

# Lamentations 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.

## Analysis

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Continued suffering described: "He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood" (hisbi'ani ba-merurim hirvani la'anah, הִשְׁבַּעַנִּי בְּמְרוּרִים הִרְבֵּנִי לְעַנָּה). The verb sava (שָׁבַע, "filled, satisfied") normally describes positive satiation (Psalm 103:5, 107:9), but here it's perverted—filled not with good things but merurim (מְרוּרִים, "bitterness"). La'anah (לְעַנָּה, "wormwood") is the bitter herb from verse 19. Being "drunken" (hirvani, הִרְבֵּנִי) with wormwood suggests overwhelming, disorienting bitterness. Deuteronomy 29:18 warns of idolatry producing "a root that beareth gall and wormwood." Revelation 8:11 uses wormwood for divine judgment. The imagery conveys that suffering isn't minor discomfort but consuming, all-encompassing bitterness that saturates existence. Yet the very act of describing it in prayer to God shows that even overwhelming bitterness needn't sever relationship. The darkest laments in Scripture are still prayer—maintaining connection with God through suffering.

## Historical Context

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Wormwood (la'anah, *Artemisia absinthium*) is an extremely bitter plant used medicinally in small doses but poisonous in large amounts. Being 'drunken' with it would cause severe nausea, disorientation, and potentially death. The metaphor captures both the pervasive nature of suffering (like drunkenness affecting all faculties) and its intensely unpleasant character (like consuming poison). The exile generation experienced this comprehensively—every aspect of life was bitter. Loss of land, temple, independence, loved ones, certainty—all compounded into

overwhelming grief. Jeremiah 9:15 and 23:15 use identical language as God's threatened judgment: 'I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.' The fulfillment was literal—life tasted of nothing but bitterness. Yet Exodus 15:22-25 shows God can make bitter waters sweet. The principle: God who sends bitterness can also remove it.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to be 'filled' and 'drunken' with bitterness, and how does this imagery help us acknowledge rather than minimize deep suffering?
2. How can even the bitterest experiences be brought to God in prayer rather than driving us away from Him?
3. In what ways does Christ taste the ultimate bitterness (the cup of God's wrath, Matthew 26:39) so believers eventually taste only sweetness?

## Interlinear Text

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לעָנָה: נִיְמָנָה הַשְׁבִּיעַ יְמִינָה בְּמִרְאַת יְמִינָה

**He hath filled me with bitterness he hath made me drunken with wormwood**

H7646

H4844

H7301

H3939

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 9:15** (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

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