# Outline of Lamentations

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## Outline of Lamentations

I. The awful desolation of Jerusalem (1:1-11).

II. The sad cry, confession and prayer of the people (1:12-22).

A. Cry (vv. 12-17).

B. Confession (vv. 18, 19).

C. Prayer (vv. 20-22).

III. The Lord seen as the One Who punished Jerusalem (2:1-22).

A. The effects of God's wrath (vv. 1-13).

B. The cause of God's wrath - the false prophets' failure to warn the people (v. 14).

C. The ridicule of onlookers (vv. 15, 16).

D. The fulfillment of God's threats (v. 17).

E. The call to repentance (vv. 18, 19).

F. The prayer for God's mercy (vv. 20-22).

IV. The prophet voices the sorrow and confession of the remnant (Chapter 3).

A. The judgments of God (vv. 1-18).

B. The mercies of the Lord (vv. 19-39).

C. The confession of the people (vv. 40-47).

D. The sorrow of Jeremiah over Jerusalem (vv. 48-51).

E. The prophet's prayer for deliverance from his foes (vv. 52-66).

V. The past and present of Judah contrasted (4:1-20).

VI. The future prospect - Edom to be destroyed and Judah restored (4:21, 22).

VII. The remnant appeals to God for mercy and restoration (Chapter 5).

# Lamentations

The fall of Jerusalem was a time of terrible suffering and anguish. It was this fearful catastrophe that brought forth the book of Lamentations - a series of tearful laments over the desolation of the city, wrung from the heart of the prophet Jeremiah.

This book forms an appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah. It describes the deep mourning of the prophet at the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple. Instead of being elated over the fact that his prophecies had been fulfilled, he wept bitterly over the miseries of his people.

In addition to being the words of Jeremiah, the book may also be thought of as expressing:

1. The sorrow of the Jewish remnant, for whom Jeremiah was a spokesman, as they witnessed the Babylonian invasion.

2. The anguish of the Messiah when He came to suffer, bleed and die on the cross of Calvary (see 1:12, for instance).

3. The sorrow of the Jewish remnant in a future day when they will be called upon to go through the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble.

Chapters 1, 2, and 4 are acrostics. Each chapter has twenty-two verses, arranged according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 is also an acrostic; it, however, has sixty-six verses, with every third verse arranged in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 5 has twenty-two verses, but it is not an acrostic.

## Chapter 1

Here we see the utter desolation of Jerusalem. She is alone, forsaken by her idols, and betrayed by her allies (vv. 1, 2). The people have gone into captivity because of their sin, and no pilgrims come to worship in Zion (vv. 3-9). The precious vessels of the temple have been taken by the Babylonians (v. 10), and the people suffer famine (v. 11). Verses 12-22 are the lament of the Jewish people, their confession of sin (vv. 18, 19), and their prayer for mercy and for the destruction of their foes (vv. 20-22).

## Chapter 2

These verses describe what God has done to Judah - destroyed the temple (footstool) (v. 1), swallowed up the cities (v. 2), refused to hold back the enemy (v. 3), treated the temple as if it were a mere booth, caused the sacrificial system to cease, and set aside both king and priests (v. 6). The children faint from hunger in the streets; they fall and die (vv. 11, 12). The people's calamity is greater than anything the prophet can think of with which to comfort them (v. 13). Mothers eat their own children because of the famine (v. 20).

## Chapter 3

The prophet here speaks for the people, the special object of God's wrath (vv. 1-18). His mercy is their only hope (vv. 19-33). He has a right to punish men for their sins (vv. 34-39). Then follows a call to confession and repentance and a committal of their cause to the Lord, asking Him to punish their enemies (vv. 40-66).

## Chapter 4

The prophet compares the former glory and the present pitiful condition of Jerusalem. The temple is destroyed, mothers desert their young (vv. 3, 4), people die of hunger (v. 5), the suffering is prolonged (v. 6), the princes are unrecognizable (vv. 7, 8), cannibalism prevails (v. 10), and the city that was considered impregnable has fallen (v. 12). It was all caused by the sins of the prophets, the priests, and the people (vv. 13-16). They looked in vain to Egypt for help (v. 17). The Babylonians besieged them suddenly (vv. 18, 19), and King Zedekiah (the Lord's anointed) was captured (v. 20). Edom rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem, but she will be punished severely, and Zion will be restored (vv. 21, 22).

## Chapter 5

In verses 1-18, the people bewail the terrible conditions that have come upon them - the high cost of necessities (v. 4), the forced labor (v. 5), the oppression (v. 8), the famine and danger (vv. 9, 10), the atrocities (vv. 11, 12), etc. Then in verses 19-22, the people turn to the Lord and appeal for mercy.

It is interesting to notice that in the Hebrew Bible, verse 21 is repeated after verse 22 in small letters, apparently so that the book will end with a note of hope rather than gloom.