

## **LAMENTATIONS**

### **GODS MAN MOURNS FOR HIS NATION**

#### Authorship:

We assume Jeremiah authored this book, however, the clear evidence to substantiate that assumption is very scant. Typically, we would appeal to II Chronicles 35:25 as a reference to authorship, but this text is not conclusive. We might also consider similarities between this and Jeremiah's prophecies, such as tone and vocabulary, as supportive arguments for his authorship. However, style and theological perspective is substantially different. Ultimately, we don't know the precise identity of the author, but thousands of years of tradition bear out that Jeremiah was it.

#### Context:

Setting: With the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on or around 593 B.C. came a realization, God was true to His word about removal from the land upon persistent disobedience. This realization was accompanied with sorrow and grief, hence the Lamentation.

Purpose: The collection of five "dirge type" poems offer an appropriate expression of grief and mourning. This is based on the recognition of sin, and God's just punishment of the same.

#### Content:

Structure: Three of the five poems are funeral dirges which open with the cry, "How?". Chapter one is the first dirge and it depicts Jerusalem as a noble lady, having dignity and elegance, but has been left in ruins by friends after her brutal rape. It captures the strong emotions of isolation, rejection, and shame felt in the city.

Chapter two couples with chapter four, both are funeral dirges that describe the ferocity of God's wrath. The only good thing God's people felt was the reality that their sins penalty was being realized, and they would eventually see God's favor once more.

Chapter three is an acrostic poem comprised of 66 verses, three lines each. In this the poet outlines his personal suffering as a picture of that of the nation. He prays for consolation and hope, and pleas for repentance, and cries out for vengeance and vindication.

Chapter five is the final poem in the short collection. It is a community lamentation in which the people grieve the perceived irreversible catastrophe that has come in the form of captivity.

Two themes: Human suffering – the reality that when we sin, it has consequences that are unpleasant and remind us of the reality that God's justice will be meted out against our disobedience. Divine abandonment – though we cannot be physically apart from an omnipresent God, we bemoan the absence of His peace, provision, and prosperity that is present when we are obedient to Him.