



Lamentations

New Every Morning

The Major Prophets

The Major Prophets

23. Isaiah The Fifth Gospel

24. Jeremiah The Weeping Prophet

25. ---*Lamentations* *New Every Morning*

26. Ezekiel

27. Daniel

Lamentations New Every Morning

Lamentations New Every Morning

- When it comes to grief – the foundation of all lament – Jewish people may be the world's experts.

Lamentations New Every Morning

*I know, I know. We are Your chosen people.
But, once in a while, can't You choose
someone else?*

– Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof



Lamentations New Every Morning

- They read **Lamentations** in synagogues each year on **Tisha Be'av** – the ninth day of the Jewish month of **Av**.
- It comes in the middle of summer.
- This commemorates the day the **Babylonians** destroyed the Temple in Jeremiah's lifetime in **586 B.C.**

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- It is also the day the **Romans** destroyed the Second Temple in **70 A.D.**
- And the day the Jews were expelled from **England in 1290.**
- And from **Spain in 1492.**

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- Maybe there is a lesson here.
- If you're going to have such a tragic history, you might as well put as much as you can on one day.
- There are fewer sad days to remember on the calendar.

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- All of us need to grieve at some point.
- Grief is the natural response that all of us have to loss.
- The bigger the loss, the bigger our need to grieve.

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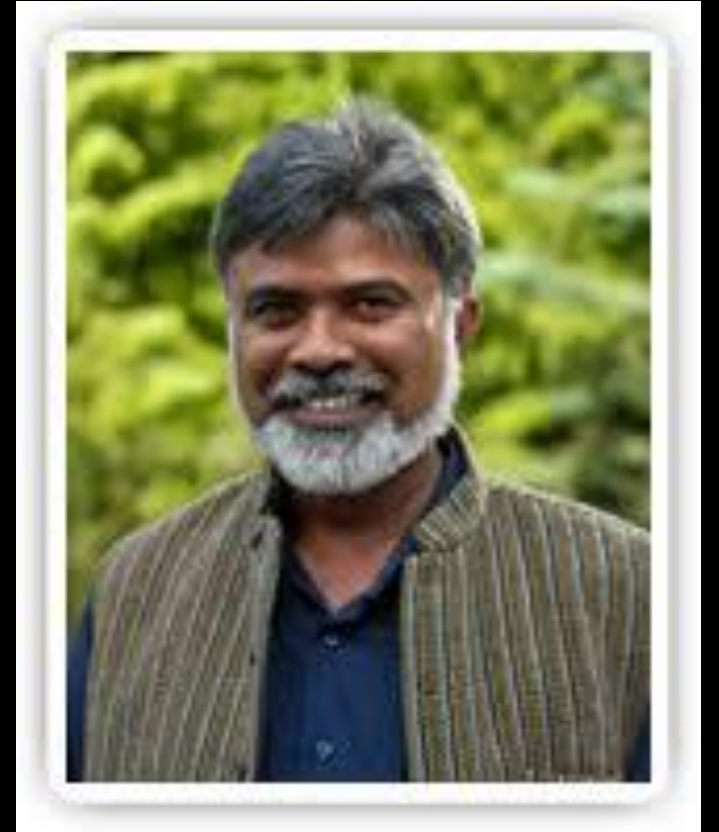
Some causes of grief:

- Death of a loved one
- Loss of job or retirement
- Loss of safety after a traumatic experience
- Loss of a cherished dream
- Major changes in life, even when they aren't purely sorrowful

Lamentations New Every Morning

Sometimes, we do not know why we or other people are suffering. But the one thing we can be certain of is that suffering will come. Thus we need to talk about suffering and how to endure it so that we are ready when it comes. That is one function of the book of Lamentations. It helps us to find words to express our suffering without giving in to hatred or despair.

– Paul Swarup, Cathedral Church of the Redemption, New Delhi, India



Lamentations New Every Morning

- The Book of **Lamentations** is the Bible's poetic written response to the universal experience of grief.
- We might call it a hymn for the funeral of a city.

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- **Jerusalem** was once proud and powerful, full of royal glory.
- Now it is destroyed, ruined by the invading armies of Babylon.

