

Lamentations – 5 Chapters

Title:

Lamentations- i.e. laments, cries of sorrow and pain.

The Hebrew title is literally translated “How?” From the first word of the book, “*How* deserted is the city”

Reflects the shock of the circumstances– that is, ‘How can this be happening?’ ‘Why did God do this?’

Author:

Technically anonymous. The author is obviously an eye witness to the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Traditionally, Jeremiah has been suggested as the author. That is why this book is located after the book of Jeremiah in English Bibles.

Occasion and Purpose:

Babylon invaded Judah in the early sixth century B.C. They finally destroyed Jerusalem and took the Jews captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. Lamentation mourns the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment from God for the sin of Judah. It gives vent to the tremendous grief and yet shines forth hope in the midst of this great tragedy.

Themes:

1. Sorrow and repentance
2. Hope in sorrow

Summary:

A song of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews. Contains bitter sadness for sin and punishment, but also contains one of the most profound statements of hope in God in the midst of hard times.

Organization:

5 chapters organized around the Hebrew Alphabet
(chapters 1-4 are acrostic, chapter 5 has 22 verses)

1 st Lament	Jerusalem Destroyed Funeral Dirge Because of sin Cries out in misery	1:1-22
2 nd Lament	Reasons for Wrath God is acting as an enemy in His wrath False Prophets were worthless God fulfills His promise to punish Cry out to the Lord	2:1-22
3 rd Lament	Remembrance and Repentance Personal affliction God's compassion Bearing up under just punishment Cry for vindication	3:1-66
4 th Lament	Contrast between then and now The depth to which Judah has fallen God poured out wrath against sin	4:1-22
5 th Lament	Plea for mercy Lord, remember us We are suffering Lord, restore us	5:1-22

Key Verses:

2:17; 3:19-32; 5:19-22