

A close-up, profile view of a man's head and hand. He has dark hair and is looking down and to the left. His right hand is raised, with fingers spread, as if holding up a barrier or gesturing a point. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Lament of Skepticism (Lam. 2:5)

HONEST LAMENTS

- The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins... Jerusalem has SINNED greatly. (1:5,8)
- The Lord has done what he decreed long ago, he has fulfilled his word. (2:17)
- Why should anyone living complain when punished for their sins? (3:39)

SKEPTICAL LAMENTS

- The Lord has not remembered his footstool [Israel] in the day of his anger. (2:1)
- Consider this, O Lord. Whom have you ever treated like this? (2:20)
- Pay them [enemies] back what they deserve, O Lord. May your curse be on them. Pursue them and destroy them from under the heavens, O Lord. (3:64)
- Renew our days unless you have utterly rejected us. (5:22)

The writer ADMITS

- ✓ sin and rebellion
- ✓ being warned of consequences
- ✓ this punishment is just and leaves no reason to complain

At the same time he **COMPLAINS**

- ✓ God has not remembered
his special people
- ✓ Their punishment is excessive
- ✓ God should also be punishing
other people
- ✓ God has spurned and rejected them

Jeremiah's complaints go beyond expressing misery. They express anger, criticism, and accusations against God... **SKEPTICISM that God has done the right thing.**

- You told us not to let pagans enter our temple... Now YOU have let pagans tear down our temple! *(1:10)*

- Our enemies are rejoicing in what YOU have done! *(1:21)*
- We have now lost the feasts, Sabbath, altar, sanctuary, King, and priests that YOU told us to honor. *(2:6-7) ETC. ETC)*

SKEPTICISM toward God has roots in
DEFIANCE of God.

- They say “How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?”
(Psalm 73:11)

CRITICISM of God's methods implies
AUTHORITY of your own knowledge.

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (*Gen. 3:4-5*)

REPENTANCE, is not defensive or self-justifying.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. But worldly sorrow brings death. Look at what godly sorrow has produced in you... earnestness, eagerness to clear yourself, indignation, alarm, longing, concern, readiness for justice. *(11 Cor. 7:10-11)*

A lament of grief may be a humble questioning of God, crying out for understanding

OR

It may be a skeptical question filled with arrogance and anger, an assumption that you know better than God what should have been done.

SKEPTICAL?

- What are you looking for?
- Have you asked for a new birth or only a new blessing?
- Are you interested in trusting God or challenging God?
- Have you offered God your life or just a deal/request?
- Do you worship God or disregard/disdain his will?
- Do you seek to serve God or seek that God may serve you?