

Lamentations

“How!” “Alas!”

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Title

- Hebrew: אֵיכָה, *Eikhah*, 'ēkhā(h)
 - Meaning "How!" or "Alas!"—the first word of the book
 - Formula for the beginning of a song of wailing
- “Lamentations” in LXX
 - “Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented this lamentation over Jerusalem”

Background & Time Frame

- Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar
- Jeremiah wrote about the destruction of the city, the temple and the second siege and fall of Jerusalem (second deportation into Babylonian captivity that occurred in July and August, 586/7 BC)

Background

- Jer. 31:15-17
 - Mt. 2:16-18
- Jeremiah 52

“Jeremiah's Grotto”

“Is the name of the place, just outside the north wall of Jerusalem, where tradition says, Jeremiah wept bitter tears and composed this sorrowful elegy. This grotto is under the knoll that is now called 'Golgotha,' the self-same hill on which the cross of Jesus stood. Thus the suffering prophet wept where later the suffering Saviour died.”

– Halley's Bible Handbook

Key Words

- **Daughter/daughters** (21 times)
 - of Judah, Zion, Jerusalem, my people
 - 1:6, 15; 2:1-2, 4-5; 2:10-11, 13; 3:48, 51
- **Sorrow/pain** (3 times)
 - 1:12, 18

Verses to Remember

- 1:12
- 2:16
- 3:22-26, 40-41
- 4:5
- 5:7, 21

Structure Summary

- Chapter 1: 22 verse acrostic
- Chapter 2: 22 verse acrostic
- Chapter 3: 66 verse acrostic
 - Three verses per letter
- Chapter 4: 22 verse acrostic
- Chapter 5: 22 verses, not acrostic

Structure

- Chapters 1, 2, 4 are acrostic poems
 - Each chapter is a unit and each chapter has 22 verses
 - The first verse begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet (aleph) and each succeeding verse begins with the next successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet

Structure

- Chapter 3 is also an acrostic, but the chapter is in three verse segments
 - 66 verses
 - First three verses begin with aleph, etc.
- Chapter 5 with 22 verses is not in acrostic form
 - Perhaps whispered fashion as Jeremiah quietly grieves over the people and then pleads for restoration based on God's sovereignty and grace

Overview Outline

Ch. 1: Jerusalem, lonely and desolate

- Way of wickedness

Ch. 2: The Lord's anger, wrath, and destruction

- Wrath of God

Ch. 3: Jeremiah's affliction, hope, and prayer

- Weight of sorrow

Ch. 4: Sin caused suffering

- Wreck of sin

Ch. 5: Jeremiah prays because joy has ceased

- Wanting help

Trivia

According to Lamentations, why does the infant's tongue cling to the roof of his mouth?

4:4

Memory Verse Review (Proverbs—Jeremiah)

- Prov. 3:5—“Trust in...”
- Eccles. 12:13—“Let us hear...”
- Song 8:7a—“Many waters...”
- Is. 55:6—“Seek the LORD...”
- Jer. 10:23—“O LORD, I know...”

Memory Verse for Lamentations

3:40-41

“Let us search out and examine our ways,
and turn back to the LORD;
Let us lift our hearts and hands
to God in Heaven”