



EXIT 25: Lamentations

PURPOSE: To teach people that to disobey God is to invite disaster, and to show that God suffers when his people suffer

AUTHOR: Jeremiah

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE: The exiled people of Judah

DATE WRITTEN: Soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

SETTING: Jerusalem had been destroyed by Babylon and her people killed, tortured, or taken captive.

KEY VERSE: "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city." (Lamentations 2:11)

KEY PEOPLE: Jeremiah, the people of Jerusalem

KEY PLACE: Jerusalem

SPECIAL FEATURES: Three strands of Hebrew thought meet in Lamentations—prophecy, ritual, and wisdom. Lamentations is written in the rhythm and style of ancient Jewish funeral songs or chants. It contains five poems corresponding to the five chapters.

OUTLINE:

1. Jeremiah _____ for Jerusalem (1:1-22)
2. God's _____ at _____ (2:1-22)
3. Hope in the midst of affliction (3:1-66)
4. God's anger is _____. (4:1-22)
5. Jeremiah pleads for restoration (5:1-22)



CHRIST IN LAMENTATIONS:

- **Faithfulness, mercy, hope of chapter 3**

In the original Hebrew, the first four chapters in Lamentations are acrostic poems. Each verse in each chapter begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 has 66 verses rather than 22 because it is a triple acrostic: The first three verses begin with the equivalent of *A*, the next three with *B*, and so on. This was a typical form of Hebrew poetry. Other examples of acrostics are Psalms 37, 119, and 145, and Proverbs 31:10-11.

MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
Destruction of Jerusalem	Lamentations is a sad funeral song for the great capital city of the Jews. The Temple has been destroyed, the king is gone, and the people are in exile. God had warned that he would destroy them if they abandoned him. Now, afterward, the people realize their condition and confess their sin.	God's warnings are justified. He does what he says he will do. His punishment for sin is certain. Only by confessing and renouncing our sin can we turn to him for deliverance. How much better to do so before his warnings are fulfilled.
God's Mercy	God's compassion was at work even when the Israelites were experiencing the affliction of their Babylonian conquerors. Although the people had been unfaithful, God's faithfulness was great. He used this affliction to bring his people back to him.	God will always be faithful to his people. His merciful, refining work is evident even in affliction. At those times, we must pray for forgiveness and then turn to him for deliverance.
Sin's Consequences	God was angry at the prolonged rebellion by his people. Sin was the cause of their misery, and destruction was the result of their sin. The destruction of the nation shows the vanity of human glory and pride.	To continue in rebellion against God is to invite disaster. We must never trust our own leadership, resources, intelligence, or power more than God. If we do, we will experience consequences similar to Jerusalem's.
Hope	God's mercy in sparing some of the people offers hope for better days. One day, the people will be restored to a true and fervent relationship with God.	Only God can deliver us from sin. Without him there is no comfort or hope for the future. Because of Christ's death for us and his promise to return, we have a bright hope for tomorrow.

This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. *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. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.*

(Lamentations 3:21-25)



Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, *and* forsake us so long time? 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. (Lamentations 5:19-22)