

# Old Testament Introduction

## *The Book of LAMENTATIONS*

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### INTRODUCTION

1) The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible is

*Ekhah*— “\_\_\_\_\_!”

- This is the opening word of chapters **1, 2, & 4**.
- The Septuagint entitled the book “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- Another Hebrew title is *Qinoth*, which means “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- It is from this word that we get our English title.

2) The Jews divided the Old Testament into three sections: *The Law, The Prophets, & The Writings*.

- In the Hebrew Bible, Lamentations is a part of the last section, *The Writings*.
- Lamentations is one of the five *Megilloth*, or \_\_\_\_\_, which were appointed to be read publicly by the Jews on national holidays.
- Lamentations was read on the ninth day of *Ab* (*about mid-July*) on the anniversary of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem.

3) Lamentations is a set of five elegies, or melancholy poems, written in the rhythm and style of ancient Jewish \_\_\_\_\_ dirges or chants.

- Each chapter is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Chapters **1, 2, 3, & 4** are written in the acrostic format.
- Chapters **1, 2, & 4** have 22 verses each, each of these verses beginning with a different letter of the 22 letter Hebrew alphabet, these 22 letters being used consecutively.  
a=Aleph (A) b=Beth (B) g=Gimmel (C) d=Dalet (D), etc.
- Chapter **3** has 66 verses with each succeeding three verses using a different letter consecutively to begin each set of three verses.
- Chapter **5** has 22 verses as well, but the alphabetical order of each verse is dropped.

Even though Lamentations is a book of intense emotion, its deliberate and careful construction shows that it is not merely a sentimental outburst.

4) The book of Lamentation has a threefold message:

- Mourning over Jerusalem's sin.
- Confession of sin.
- A ray of \_\_\_\_\_ (**3:21-32**)—the writer saw the future glory of Israel and the desolation of Babylon.

5) The Book of Lamentations is a \_\_\_\_\_, or supplement to the book of Jeremiah.

- The Book of Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem and relates the fulfillment of these prophesies.
- The Book of Lamentations relates and laments the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ which came upon the Jews at the time of the fulfillment of these prophesies.
- The Book of Lamentations has been called the “*Wailing Wall of the Bible*.”

### AUTHORSHIP

1) **Traditional:**

- The people of God from earliest times have held that \_\_\_\_\_ was the author of this book.
- The writer seems to have been an \_\_\_\_\_ to the destruction of Jerusalem. (**Lamentations 1:13-15 & Jeremiah 52:4-7**)
- The writers of both books were \_\_\_\_\_ prophets. (**Jeremiah 9:1 & Lamentations 1:16**)

2) **The Critical view:** It definitely was not written by Jeremiah, but was written by one or possibly two writers over a considerable length of time.

### RECIPIENTS

The exiled Jewish nation who had just been taken into Babylonian captivity.

#### DATE OF WRITING

Immediately after the fall of Jerusalem in \_\_\_\_\_ B. C. *"As one reads the book one can almost feel the tears yet in the eyes of the Jews as they watch their city smolder."*

#### PURPOSE OF BOOK

- **Historically** = To serve as an expression of sorrow at the destruction of Jerusalem and as a reminder of God's \_\_\_\_\_ to His Word and to His people.
- **Doctrinally** = To show God's faithfulness to punish \_\_\_\_\_, and yet His steadfast love and compassion for His people.
- **Christologically** = Christ as the *"man of sorrows, acquainted with grief"* (*Isaiah 53:3*).

#### THEME OF THE BOOK

The desolate condition of Jerusalem after its fall.

#### OUTLINE

**Chapter 1** = The Pain of Zion's Fall—A Mourning Widow

**Chapter 2** = The Plight of Zion's Fall—A Weeping Daughter

**Chapter 3** = The Purpose of Zion's Fall—An Afflicted Man

**Chapter 4** = The Pondering of Zion's Fall—Tarnished Gold

**Chapter 5** = The Plea on Zion's Behalf—A Fatherless Child