

Lamentations

A collection of funeral type dirges and poems lamenting the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon.

Author: Jeremiah, written after seeing his own prophesy filled.

In Lamentations – Jesus is the One who Hears our cries

Lamentations 2:19 "Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord."



TEACHER: 5 CHAPTERS

Every ancient copy we have in the original language names this book "How." The word how is the 1st word of this book. As in "How could this have happened?" How, in the sense of incredulity. The unthinkable.

The book of Lamentations was written around 586 B.C. The city of Jerusalem was already destroyed. Burned to the ground. The Temple was ransacked, pillaged and destroyed. The city walls destroyed. The gates of the city were burned. The people were removed and taken as slaves to Babylon. Only a few sick and undesirable people remained. People the Babylonians didn't even want as slaves. It is a collection of 5 poems. I believe it was written at least partially for parents to read to their children. The 1st 3 lines of each poem except the last, all start with the ABC's, as you can see from the chart above. It is as if the Lord wants us to teach our children the important lesson of how to respond to the most extreme hardships and losses without losing our hope. And what is the secret to that lesson? It is in whom we place our hope.

We can't lose our hope, if we keep our hope in God. Why? Because God cannot be moved. DH

CH. 1

STUDENT:

How lonely sits the city *that was* full of people!

How like a widow is she, who *was* great among the nations!

The princess among the provinces has become a slave! (NKJV)

TEACHER:

The beginning of the poem reveals the end result of sin. Sin leaves us lonely. No matter what our potential, with sin, the end result is loneliness. Ultimately, we who were created for fellowship with God, who sin without repentance, will have no fellowship with Him. "How lonely sits the city that was full of people."

STUDENT:

Jerusalem has sinned gravely, therefore she has become vile.
All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness;
Yes, she sighs and turns away. ⁹ Her uncleanness is in her skirts; She did not consider her destiny;
Therefore her collapse was awesome; She had no comforter.
“O LORD, behold my affliction, for *the* enemy is exalted!”....
“The LORD is righteous, for I rebelled against His commandment.....
For all my transgressions; for my sighs *are* many, and my heart *is* faint.” (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Here at the end of the 1st poem, Jeremiah makes the 1st step in restoration. He takes the blame. He owns it.
“My sins, my transgressions, my heart.....I rebelled.”
Starting chapter 2 we see the next step in restoration. Acknowledging the Lord’s work in our punishment. It wasn’t Babylon’s evil that cursed us, it wasn’t the global markets or Mother Nature. God is judging us.

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CH. 2

STUDENT:

The Lord in his anger has covered Zion with darkness.
Its heavenly splendor he has turned into ruins. On the day of his anger he abandoned even his Temple...
The Lord destroyed without mercy every village in Judah
And tore down the forts that defended the land.
He brought disgrace on the kingdom and its rulers.....
He aimed his arrows at us like an enemy; He killed all those who were our joy and delight.
Here in Jerusalem we felt his burning anger....
⁷The Lord rejected his altar and deserted his holy Temple; (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Notice God even destroyed His own Temple. His own Altar. He would rather have no Temple, than a house filled with sin and hypocrites. I will never forget when a world famous televangelist fell into sin and was caught red handed for all to see. Our youth pastor was interviewed within hours and when asked “how God could let this happen?” His reply was, “God cares more about his soul, than his ministry.” How true.
Lamentations chapter 3 is the longest of the 5 poems. It covers the entire theme of Lamentations in itself. Punishment, Repentance, and Hope.

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CH. 3

STUDENT: *Punishment*

I am one who knows what it is to be punished by God.
²He drove me deeper and deeper into darkness
³and beat me again and again with merciless blows.
⁴He has left my flesh open and raw, and has broken my bones.
⁵He has shut me in a prison of misery and anguish.
⁶He has forced me to live in the stagnant darkness of death.
⁷He has bound me in chains; I am a prisoner with no hope of escape.
⁸I cry aloud for help, but God refuses to listen;
⁹I stagger as I walk; stone walls block me wherever I turn. (GNT)

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STUDENT: *Repentance*

The will of the Lord alone is always carried out. ³⁸ Good and evil alike take place at his command.

³⁹ Why should we ever complain when we are punished for our sin? Let us examine our ways and turn back to the LORD.

