

INTRODUCTION TO  
**Lamentations**

**READ ALONG**

☐ 04/28-04/29 Lamentations 1-5

**WHERE IS IT IN THE BIBLE?**

- 22. SONG OF SOLOMON
- 23. ISAIAH
- 24. JEREMIAH
- 25. **LAMENTATIONS**
- 26. EZEKIEL
- 27. DANIEL
- 28. HOSEA

**KEY VERSES**

Lamentations 3:19-24

**KEY THEMES**

- The major theme of Lamentations is suffering (national suffering of Judah). There is an evident movement from protest concerning suffering (1:1-22) to penitent turning to God (5:1-22)
- The result of sin is death and destruction (2:21, 4:1-11). God’s faithfulness to His promise of judgment is seen in His sovereign plan to bring destruction on Judah. He is acting justly, not unjustly (2:17). God promised His people in Deuteronomy 28 that if they would not obey His commands, then all the curses pronounced in the law would come upon them (Deut 28:15). He states in vv. 49-50, *The LORD will bring a nation from far away, from the ends of the earth, to swoop down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you won’t understand, a ruthless nation, showing no respect for the old and not sparing the young.*
- The book affirms God’s great faithfulness to extend never-ending mercy (3:19-24). Judah’s only hope was to turn to God and trust Him! Those who turned to the Lord (the remnant) returned to their homeland and were eventually able to rebuild the temple. This was only a partially realized fulfilment of God’s ultimate promise though. The ultimate fulfilment of God’s never-ending mercy and faithfulness is seen most clearly in the incarnation of Jesus Christ (His life, death, burial, and resurrection—c.f., Rom 5:8). Like Judah, our only hope is to turn to God from our sin and rebellion and trust His covenant love and mercy.
- Prayer is an important part of what we learn in this book. We see confession of sin as well as expressions of faith and hope in the Lord in the midst of suffering.
- The Gospel in Lamentations: the suffering of Judah & the suffering of Jesus
  1. Judah suffered for her own sin; Jesus suffered for our sin.
  2. Judah’s suffering brought limited freedom (i.e., return to the land & restore the temple); Jesus’ punishment brings true freedom.
  3. Those who scoffed at Judah’s suffering will also suffer (4:21-22); those who scoff at Jesus’ suffering will also suffer.

**BOOK BASICS**



**DATE**  
586-562 BC



**TYPE**  
Poetry



**AUTHOR**  
Unknown\*

The OT book of Lamentations has a name which describes both the content and genre of the writing. The book is poetic in form and addresses the universal human experience of suffering. The poems are meant as a help for people who are suffering to find a voice for their experience and consolation in their plight.

The laments are most likely composed between 586-562 B.C. (after the fall of Jerusalem and before King Jehoiachin is released from prison—c.f., 2 Kings 25:27-30).

\*The author doesn’t include a specific identification, so, technically the author is unknown. However, church tradition attributes the writing to Jeremiah since 2 Chronicles 35:25 says, *Jeremiah chanted a dirge* (i.e., a lament) *over Josiah* (CSB) and, Jeremiah was an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem.

**OCCASION**

Lamentations was written following the complete destruction of Jerusalem (including the temple) by the Babylonians in 587-86 B.C. Many commentators believe the laments/poems are meant to be read/recited during an annual memorial service for the widespread destruction of the temple.

**BASIC STRUCTURE**

COMPOSED OF 5 CHAPTERS THAT ARE 5 LAMENTS

