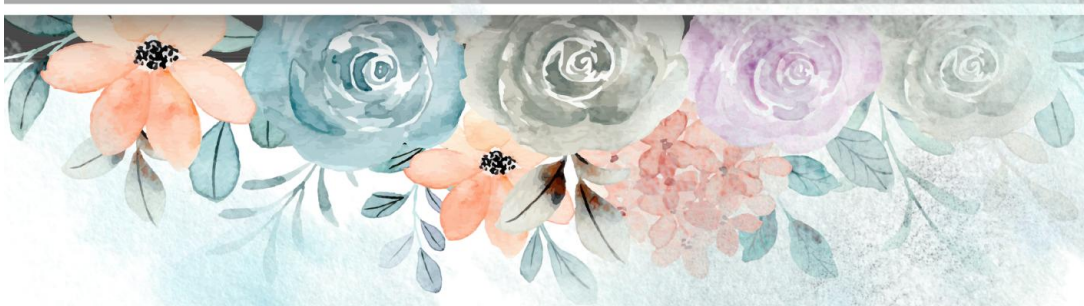


Digging into God's Word



Lamentations



written by: Shelli Locke

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Digging Into the Word

I am so glad you are taking time to dig into the Word of God. What an amazing opportunity we have to grow in our understanding of God Himself and learn about the life and sacrifice of Christ. I hope you enjoy taking time to go verse by verse and chapter by chapter. I pray that you will grow in your faith and experience the love of the Savior whose biggest desire is to have a relationship with you.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Bradie Peeples for designing the cover of this study. Her gifts and talents are greatly appreciated!

Sources

For all ‘Bible Notes’, I used my study Bible which is the ***Holman Christian Standard Bible***. All websites used are noted within the text for additional study resources.

God Bless!

Lamentations

According to strong ancient tradition, both Jewish (Talmud) and Christian (LXX, Latin Vulgate), the author of this book is Jeremiah, although he is not specifically named in the text. There is some thematic similarity between the two books, especially the incessant and bitter weeping for Judah's plight (Jr 8:18-9:1; 14:17; Lm 3:48-51). It was written between 586-582 BC, between the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC) and Jeremiah's forcible flight to Egypt (582 BC). The events to which Lamentations refers took place in Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, the southern kingdom of the nation of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar had begun to deport Jews in 605 BC, as soon as he ascended the throne. Others were deported in 597 and 586 BC, after an 18-month siege and the devastation of Jerusalem and its walls, leaving it a ruin. Lamentations is chiefly a song of grief over the events of Jerusalem's destruction. This brief five-chapter poetic composition delivers a devastating blow. Its subject concerns the siege, fall, and destruction of Jerusalem. (Bible Notes)

Chapter 1: The Lament of Jerusalem

Vs. 1- As we begin this book, it is immediately evident that devastation has occurred. How does he describe Jerusalem?

Vs. 2- What is her condition and what became of her allies?

(Bible Notes- Jerusalem's lovers and friends refer most likely to nations such as Egypt, with whom she formed political alliances to serve her own military interests, defying God's command to the contrary (cp 5:6).

Vs. 3- What has become of Judah?

Vs. 4- Why do the 'roads' mourn?

Vs. 5- Who has become their masters?

Why did the Lord allow this?

What had happened to their children?

Vs. 6- How does he describe the city and its leaders?

(Bible Notes- Judah's leaders were weak spiritually and militarily. Perhaps the author had in mind the attempted flight of Zedekiah and his men, who were overtaken and severely punished.)

[Who was King Zedekiah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Vs. 7- What are they remembering as they endure this homelessness?

What does he describe as Jerusalem fell to her adversaries?

Vs. 8- Why is Jerusalem being punished?

Vs. 9- Their sin left stains and affliction. What had they never considered?

Vs. 10- What do they witness?

Vs. 11- How are they surviving?

Vs. 12- Jerusalem addresses the on-lookers. What is expressed?

