

Introduction to the Lamentations of Jeremiah

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 1, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2019

Prelude:

I. Since I do funerals,

- A. when I do one for someone whom I loved deeply,
- B. I say special things about them in special ways.
 - 1. It shows what I thought about the person and
 - 2. how I felt about him or her.

II. Jeremiah did the same thing with the Book of Lamentations.

- A. He not only says spectacular things about Jerusalem, but
- B. he also said them in special ways.

III. Consider some gems from chapter 3:

**22 Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.**

**23 They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.**

**24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I hope in Him!"**

– Lamentations 3.22–24

**25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul who seeks Him.**

**26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.**

**27 It is good for a man to bear
The yoke in his youth.**

– Lamentations 3.25–27

31 For the Lord will not cast off forever.

**32 Though He causes grief,
Yet He will show compassion
According to the multitude of His mercies.**

33 For He does not afflict willingly,

Nor grieve the children of men.

– **Lamentations 3.31–33**

**48 My eyes overflow with rivers of water
For the destruction of the daughter of my people.**

– **Lamentations 3.48**

Persuasion:

I. The Name of this Book in the Hebrew Bible

A. When the Hebrew Scriptures, the Jews do not call this Book the Book of Lamentations, but, “How,” because

B. that is the first word in the Hebrew, and

1. I think that sums up what the Book says also.

2. How did this happen?

a) How did the city of God

b) suffer destruction at the hands of pagans?

(1) How did the children of Israel turn their backs on their God?

(2) How did they turn to other gods?

II. The Structure of the Book

A. Jeremiah did not write Lamentations with the chapter and verse divisions,

1. he did write the Book in such a way

2. that it breaks down naturally

a) into the chapter and verse divisions that we have now.

b) The pattern or structure that I will show you,

(1) happened because of his love for Jerusalem.

(2) If someone you love perishes, and

(a) if you have the ability to write,

(b) you would want to put together something special.

3. Jeremiah created an acrostic for the first four chapters:

a) In chapter 1, each verse begins with the successive letter of Hebrew.

b) In chapters 2–4, Jeremiah again used the Hebrew alphabet,

(1) except in all three chapters,

(2) Jeremiah exchanged the places of the 16th and 17th letters.

c) Chapter 5 does not follow the Hebrew alphabet.

B. Why did Jeremiah exchange the places of those two letters?

1. Apparently Psalms 34 and 145 do the same.

2. Also, note the absence of the tribe of Dan in Revelation 7.5–8.

3. Deuteronomy 33 does not include Simeon.

4. What are we to make of these things?

a) For one thing, it catches our attention.

b) What other reason could there be?