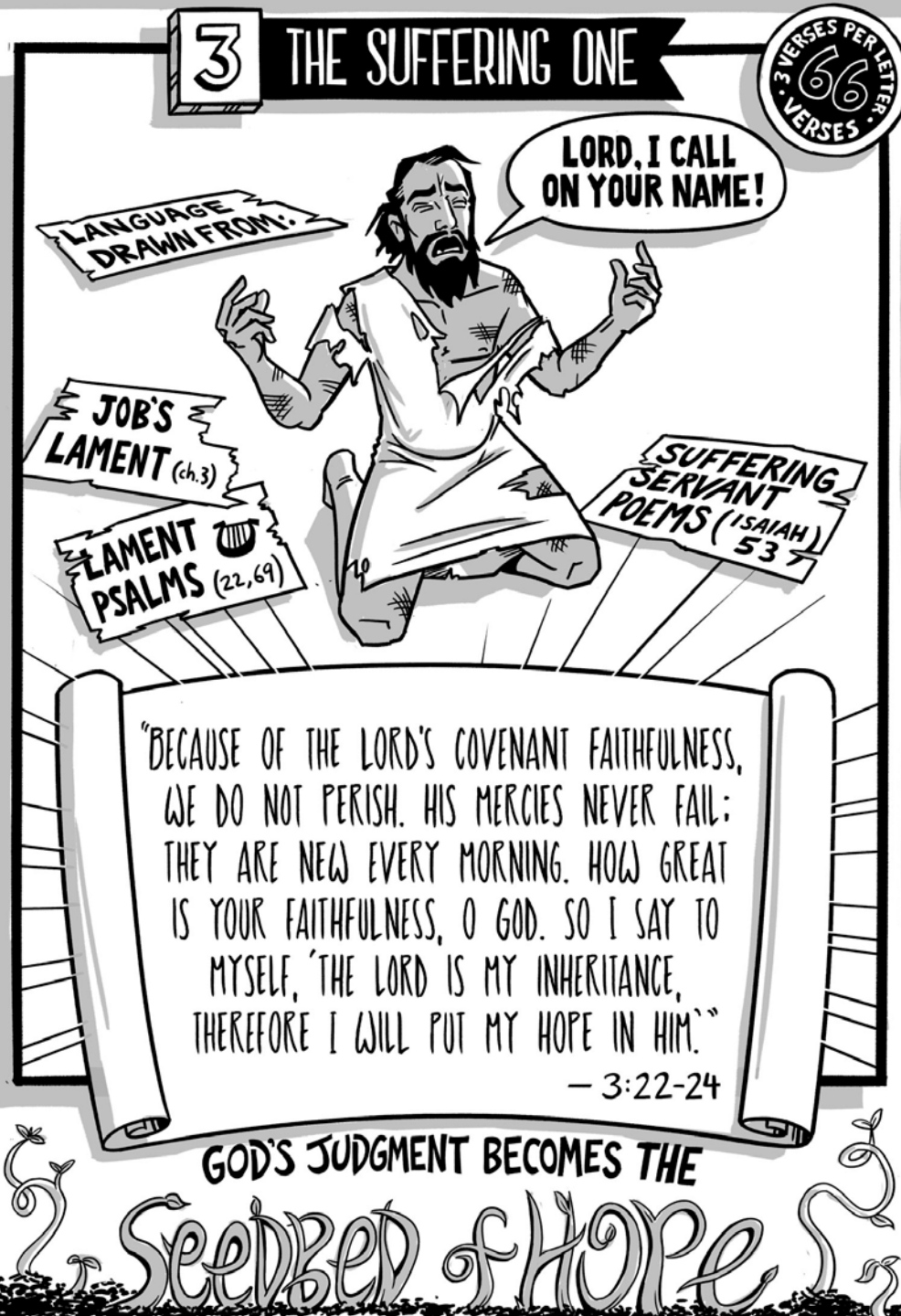
Aleph, Aleph, Aleph  
Beth, Beth, Beth  
Gimel, Gimel, Gimel  
Daleth, Daleth, Daleth  
He, He, He  
Waw, Waw, Waw  
...  
Taw, Taw, Taw

LAMENTATIONS

3

THE SUFFERING ONE

3 VERSES PER LETTER  
66  
VERSES



1 [Aleph] I am [*the man*] who has **seen affliction**  
under the **rod of his wrath**;

2 [Aleph] he has **driven** and brought me **into**  
**darkness** without any light;

3 [Aleph] **against me alone** he turns his hand,  
**again and again**, all day long.

4 [Beth] He has made my flesh and my skin  
**waste away**, and **broken my bones**;

5 [Beth] he has **besieged** and **enveloped** me with  
**bitterness** and **tribulation**;

6 [Beth] he has made me sit in darkness like the  
dead of long ago.



The Geber repeats himself, overlaps and interweaves across stanzas with greater density than the other poems.

We have here the “**language of entrapment & encirclement**”

The enemy, us & the speaker are all inside these walls & barricades





Daughter Zion wanted someone to  
see – wanted the Lord to see.  
The *geber* declares that he has seen.

The identity of the enemy  
remains hidden until <sup>22</sup>

(*there is a hint at <sup>8</sup> ‘he shuts out my prayers’ and <sup>18</sup> ‘my glory is ruined, my expectation from the Lord.’*)



## What the enemy has done:

<sup>14</sup> I have become the **laughing stock** of all my people.

<sup>15</sup> He has **filled me with bitterness**; he has drenched me with wormwood.

<sup>16</sup> He has made my **teeth grind on gravel** and made me cower in ashes...



*The steadfast love  
of the Lord never ceases,*

his mercies **never** come to an end

*They are new every morning;*  
Great is your faithfulness!

*The geber has hope*

because of the Steadfast Love of God

yet God is the source of his affliction

God **causes grief** & has **compassion**

God has pierced  
my heart

God has  
driven me away

God has broken  
my teeth with  
gravel

God has trampled  
me in the dust

God is good

God's love  
is great

God is  
compassionate

God is good

CONTRADICTIONS

*Let us test and examine our ways,  
and return to the Lord.*

*Let us lift up our hearts  
as well as our hands  
to God in heaven.*

3:40-41



We have transgressed and rebelled,  
and you have not forgiven.  
You have wrapped yourself with anger  
and pursued us ...  
you have wrapped yourself with a cloud  
so that no prayer can pass through.



3:42-44

My eyes flow with rivers of tears  
because of the destruction of my people.  
My eyes will flow without ceasing,  
without respite,  
until the Lord from heaven  
looks down and sees.



3:48-50



I called on your name, O Lord,  
from the depths of the pit;  
you heard my plea,  
“Do not close your ear  
to my cry for help,  
but give me relief!”



3:55-56

You came near when I called on you;  
you said, “Do not fear!”  
You have taken up my cause, O Lord,  
you have redeemed my life.

*God has seen. God has heard.  
God has taken up the speaker's cause.  
The 'geber' & we are now redeemed.*



3:57-58