

Bible Study: Lamentations of Jeremiah

This little book has been written as a five-fold poem where chapters 1-4 are an acrostic starting with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet and ending with the last letter. The book has been called "*an elegy written in a graveyard*". Much grief is shown. The Lamentations is one of the five rolls called the Megilloth. It is read at the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem (9th of Av). The other books are read at specific times: Song of Songs at Passover; Ruth at the feast of Weeks or Pentecost; Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles and Esther at Purim.

The five chapters can be shown as five laments:

LAMENT 1: Shows the destruction of Jerusalem being bewailed by the prophet (**chapter 1:11**) and secondly bemoaned by the city as shown by writing in the first person (I, me, my) in **chapter 1:12-22**.

LAMENT 2: We are shown God's anger. The lament is in two parts:

A) The anger is described in detail (**chapter 2:1-12**).

B) The city of Jerusalem is addressed by using the second person (thee/you, thine/your) in **chapter 2:13-22**.

LAMENT 3: The prophet begins this chapter showing grief and anguish in much affliction (**chapter 3:1-20**) but then there is hope expressed (**chapter 3:21-39**). The remaining verses (**chapter 3:40-66**) show a prayer, which is a plea to God on behalf of the nation (**chapter 3:40-51**) and then personal in **chapter 3:52-66**.

LAMENT 4: We are shown in detail how Jerusalem has been destroyed. There is much calamity even to the astonishment of the Gentile nations (**chapter 4:1-22**).

LAMENT 5: This lament is not an acrostic even though it has 22 verses in short couplets. The other laments are in long-lined triplets. The speaker is Jerusalem recognising its pitiful plight in **chapter 5:1-18** and then in the final four verses (**5:19-22**) acknowledging God's eternal existence and pleading for restoration.

Questions on the Lamentations of Jeremiah

The following questions should provoke the reading of this book in its entirety more than once. Each question seeks to encourage careful study of this book.

Q.1 Show what has happened to Jerusalem in **chapter 1**

A) From the prophet's viewpoint (**1:1-11**).

B) From the city's viewpoint (**1:12-22**).

It may be helpful to make a list and to write down any key words.

Q.2 How did God show his anger in **2:1-22**? List key words and consider carefully what God has done to Jerusalem.

Q.3 Show the evidence of the prophet's anguish in **3:1-20**.

Q.4 What hope does the prophet show in **3:21-39**?

Q.5 Read carefully the prayer in **3:40-66**.

A) What does the prayer reveal in **3:40-51**?

B) How does the prayer change in **3:52-66**?

Q.6 Is it true to say that the writer is showing a contrast between the past and present conditions of Jerusalem when the book was written? See **4:1-12**.

Q.7 What has happened to Jerusalem as a consequence of her sins in **chapter 4**? See **4:6, 9, 11, 13-20**.

Q.8 What does the prayer reveal of Jerusalem being judged in **5:1-18** and restored in **5:19-22**?

Q.9 What does this book reveal of who God is? See **1:18; 3:22-25, 31-33; 5:19-22**.

Q.10 Is there evidence that God will judge Gentile nations? See **1:21, 22; 4:21, 22**.

Q.11 Can you show from evidence in this book that the writer is an eyewitness to seeing the city of Jerusalem destroyed?

Q.12 What can we learn from this book in applying this book to ourselves as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

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