

A STUDY OF LAMANTATIONS

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LAMENTATIONS

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Written by the Prophet Jeremiah, no doubt, after the destruction of the City of Jerusalem. This is the Book they read at the wailing wall every Friday this present day.

It is a poem with 5 stanzas with 22 verses each, corresponding with the Hebrew alphabet, with the exception of the 3rd which has 66 verses.

- I. Isolation of Jerusalem (1)
- II. Indignation of Jehovah (2)
- III. Intention of Jehovah (3)
- IV. Impoverishment of Jerusalem (4)
- V. Imploration of Jehovah (5)

LAMENTATIONS

The human author was the weeping prophet, Jeremiah. Most all prophets wept, but not like this man.

It is the funeral dirge of the city of Jerusalem and the people of Judah. In the Western vernacular, Jerusalem has become a ghost city.

Each lamentation consisted of 22 verses, except the third which had 66 verses. Chapters and verses are man made, we know, but in the construction of each lamentation, we see the truths are divine.

Chapter One

Lamentation One

1:1-22

Who's dead? A prophet, a priest, a king maybe?

None of these—

It is the funeral service for a city, yea a kingdom.
Was the patient subject to disease?
Did it not seek a cure?
Was any medicine sought for? Wasn't the balm of Gilead sufficient?
Where was the cure?
Why was it rejected?
Did one see Jerusalem in its beauty collapse?
Were there no mourners present, nor a comforter?
Where is Jehovah Rapha? (The LORD that healeth)?
Did Judah have report with the Almighty?
Isn't Jerusalem God's sanctuary?
Why is He allowing the heathen to trod the places where only Israelites were to stand?
Could God have disciplined His people easier? Why was the punishment so severe?

Verses 1 - 3

Judgment for Jerusalem was slow in coming and her true prophet spoke of the coming disaster — a disaster that could have been avoided if only her people would have acknowledged her transgression to God, and humbly surrendered to the Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

But God was out of their thinking, and surrender was an act of weakness — false hope was that Pharaoh would come to their aid. He never showed up, yet God was waiting, but completely ignored.

Verses 4 - 7

The tragedy that transpired was beyond human imagination. No one can come to the feast, for there is no temple; the priests who were there to help are no more. The enemy has all the riches for booty, the women for lust, and given pain for joy, and death for anyone — old, young; boy, girl; princes, poor.

All Jerusalem possessed now is controlled by the enemy.

Verses 8 - 10

Of course Jerusalem has sinned. Her filthiness is displayed, and her enemy is now drinking the cup of lustful enjoyment. Holy places are defiled — no reverence to the God of all gods, Jehovah!

Verse 11

Hunger — the enemy provides no bread lines. Bread, scarce as it became, was sold at a king's ransom.

Verses 12 - 13

Jerusalem cries for recognition to be the most hideous, the most pathetic, and the most devastated object of the fury of a holy God.

Verse 14

What a revelation! What a truth!

It was the LORD who delivered us into such a terrible enemy.

Verse 15

It was the LORD (our Jehovah) who has trodden down all we thought was beautiful.

It was the LORD (the mighty Jehovah) who seemed to glory in trodding out the fierceness of God Almighty's judgment.

Verses 16 - 17

Weeping! There is no stopping it. Where are the comforters? Where are the paid mourners? No one cares for Jerusalem's plight.

Verses 18 - 22

I know God is a Righteous Jehovah. Everything He does is perfect. Why can't there be some great sage with his worldly wisdom to help us bear this wrath of God?

In fact, my enemies — God's enemy — are rejoicing at the results of God's judgment upon His own.

Can the enemy escape the judgment of God who are plunging into the same lustful sin that we ourselves were committing?

Chapter Two

Lamentation Two

Another funeral dirge: Israel's God, Jehovah, has proven to be fiercer than an enemy! How could such a God of grace be so vindictive? Simple: Israel's sin: going after strange gods.

Verses 1 - 2

Not a Jew is spared the treatment of a jealous God.

Verses 3 - 5

As an enemy and not their Saviour, has God demonstrated his wrath for the people of His covenant.

The strongholds, the houses of the princes, their God's dwelling place, the temple, has He reduced to rubbish.

