

RAINBOW THROUGH THE RAIN *continued*

off to Babylon carried the yoke in youth – as did Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 1:6**). It is never too early to come under this instruction (cf. **Matthew 11:28-29**) or discipline (cf.

Lamentations 3:27-30) as it prepares us for grace and glory.

(b) **THE INTERACTION WITH THE YOKE**; for best benefits the yoke is to be borne (i) **IN GODLY FEAR, 3:28** – “*sitteth alone*” (cf. **1:1**) and “*keep silence*” ... (ii) **WITH REVERENT HUMILITY, 3:29** – this Eastern custom is a picture of resignation, but is hopeful, not hopeless ... (iii) **WITHOUT RESENTMENT, 3:30** – God’s man is not to resist the blows inflicted by the instruments of the Lord’s chastisement (cf.

Matthew 5:38-39 + Christ’s example, **Matthew 26:67; John 18:22; 19:3; Isaiah 50:6**). (c) **THE INCLINE WITH THE YOKE**; note gradation from **3:28-30**: difficulty increases from sitting in silence < mouth in the dust < cheek being smitten.

[3] THIS RAINBOW IN THE RAIN TRACKS THE STEEL IN THE SPECIFICS ABOUT GOD; 3:31-36.

Three principles about God emerge, re:

(a) **ISOLATION: GOD WILL NOT CAST OFF HIS PEOPLE FOREVER, 3:31-32**: all our sorrows will come to an end;

(b) **INTENTION: GOD WILL NEVER AFFLICT US WILLINGLY, 3:33**: “*willingly*” = “*from the heart.*” His heart remains full of covenantal love; (c) **INTEGRITY: GOD IS THE GOD OF**

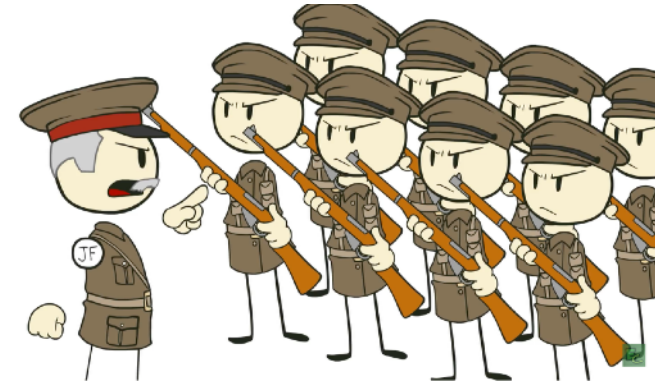
JUSTICE, 3:34-36: God is not an uninterested spectator of injustices; He requires a reckoning. Meantime, keep tracing Jeremiah’s / Matheson’s / God’s rainbow through the rain, “*and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be!*”

MEETINGS TODAY



•Morning Worship – 11.30am:
*7th Message in Lamentations Series:
“Tracing The Rainbow Through The Rain.”*

•Evening Service – 7.00pm:
“The Blessings of the Blood.”
Soloist – Nathan Crozier.



ALMOST 300 VISITORS IN ONE WEEK

Between Saturday 10 November and the following Saturday, almost 300 visitors took our ‘The Path To Peace’ Tour, most of whom were children. It was our privilege to welcome young people from as far apart as North Belfast, Portadown, Sixmilecross and Monaghan.

One school secretary commented: “*Thank you so much for today. They all arrived back with great reports.*”

One of our own tour guides enthused: “*What a blessing these tours have been, reaching folks that otherwise wouldn’t be reached with the Gospel!*”

This week also promises to be extremely busy:

- 42 text messages have been sent inviting the parents of children in the Sunday School at Sandy Row to accompany their children on a tour this afternoon,
- 100+ plan to arrive from Portavogie Free Presbyterian Church on Thursday evening,
- other groups including Lisburn and Ballymoney and school groups threaten to challenge the record number of visitors that was set last week.

Please continue to pray: as always our goal is not merely education, but evangelisation!



TRACING THE RAINBOW THROUGH THE RAIN

Lamentations 3:19-36.

