

25 – Lamentations: Sorrow After the Fall

- As Jerusalem falls, the 70-year captivity begins, and Jeremiah continues his weeping and mourning as he writes the book of Lamentations.

- COMMENTARY:** The Book of Lamentations is a mournful postscript to the Book of Jeremiah. Through the use of five dirges, or funeral laments, the author grieved over the fate of Jerusalem because of her sin. Yet the book contains more than just the backward glances of a vindicated prophet. “It is a mute reminder that sin, in spite of all its allurements and excitement, carries with it heavy weights of sorrow, grief, misery, barrenness, and pain. It is the other side of the ‘eat, drink, and be merry’ coin” (Charles R. Swindoll, *The Lamentations of Jeremiah*, “Introduction”). Lamentations both mourns the fall of the city and offers reproof, instruction, and hope to its survivors. (Walvoord and Zuck)



- Lamentations could be called the **saddest book of the Old Testament**. In five “dirges of death,” Jeremiah expresses the horror and helplessness of seeing the Jews’ proudest city reduced to rubble. Even as the prophet’s heart breaks, however, he pauses to proclaim a deep faith in the goodness and mercy of God. Though the present is bleak with judgment, the future contains the promise of renewal and restoration. “Great is Your faithfulness” (3:23).
- Jeremiah writes this lament in acrostic format. He begins each chapter with the first letter A (aleph in Hebrew) and goes verse by verse through the Hebrew alphabet, literally weeping from A to Z.
- There are **three themes** that run through the five laments of Jeremiah. The most prominent is the theme of mourning over Jerusalem’s holocaust. The Holy City has been laid waste and desolate—God’s promised judgment for sin has come. In his sorrow, Jeremiah speaks for himself, for the people, and sometimes for the city. The second theme is a confession of sin and acknowledgment of God’s righteous and holy judgment upon Judah. The third theme is least prominent but very important: it is a note of hope in God’s future restoration of His people. Yahweh has poured out His wrath, but in His mercy He will be faithful to His covenant promises. “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (3:22–23).

KEY VERSES:

“The Lord was like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel, He has swallowed up all her palaces; He has destroyed her strongholds, And has increased mourning and lamentation In the daughter of Judah. He has done violence to His tabernacle, As if it were a garden; He has destroyed His place of assembly; The LORD has caused The appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion. In His burning indignation He has spurned the king and the priest.” (2:5-6)

“This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD.” (3:21-26)

- The Jews publicly read this tragic book each year to commemorate Jerusalem’s destruction in 586 B.C. and again in A.D. 70. Both the first and second temples fell on the same day on the calendar, the 9th of Av. Coincidence? No! It is a national day of mourning in Israel every year.



Highlights

First Dirge: Ch 1 <u>Jerusalem's Desolation</u> because of Her Sin Destruction of Jerusalem , laments over what happened and also confession for Jerusalem.	Second Dirge: Ch 2 <u>God's Punishment of Jerusalem's Sin</u> Anger of God , the agony of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's appeal to God.	Third Dirge: Ch 3 <u>Jeremiah's Response.</u> A great cry of despair, faith in God, need for God and confidence in God. Prayer for God's mercy. The hope of this book.	Fourth Dirge: Ch 4 <u>The Lord's Anger</u> A glimpse of the horrible conditions during the siege of Jerusalem , what caused it, and the consequences.	Fifth Dirge: Ch 5 <u>Remnant's Response.</u> Prayer for restoration , repents for the sins of the nation, and again prays for restoration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem's desolation (1:1-11) Jerusalem's plea for mercy (1:12-22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God's anger (2:1-10) Jeremiah's grief (2:11-19) Jerusalem's plea (2:20-22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeremiah's afflictions (3:1-18) Jeremiah's hope (3:19-40) Jeremiah's prayer (3:41-66) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before and after siege (4:1-11) Causes for siege (4:12-20) Call for vindication (4:21-22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remnant's prayer for <u>remembrance</u> (5:1-18) Remnant's prayer for <u>restoration</u> (5:19-22)

Parallels between Lamentations and Deuteronomy. Before entering the Promised land, Moses gave a series of sermons warning of the choices the people had – to serve God and be obedient, and therefore be blessed, or to disobey God and be cursed. Deuteronomy 28 is a prophetic chapter of what would happen as a result of their leaving God. **Lamentations is the fulfillment of those prophecies.**

Deuteronomy: THE PROPHECY	Lamentations: THE FULFILLMENT
28:65 Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot.	1:3 <i>She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place.</i>
28:44 He will be the head, but you will be the tail.	1:5 <i>Her foes have become her masters.</i>
28:32 Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation.	1:5 <i>Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe.</i>
28:25 The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven.	1:6 <i>In weakness they have fled before the pursuer.</i>
28:41 You will have sons and daughters, but you will not keep them, because they go into captivity.	1:18 <i>My young men and maidens have gone into exile.</i>
28:37 You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the Lord will drive you.	2:15 <i>All who pass your way clap their hands at you; they scoff and shake their heads at the Daughter of Jerusalem.</i>
28:53 Because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the Lord your God has given you.	2:20 <i>Should the women eat their offspring, the children they have cared for?</i>
28:50 ... a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old and pity for the young.	2:21 <i>Young and old lie together in the dust of the streets.</i>
28:56-57 The most gentle and sensitive woman among you... will begrudge the husband she loves and her own son and daughter the afterbirth from her womb and the children she bears. For she intends to eat them secretly during the siege.	4:10 <i>With their own hands compassionate women have cooked their own children.</i>
28:30 You will build a house, but you will not live in it.	5:2 <i>Our inheritance has been turned over to aliens, our homes to foreigners.</i>
28:65 Among those nations you will find no repose.	5:5 <i>We are weary and find no rest.</i>
28:48 In hunger and thirst... you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you.	5:10 <i>Our skin is as hot as an oven, feverish from hunger.</i>
28:30 You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravish her.	5:11 <i>Women have been ravished in Zion, and virgins in the towns of Judah.</i>
28:50 ... a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old...	5:12 <i>Elders are shown no respect.</i>
28:26 Your carcasses will be food for the all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.	5:18 <i>Mount Zion... lies desolate, with jackals prowling over it.</i>