


# Note

## Lamentation – Part 1 to 2

| Era                                              | Characters                                                                                       | Chapters                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In the beginning                                 | God created the world.                                                                           | <a href="#">Genesis 1</a>                                                                                         |
| Before 4000 BC                                   | Adam & Eve                                                                                       | <a href="#">Gen 1~5</a>                                                                                           |
| Before 3000 BC                                   | Cain Abel Seth                                                                                   | <a href="#">Gen 4~5</a>                                                                                           |
| Before 2500 BC                                   | Noah                                                                                             | <a href="#">Gen 5~10</a>                                                                                          |
| Before 2100 BC                                   | Job Elihu                                                                                        | <a href="#">Job</a>                                                                                               |
| About 2000 BC<br><b>Era of Patriarchs</b>        | Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph                                                      | <a href="#">Gen 11~50</a>                                                                                         |
| About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC<br><b>Era of prophets</b> | Moses Aaron Joshua                                                                               | <a href="#">Exo Lev Num Deu</a>                                                                                   |
|                                                  | Joshua                                                                                           | <a href="#">Joshua</a>                                                                                            |
|                                                  | Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech | <a href="#">Judges</a>                                                                                            |
|                                                  | Ruth Boaz Naomi                                                                                  | <a href="#">Ruth</a>                                                                                              |
|                                                  | Eli Samuel Saul David                                                                            | <a href="#">1 Samuel</a>                                                                                          |
| About 1000 BC<br><b>Era of princes</b>           | Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon                                                              | <a href="#">1 Samuel</a><br><a href="#">2 Samuel</a>                                                              |
|                                                  | Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu                                                | <a href="#">1 kings</a>                                                                                           |
|                                                  | Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah                                                 | <a href="#">2 kings</a>                                                                                           |
|                                                  | Saul David Solomon                                                                               | <a href="#">1 Chronicles</a>                                                                                      |
|                                                  | Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah                                   | <a href="#">2 Chronicles</a>                                                                                      |
| About 500 BC<br><b>Era of priests</b>            | Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah                                                        | <a href="#">Ezra Nehemiah</a>                                                                                     |
|                                                  | Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus                                                                  | <a href="#">Esther</a>                                                                                            |
|                                                  | Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah                                                                             | <a href="#">Isaiah</a>                                                                                            |
|                                                  | Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah                                                                         | <a href="#">Jeremiah</a>                                                                                          |
|                                                  | Jeremiah                                                                                         | <a href="#">Lamentation</a>  |

# Summary

## **Lamentation - Part 1 of 1 .....3**

Lamentation, as the word implies, is Jeremiah's passionate outcry in grief, anguish and confusion, mourning the fall of Jerusalem. The glorious City of God is now wasting away in utter desolation, a visual reminder of the broken covenant between a stiff-neck people and its God. But does a righteous God delight in destroying His people? Jeremiah's lament is also an echo of the pain and heartbreak of a loving Father towards His wayward son. God grieves.

### Key points

- In Lamentation, Jeremiah reflects on fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the First Temple and the exile of the Jewish kings
- The Five Acrostic Poems (Chapters), each lament the state of Jerusalem from 5 different perspectives:
  - i. Jerusalem, the widow, mourns her sufferings borne out of her state of complete abandonment
  - ii. Righteous God has punished His people for their continuous disobedience
  - iii. Jeremiah saw the mercy in the midst of the suffering because he recognised the Jews deserved far more punishment than they got.
  - iv. Retrospect of Jerusalem's past glory when under God's providence
  - v. A collective (we) prayer for God to remember and forgive His people
  - vi. The punishment inflicted upon Jerusalem foreshadows God's righteous wrath upon His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. God reveals His never-ending love for His people through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

# Transcript

## Lamentation – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the book of Lamentations.

The word lamentations in Latin simply means tears or cry. In the Greek Bible, the title of this book is Tears in Greek. Now, this type of literature, they're nothing more than funeral songs and when we say songs we think of something nice, melodious. No, no, a better word is funeral chants.