Rev. Dr. George Matheson, the blind pastor, wrote a hymn in 5 minutes that remains a favourite 135 years later – ‘O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go.’ He explained that its words were, “*the fruit of suffering,*” though for many, these lines resonate with hope: “*I trace the rainbow through the rain / And feel the promise is not vain / That morn shall tearless be.*” What Matheson anticipated by faith in 1882, Jeremiah did almost 2500 years earlier after the fall of Jerusalem.

According to the conventions of Hebrew poetry, the most important truths are located **in the centre** of the work. It is therefore appropriate that in the middle of Jeremiah’s 3rd lament, he eventually reaches a place of comfort and hope.

[1] THIS RAINBOW IN THE RAIN TRANSCRIBES THE SPAN OF THE STEADFASTNESS OF GOD; 3:19-26.

(a) THE PATH TO THE RAINBOW, 3:19-21: the mere mention of “*hope*” and “*the LORD*” in the same sentence is enough to trigger a change in Jeremiah’s melancholy mood, 3:18.

From this point on, as he focuses on God and not himself, he begins to walk the road of genuine hope. When he preached on **Lamentations 3:21**, C.H. Spurgeon compared the renaming of the Cape of Storms at the bottom of South Africa as the Cape of Good Hope – and drew the parallel in our life once the Lord becomes the dominant force in the picture (cf. **Psalm 130**).

(b) THE PROMISE BEHIND THE RAINBOW, 3:22-26:

“*Mercies*” is a grand word, including God’s grace and goodness, but especially points to His covenant love. That Jerusalem could still enjoy covenant mercies is seen from **Deuteronomy 28-30** where restoration to its benefits comes on the heels of repentance (cf. **Deut. 28:59; 29:28; 30:1-10 – 2 Timothy 2:13**).

(c) THE PLURALITY ABOUT THE RAINBOW, 3:22: the fact that these “*mercies*” are plural implies their varied and abundant

nature – plus intensifies the character of God’s covenant love. (d) THE PRESERVATION THROUGH THE RAINBOW, 3:22: That we have not been completely overwhelmed and destroyed (“*consumed*”) gives good reason to believe that the Lord is not finished with His people yet.

(e) THE PERMANENCE OF THE RAINBOW, 3:22-23; as indicted by (i) The *Term* used – “*compassions*”: this comes from a word for the womb and points to the intensity of a mother’s love for her child (cf. **Isaiah 49:15**). The compassions of God do not stop so that the consumption of us cannot begin. Matthew Henry described the church as, “*corrected, yet not consumed; refined in the furnace as silver, but not consumed as dross.*”

(ii) The *Time* indicated – Fresh acts of steadfast love and pity each morning enable the prophet to survive. That these daily blessings are described as “*new*” highlights their surprise.

(iii) The *Totality* encompassed – “*Great is Thy faithfulness.*” (cf. **Exodus 34:6; Psalm 36:5; 98:3; 100:5**).

(f) THE PLENITUDE IN THE RAINBOW, 3:24: God as the church’s and believer’s “*portion*” ensures happiness and help (cf. **Psalm 73:25-26; 16:5-6**). As “*portion*” comes from a root = “*to divide,*” God’s people have a possession like the tribe of Levi which was not assigned a plot of ground but the Lord Himself (; **Numbers 18:20**). “*A man that has God for his portion is the rarest and happiest man in the world*” (Thomas Brooks).

(g) THE PROVISION UNDER THE RAINBOW; 3:25-26: God is good to those who “*seek*” and “*hope and quietly wait for*” Him: “*the more we grumble, the farther are we away from goodness*” (George Barlow).

[2] THIS RAINBOW IN THE RAIN TEMPERS THE SHARPNESS OF THE SUFFERING FROM GOD; 3:27-30.

The message of this section is simple to state but tough to take: in some senses afflictions are good for us!

(a) THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE YOKE: the “*yoke*” of afflictions is a beneficial burden *in youth* as this is the time of vitality and strength, will develop humility and solemnity early, will drag from the clutches of the world and centre the affections on Christ, and will best glorify the Lord when the young devote themselves to His worship and service (**2 Corin. 4:17-18; 2 Tim. 2:22; Psalm 119:71**). The young men and women carried