

Lamentations 3:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

Analysis

Let us search and try our ways (נַחֲפֹסָה דְרָכֵינוּ וְנַחְקֹרָה, nachpesah derakeinu venachqorah)—Two intensive Hebrew verbs: 'search' (chaphas) means to dig, investigate thoroughly; 'try' (chaqar) means to examine, test. The plural 'us' shifts from individual (verses 25-39) to corporate—Israel must collectively examine its covenant violations. **And turn again to the LORD** (וְנָשׁוּבָה אֶדְיָהוָה, venashuvah ad-YHWH)—'Turn' (shuv) is the Hebrew word for repentance, meaning to return, reverse direction. The phrase 'turn again' or 'return back' acknowledges that Israel has strayed and must retrace steps back to covenant faithfulness. Self-examination precedes restoration.

Historical Context

This call to self-examination reverses the pattern in Jeremiah's earlier ministry when people blamed God for their suffering (Jeremiah 2:35). Now, after judgment has fallen, Jeremiah calls for honest acknowledgment of sin rather than self-justification. The acrostic continues (verse 40 begins with nun), structuring even the call to repentance within poetic order.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. When you experience hardship, is your first instinct to examine your own ways or to question God's justice?
2. What specific 'ways' in your life need searching and trying before God—patterns of thought, relationship habits, use of resources, priorities?

Interlinear Text

נְחַפֵּשׁ	דְּרֹכַי	וְנִחְלֹק	וְנָשׁ וְבָהּ	עַד	יְהוָה:
Let us search	our ways	and try	and turn again	H5704	to the LORD
H2664	H1870	H2713	H7725		H3068

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 13:5 (Parallel theme): Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Psalms 119:59 (Parallel theme): I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

Psalms 4:4 (Parallel theme): Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Isaiah 55:7 (References Lord): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Hosea 6:1 (References Lord): Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

1 Corinthians 11:28 (Parallel theme): But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 Corinthians 11:31 (Parallel theme): For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

2 Chronicles 30:6 (References Lord): So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

Deuteronomy 4:30 (References Lord): When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

Ezekiel 18:28 (Parallel theme): Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

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