Now, there are actually five funeral chants in this book. That's why it's plural -Lamentations. And this kind of song is not only found in Lamentations, you can find it in, for example, Job. Job was the cry, personal cry of a man in his suffering. And then, we saw how God allowed Job just to express his agonies, his sufferings. It's part of our human life. The heart feels and the heart needs to express it out.

Such kinds of lamentations are also found in Psalms. Psalms 10-that's a lamentation, a lament. So basically, these lamentations are just the expression of a suffering person, in a sense, protesting to God. Why God, why God? He's confused, he doesn't know why, he's talking to God expressing all his agonies and confusion to God. And God allows that. It's the honest part of man, that's the emotional part of man and God is emotional and God made us in His image. We are emotional and we shouldn't be embarrassed. You know, we are so logical that we think if it's not very logical or scientific better don't say anything. That's not true at all.

If you read this lament it goes round and round and sometimes comes back again. That's how we feel when we are suffering. So, God allows us. He wants us to process our emotions, to vent our emotions on Him. It's just like a father seeing his son confused or suffering, and saying, Son talk to me. Why? And you just let your son speak. Pastors do that all the time. We allow our members who are suffering just to tell us. We spend an hour just listening to them, allowing them to process their suffering, to share their emotions, their confusion, and we don't say that you're not being logical, you told me this five times already, can you just stop repeating it? No, we don't do that. But some people just do that. They get very irritated with emotional people, they say he's too emotional. What's wrong with that?

In the Bible, for example Jeremiah is full of this. It is an acceptable part of our human dignity to be able to share what's in our heart without being ashamed. This book (Lamentations) is written by Jeremiah who wrote, possibly the Book of Kings. Then he wrote Jeremiah, the book we just studied.

In the book of Jeremiah, he predicts the coming siege, fall of Jerusalem and exile. He predicts it, then he warns. That's the book of Jeremiah. In Lamentations, he's not predicting and warning, he's now looking back and saying, Oh, how terrible this siege was. How terrible the fallen Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple. So, in Lamentations it's looking back; Jeremiah is looking forward.

In Lamentations, he pours out his heart because as a Jew, it's unimaginable - the fall of Jerusalem, the city of God; the fall of the temple, unthinkable, the house of God; the exile of the kings, the line of David, unthinkable, because they know, through that line is the hope of Israel. So, when a Jew saw all these things, the siege of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and the exile of the Jewish kings, it is an emotion you and I cannot possibly imagine. Everything they have put their hope in is gone, in this one event. So, for the Jew, this is something that up to today, every synagogue on the ninth day of the Jewish calendar, the month Abib, the Lamentations is five songs, sung and read in the synagogues every year-ninth day of the Jewish month Abib. Reminding themselves of that event that happened 2500 years ago. Interestingly enough, it's exactly the same day, ninth day of the Jewish calendar month Abib, that the second temple was destroyed. The first one, the one we're studying now - 587 B.C. - on that day the temple was totally destroyed.

Fast forward, roughly 600 years later, A.D 70 the Roman army went in and destroyed the second temple. So, the first one was gone. It was rebuilt again by Herod at the time of Jesus. That was the second temple. At the time of Jesus, the parables, the stories of Jesus in the temple, that's the second temple. A.D. 70 - the second temple was destroyed on exactly the same day, 600 years later. I hope you're seeing some beauty in the connections of the Bible. And Jesus had predicted this.

Let me read to you Mark 13:1-2 "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here." Wow, the Jews of Jesus time were so impressed by

this second temple. “And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings, there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Can you imagine the disciples thinking What are you talking about? In fact, Jesus was accused by the Jewish leadership, you know, of this horrible statement, how can it be?