Verse 6

The courts of the Gentiles which are reserved for the gathering of God's people, he has allowed to be pulled down. He has allowed the stragglers to forget the sabbaths and holy feasts. The king is a despised servant.

Verse 7

The altar is rejected, torn part, carried away to be smelted into trivia for the gentiles.

Verses 8 - 9

That which was beautiful is now ugly — tall walls now crumble; gates, once the strong protector of the people, are now burned with fire.

Her king is stripped of royalty and become excess baggage in the country where he was cast.

No law — there is no need of the priests.

No prophet; therefore, no visions.

Verse 10

The elders have cast dust upon their heads — needlessly — everyone is doing the same. What good is it — God does not hear, God does not care. God grieves.

The virginity of the youth was once guarded but now is sacrificed to prostitution.

Verses 11 - 12

It is the prophet Jeremiah who weeps over the pain, suffering, and rejection of “his” people.

The siege was fearful, depraved, crushing, but now the suffering sets in — thoughts flash in a convicted heart — all this could have been avoided — could have, could have, could have! What? Nothing. There is nothing left. Infants, children look to Mamma — who always had the answer — but she is lost to help even her very young — nothing but anguish.

Verses 13 - 14

To have accepted prophets speak from their own vile hearts; pleasant to hear, but oh, how wrecking to the mind and heart to learn they were false from the beginning. But own up to it! You wouldn’t have accepted and acted upon the prophecies, if they had been true. There was one who stood among 40 years, and no one listened to him — yes, the one, by inspiration, writing this very discourse, against the people of God.

Verses 15 - 16

The goyim, the Gentile onlookers, can hardly realize the calamity, but rejoice in it, and are thrilled at Judah’s destruction.

“We wanted such crushing, pounding and destroying, power to be turned upon yours and YOU — but we never thought it possible.”

Verse 17

And the unbeliever gives the LORD (Jehovah) credit for it.

Verses 18 - 19

Oh, the lamenting of the Jewish soul — tears come and flow as a fountain. In the darkness acknowledge the LORD (Jehovah) — but it alas is too late — no relief is in sight — for at least 70 years.

Verse 20

Such tragedy! Women suffocating their children, then boiling them as a chicken, and eating the flesh to keep themselves alive.

No better place to slay the false prophets and the God forsaking priest but the sanctuary where they stood and uttered their thoughts.

Verses 21 - 22

Look at the rubble and see the bodies of young; old; virgins decaying in the sunlight. They were alive, but now slain by the enemy’s swords. Who will bury them? Bury them? They are the food for birds and dogs. They will soon be in the belly of these carnivorous

creatures, who will later fertilize the fields with their dung. Complete annihilation.

Chapter Three

LAMENTATIONS THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE

Remember, the name Jeremiah means “Whom Jehovah has appointed.” We emphasize the words of the Scofield Reference Bible in their introduction of the Book of Jeremiah, “The touching significance of this book (Lamentations) is in the fact that it is the disclosure of the love and sorrow of Jehovah for the very people whom he is chastising — a sorrow wrought by the Spirit in the heart of Jeremiah.” Thus Jeremiah becomes Israel, especially Jerusalem and Judah, and he suffers being one, as all of God’s covenanted people.

Verses 1 - 4

I grope in the darkness, I have lost my sense of direction. Everything is hid to me as a blind man. What skin I have has been sanded rougher than it was before.

Verses 5 - 7

My God seems to enjoy my pain and sorrow, even allowing me to be dragged in a lost closed torture chamber. I cannot leave it, for I am chained to its walls.

Verses 8 - 11

No one exists who could bring me relief; my cold stone cell shuts out even my prayers to God. He will not hear me. No deliverance is assured.

As a bear and a lion who wait for the straggler, so my God puts me on the rack, and I am pulled nearly apart.

Verses 12 - 13

The bow has been drawn to the end of its strength, the arrows seem to fall in unending numbers. All are designated for my breast — I have no protection against such armament.

Verses 14 - 18

The famous ballads of old to picture the might of Jehovah, now sound out the death knell to the world. I am a colossal failure — my outward appearance is pitiful. Once I boasted in my strength, but that has failed also.

Verses 19 - 20

I still can recall — but remembering the blessings is ground into the earth, it is the bitter miseries that choke me — I am humbled by these pressures.

