

## **Book 25: Lamentations** **Mourning over Jerusalem**

- The book of Lamentations might be thought of as the music for the funeral of a city.
- Jerusalem was once proud and powerful, full of royal glory.
- Now it is destroyed, ruined by the invading armies of Babylon.
  
- The book consists of five chapters or individual poems written by Jeremiah, the prophet and priest who once preached to the city in an effort to avoid this destruction.
- After the downfall of Jerusalem he expressed his sorrow in this poetry.

### **Lamentations: Poetic Structure**

- Lamentations is written using a pattern known as *acrostic*.
- This is an alphabetical pattern sometimes used in the Hebrew poetry of the Bible.
- We can explain it as follows:
  - The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters.
  - The simplest kind of acrostic would have 22 lines and each line would begin with a different letter in alphabetical order.
  
- This is the pattern we see in Lamentations Chapters 1, 2 & 4, each of which have 22 verses.
- Chapter 3 has 66 verses, made up of groupings of three verses for each letter.
  
- Chapter 5 has 22 verses, but does not follow an acrostic pattern.
- It's as if Jeremiah's sadness did not permit him to pay attention any longer to such details as he poured out his grief in his poetry.

## **Lamentations and the *Ninth of Av***

- Lamentations is read in synagogues each year on *Tisha Be'av* – the ninth day of the Jewish month of *Av*, which comes in the middle of summer.
- This commemorates the day the Babylonians destroyed the Temple in Jeremiah's lifetime in 586 B.C.
  
- What's weird is that it is also the day the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 A.D.
- Moreover, it marks the day the Jews were expelled from England in 1290 and from Spain in 1492.
  
- Religious Jews commemorate the ninth of Av with fasting and abstaining from joyful activities.
- During the evening service it is customary to sit on the floor rather than seats, and to wail or cry out during the reading to intensify the atmosphere of mourning.

### **Book 25: Lamentations**

"God will teach us important lessons we need to learn one way or another. If we learn the easy way, we will be blessed. But if we don't learn the easy way, we will have to learn the hard way. It just depends on how stubborn we are. But when we learn the hard way, it breaks the heart of our loving Father."

– Chuck Smith

"Jeremiah's lamentations also express the love and sorrow of the Lord for His people, whose wickedness and departure from truth brought on these tragic circumstances."

– Tim LaHaye

### **Book 25: Lamentations**

- Lament 1: Jerusalem's Grief
- Lament 2: God's Righteous Anger
- Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope
- Lament 4: Details of the Tragedy
- Lament 5: A Prayer for Restoration