Well, 40 years after Jesus went on the cross and rose from the dead, 40 years after that, the temple was destroyed. Hope you see another significant event here. 40, number of testing, generally in the Bible. Jesus died, rose again, disciples had gone out, preach that He is the risen Messiah, our Messiah, the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament. The Jews were given 40 years to accept that. Did they? No. The majority did not. They rejected the suffering Saviour. They wanted their own version of a Saviour coming on a white horse, a concrete Saviour, destroying the Romans, not concerned about their sin, not concerned about their spiritual state, concerned about their financial and political state. They wanted that kind of a king and the suffering saviour was not acceptable to them. 40 years he was preached, and the Jews rejected him. That's why the evangelists went out, and then the Gentile world believed.

Same story today. People want their own version of God. Santa Claus God coming to town, throwing goodies, health packages, financial packages, beauty packages, and they love that version of the God they want. Nothing new. 40 years later, they rejected Christ, the real Christ, their Messiah and then the second temple was destroyed. They sing on the ninth day of the month Abib; two temples were destroyed.

Now let's move on to see the structure of the Lamentations. If you look at your Bible, you'll see chapter one to chapter five, the five songs have 22 verses. Why 22? The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters, like our English alphabet. And every verse, verse one starts with the Hebrew alphabet equivalent of A. Verse two starts with the Hebrew alphabet version of B, and then C and D. These are called acrostic poems, or acrostic songs. Alphabetical, maybe that's the easier word for alphabetical songs. A lot of preachers today do the same thing. They like the three C's, the four D's so that by the alphabet you can remember the four points the preacher or three points he was saying about- the three C's you know, God calls, God commands, God commissions, you know like that.

The purpose of this, just as the preacher wants you to remember three C's, is so it's easy to for the Jews to remember this song. It's easier

because they know the first line begins with A, the second B and so on. Now why did Jeremiah write it in this way? I believe he wanted every Jew to know these songs so that they could sing it, especially in their agony in exile, away from home where there's no temple to worship God. There is no king over us, we are abandoned-so they have a way to express themselves. So, written probably in this way, for this purpose.

So basically, God wants us to learn how to express. Please, when you pray - express to God your true feelings, there's nothing to hide. When you pray in front of people, you may want to show off how godly and spiritual and logical and biblical you are. But truly, you know your heart is not exactly like that and can be pretty confused sometimes and struggling. And when you pray your private prayers, just pray, just express, God does not get offended. God says, I like you, you express your heart to your Father. I get cringy when I hear those scholarly prayers read out from the pulpit, it's like going to your father and talking, Hello Papa, I am Paul, this morning I would like to thank you for my lunch yesterday. You know, if that was my son talking, I would say, excuse me, I'm your father, try talking to your father.

You know, sometimes I don't think we even know what a prayer is. We think it's a speech in parliament to impress the crowd, how disgusting! Really disgusting! I cringe in so many places that I go to where people are more concerned with their grammar and how perfect, biblical their prayer is. They write and rewrite this parliamentary speech to God. Well, having said that, I want to say these 22 verses are not necessarily the same length.

The third chapter, Lamentations chapter three, the longest because they have more verses per alphabet and that's longer, that's all. But they all begin with the same letter ABCDE until the last letter A to Z as they say.

Now, if you look at the Lamentations, you will find that the writer, Jeremiah, sees the suffering from five different angles.

Number one, chapter one, he sees the suffering as a widow. A widow has lost her husband, lost her children, lost her home. So he laments as a widow. Lord, look on my distress, look at me, I'm a helpless widow. And she's crying as a widow who has lost everything. As Jeremiah sees the streets of Jerusalem, empty, the place burned down, the temple is nothing left. It's like the widow seeing, you know, the tsunami came, all gone, my family's gone, my kids are gone, everything's gone, I'm all alone. That's

chapter one. So, you see the pronoun like 'she'. The city is a female. Jerusalem is the city, looking what's around her and crying.

Chapter Two sees the angle, not as a widow crying, but as seeing God judging. Different angle now, it's not the helpless widow crying, it's the angle of God. He has done this. He did it. He , He, He -when you listen to it and you read it, you can see that pronoun, He. He did this, He did this. He is faithful to His Word. Everything that happened in Jerusalem was predicted hundreds of years ago. Deuteronomy in Sinai, a thousand years before, God has said, if you continue to disobey me, this is what will happen. Let me just read to you Deuteronomy 53. Everything that you read in Lamentations and you read in Jeremiah and all the prophets was predicted at Sinai.