Let us open our hearts to God in heaven and pray, "We have sinned and rebelled, and you, O LORD, have not forgiven us.

"You pursued us and killed us; your mercy was hidden by your anger, By a cloud of fury too thick for our prayers to get through. You have made us the garbage dump of the world.

"My tears will pour out in a ceaseless stream ⁵⁰ Until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees us.

⁵¹ My heart is grieved when I see what has happened to the women of the city...

"From the bottom of the pit, O LORD, I cried out to you, ⁵⁶ And when I begged you to listen to my cry, you heard.

⁵⁷ You answered me and told me not to be afraid. (GNT)

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STUDENT: *Hope*

"You came to my rescue, Lord, and saved my life.

Judge in my favor; you know the wrongs done against me.

You know how my enemies hate me and how they plot against me. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Chapter 4 is a poem showing how thorough God's judgement is. The price we pay for rebellion.

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CH. 4

STUDENT:

Our glittering gold has grown dull;

the stones of the Temple lie scattered in the streets.

² Zion's young people were as precious to us as gold,

but now they are treated like common clay pots....

They let their babies die of hunger and thirst;

children are begging for food that no one will give them.

⁵ People who once ate the finest foods die starving in the streets;

those raised in luxury are pawing through garbage for food.....

Those who died in the war were better off than those who died later,

who starved slowly to death, with no food to keep them alive.

¹⁰ The disaster that came to my people brought horror;

loving mothers boiled their own children for food... (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Already at the final chapter, Jeremiah closes with a prayer for mercy.

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CH. 5

STUDENT:

Remember, O LORD, what has happened to us. Look at us, and see our disgrace.

² Our property is in the hands of strangers; foreigners are living in our homes.

³ Our fathers have been killed by the enemy, and now our mothers are widows.

⁴ We must pay for the water we drink; we must buy the wood we need for fuel.

⁵ Driven hard like donkeys or camels, we are tired, but are allowed no rest....

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STUDENT:

Our young men are forced to grind grain like slaves; boys go staggering under heavy loads of wood.

¹⁴ The old people no longer sit at the city gate, and the young people no longer make music.

¹⁵ Happiness has gone out of our lives; grief has taken the place of our dances.

¹⁶ Nothing is left of all we were proud of. We sinned, and now we are doomed.

¹⁷ We are sick at our very hearts and can hardly see through our tears...

But you, O LORD, are king forever and will rule to the end of time.

²⁰ Why have you abandoned us so long? Will you ever remember us again?

²¹ Bring us back to you, LORD! Bring us back! Restore our ancient glory. (GNT)

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NEXT LESSON EZEKIEL

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.....His mercies are new every morning.....Great is Thy faithfulness... 3:23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.... 3:22

The Lord is all I need.... 3:24

The Lord is good to those who depend on Him, to those who search for Him. 3:25

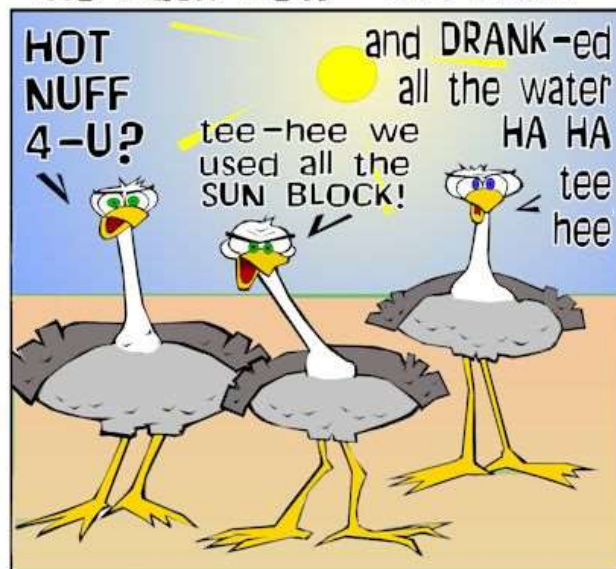
Bring us back to You, Lord! Bring us back! 5:21

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



For all those stumblin' bumblin' days..
Tomorrow is a FRESH START!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see. Strength for today,
and bright hope for tomorrow. ... **Lam 3:22-23**
The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up
again. ... **Pr 24:16**

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



My people are cruel like ostriches
in the desert. **Lamentations 4:3**

