

Lamentations

for today

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(1) The Lamentations pattern

- Poetical structure
- Overview of the content
- The message of the book as a whole

(2) "I am the man that hath seen affliction"

- Characters of the book
 - *Jerusalem and the afflicted man*
- How we fit into the Lamentations pattern

(3) "We shall be turned"

- New Testament quotations and allusions
- Lamentations for tomorrow

The contextual setting

Event	Reference	Lamentations
Jerusalem falls after a lengthy siege	Jeremiah 52:4, 7	1:3
Babylonians desecrate the temple	Jeremiah 52:13	1:10, 2:7
The horrors of the siege included famine	Jeremiah 52:6	2:11-12
Judah had looked to Egypt for help	Jeremiah 2:18	4:17
Edom rejoices at Jerusalem's downfall	Obadiah 11	4:21-22

The Hebrew Bible

Torah (the law)

- 5 books of Moses

Nevi'im (the prophets)

- Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
- Major and minor prophets

Ketuvim (the writings)

- Psalms, Proverbs, Job
- Songs, Ruth, **Lamentations**, Ecclesiastes, Esther
- Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

The question of authorship

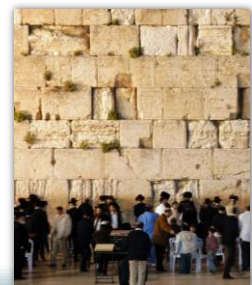
- LXX superscription;
 - "And it came to pass after Israel had been led into captivity and Jerusalem had been laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping, and he lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and he said..."



Front cover painting from *'Lamentations'* by G. Becker and Bro T. Hallem

Literary style of Lamentations

- Poetic
 - Parallelism
 - Rhythm
 - Chapters 1-4 are acrostic poems
- Dirge
 - Hebrew title 'ekhah' = 'How!'
- Drama
 - Different characters



Characters of the drama

- Narrator (prophet)
- Jerusalem – oppressed and crushed
- Enemies
- Those who pass by
- The man that has seen affliction



A related drama?

Lamentations	Parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10)
Narrator (prophet)	Narrator (Jesus)
Jerusalem – oppressed and crushed	Man from Jerusalem – left for dead
Enemies	Thieves
Those who pass by	Priest and Levite who pass by
The man that has seen affliction	Samaritan?

The poetic structure

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Acrostic	Acrostic	Acrostic	Acrostic	-
22 verses	22 verses	66 verses	22 verses	22 verses
3 lines per stanza	3 lines per stanza	3 lines per stanza	2 lines per stanza	1 line per stanza
Each letter x1	Each letter x1	Each letter x3	Each letter x1	-

Content of the laments

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
'How!'	'How!'	'Remember'	'How!'	'Remember'
Community	Community	Individual	Community	Community
Appeal to people passing by				Appeal to God
Nation's experiences	Nation's experiences	Individual's experiences & supplications	Nation's experiences	Nation's supplications

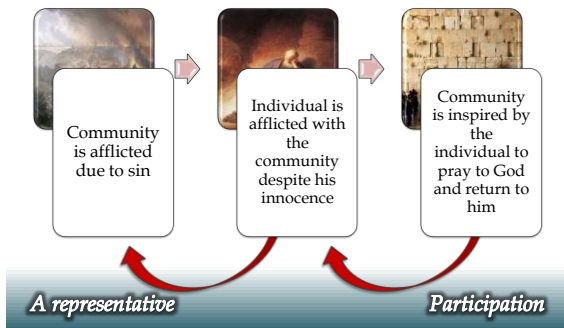
Nation/individual comparison

Individual	Common experience of affliction	Nation
3:1	God's anger	2:1
3:4	Destroying body and bones	1:13
3:7	Hedged/devouring round about	2:3
3:8	No-one answers	1:21
3:10-11	God destroys like a marauding animal	1:15
3:11	Desolate	1:4
3:12-13	Bent his bow	2:4
3:14	Mocked by passers-by	2:15-16
3:15	Bitterness	1:4
3:16	Sackcloth and ashes	2:10
3:17	No rest/peace	1:3
3:18	Strength fails	1:14
3:53-54	Swallowed up/waters over my head	2:5, 16

Nation/individual comparison

Individual	Prayers and supplications	Nation
3:19-21	Remember	5:1
3:42	We have transgressed	5:7, 16
3:22	God, his steadfast love and his mercy never come to an end	5:19
3:31	The LORD will not cast off forever... ...why do you forget us forever? ...unless you have utterly rejected us?	5:20 5:22
3:40	Return to the LORD!	5:21

The Lamentations pattern



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Suggested table of characters

Chapter 1		Chapter 3	
Narrator/prophet	1-9a	The man that has seen affliction	1-66
Jerusalem	9b	Chapter 4	
Narrator/prophet	10-11a	Narrator/prophet	1-16
Jerusalem	11b-16	Community of Jerusalem	17-20
Narrator/prophet	17	Narrator/prophet	21-22
Jerusalem	18-22	Chapter 5	
Chapter 2		Community of Jerusalem	1-22
Narrator/prophet	1-19		
(Passers-by.....)	15b)		
(Enemies.....)	16b)		
Jerusalem	20-22		

