

Lamentations – Grief

S.R. Lamentations 3:22 - 25

2 – 23 – 2020

Introduction

- A. **Title:** The Hebrew title of the book is ‘*ekah*’ (Ah, how-alas cf. **1:1; 2:1; 4:1**).
1. Because of the subject of the book it is also referred to as “Lamentations”. This title was given to it in the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate.
 2. Lamentations means – “to cry aloud.”
- B. **Author and Date:** - “Although Lamentations is anonymous and we cannot be certain who wrote it, ancient Jewish and Christian tradition ascribes it to Jeremiah.”
1. Note some of the similarities in text and style between the book of Jeremiah (7:29; 8:21; 9:1,10, 20) and Lamentations.
 2. Most of the book of Jeremiah anticipates the fall of Jerusalem. Lamentations reflects back on that event – most likely shortly afterward.
 3. Because Jeremiah was an eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. it is reasonable to assume him author of the book that mourns that event.
 4. The earliest possible date for the book is 586 B.C. Evidence indicates it was written probably before 575.
- C. **Literary Features:** The book is entirely poetic.
1. Lamentations is a set of five *elegies* (melancholy poems)
 - a. The first four are in acrostic pattern
 - b. First letter of line or group of lines (ch. 3) represents each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
 2. Except for the third lament (which has 66 verses), each of the five laments contains 22 verses.
 3. Acrostics are used to aid memory and express fullness of grief (from A – Z).
- D. **Theme:** The book of Lamentations is a funeral song (dirge) reminding the reader of the significance of God’s destruction of this holy city and the temple. Some of the horrors of 586 are reiterated as they were in **Jeremiah 52**. Note a few.
1. Wholesale **devastation and slaughter** engulf **kings** (2:6,9; 4:20), **princes** (1:6;2:2,9; 4:7 - 8), **elders** (1:19; 2:10; 4:16; 5:12), **priests** (1:4,19; 2:6, 20; 4:16), **prophets** (2:9,20) and **commoners** (2:10 - 12; 3:48; 4:6) alike.
 2. Starving mothers are reduced to cannibalism (2:20; 4:10).
 3. The elite of Judah’s citizens are dragged off into exile (1:3, 18)
 4. Sacrifice and worship at Solomon’s temple comes to an end (1:4, 10).
- E. **Deeper significance** of the destruction of the temple is discussed.

1. The Babylonians were mere instruments in the hand of God to carry out His will in destroying the city and temple (1:12-15; 2:1-8, 17,22; 4:11).
 2. God's action was a response to the blatant defiance toward God and the people's covenant - breaking rebellion (1:5, 8-9; 4:13; 5:7,16).
 3. The appropriate response besides weeping and desire to see the Babylonians punished, is a sincere and heartfelt repentance.
 4. The book that begins with lament ends with repentance (5:21-22).
- F. Outline of the document:
1. The Grief – Jerusalem weeps - prayer 1:20 – 22
 2. The Cause – Jehovah punishes – prayer 2 :20 – 22
 3. The Hope - Hope in the midst of Affliction – prayer 3:55 – 66
 4. The Repentance – Sin the Cause of Punishment – (no prayer)
 5. The Prayer – plea for mercy
- G. The apex of the book's focus is found in the **middle of the book** as it discusses the **goodness of God**.
1. He is the Lord of hope (3:21, 24-25), of love (3:22), of faithfulness (3:23), of salvation (3:26).
 2. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, "his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (3:22-23).
 3. Note: Much of this information was gleaned from the NIV Study Bible, Intro. \to Lamentations and Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament.

II. Pictures of Christ in Lamentations:

1. Christ the sinless, is "afflicted of the Lord" (1:12)
2. Despised by His enemies (2:15 – 16)
3. Christ was a derision to the people (3:14)
4. He, the smitten and insulted One (3:30)
5. It is Christ's mercies that are new every morning. (3:22 – 23)
6. His faithfulness is great. (**Heb. 13:5 – 6**)

III. Conclusion: Jesus and Jeremiah – Suffering and Loss

- A. Lam. 1:12 is it nothing to you - sorrow like my sorrow – Lord inflicted
1. A voice that speaks - someone has suffered very deeply,
 2. You are filled with sorrow – take a look at my sorrow.
 3. Look at what was laid upon Me In the day of His anger. (Isa. 53)