

# Lamentations 3:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

## Analysis

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The pivotal turn: "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope" (zot ashiv el-libi al-ken ochil, זאת אָשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל). After twenty verses of dark lament, the word ochil (אוֹחִיל, "I have hope") appears. The verb yashuv (יָשׁוּב, "recall, bring back") suggests deliberate mental action—choosing to remember truth despite feelings. This models biblical hope: not denial of pain (verses 1-20 honestly express anguish) but anchoring in God's character despite circumstances. The "this" (zot) refers to what follows in verses 22-23: God's mercies, faithfulness, and steadfast love. Hope isn't wishful thinking or optimism about outcomes. It's confident trust in God's unchanging nature regardless of outcomes. Romans 5:3-5 shows hope emerging from suffering through endurance and proven character. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as "substance of things hoped for." The speaker consciously redirects thoughts from circumstances to God's revealed character—a cognitive act of faith essential to enduring trials (Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2).

## Historical Context

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This verse marks Lamentations' structural center and theological climax. Chapters 1-2 describe judgment's devastation. Chapter 3:1-20 intensifies with personal suffering. Verse 21 pivots. Verses 22-26 proclaim hope. The remainder works through implications. This structure models how believers process suffering: acknowledge reality, express pain honestly, deliberately recall truth, rest in God's character, respond with faith and submission. Historical examples abound: Job's 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him' (Job 13:15). Habakkuk's 'Though the fig tree does not bud...yet I will rejoice in the LORD' (Habakkuk 3:17-18). Paul's 'We

are troubled...perplexed...persecuted...struck down—but not...' (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). The exile tested whether Israel's faith depended on circumstances (temple, land, monarchy) or on God Himself. Those who, like this speaker, recalled God's faithfulness amid ruin maintained faith. Those who couldn't, despaired or turned to idols.

## Related Passages

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

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. What specific truths about God's character must we deliberately 'recall to mind' when circumstances tempt us toward despair?
2. How does the pattern of honest lament (verses 1-20) followed by deliberate hope (verse 21) model healthy spiritual and emotional processing?
3. What practices help us actively 'bring to mind' God's faithfulness when feelings contradict His promises?

## Interlinear Text

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ז	אֶשׁ יִב	אֶל	לִבִּי	עַל	כִּי	אֲחִיל:
H2063	<b>This I recall</b>	H413	<b>to my mind</b>	H5921	H3651	<b>therefore have I hope</b>
	H7725		H3820			H3176

## Additional Cross-References

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**Habakkuk 2:3** (Parallel theme): For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

**Psalms 130:7** (Hope): Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

