

Lesson 11 – Lamentations

Though the Bible does not name the author of Lamentations, several pieces of evidence point to Jeremiah, including Jewish tradition, the title and heading in the Septuagint, and the fact that Jeremiah was an author of laments and was an eyewitness of the destruction.

Jeremiah was imprisoned in Jerusalem when it fell. He would've heard many of the things he described in his lament. People starving to death, weeping as they killed their own children for food, and then the enemy soldiers marching through the streets, people being struck down as they fled, women being raped, cries as hooks pierced skin and chains were placed on survivors, stones and wood being broken and fires being started, buildings collapsing. The Babylonians released Jeremiah and permitted him to remain in Judah. He moved to Mizpah and continued preaching among the new government there. Imagine what Jeremiah witnessed as he emerged from prison. The bloodstained streets must've still been filled with bodies of his fellow Jews who had suffered extreme starvation before being slaughtered. He'd known them. He'd tried to save them. He may have seen the corpses of those the conquerors had chosen to display (5:12). The temple, palaces, and houses were heaps of rubble and ash, and some may have still been burning. Jeremiah may have even seen the Babylonians carrying some of the sacred plunder from the temple and treasuries. He exited the city through these horrific scenes of fresh destruction. He passed through or over the ruins of what was once the city wall. Perhaps he looked back at the crumbled walls and smoke rising into a cloud above the once-glorious capital of God's chosen people. Jerusalem had been established by David over 400 years earlier and been the site of worship for about as long. He knew the shame and derision which would follow the fall. Nations would mock Judah and its God, ignorant of the fact that God was punishing his own people.

Lesson 11 – Lamentations

1. What is a lamentation? What other lamentation is ascribed to Jeremiah?
(2 Chron. 25:23)
2. How does the lamentation describe all the pagan nations from whom Judah had sought help and adopted idolatry? (Lam. 1:2)
3. By what other name is Jerusalem called fifteen times in this book? (Lam. 1:17)
4. Provide some descriptions of Jerusalem's former glory in this book. What was Judah like at its peak? (1 Kings 4:21)
5. What quality of God is mentioned in Lam. 1:18? What does this mean, and how was it relevant to the destruction?
6. What would other nations say when they observed the fallen capital?
(Lam. 2:15-16)
7. God had foretold this consequence several times beforehand. Provide one of these warnings by Moses or a prophet. (Lam. 2:17)
8. Jeremiah recalled God's faithfulness as the tone changes in Lam. 3:21. How would God's faithfulness be shown after the destruction?
9. What must the remnant do? (Lam. 3:40-42)
10. What lessons may be learned from Lamentations?