

AN INTRODUCTION TO **LAMENTATIONS**

Tonight, we'll begin our study of Lamentations by addressing some helpful questions as to when it was written, how it was written and what the book conveys.

I. THE TIME

A. DETAILS - See Jeremiah 39:1-10

B. DATE: Late 586 BC

1. After Jerusalem fell in the summer 586
2. Before the Egyptian exile in 583

II. THE TEARS

A. FROM THE PEOPLE - Lamentations 1:2

1. This is Israel's funeral and the tears are appropriate
2. Jeremiah 9:17-19 had predicted this

B. FROM THE PROPHET - Lamentations 1:16 & 2:11

- Their despair affected him

III. THE TRUTHS

A. GOD JUDGES SIN

- See Lamentations 1:5, 8; 3:42, 4:6, 13; and 5:16

B. GOD ALLOWS ATROCITY

- See Lamentations 2:20 and 4:10

C. GOD KEEPS HIS WORD

- Compare the reality of conditions in Lamentations with the curses predicted in Deuteronomy 28

1. Compare Lam. 1:3 with Deut. 28:65 > No resting place
2. Compare Lam. 1:5 with Deut. 28:32 > Children exiled
3. Compare Lam. 1:6 with Deut. 28:25 > Defeated by an enemy
4. Compare Lam. 2:15 with Deut. 28:37 > Scorned by observers
5. Compare Lam. 2:20 with Deut. 28:53 > Women eating their offspring
- See also Lam. 4:10 and Deut. 28:56-57
6. Compare Lam. 5:11 with Deut. 28:30 > Women ravished
7. Compare Lam. 5:12 with Deut. 28:50 > Elders disrespected

IV. THE TEMPLATE

- Stylistic elements in the book

A. A DOLEFUL EXCLAMATION

1. "How" in 1:1, 2:1 and 4:1
2. Sometimes translated "Alas" or we might use "Ugh!"
3. The word was used to introduce strong laments or dirges

B. AN INTRICATE ARRANGEMENT

1. Reality: In chapters 1-4 there is an acrostic letter pattern moving from A-Z
2. Reasons
 - a. To show the complete nature of their suffering > from A-Z
 - b. To show a careful thoughtfulness and elegant style in writing these dirges
 - c. To aid in the memorization of these lines > So that none forget

C. A DEFINITIVE STRUCTURE: Written in chiasm

Jeremiah's Response

- Chapter 3

God's Judgment

- Chapter 2

The Lord's Anger

- Chapter 4

Jerusalem's Desolation

- Chapter 1

The Remnant's Response

- Chapter 5

V. **THE TRIUMPH**

- A. THE LORD'S SALVATION - Lamentations 3:21-32
- B. THE PUNISHMENT'S COMPLETION - Lamentations 4:22
- C. THE NATION'S RESTORATION - Lamentations 5:21

CONCLUSION:

Funerals are better than festivals for we can learn much through laments

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes *it* to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for when a face is sad a heart may be happy. The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure. - Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

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