



Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."

Course Text: Lamentations

Lamentations is a book of poetry written by Jeremiah the prophet. The word "lamentations" means a communication, usually in poetry, of great grief or sorrow, like a "you done me wrong" country song. Jeremiah is very unhappy about the destruction of the city Jerusalem (aka Zion) and all the people of Judah being killed, imprisoned, or enslaved. If you took our course 105 Poetry you will recognize the form of Hebrew poetry used throughout this book. Whether you do or do not, you need to be aware, that since it is poetry you should expect a lot of picturesque figures of speech. God in His wisdom has given us a life of victory in this veil of tears called Earth. Because of the struggle between good and evil which goes on here, part of our lives here will be sad. Using phrases like those found in this book can help us to express our sorrow, sadness, and grief in our prayers to God, and thus share our burdens with Him, so that He can lift us up.

Jeremiah starts out talking about the current condition of Jerusalem and Judah at the time of his writing before doing a kind flashback in the later chapters of the siege of the city before it fell and the causes of God's wrath. He calls on the people to repent, begs God for mercy, and praises Him because Jeremiah fully expects God's mercy to be shown eventually.

Suggested methodology:

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on page 9. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the Lamentations.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

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Lamentations Chapters 1 to 3

In Lamentations 1 Jeremiah begins with a description of the current condition of things – the city is destroyed and the survivors are slaves in distant lands. In verse 8-9 he admits that the people have brought it on themselves due to great sins. These sins are said to be acts of rebellion and disobedience in verse 18 and 20. Please read Lamentation chapter 1 and then match these sorrows with the verses in which they appear:

Example: Lam 1:16-17 A woman crying without stopping, and without comfort

- [1A] _____ A bereaved and lonely widow
- [1B] _____ A bitter woman whose favorite guests no longer attend her parties
- [1C] _____ A crying woman betrayed by her friends
- [1D] _____ A dirty woman, hopeless of the future, without comfort
- [1E] _____ A mother whose children are taken from her by an enemy
- [1F] _____ A poor, mocked, woman remembering her past wealth
- [1G] _____ A princess forced into slavery
- [1H] _____ An already unhappy woman captured and enslaved

In Lamentations 2 God's fierce anger is described. In verse 14 we see one of the reasons for His anger are the false prophets which the people believed and followed. Please read Lamentation chapter 2 and then match these results of God's anger with their verses:

- [2A] _____ Destruction as wide as the ocean
- [2B] _____ Strongholds destroyed right down to the ground
- [2C] _____ Killed everything that had beauty
- [2D] _____ No longer in his Holy Temple
- [2E] _____ Prophets can no longer receive prophecy from God
- [2F] _____ Burned up in a flaming fire
- [2G] _____ Covered with a cloud of anger
- [2H] _____ Killed without mercy

In Lamentations 3 God is praised. Jeremiah calls on the people to repent and God to have mercy to deliver them from their enemies. Please read Lamentation chapter 3 and then match these answers to prayer with their verses:

- [3A] _____ Hope
- [3B] _____ Justice
- [3C] _____ Compassion according to his abundant loving kindness
- [3D] _____ Goodness and salvation towards those who wait for Him
- [3E] _____ Vengeance belongs to God
- [3F] _____ Looks down from heaven and sees the one praying
- [3G] _____ Keeps His word, does what He say He will do
- [3H] _____ Loving kindness and compassion renewed daily without failure or end
- [3I] _____ Calms our fears
- [3J] _____ Hears the prayers for help of those in the deepest sorrows
- [3K] _____ Saves us

-----ANSWERS-----

Lamentations Chapters 1 to 3

- [1A] Lam 1:1 A bereaved and lonely widow
- [1B] Lam 1:4 A bitter woman whose favorite guests no longer attend her parties
- [1C] Lam 1:2 A crying woman betrayed by her friends
- [1D] Lam 1:9 A dirty woman, hopeless of the future, without comfort
- [1E] Lam 1:5 A mother whose children are taken from her by an enemy
- [1F] Lam 1:7 A poor, mocked, woman remembering her past wealth
- [1G] Lam 1:1 A princess forced into slavery
- [1H] Lam 1:3 An already unhappy woman captured and enslaved