Verses 21 - 23

But light breaks upon my mind — all is not lost. I have hope! It is a wonder that our God did not annihilate us. Own up to it! His compassions fail not. Thou mercies are renewed each morning. “God! Thanks for your faithfulness.”

Verses 24 - 27

The LORD (Jehovah) is my All in All! I trust Him and the LORD knoweth them that trust in Him! Glory — He is my Hope!

Isn’t it simple, how good God is to them that wait upon Him.

God waits silently — wait for us to make the first move. Shhh — it is good that He waits silently for the salvation that only He can give!

Verses 28 - 30

It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth — for many yokes — burdens — affliction — desertions — illnesses — want — come to all in a lifetime. How terrible to get the heartbreak experiences only when we are old. Man then is at a loss to know what God can and will do. The one who is experienced all his life knows where his Help is — and he knows that his Help is forthcoming!

Verses 31 - 38

The tragedy is only for awhile. God always works two ways — he blasts, then He will heal — His compassion will come.

He causes grief, but not without a cause.

Just get this lesson. Only the LORD (Jehovah) can bring chastisement. Will we pass the test? Of course. Then why does the Almighty send such upon us. He knows what His servants need.

Nothing can come into the Life of the child of God but that the LORD allows it.

Take it all as from your God.

Verses 39 - 44

Let's sum it up. We sin, God chastises; we feel the pain; God sympathizes; we submit humbly, God receives us joyfully; we grow spiritually, God is glorified.

Verses 45 - 47

We are embarrassed before the Gentiles.

Verses 48 - 50

Our tears continue to flow at the fall of such a people, until the Lord acknowledges these in heaven.

Verses 51 - 54

What treatment the beautiful city has received. The enemies rejoice. I was placed into the dungeon. There were none to take me out.

Verse 55

There is the ray of Hope! I called upon thy name — “and whosoever calleth upon the LORD (Jehovah) shall be delivered.”

Verse 56

And He heard me. Of course — as Jonah in the belly of the fish I call for thy deliverance.

Verse 57

Oh, when God draws near!

Verse 58

Jehovah pleads my cause — He pleads to Himself for His mercy.

Verse 59

Then seest me. What is thy verdict?

Verses 60 - 63

As Jerusalem was the subject of the drunkards, so even so was God's destiny; His Son to be four hundred years later the same subject of the drunkard.

Verses 64 - 66

Though Jerusalem deserved its punishment, yet those who had joy in afflicting God's city will receive the same treatment that the enemy rejoices to impose.

Chapter Four

LAMENTATION SIX

Verses 1 - 4

What a contrast of the wealth and glory of the Temple, but now it is in shambles — there is no gold to be seen. Nebuchadnezzar has stripped the ceiling of its treasure; even the gold covered floor has been hacked and stored away in Babylonian sacks.

The young men who were the treasure of Judah have either been slaughtered or chained to walk to the empire of their conquerors.

Children are thirsty, yet the water is sold for a price, and their mothers' breasts are dried up. Should they die of thirst, their little bodies will end in a pot. Yes, to be eaten, to keep their mothers alive for a very short time.

Verse 5

Those who ate gourmet food and worried not at the price, are now begging in the streets for a piece of stale food. How so many loved to wear purple, the color that speaks of royalty, now pick and peck in the garbage heaps.

Verse 6

The lustful sin of Judah's daughters is worse than Sodom. [See Ezekiel 16:55. We read that Israel shall be restored; Judah shall be restored, and of all things, Sodom shall be restored! Why not? If Judah's sin is greater than Sodom, and Judah is restored, why not Sodom whose sins were less than Judah be restored? The Bible says she shall. This confirms, OK's, substantiates, proves, that God is no respecter of persons.]

Verses 7 - 8

The physical appearance of Judah's consecrated young men was the acts of art, but since the war with its famine, they are desired by no one.

Verses 9 - 10

If one had a choice, it would have been better to die by the sword than to be slain by famine. Cannibalism answered the problem for the lack of food.

Verse 11

The Lord's wrath has been appeased. He poured out his anger; He kindled a fire in Zion which consumed its foundation.