The daughter of Zion

Daughter of Zion	1:6, 2:1, 2:4, 2:8, 2:10, 2:13, 2:18, 4:22
Daughter of Judah	1:15, 2:2, 2:5
Daughter of Jerusalem	2:13, 2:15
Virgins of Jerusalem	2:10
Daughter of my people	2:11, 3:48, 4:3, 4:6, 4:10
Daughters of my city	3:51



Remembrance

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
v7 - Jerusalem remembered all her pleasant things	v1 - The LORD remembered not his footstool in day of anger	v17 - I forgot prosperity		v1 - Remember o Lord what is come upon us
v9 - Jerusalem remembered (considered) not her last end (coming judgement)	v6 - Caused Sabbaths to be forgotten	v19-21 - Remembering the affliction... ...this I recall to mind, therefore I have hope	<i>No mention of remembrance!</i>	v20 - Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever?
Acrostic	Acrostic	Acrostic	Acrostic	

The Thessalonians' experiences

- Afflictions & persecutions (1 Thess. 2:14, 3:4)
- Lamented over those who had fallen asleep (1 Thess. 4:13)
- Waiting for the Lord (1 Thess. 1:10)
- Waiting for the day dawning (1 Thess. 5:4-6)
- Exhort to live "quietly" (1 Thess. 4:11)



Jeremiah: the afflicted man

Jeremiah		Lamentations
15:15	Remember! Revenge me!	3:64
15:17-18	God's hand against him	3:3, 8
20:2	Put in the stocks	3:7
20:7	A derision daily	3:14
20:14-18	A man of affliction	3:1
38:6	Let down into the dungeon	3:52-55

Isaiah's suffering servant

Isaiah		Lament.
52:14	Visage marred	3:4
53:2	No form or beauty	3:4
53:3	Despised and rejected of men Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief	3:14 3:1
53:4	Esteemed as stricken and smitten of God	3:3
53:5	Wounded and bruised	3:11-13
53:6	The LORD laid on him iniquity	3:1
53:7	Oppressed, but silent	3:28
53:8	Prison and judgement, cut off from the land of the living	3:53
53:10	The LORD bruised him	3:11-13

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Where do we fit into the pattern?

(1) With the desolate woman, Jerusalem?

(2) Inspired by the man that has seen affliction?

(3) Living like the man that has seen affliction, in order to inspire others...?

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New testament quotes/allusions

NT passage	Content	Lamentations
Matthew 23:37	'How!'	1:1 etc
Matthew 23:35	Shed blood of just	4:13
Matthew 24:2	Stones	4:1
Mark 13:14	Stand where it ought not	1:10
Luke 19:41-44	Weeping over Jerusalem	2:11 (e.g.)
Luke 23:28-29	Daughters of Jerusalem	1:16, 2:11 (e.g.)
Matthew 10:15, 11:23-24 Luke 10:12	Punishment greater than Sodom	4:6

Personification of the city

- The roads/ways to Zion mourn (1:4)
- Gates are desolate (1:4)
- Ramparts and walls lament (2:8)
- The wall cries with tears (2:18)
- Fine gold as the sons of Zion (4:1-2)



"Thy young children"

- 1:5 - gone into captivity
- 1:15-16 - desolate
- 2:11-12 - infants faint in the streets
- 2:19-20 - faint for hunger, eaten as food
- 2:22 - those I swaddled are consumed
- 4:4 - thirsty and hungry
- 4:10 - eaten for food

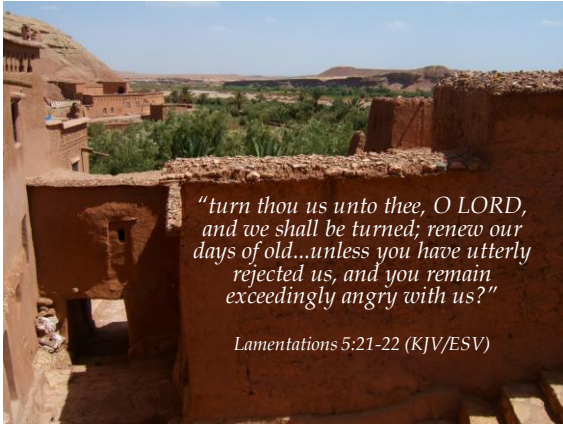
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"to **you** also the cup shall pass"



Lamentations	Characteristic	Revelation
<i>throughout</i>	A woman	17:3
1:2, 8-9	...who is an adulterer/fornicator	17:1-2, 5
4:13	...drunk with the blood of innocents	17:6
<i>throughout</i>	A city	17:18
1:1	...once a proud queen/princess	18:7
1:1	...once "great"	18:10
1:6	...once clothed in fine raiment	18:16
2:1 etc	...now fallen	18:2
5:18	...become a dwelling for beasts	18:2
<i>throughout</i>	...and lamentation is made for it	18:9-10 etc



*"turn thou us unto thee, O LORD,
and we shall be turned; renew our
days of old...unless you have utterly
rejected us, and you remain
exceedingly angry with us?"*

Lamentations 5:21-22 (KJV/ESV)