

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS  
(Lamentations 1:1a)

I. The Book's TITLE

- A. In the Hebrew Bible it is called "HOW!"
- B. In the Greek LXX it is called "*Threni* [DIRGES] of JEREMIAH"
- C. In the Latin *Vulgate* it is called "*Threni*" with a Latin subtitle that means "that is, LAMENTATIONS of Jeremiah the Prophet"

II. The Book's DATE and AUTHOR

- A. It must have been written soon after 587 BC
- B. Author is UNIDENTIFIED in the book
- C. TRADITION says author was Jeremiah (cf. 2 Chron. 35:25)
  - 1. He was a skillful POET
  - 2. He was an EYEWITNESS to Jerusalem's FALL
  - 3. He CARED DEEPLY for his PEOPLE
  - 4. He LOVED his COUNTRY

III. The Book's STRUCTURE

- A. Each chapter is a COMPLETE and INDEPENDENT poem
- B. Every poem shares a common THEME of SORROW over Jerusalem's fall

- C. Most of the book employs a “DIRGELIKE METER”
- D. Most of the book follows an ACROSTIC poetic form
  - 1. Chapters 1 and 2 have 22 verses of THREE LINES each
  - 2. Chapter 3 has 66 verses with ONE LINE each
  - 3. Chapter 4 has 22 verses of TWO LINES each
  - 4. Chapter 5 has 22 verses but is NOT AN ACROSTIC
- E. An acrostic symbolized a COMPLETE expression of GRIEF

IV. The Book’s HISTORICAL Context: The aftermath of the BABYLONIAN invasion and destruction of JERUSALEM under King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1-11)

V. The Book’s THEOLOGY

- A. God JUDGES SIN (1:5)
- B. There is HOPE in God’s COMPASSION (3:22-24)
- C. God is SOVEREIGN, controlling both BENEFIT and CALAMITY (3:37-38)
- D. God is ACCESSIBLE through PRAYER (3:55-56; cf. 3:8, 44)

VI. The Book’s APPLICATIONS

- A. Persistent WICKEDNESS will result in SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION
- B. God will JUDGE sin even in those He has previously BLESSED
- C. God always FULFILLS His WORD
- D. The only SATISFACTORY and ABIDING solution to human suffering is through profound personal FAITH in God in spite of CIRCUMSTANCES