Vs. 13- How does he describe what God has allowed to happen to Jerusalem?

Vs. 14- What has God done and why?

Vs. 15- What does he describe the Lord doing?

Vs. 16- He describes the anguish they experienced. What does he say?

Vs. 17- What decree did the Lord issue?

Vs. 18- What is said of the Lord?

What happened to all the young men and women?

Vs. 19- What happened to the priests and elders?

Vs. 20- There is conviction for these circumstances. What is admitted?

Vs. 21- How are their neighbors/enemies responding?

Vs. 22- What does he ask of God?

Chapter 2: The Judgment on Jerusalem

Vs. 1- What are the consequences Israel must endure?

Vs. 2- “Without _____ the Lord swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob”. What did He do to their kingdom?

Vs. 3- In His anger, what did He do?

Vs. 4-5- How is God described?

Vs. 6-7- What did He destroy?

With its destruction, what else was abolished?

“The Lord _____ His alter”.

(Bible Notes- Clearly expressed here is the unfathomable fact that the Lord Himself rejected and brought about the destruction of the temple, here called “Israel’s glory...His footstool” (vs 1), His place of meeting (vs 6), His alter,...His sanctuary...the house of the Lord (vs 7), thus fulfilling Jeremiah’s warnings (Jr 7: 1-15).

Vs. 8-9- He describes further destruction. What does he describe here?

There is also silence. What does he say about kings and prophets?

Vs. 10- What image is given here?

Vs. 11-12- Why does he express deep sorrow and is exhausted from weeping?

Vs. 13- He asks rhetorical questions because it’s too late for them now.

Vs. 14- He reminds them of the “prophets” they chose to listen to. What does he say?

(See Jeremiah 14:14, 23:16)

Vs. 15-16- Now they are an object of scorn and mockery. What do their enemies say?

Vs. 17- Who allowed this?

Vs. 18-19- How do the people react?

What are they told to do?

Vs. 20- He asks the Lord a very pointed question. What does he say?

(Bible Notes- Glimpses of the horrors of the Babylonian siege are provided here. Children and infants are starving and are victims of cannibalism by the desperate besieged population (cp. The siege of Samaria in 857 BC in 2 Kg 6:26-29).

Vs. 21- Who all were affected by this punishment?

Vs. 22- How does he describe this massacre?

(Bible Notes- **HARD QUESTION:** *How can a loving God destroy His own people and bring about the atrocities delineated here?* To answer this question, one must understand the nature of God's relationship with His people. God and Judah were in a covenantal relationship initiated by God, who desired to dwell among His people and "be their God" (Ex 25:8; Dt 29:13; Jr 30:22, 31:1, 33). The problem was Judah's violation of the covenant: She had broken her oath of love and loyalty. In a common prophetic metaphor, Judah betrayed the Lord, her spouse (Jr 3:1-5, 31:32; Ezk 16:1-63, 23:1-49; Hs 2:2-23). Clearly Judah understood that the devastation she experienced came about by the Lord's agency; He accomplished His plan and His decree from days of old (Lm 2:17). The "decree" is found at the original making of the covenant as well as at its renewal (Dt 4:1-8, 11:13-17, 26-28). Obedience to the covenant brought blessings while violation of the covenant resulted in curses. Among other curses, the worst was exile; and when destruction and exile resulted from Judah's many transgressions against her covenant God, there was no doubt concerning agency. While the Babylonians, and the Assyrians before them, were agents of punishment in God's hand, the primary agent was God, who honored His own covenant conditions by following through with punishment (Lm 2:17; see Dt 29:24-28). God does not capriciously or maliciously destroy His chosen people, or any people for that matter (Lm 3:32-33). God defines His own nature and character as "compassionate and gracious" and simultaneously just, not leaving the guilty "unpunished" (Ex 34:6-7). In Lm 3:31-33 God's punishment is intended to discipline, purge, and restore His people, not ultimately to obliterate them (Ezk 36:25-29).