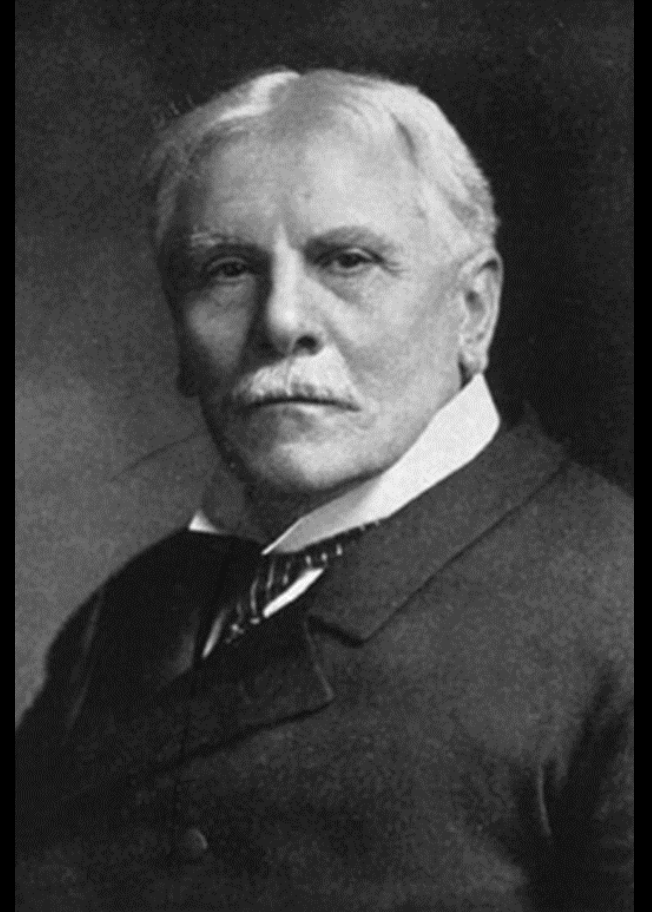
Lamentations New Every Morning

- **Jeremiah** is traditionally considered the author.
- He was the prophet and priest who once preached to the city in an effort to avoid this destruction.

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The touching significance of this book lies in the fact that it is the disclosure of the love and sorrow of Jehovah for the very people He is chastening – a sorrow wrought by the Spirit in the heart of Jeremiah.

*– C. I. Scofield (1843 – 1921),
Scofield Reference Bible*



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- After the downfall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah expressed his sorrow in this poetry.

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- **Lamentations** is written using a pattern known as **acrostic**.
- This is an alphabetical pattern sometimes used in the Hebrew poetry of the Bible.
- This is how it works:

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- 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.

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- This is the pattern we see in **Lamentations 1, 2 & 4**, each of which have **22 verses**.
- **Chapter 3** has **66 verses**, made up of groupings of three verses for each letter.
- Something like A, A, A; B, B, B ...

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- **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.
- He is now simply pouring out his grief.

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As regards its external structure, the composition of the book, both as a whole and in its several parts, is so artistic, that anything like it can hardly be found in any other book of Holy Scriptures.

– Johann Peter Lange (1802 – 1884)



Lamentations New Every Morning

- 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

Lament 1: Jerusalem's Grief

Lament 1: Jerusalem's Grief

- Lamentations 1:1-2

Lament 1: Jerusalem's Grief

- **Lamentations 1:1-2**
- Jerusalem experienced a stunning reversal.
- When things are going well, we may begin to believe that they will always go well for us.

Lament 1: Jerusalem's Grief



*Success is a lousy teacher.
It seduces smart people into
thinking they can't lose.*

– Bill Gates

Lament 2: God's Righteous Anger

Lament 2: God's Righteous Anger

- Lamentations 2:5-6, 13-14

Lament 2: God's Righteous Anger

- **Lamentations 2:5-6, 13-14**
- When we are grieving we may then begin to think that nothing good can ever happen again.
- This, of course, is also not true.

Lament 2: God's Righteous Anger

- **Lamentations 2:5-6, 13-14**
- In Jerusalem's case, the destruction was the direct result of persistent disobedience.
- That may not always be the case.
- In a fallen world it is impossible to avoid the fallout.

Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope

Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope

- Lamentations 3:21-26, 31-33, 37-41

Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope

- **Lamentations 3:21-26, 31-33, 37-41**
- These are the key verses in the book.
- If you are going to hold onto anything, hold onto these.

Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope

- **Lamentations 3:21-26, 31-33, 37-41**
- Grief can cause us to stop and look closely at ourselves.
- One of the best things we can do while we are grieving is examine our ways.

Lament 3: Personal Grief and Hope

- Lamentations 3:21-26, 31-33, 37-41
- It is also a time to look firmly at the Lord.
- As we seek him we can again call to mind 3:21-26.

Lament 4: Details of the Tragedy

Lament 4: Details of the Tragedy

- Lamentations 4:1-2, 12-13

Lament 4: Details of the Tragedy

- **Lamentations 4:1-2, 12-13**
- The destruction was complete.
- It was worse than anyone would have imagined – but then it actually happened.

Lament 5: A Prayer for Restoration

Lament 5: A Prayer for Restoration

- Lamentations 5:1, 19-22

Lament 5: A Prayer for Restoration

- Lamentations 5:1, 19-22
- In the worst grief, the prophet prays for restoration.
- We can do the same.

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Conclusions

New Every Morning Conclusions

- 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.
- As they read **Lamentations**, many will wail or cry out during the reading to intensify the atmosphere of mourning.

New Every Morning Conclusions

- Culturally and religiously, the day becomes a constant reminder that we have a need to grieve.
- Lament, in the context of God's love and faithfulness, reminds us that our grief is also a new beginning.

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Conclusions



Lamentations ... models meditation on and during suffering so as to understand its place in the scheme of things, adopting the right attitude towards suffering and recognizing that suffering is not the end of everything.

– Issiaka Coulibaly, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, FATEAC, Ivory Coast

New Every Morning Conclusions

- Death can lead to resurrection.

New Every Morning Conclusions

John 11:20-27 (ESV)

²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

New Every Morning Conclusions

John 11:20-27 (ESV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,
²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”