Deuteronomy 28:53-55, "And thou (this is a thousand years before the fall) shall eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straightness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: (you eat your children's flesh) So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat. (He won't even share the flesh of the children who he has boiled and eating, as he's eating the flesh of his children, he won't share it with his starving other children). Because he has nothing left him in the siege and in the straightness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates." Wow! Unbelievable! What kind of siege is this? When people actually boil their children, eat the flesh of their kids. And the other kids ask their dad to give them some flesh, he pushes his kid away, he pushes his wife away because this is my meat. Wow! Can you picture that? I can't, I can't, honestly, I can't. We read of distress, we read of hunger, we read of suffering, we read of cruelty, this is like beyond human feeling and understanding. He's faithful. I told you, I told you, I'm faithful to my word.

And then chapter three, angle of suffering man. I, no more she, no more he, it's I. It's a picture of Jeremiah himself, I think. He's the suffering man. I, I, I saw this, I felt this. And you know, when I'm expressing all that pain, I love this part. In fact, this is probably the only verses of Lamentations, all Christians, most Christians know.

Lamentations chapter 3:22-24, I'm sure you've heard this before. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions

fail not. They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.” Can you picture this? This person is in great agony. I am suffering this, I'm suffering this and then in the middle of his agony, he cries out. It is of your mercies that I am not consumed. You see, God could easily just wipe off Israel. I mean a thousand years I gave you, all the opportunities, prophets have warned you. I send enemies to threaten you, to wake you up, refuse. Don't you think It's time that God just says, enough, wipe them out. But Jeremiah says, it is of your mercies that we are not consumed. You didn't wipe us, God. There are some of us still left. You didn't wipe us, you sent us into exile. He saw the mercy in the midst of the suffering because he saw the Jews deserve far more punishment than they got. You know, it's like when we are suffering in our sin when we do something wrong. People complain against God and suddenly you realize, God, honestly, you should have thrown us to hell, that's where we deserve to go. It is of your mercy that we just got this punishment, it is of your mercy that we are not consumed. Great is thy faithfulness. See, he saw God's promise that He will not wipe them out. He would just send them into exile. He saw God's promise that they will eat their children, he saw that. And if God was faithful to that promise to punish, He will also be faithful to the promise to bless. He is faithful to whatever He said. So, when he saw that, Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord. So, when you see the wrath of God and the punishment of God, what should you say? Great is thy faithfulness! You said you will punish, you did. And you said you will bless, you will. So that is chapter three.

In chapter four - comparing the past of Jerusalem. How glorious it was, how well they were living and the present and the pronoun here is no more 'I', it's 'they'. It's the past. They had so much, then they lost it. They were women, all well fed and now they were starving. The kids were running around, now the kids are in the drain, too hungry to move. Rejected, kicked around. So, another angle, looking down looking at it from above, they, not me. Chapter three is I, I. So these five laments see the struggle from different angles, same struggle.

And, then chapter five, there is no more acrostic. Earlier I said everyone is proper, starts with A, B. Chapter five also has 22 verses, but no more acrostic. It is confused already. The order is gone. I think it's like chaos already in his heart. I don't know how to put this acrostic. So, he just cries out. Chapter five is actually a prayer - We, we, Lord, we. So it's no more He doing this to us. It's we, we as your people, Lord, you as our God. And that's how we pray.



So, I hope that you will see these five songs expressing grief, of a great loss that the Jews, only the Jews can fully grasp. Then the end comes. It's quite interesting at the end when we see it's almost like there's no proper ending. You think, all that grief and then and they live happily ever after and everything was resolved. That's how you like that story to end. But you must remember, Lamentations is only a chapter in the story. So, the ending here is not the ending of a book. It's still hanging, until Revelation.