[Why does God allow the innocent to suffer? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

Chapter 3: The Hope Through God's Mercy

(Bible Notes- This chapter presents the Lord as both for and against Judah. He destroys and humiliates Judah like an enemy, yet Judah can count on God's faithfulness to His own covenantal love.)

Vs. 1-9- These verses describe the devastation felt under the affliction of God's wrath. Explain:

Vs. 2-

Vs. 3-

Vs. 4-

Vs. 5-

Vs. 6-

Vs. 7-

Vs. 8-

Vs. 9-

Vs. 10- How does he describe God?

Vs. 11- Describe what happened to him?

Vs. 12-13- Of what does he accuse God?

Vs. 14-15- He describes his treatment by others and how this feels. What does he say?

Vs. 16- He is brought even lower. What does he describe?

Vs. 17-18- What does he express?

Vs. 19-20- Remembering this constant affliction leaves him feeling completely

(Bible Notes- The cumulative effect of vv. 2-16 is that the imagery pushes the speaker lower and lower until he is bowled over, trampled face down in the dust and eating gravel (v. 16). He is completely despondent and depressed (v. 20), dismissing any future or hope (v. 18). The pairing of these two ideas (hope and future) harks back to God's words to the exiles through Jeremiah in the beloved promise of Jr. 29:11.)

Vs. 21-24- A HUGE break in this writing with the word YET. Write down these verses:

(Bible Notes- Suddenly, the speaker recalls God's faithful love, upon which one can always rely. For the first time in the chapter, the author invokes God's covenant name, Lord (Hb YWHH, "Yahweh", vv. 22, 24-26). The thought of God's love gives the speaker renewed optimism that with God there is an endless supply of mercy and compassion. This testimony of the providential goodness of God is the brightest spot in this book. The covenant-breaker does not deserve compassion, but the faithful covenant God gives new "mercies" every morning; when all other comforts are removed, the Lord as my portion is sufficient.)

Vs. 25- To whom is the Lord good?

Vs. 26-27- What actions are described as "good"?

Vs. 28-30- How does he say to deal with the Lord's discipline toward sins committed?

Vs. 31- What assurance did he have?

Vs. 32- Even if there is suffering in His discipline, what will He show?

Vs. 33- What does he clarify here?

(Bible Notes- How should one deal with divine discipline? It should be borne in quiet waiting, seeking, bearing the yoke (cp. 1:14), in silence and even alone. This description of patient, hopeful suffering has messianic overtones, being found in one of the Servant Songs of Isaiah (Is 50:6), knowing that one is not forever abandoned by the Lord, who does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering on mankind.)

Vs. 34- Of what did the Lord disapprove?

(Bible Notes- God is displeased with injustice and punishes it. Perhaps Judah is at fault here, or perhaps the poet is describing military injustices perpetrated upon Judah by the invaders.)

Vs. 37-38- Only the Lord is in control. What comes from His mouth as He speaks?

Vs. 39- Valid question. What does he ask?

Vs. 40-41- What does he implore them to do?

Vs. 42- What does he admit?

Vs. 43-45- He describes the harsh consequences of their sin and rebellion. What does he say?

Vs. 46-47- What have they experienced?

Vs. 48-50- How does he express his deep sorrow?

Vs. 51- What specifically causes him so much grief?

(Bible Notes- Whether the fate of all the women has to do with defenselessness and captivity or refers to the loss of their children in various ways is unclear here.)

Vs. 52-54- What happened to him?

(Bible Notes- These verses could refer to Jeremiah's experience of unjust persecution and being thrown into the pit (Jr 38). Otherwise, the metaphors of the pit and of overwhelming floodwaters express fear that death is imminent (eg. Ps 88:3-7).

Vs. 55-56- What did he do?

Vs. 57-58- How does the Lord respond?