- [2A] Lam 2:13 Destruction as wide as the ocean
- [2B] Lam 2:2 Strongholds destroyed right down to the ground
- [2C] Lam 2:4 Killed everything that had beauty
- [2D] Lam 2:6-7 No longer in his Holy Temple
- [2E] Lam 2:9 or 14 Prophets can no longer receive prophecy from God
- [2F] Lam 2:3 Burned up in a flaming fire
- [2G] Lam 2:1 Covered with a cloud of anger
- [2H] Lam 2:21-22 Killed without mercy

- [3A] Lam 3:24 Hope
- [3B] Lam 3:35-36 Justice
- [3C] Lam 3:32-33 Compassion according to his abundant loving kindness
- [3D] Lam 3:25-26 Goodness and salvation towards those who wait for Him
- [3E] Lam 3:64-66 Vengeance belongs to God
- [3F] Lam 3:50 Looks down from heaven and sees the one praying
- [3G] Lam 3:37-38 Keeps His word, does what He say He will do
- [3H] Lam 3:22-23 Loving kindness and compassion renewed daily without failure or end
- [3I] Lam 3:57 Calms our fears
- [3J] Lam 3:55-56 Hears the prayers for help of those in the deepest sorrows
- [3K] Lam 3:58 Saves us



Lamentations Chapters 4 to 5

In Lamentation 4 we find these causes of God's anger:

Lam 4:6 says the sins of the people are worse than Sodom, probably referring to orgies of homosexuality, pedophilia, fornication and adultery.

Lam 4:13 says the priests and prophets killed innocent people

Lam 4:16 says the people failed to honor God's true priests and to respect their elders

Please read Lamentation chapter 4 and then match these things that happened to a besieged city with their verses:

- [4A] _____ Gold and jewels became worthless
- [4B] _____ Hungry and thirsty children
- [4C] _____ It ends in captivity, exile and slavery for all
- [4D] _____ Help expected and hoped for, never comes
- [4E] _____ Women so famished they can not nurse their babies
- [4F] _____ The wealthy suffer the same fate as the poor
- [4G] _____ Those who are killed by the sword are envied by those dying of hunger
- [4H] _____ People who die become food for those still living

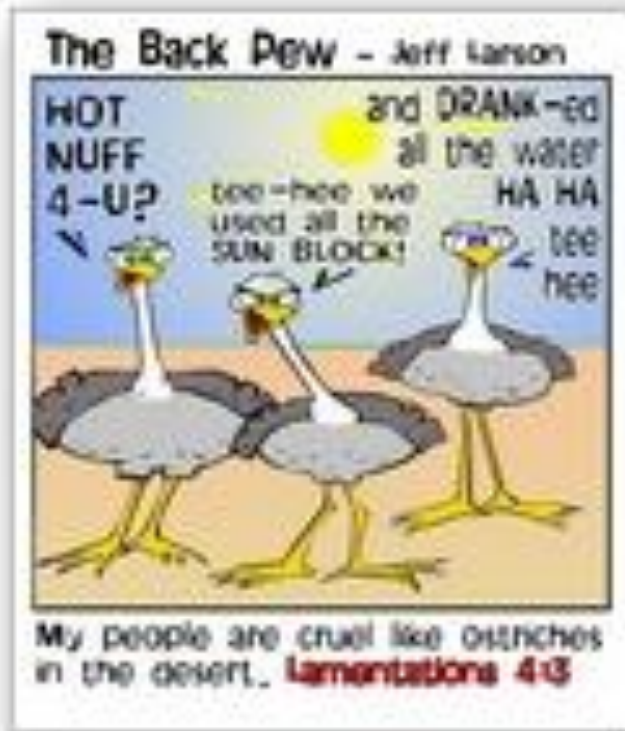
In Lamentation 5:16 Jeremiah confesses that God's anger is justified by the sins of the people, but begs for mercy on their behalf. Please read Lamentation chapter 5 and then match these results of God's anger with their verses:

- [5A] _____ Inheritance and homes given to strangers and foreigners
- [5B] _____ Orphaned and widowed
- [5C] _____ Famine and hunger
- [5D] _____ The basic needs of life, food and fuel, which used to be available for free, are no longer
- [5E] _____ The end of happiness and joy
- [5F] _____ Widespread rape of women
- [5G] _____ Without rest, subject to neighboring countries
- [5H] _____ Bearing the consequences of former generation's sins as well as their own

----- ANSWERS -----

Lamentations Chapters 4 to 5

- [4A] Lam 4:1 Gold and jewels became worthless
[4B] Lam 4:4 Hungry and thirsty children
[4C] Lam 4:20-22 It ends in captivity, exile and slavery for all
[4D] Lam 4:17 Help expected and hoped for, never comes
[4E] Lam 4:3 Women so famished they can not nurse their babies
[4F] Lam 4:5 The wealthy suffer the same fate as the poor
[4G] Lam 4:9 Those who are killed by the sword are envied by those dying of hunger
[4H] Lam 4:10 People who die become food for those still living
- [5A] Lam 5:2 Inheritance and homes given to strangers and foreigners
[5B] Lam 5:3 Orphaned and widowed
[5C] Lam 5:9-10 Famine and hunger
[5D] Lam 5:4 The basic needs of life, food and fuel, which used to be available for free, are no longer
[5E] Lam 5:14-15 The end of happiness and joy
[5F] Lam 5:11 Widespread rape of women
[5G] Lam 5:5-6 Without rest, subject to neighboring countries
[5H] Lam 5:7 Bearing the consequences of former generation's sins as well as their own



(1) Compare Lamentations 3:30 with Matthew 5:39 and Luke 6:29. Are they all talking about the same thing? Why or why not?

Think & Pray _____

(2) Jeremiah had spent many years warning the people and their leaders and trying to get them to repent before it was too late. They would not listen to him, and frequently abused him, and yet Jeremiah is still sorry for them and trying to help them. What do you think that should teach us about ourselves?

Think & Pray _____

(3) What does Lamentations 3:21-26 mean to you?

Think & Pray _____

(4) If someone asked you what Lamentations was about what would you say?

Think & Pray _____

(5) How can the lessons of Lamentations be applied to our own life?

Think & Pray _____

(6) Which verse or passage would you select to memorize from Lamentations? Why?

Think & Pray _____

If you have any questions about Lamentations, now is the time to discuss them with your classmates.

----- ANSWERS -----

(1) LAMENTATIONS 3:30 I believe they are all talking about the same thing. The context from Lam 3:22-36 is talking about letting God deal with the ungodly and not taking your own vengeance.

(2) PERSISTENCE I think it shows we are to be persistent in our witness of the Gospel as Jeremiah was.

(3) LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 To me it means that I should fan the flames of hope and quietly wait on the deliverance of God.

(4) Lamentations Summary In the Jewish religion, Lamentations is read on the fast occurring on the ninth day of “Av” (usually occurs in our month of August). It is used to commemorate the “*five great calamities that came upon Israel*”:

[a]. The decree to wander forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:26-35).

[b]. The destruction of the first Temple (II Chro. 36:14-19).

[c]. The destruction of the second Temple (70 AD, by Titus the Roman).

[d]. The destruction of 580,00 Jews by Hadrian in 135-138 AD.

[e]. The ploughing of Zion by Hadrian (Jer. 26:18; Mic. 3:12).

This is an “*elegiac*” poem—: mourning the destruction of Jerusalem.

It is also an “Acrostical” poem, each verse begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letters stand for a concept as well as a vocal sound. This third chapter is laid out in 22 triads, instead of single verses. This verse occurs in the tenth triad—: The Hebrew letter “*Yod*”, representing numerical completion, creation and the metaphysical. It represents the abstract noun “*humility*”. The first ten triads are brought to completion by humbly submitting to God—: ***Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord*** (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19). Jesus taught the same thing.

(5) Lamentations Life Application To me the big lesson to be learned is that no matter how bad things may get, there is still good reason to hope in the Lord.

(6) Something to Remember I like Lamentations 3:25 “The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.”