



**Series: Bible Survey**

**Lesson: 36. Lamentations**

- **Introduction**

- Author: There is none declared in Scripture, but there is strong evidence that it was Jeremiah.
- Date: Most likely sometime soon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- Context:
  - Jeremiah (the book) had prophesied for decades about Jerusalem's fall and then recorded the details of how it happened; Lamentations records what it would have *felt* like to experience that awful judgment.
  - The fall of Jerusalem was the culmination of the covenant curses promised in Deut. 28 for unfaithfulness, and there are over a dozen references in Lamentations to how those curses were fulfilled.
  - People had continued to worship in Jerusalem after its fall (i.e., Jer. 41:4–5) but in a state of mourning that continued until the rebuilding of the Temple (and in some ways continues today).

○ The structure and place of the book:

- Its Hebrew title is *Ekhah* ('\_\_\_\_\_?'), but it has been referred to by different terms meaning 'Lamentations' for most of its history.
- It is included in the 'Writings' section of the *Tanakh* (Heb. OT) because of its poetic character, but we include it with the Major Prophets because of its supposed Jeremiah authorship.
- It is read in synagogues every year on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem.
- It is mostly built on \_\_\_\_\_ poems, most likely for both practical and theological reasons.
- The third chapter is the climax of the book.
- It often uses a staggered poetic meter to make it feel more like someone in mourning.

○ Main themes:

- What it's like to experience God's \_\_\_\_\_
- What it's like to pursue God when \_\_\_\_\_

- **Overview of the Chapters**

- Chapter 1 – Jerusalem’s \_\_\_\_\_  
before her enemies
  - It is a lament over the contrast between the city’s former glory and its present destruction
  - It is a lament over the victory and gloating her enemies have over her now
- Chapter 2 – God’s \_\_\_\_\_ poured on Jerusalem
  - The frequent use of ‘His’ shows both God’s action to bring about destruction, as well as acknowledges that He’s doing this to *His* own people, *His* own Temple, etc.
  - It shows how far His wrath has gone with the first mention of cannibalism (v20).
- Chapter 3 – The journey of the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Recognition
  - Remembrance
  - Repentance
  - Reassurance
  - Retribution

- Chapter 4 – The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem's inhabitants
  - The desperate conditions of the siege have reduced them to the lowest version of humanity, including cannibalism (v10).
  - Their fate is explicitly tied to their unrighteousness so that you're not really supposed to feel pity for them.
  
- Chapter 5 – A prayer for \_\_\_\_\_
  - They appeal for relief, but they acknowledge that they have sinned and that God is in charge.
  - It breaks the acrostic pattern and uneven meter, possibly as a metaphor for their repentance and hope.

### **Discussion:**

1. Why does the Bible work to make us not just *know* things, but *feel* them too?
2. How can we praise God based on a book with so little hope?

**FOR REFLECTION:** Does what you learn about God affect your head AND your heart?

**Blanks:** How, acrostic, judgment, chastised, humiliation, wrath, faithful, suffering, mercy