So, let's look at the end of the laments - chapter 5:19 "Thou, O Lord, remainest forever; thy throne from generation to generation.(Wow, He's lifted up) Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, forsake us so long time? (Verse 19 says, Your throne is forever and v20 but you forgot us) Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us", and it ends. You mean it ends like, You're still very angry with us, and then it ends. You know, that's how we feel when we are suffering. It's like God, are you there? I know you're there. You're on the throne and then you say, but where are you? I can't sense you and then you give up praying and stop-that's life. That's life on this sinful earth. It's not neat and tidy. It's not with beautiful fairytale endings until the great and glorious day. So, this is a true picture of the journey of a believer in this sinful world, the faith journey.

Now, when you listen to something like Lamentations, use the oral audio version, and I recommend the Message-that's what I like. When I listen to the Message, the guy reading it reads with feeling. He's not so much concerned how to pronounce Jehoiakim, as most audio readers because they want precision and accuracy. The Message brings out the feelings. And honestly, if you listen to it, you will be quite shocked. that you never read Lamentations before because you used to read it as a scholarly, scientific, spiritual book that is very precise and you analyse and underline. But when you listen to the audio version of the Message, you get the feel. (I'm not saying it's the most accurate version, but it really expresses the feelings and that's important.) We love God with our minds, this is called accuracy and also feelings.

So, listen to Lamentations. Use the Message, you can download it. It's free. Now, for us, I'm going to ask you a question: do you know how to cry? Of course, I know how to cry. When I fail my exam, I cry. When I lose my job,

I cry. When people slander me, I cry. I'm not talking about that kind of crying. Everybody can do that, you don't even need to learn how to do that.

I'm asking, can you cry? When God's name is shamed, His glory is shamed, when some ridiculous prosperity gospel guy goes up in his fancy suit and uses God's name. How do you feel? Do you cry or you just say, Not my business. When people quote the bible out of context and throw one favourite verse here and one favourite verse there, and you know, just talk as if God's just this kind of person and made God his own image. How do you feel? Nothing? Do you cry that people are making a mockery of your God? When someone makes fun of your father's name, how do you feel? How dare you say that of my dad? Your mom burns some rice one day and someone just says, Ha, your mom can't cook for nuts. Do you ever feel that way for the things of God? Do you ever feel when the people of God are suffering, not just the guy teaching falsehood? Are you just angry with him? What about for the poor victims in his church who are listening to all his lies? Do you feel sorry for them? Or you say stupid people, they should know better. Because that's logical. And also, I hope that you can cry, not just for your own pain, pleasure, pride, but for God's glory, God's people, God's mission, God's house. Hope you can cry like Jeremiah.

Most of all, what's the purpose of his book? I believe Jeremiah's heart and Jeremiah's cry is just a reflection of God's cry when He punished his people. You all see God punishing, and God the judge. The judge says I condemn you, and the judge stands up and walks off. He did his job. If we see God as that kind of judge, my goodness, that's such a sad reflection of God. When God punishes, I tell you who feels the pain - God.

I'm a father, I've four kids. When I have to punish my children and I have to, kids are kids, they are sinful, who do you think suffered more? My son who got whacked on his bottom? No, the pain is okay. You whacked him, he cries for five minutes, then he goes back to his room, looks out of the window, takes out his toys after 10 minutes and starts to play. You know, who suffered the whole day? Dad and Mom. The pain of seeing you have to punish a naughty sinful boy is far more than the pain on the bottom that your son had. If you are a father, you are a mother, you understand what I'm saying. You're a Christian, you understand what God feels when he has to punish us? Do you know the heart of God? Or do you just see the hand of God? Or you just see the words of the Bible? Do you see the heart behind the words when you read the Word of God?

May you in Lamentations, not see Jeremiah's cry when he saw this destruction. See there's a far greater cry, a pain in the heart of a loving Father who loves us more than any father, any pastor, anyone on earth. Do you see the heart of God when you read the Word of God? May God bless you, that you will now pray to a Father - loving, tender, understanding, emotional , in a loving way. The heart, the heart of God.

God Bless You!