



The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Introduction

I. THE LIFE OF JEREMIAH

A. The Model Ministry

1. His call

- a. The time of his call (Jeremiah 1:5)
 - (1) BEFORE I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.
 - (2) BEFORE thou camest forth out of the womb
 - a) I sanctified thee.
 - b) I ordained thee a prophet unto the NATIONS.
- b. The uniqueness of his call (Jeremiah 1:1)
 - (1) Ordained to be a prophet (Jeremiah 1:5)
 - (2) From among the priests (Jeremiah 1:1)
 - a) Even though Jeremiah was from a priestly line
 - b) He was called instead to be a prophet.
- c. The conditions of his call (Jeremiah 1:2-3)
 - (1) During the reign of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:2)
 - a) The word of the Lord first came to him when Josiah was twenty or twenty-one years old (Jeremiah 1:2).
 - b) He would have ministered the final eighteen years of Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22:1).
 - c) Approximately five years after Jeremiah's ministry began, Josiah's men found the book of the law and Josiah heard of the pending judgment (2 Chronicles 34:8-19; see especially 2 Chronicles 34:24-28).
 - (2) During the reign of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 1:3)
 - a) Jehoahaz reigned three months after Josiah until he was taken away by Pharaoh-nechoh (2 Kings 23:31-33).
 - b) Jehoiakim was appointed by Pharaoh-nechoh and reigned eleven years (2 Kings 23:34, 36).
 - c) In his third year, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1).
- d. The message of his call (Jeremiah 1:10)
 - (1) First
 - a) Root out.
 - b) Pull down.
 - c) Destroy.
 - d) Throw down.
 - (2) Later
 - a) Build.
 - b) Plant.



2. His commitment
 - a. Against the prophets
 - (1) They prophesied by Baal (Jeremiah 2:8).
 - (2) They prophesied falsely (Jeremiah 5:31).
 - (3) They did so in the Lord's name (Jeremiah 14:13-15).
 - (4) Yet, their prophecy was not from the mouth of the Lord (Jeremiah 23:16).
 - (5) One prophet, Pashur, smote Jeremiah and put him in stocks for his message of judgment (Jeremiah 20:1-3).
 - b. Against the priests
 - (1) The priests dealt falsely (Jeremiah 6:13; Jeremiah 8:10).
 - (2) The priests were profane and had brought wickedness into the Lord's house (Jeremiah 23:11).
 - (3) Both the prophets and the priests accused Jeremiah of committing sins worthy of death (Jeremiah 26:8).
 - c. Against the king—Jehoiakim the king sought to put to death Urijah for prophesying according to all the words of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:20-21).
 - d. Against the people
 - (1) They were a nation that walked after vanity (Jeremiah 2:5).
 - (2) They were a nation that would not hear in the day of prosperity (Jeremiah 22:21).
 - (3) They were a nation that sacrificed their children (Jeremiah 7:30-32).
 - (4) They were a nation that sought out the host of heaven (Jeremiah 8:1-2).
 - (5) They were a nation whose prophets prophesied their own visions according to what the people wanted (Jeremiah 23:16-17, 25, 28, 30-31).
 - (6) They were a nation that rejected the word of the Lord (Jeremiah 8:8-9).
 - (7) They were a nation that laid no heart to their heritage (Jeremiah 12:7-9, 15).
 - (8) They were a nation that hated God's men (Jeremiah 18:18-20; Jeremiah 20:1-2).
 - (9) They were a nation that made it a struggle for the men of God to preach (Jeremiah 20:7-9).
 - (10) They were a nation that defiled the house of God (Jeremiah 32:34).
3. His compassion
 - a. Jeremiah warned the nation of all that was going to transpire.
 - b. He was rejected and abused for warning them of the pending judgment.
 - c. Yet, when the judgment came, Jeremiah lamented that it came.
 - (1) He saw the outcome (Lamentations 2:10, 11b-12).
 - (2) Yet, he mourned and was troubled (Lamentations 2:11).



B. The Timing of Its Writing

1. The Assyrian captivity of Israel
 - a. Taken into captivity by Assyria (2 Kings 17:6, 22-23)
 - (1) Because they walked in the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 17:22)
 - (2) The Lord removed Israel out of His sight (2 Kings 17:23).
 - (3) Israel was carried to Assyria (2 Kings 17:23).
 - (4) They were spread out through various locations (2 Kings 17:6; 2 Kings 18:11).
 - a) Halah
 - b) Habor
 - c) The cities of the Medes
 - (5) Israel never completely returned from captivity.
 - b. To return one day to the land (Isaiah 11:10-13; Jeremiah 3:17-18; Jeremiah 30:3-4; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Jeremiah 33:7; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Hosea 1:11; Zechariah 10:6)
 - (1) The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people (Isaiah 11:11).
 - (2) Israel will be brought again to the land of their fathers, and they shall possess it (Jeremiah 30:3-4).
 - (3) The house of Judah and the house of Israel will be reunited with the Lord as their one and only King (Jeremiah 3:17-18).
 - (4) The Lord will again build Judah and Israel as He did at the first (Jeremiah 33:7).
 - (5) The Lord will put His laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
 - (6) The Lord will cleanse His people and will be their God (Ezekiel 37:23).
 - (7) They shall be as though the Lord had not cast them off (Zechariah 10:6).
2. The Babylonian captivity of Judah
 - a. First stage (2 Chronicles 36:5-8; Daniel 1:1-6)
 - (1) Occurred during the reign of Jehoiakim as king of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:5-6; Daniel 1:1)
 - (2) Occurred during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6)
 - (3) Jehoiakim was bound and carried to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6).
 - (4) The vessels of the house of the Lord were carried to Babylon and placed in a heathen temple (2 Chronicles 36:7; Daniel 1:2).
 - (5) Nebuchadnezzar took certain of the children of Israel and groomed them to be wise men of Babylon (Daniel 1:3-6).
 - b. Second stage (2 Kings 24:8-16)
 - (1) Occurred during the reign of Jehoiachin as king of Judah (2 Kings 24:8)
 - (2) Occurred during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:10)



