

A LOOK AT THE BOOK LAMENTATIONS

Ralph Porter
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Author and date

As a continuation of the work of Jeremiah, the author and date of the book have already been discussed (see Jeremiah notes).

Lamentations was written soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., as a lament concerning the condition of Jerusalem.

It expresses the attitude of the heart of one who had to pronounce God's judgment on a people and city he loved.

Purpose and theme

The primary theme of the book is **the pain of God's people, caused when sin requires divine judgment.**

- As a faithful servant of God, Jeremiah had to proclaim God's judgment.
- As part of God's people, he was saddened by its results.
He never rejoiced when those who opposed him were caused to suffer.

God's control over the nations and over His people is apparent.

The prophet's attitude demonstrates his confidence that God, who caused the judgment, is also capable of restoring His people.

The motive of God in judging the people was the correction of sin.

The prophet prays that they may learn the lesson quickly, so that He can restore them.

He prays, confessing their sin, as part of the nation, in order to prepare the way for their restoration.

Organization

The book is composed of five hymns of lament, which correspond to the five chapters.

Each of the first four is an acrostic lament, with differing styles of acrostic, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

The final hymn is a petition to God for restoration.

Due to the intensity of the request, the final hymn does not use the acrostic style.

What practical lessons do we learn from our study of this book?

LAMENTATIONS

“Although He should destroy us, I will trust in God!”

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Cause of the Affliction 1	Source of the Affliction 2	Hope in the Affliction 3	Results of the Affliction 4	Prayer in the Affliction 5
Prophet's lament 1-11	God's indignation 1-10	Cry of the suffering 1-18	Description of conditions 1-10	Petition to remember 1-18
Desolation 1-7	People's pain 11-19	Song of confidence 19-39	Lack of gold 1-2	
Transgression 8-11			Lack of compassion 3	
City's lament 12-22	Its causes 11-17	Prayer of the afflicted 40-66	Lack of food 4-10	Petition to restore 19-22
Affliction 12-15	Famine 11-13		Cause of the invasion 11-20	
Confession 16-22	False visions 14	Petition for forgiveness 40-47	Guilt of prophets and priests 11-16	
	Ridicule 15-16	Petition for deliverance 48-66	False hope in human assistance 17-20	
	Destruction 17			
	Their tears 18-19			
	City's petition 20-22		Warning to Edom 21-22	