Vs. 59-60- What does he ask of the Lord?

Vs. 61-63- What does he experience from his enemies?

Vs. 64-66- He wants God's judgment to befall his enemies as well. What does he ask?

Chapter 4: Terrors of the Besieged City

Vs. 1- What does he describe here?

Vs. 2- How does he describe the people?

Vs. 3- To what does he compare his people?

Vs. 4- What tragedy does he describe?

(Bible Notes- There is no food in the city during the siege, and famine affects everyone, especially the children, who are fully dependent upon their parents to feed them. Ostriches were proverbial for their lack of maternal care (cp. Jb 39:13-18; Lm 4:4-6). Bitter ironies are put forth: Formerly refined and wealthy people are homeless and tattered. Noteworthy citizens who were in their prime are now unrecognizable, wizened, and emaciated.)

Vs. 5- What is his point here?

Vs. 6- A huge claim to express the severity of their punishment. What does he say?

Vs. 7-8- What has become of their dignitaries?

Vs. 9- What does he express?

Vs. 10- This verse shows how barbaric their lifestyle has become. What does he reveal?

Vs. 11- What does he say about the Lord?

(Bible Notes- In a nightmarish, horrifying turn, compassionate women are killing their children and cooking them. A mother's intimate connection to her own child during pregnancy, often risking her own life and health in delivery, creates a bond that is only strengthened as she personally gives the child nourishment. In view of this, a mother cooking her child is the height of humanity gone wrong. Judah feels that God's wrath has been exhausted on them (i.e., they have experienced the full measure of His burning anger for their sins.)

Vs. 12-13- No one believed anyone or anything could enter Jerusalem. But why did this collapse befall them?

Vs. 14-15- These priests and prophets were defiled by this blood. What became of them?

Vs. 17- Who were the people turning to for help?

Vs. 18-19- He describes their fall. What does he recall?

Vs. 20- They had put their hope in “the Lord’s anointed”, but what happened to him?

(Bible Notes- Judah’s spiritual leaders (prophets, priests, and elders), her military and political leaders (specifically her king, Zedekiah, the Lord’s anointed), and her foreign allies like Egypt (a nation that refused to help) all failed her miserably. The breath of our life probably refers to the king, whose very person was considered sacrosanct.)

Vs. 21- To whom will this cup of judgment pass?

Vs. 22- What does he say regarding Zion and Edom?

(Bible Notes- Edom, a long-time enemy of Judah, is singled out for harsh punishment, consistent with Jr 49:12. In both passages, Edom must drink the cup of the Lord’s punishment, just like Judah did. Unlike Judah, however, Edom’s situation shows no hope of recovery (Jr 49:17-18).

[What is the significance of Edom in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Why does God allow the innocent to suffer? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Chapter 5: Prayer for Restoration

Vs. 1- How does he begin this prayer?

Vs. 2-5- He describes their circumstances. Explain:

Vs. 2-

Vs. 3-

Vs. 4-

Vs. 5-

Vs. 6- What countries had they turned to for help?

Vs. 7- Who is at fault?

[Are children punished for the sins of their parents? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Vs. 8-10- What are some of the devastating consequences they suffer? Explain:

Vs. 8-

Vs. 9-

Vs. 10-

Vs. 11-13- Describe the brutality and anguish all people endured:

Vs. 11-

Vs. 12-

Vs. 13-

Vs. 14-16- Life as they knew it was over. Explain:

Vs. 14-

Vs. 15-

Vs. 16-

Vs. 17- Because of this, our _____ is sick; because of these, our _____ grow dim.

Vs. 18- In what condition was their beautiful temple?

Vs. 19- How does he address God?

Vs. 20-22- He asks if God will forget them for the rest of their lives. What is his cry to God?

Vs. 22- What did he fear?

[What is the definition of idolatry? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Book of Lamentations Summary | Watch an Overview Video](#) (Bibleproject.com)