- (3) Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem and besieged it (2 Kings 24:11).
- (4) Jehoiachin, his mother, and his servants were taken by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:12).
- (5) Nebuchadnezzar carried away treasures out of the house of the Lord (2 Kings 24:13).
- (6) Nebuchadnezzar carried away all but the poorest people of the land (2 Kings 24:14-16).
- c. Third stage (2 Chronicles 36:11-21)
 - (1) Occurred during the reign of Zedekiah as king of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:11)
 - (2) Occurred during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:13)
 - (3) The people of God rebelled against the clear warnings of the Lord (2 Chronicles 36:12-16).
 - (4) The remaining people were given into the hand of the enemy (2 Chronicles 36:17, 20-21).
 - (5) The remaining vessels and treasures were carried to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:18).
 - (6) Much was destroyed at the hands of the enemy (2 Chronicles 36:19).
 - a) The house of God was burnt.
 - b) The wall of Jerusalem was broken down.
 - c) All the palaces were burnt with fire.
 - d) All the goodly vessels were destroyed.
3. The conditions at the writing of Lamentations
 - a. The city sat solitary (Lamentations 1:1).
 - b. Judah was gone into captivity and dwelt among the heathen (Lamentations 1:3).
 - c. The gates were desolate (Lamentations 1:4) and sunk to the ground (Lamentations 2:9).
 - d. The princes were gone without strength before the pursuer (Lamentations 1:6).
 - e. Her people had fallen into the hand of the enemy (Lamentations 1:7).
 - f. The heathen had entered into the sanctuary (Lamentations 1:10).
 - g. They suffered food shortages (Lamentations 1:11; Lamentations 2:11-12; Lamentations 4:8-9) so much that there was danger of women eating their children (Lamentations 2:20; Lamentations 4:10).
 - h. The virgins and the young men were gone into captivity (Lamentations 1:18).
 - i. The strong holds were thrown down (Lamentations 2:2).
 - j. The palaces were swallowed up (Lamentations 2:5).
 - k. God had violently taken away His tabernacle (Lamentations 2:6-7).
 - l. Those remaining were orphans and fatherless and the mothers were as widows (Lamentations 5:3).
 - m. Some type of agreement had been made with the Egyptians and the Assyrians in order to get food (Lamentations 5:6).



II. THE UNIQUENESS OF LAMENTATIONS

A. What Is a Lamentation?

1. A lamentation is a specific statement of mourning (Jeremiah 22:18; Jeremiah 34:5).
2. It can be made
 - a. For the dead (Jeremiah 25:33)
 - b. In the absence of God's presence (1 Samuel 7:2)
 - c. In the presence of God's judgment (Jeremiah 4:8; Jeremiah 7:29; Lamentations 2:5)

B. The Layout of Lamentations

1. Lamentations was divided into five separate poems.
2. Four of these five poems are twenty-two lines each.
3. Although the book is grouped with Jeremiah because of authorship, its contents lend the book more to the writings of the Book of Psalms.

III. THE BREAKDOWN OF LAMENTATIONS

A. The Basic Statistics

1. Chapters = Five
2. Verses = 154
3. Sentences
 - a. Total sentences = 158
 - (1) 137 telling sentences
 - (2) Eight exclamatory sentences; three are in Lamentations 1:1
 - (3) Thirteen asking sentences
 - b. Compare this to Ephesians which has 155 verses = 72
 - (1) Seventy-one telling sentences
 - (2) Zero exclamatory sentences
 - (3) One asking sentence
4. Words = 3,411; surprisingly, Lamentations 2 has the most (883).

B. The Outline of the Book

1. Lamenting the conditions (Lamentations 1:1-22)
2. Lamenting the condemnation (Lamentations 2:1-22)
3. Lamenting the condemned (Lamentations 3:1-66)
4. Lamenting the consequences (Lamentations 4:1-22)
5. Lamenting the comforter (Lamentations 5:1-22)
6. Note: One of the great difficulties in outlining Lamentations is the assumption that it is like other books around it. It is actually a compilation of Jeremiah's lamentations with the emphasis found in the first verse of each chapter.