Verse 12

Kings of the world are confused at the severity and intensiveness of God's punishment

of His Own people, even to allow Judah's enemies to enter her gates and take possession of anything of value, whether it be human or beast and treasure.

Verses 13 - 15

But one cannot argue with God, for He knows how His prophets and priests sold their ordained privileges for a mess of flesh-satisfying pottage.

It was pitiful to see the royal bloodline so saturated with human blood, and as lepers do, cry "Unclean! Do not touch," until those living in lands where Judah was scattered rebelled from having them live in their location.

Verse 16

The Lord has vindicated Himself. For His people refused to honor the priest and ridiculed the elders of God's people.

Verses 17 - 20

Oh, the uselessness of expecting help from someone, when there were none able.

Our conquerors, like bloodhounds, sniffed us out of our hiding places, whether they be on the mountains or in the wilderness, they found us, and humiliated us, unbearably — we who had boasted of being in God's eternal presence, "for we shall live as God's ambassadors among the nations" while we are scattered among the Gentiles. Yes, but as prisoners.

Verses 21 - 22

Laugh, Edom. Rejoice, you sons of Esau, for not only shall the children of Jacob suffer, but you shall partake of the same suffering.

This, we hope, is God's last punishment for Israel, but only the beginning of Edom's.

Chapter Five

The last of Judah's funeral dirges: A funeral lasts only a little while, and the sorrow mourned can't be forever — but God's wrath with its punishment has lasted 2500 years (today — 1991).

God's grace and mercy shall last forever, yea, His chastisement can seem to last that long also.

Jeremiah speaks of sin that their fathers committed them and the children are chastised for them. Jeremiah prophesied to his people for over 40 years, while Daniel lived the whole 70 years of the Babylonian captivity in Babylon. On one occasion, Daniel searched the prophecy of Jeremiah who had been dead for some time, and learned that the captivity would last 70 years. Daniel counted the years and knew the 70 years were over. He began to confess his sins and the sins of God's covenanted people. True prophets recognize another true prophet. But it was not the will of God for Daniel to go back home to Judah though he was living, and Jeremiah was dead and couldn't go back — the same as with Ezekiel — he had died and couldn't go back home. But all three shall go back to Judah when Messiah shall call them from their grave to "rise and shine" back to Judah, the land of promise they shall go. Listen to

But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days (Daniel 12:13).

“Rest, now” — you are going to die, “but you shall stand in your inheritance at the end of the Tribulation.”

Verse 1

“Remember, Jehovah — yea look at us in our state of being forsaken and chastised.”

Verses 2 - 5

Our inheritance has slipped through our fingers.

Our houses are the aliens dwelling.

We have become orphans.

Our mothers are like widows.

We pay for drinking water.

Our wood, we pay, with no money do we have.

Our pursuers have chased us down.

We are exhausted.

Verses 6 - 9

We have appealed to Egypt, the iron furnace, enduring it for 400 years.

And Assyria, too. Our brethren from the 10 tribes are there. They have been treated royally, but why can't we?

Our father did the sinning and we pay for it. Slaves are our masters.

There is no other nation to appeal to.

Bread can be bought if we have the silver — and willing to face the danger of death.

Verses 10 - 16a

Our own skin is pitiful looking. Not because of sunburned, but because of famine.

Our women are ravished.

Yes, our virgins!

Our princes have been hanged by their thumbs.

Our elders have lost respect.

Our youths stumble under the heavy burdens.

Our elders, too, are missing from the gate. There is no one left to judge.

Our young men are kept from their musical instruments.

Our hearts have lost their joy!

Our dancing is reserved for the dead.

Our crowns have tumbled from our heads.

Verses 16b - 18

Our sins are before us.

Thus, our heart is faint.

Our eyes are dimmed.

Our Mount Zion lay in ruins — the only presence to glorify our God are the foxes.

Verse 19

O, Jehovah!
Thy rule is forever!
Thy throne shall be the coming generation.

Verse 20

LORD!
Hast Thou forgotten us?
Hast Thou forsaken us?

Verse 21

LORD!
Restore us to thee.
Renew our days as of old.

Verse 22

Unless —
Thou hast utterly rejected us.
Thou hast been angry with us.
Of course Thou hast not. “We, therefore pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, trusting that Thou shall bring it about to Thine own glory.”