

## Life-Study of Lamentations Summary – Messages 1 to 4

### The Introduction, the First Lamentation—a Lamentation over the Desolation of the Holy City, and the Second Lamentation—a Lamentation over the Destruction of the Holy City

In her desolation, the holy city was in distressing circumstances. She had no comfort, rest, or pasture because of her transgressions, sins, impurity, and uncleanness. Verses 12 through 19 speak of her **entreating the sympathy of the passersby**. Her circumstances were miserable because of her rebellion against the commandment of Jehovah, who is righteous. Verses 20 through 22 are **her prayer to Jehovah**. In verses 20 and 21a **she begged Him to see her in distress**. Then in 21b and 22 **she asked Him to deal with those who would not comfort her**.

In 2:1-10 we have a word concerning **Jehovah the Lord's destruction of the holy city**. This destruction was in His overflowing wrath, in the indignation of His anger. The destruction included the temple, the altar, the kings, the priests, the princes, the prophets, and the elders. Verses 11 through 19 are **the prophet's lament**. In verses 11 and 12 we have **the prophet's weeping and his inward feeling of pains** because of his people's suffering; in verses 13 and 14, **the serious "sickness"** of the people of Jerusalem; in verses 15 and 16, **the hissing and insulting of the passersby**; and in verse 17, **the fulfillment of Jehovah's commanded punishment**. Then verses 18 and 19 tell of the need to cry to the Lord with **eyes that weep unceasingly** and **hands uplifted** toward the Lord. The last three verses of this lamentation are her prayer to Jehovah. She begged Him to see her in her slaughter and in the killings she had undergone. (*Life-Study of Lamentations, chapter 1*)

### The Third Lamentation—a Lamentation over the Afflicted Prophet Identified with His Punished People

Verses 1 through 20 are **the prophet's (representing his people's) affliction**. This affliction was by the rod of Jehovah's wrath. Both the prophet's (representing his people's) strength and his hope in Jehovah had perished. The affliction described in all these verses did not happen personally to Jeremiah. God did not afflict Jeremiah directly in this way. However, because Jeremiah was one with God's afflicted people, in his feeling, in his sympathy, he was suffering the same kind of affliction.

In verses 21 through 39 we see the prophet's (representing his people's) **hope**. The prophet's hope was in **the lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness of Jehovah**, who was his portion. He hoped in Jehovah by waiting on Him and seeking after Him for His salvation, while depending on the Lord's doing and judging.

In verses 40 through 54 we have **the prophet's request to his people**. First, he requests that they would examine their ways and turn again to Jehovah. Then he requests that they repent of their transgressions and rebellion that caused the Lord to cover Himself from them and to stir up their enemies to destroy them.

Finally, in verses 55 through 66 we have **the prophet's (representing his people's) prayer** to Jehovah. He called upon His name that He would plead their case and judge their cause. Then he asked Him to avenge them of their enemies because of their evils. (*Life-Study of Lamentations, chapter 2*)

## **The Fourth Lamentation—a Lamentation over the Punished People and the Fifth Lamentation—a Lamentation as a Prayer for the Holy People**

The fourth lamentation—a lamentation over the punished people—is recorded in chapter four. The people of Israel were afflicted with a lack of food in their siege. The shining “pure gold” and the glittering “sapphire” became “black coal” because of the lack of food. The compassionate women boiled and ate their own children. God’s people were afflicted because **their iniquity was greater than the sin of Sodom**.

The children of Israel were consumed by the burning anger of Jehovah’s wrath. God’s people were consumed because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests. The people looked in vain for a nation’s help. Verses 21 and 22 **speak of their hope in the future**. They hoped that the punishment for their iniquity had been accomplished and that Jehovah would no longer take them into exile. They hoped also that Jehovah would punish the iniquity of Edom

The fifth lamentation, which is a lamentation as a prayer for the holy people as the conclusion of the fourth lamentation, is recorded in chapter five. This prayer begins with Jeremiah’s asking Jehovah to remember their sufferings and to look and see their reproach. This prayer continues with Jeremiah’s relating their miserable condition. In verses 7 and 16b Jeremiah confessed their fathers’ sin and their sin. This prayer concludes with a petition (vv. 19-22). In his petition, Jeremiah praises Jehovah (v. 19), questions Him (vv. 20, 22), and makes a request of Him.

Jeremiah ended Lamentations not with God’s lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness but with **God’s eternal being and His throne**. This is a strong sign that in writing Lamentations **Jeremiah touched God’s economy**. Although his lamentations were too much in his human feeling, taste, love, and sympathy, at the end he came out of his being human and entered into God’s divinity. (*Life-Study of Lamentations, chapter 3*)

## **Jeremiah's Disappointment and Questions and God's Eternal Being and His Throne**

When Jeremiah wrote these verses, **he was perplexed and disappointed**. Because of his background, he knew the writings of Moses, and he knew the covenant which God had made with Abraham and his descendants. Nevertheless, in his five lamentations he did not speak much according to God’s word. Rather, he spoke altogether according to his personal, human feeling. At the beginning of his fourth lamentation, he referred to Israel as pure gold which had become dim. “How the gold has become dim! / How the most pure gold has changed!” (v. 1). Then near the end of his last lamentation, he said that foxes were roving in Mount Zion. This shows Jeremiah’s disappointment. Zion was the holy land. To God it was the most holy, sanctified place on earth. **How could foxes come into this holy city and even rove on the peak of Zion, where the temple was built? This caused Jeremiah to lament.**

Although Jeremiah realized that God’s being is eternal and His throne remains forever, he still had something within him that caused him to end his lamentations with questions and even with challenges. In 5:20-22 he said to Jehovah, “*Why do You forget us forever / And forsake us for so long a time? / Turn to us, O Jehovah, and we will be turned; / Renew our days as before. / Or have You utterly rejected us? / Are You exceedingly angry with us?*” Here Jeremiah speaks to Jehovah a challenging word, even a commanding and rebuking word. **However, Jehovah did not answer him**. Instead of answering Jeremiah or telling him to be quiet, Jehovah remained silent. At the end of Lamentations, the time had not yet come for God to answer Jeremiah’s questions. (*Life-Study of Lamentations, chapter 4*)