

Lamentations 3:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion
according to the multitude of his mercies.

Analysis

Complementing verse 31-33, this verse affirms: "But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies" (ki im-hogah verikham ke-rov khasadav, כִּי אִם-הוֹגָה וְרִיחָם כָּרֹב חֲסָדָיו). The structure is "if...then": if God causes grief, then He will have compassion. It's not "if" in the sense of doubt, but "even if/though." The verb racham (רָחַם, "have compassion") comes from rechem (רֶחֶם, "womb"), suggesting maternal-like tender mercy. God grieves over necessary discipline like a mother grieving while correcting a child. The phrase "according to the multitude of his mercies" (ke-rov khasadav, כָּרֹב חֲסָדָיו) emphasizes abundance. The plural khasadim (חֲסָדִים) denotes many mercies, not just one act of kindness. Every sunrise, every breath, every moment of continued existence demonstrates mercy (chesed, covenant loyal love). This grounds hope not in circumstances changing but in God's character being unchangeable. Malachi 3:6: 'I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

Historical Context

The exile could have meant Israel's permanent end. Other nations conquered by Assyria and Babylon disappeared—absorbed into captors' populations, losing identity forever. The ten northern tribes deported by Assyria in 722 BC never returned as a distinct entity. But Judah's exile ended after exactly 70 years as prophesied (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10, 2 Chronicles 36:21). Cyrus's decree in 538 BC allowed return (Ezra 1:1-4). This wasn't Judah earning restoration but God's covenant faithfulness. Leviticus 26:44-45 promises: 'Yet for all that, when they be

in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away...to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God.' The 'multitude of mercies' appears throughout Israel's history: sparing Nineveh at Jonah's preaching, delaying judgment for repentant kings, repeatedly forgiving wilderness rebellion. Romans 11:28-29 confirms: 'As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' God's faithful love outlasts human unfaithfulness.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that God's compassion is 'according to the multitude of his mercies' change our expectations during trials?
2. What's the relationship between God causing grief (discipline) and having compassion, and how does Hebrews 12:5-11 illuminate this?
3. In what specific ways have you experienced the 'multitude' of God's mercies even in difficult seasons?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	אֲמַן	הוֹגֵה	וְיִרְחֹם
H3588	H518	H3013	H7355
		But though he cause grief	yet will he have compassion
כְּרַב	חֲסָדָיו		
H7230	H2617		
according to the multitude	of his mercies		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 78:38 (Parallel theme): But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Psalms 103:11 (Parallel theme): For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Psalms 30:5 (Parallel theme): For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Exodus 3:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Hosea 11:8 (Parallel theme): How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

Luke 15:20 (Parallel theme): And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Judges 10:16 (Parallel theme): And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

Jeremiah 31:20 (Parallel theme): Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

2 Kings 13:23 (Parallel theme): And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

Exodus 2:23 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

