



Lamentations

BIBLE READING JOURNAL

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*“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.
They are new every morning:
great is thy faithfulness.”*

Lamentations 3:22-23

Study Tips

Pray → Read

Purpose of Reading the Word of God

- ♦ it is the sword of the spirit to withstand evil (*Ephesians 6:17*)
- ♦ it can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (*Hebrews 4:12*)
- ♦ it is a seed that is sown (*Luke 8:11*)
- ♦ it gives light and understanding (*Psalms 119:130*)
- ♦ it accomplishes God's purpose (*Isaiah 55:11*)
- ♦ it is like a fire and a hammer that breaks rock (*Jeremiah 23:29*)
- ♦ it is spiritual food (living bread) (*Luke 4:4*)
- ♦ it works in those who believe (*1 Thess 2:13*)
- ♦ we are born again by the word (*1 Peter 1:23*)
- ♦ with it God smites the earth (*Isaiah 11:4*)
- ♦ with it God rules the nations (*Revelation 19:15*)
- ♦ it produces faith (*Romans 10:17*)
- ♦ it can overcome the wicked one (*1 John 2:14*)
- ♦ it makes us holy (*Numbers 15:40*)
- ♦ by it we understand righteousness, judgement, and equity (*Proverbs 2:9*)
- ♦ it delivers from evil (*Proverbs 2:12*)
- ♦ it brings peace (*Isaiah 48:18*)
- ♦ it is a lamp to our feet (*Psalms 119:105*)
- ♦ it is the joy and rejoicing of the heart (*Jer 15:16*)
- ♦ it is truth (*John 17:17*)

• Notice •

Ask the who, what, why, when, where, how questions.

Subject: the person, place, thing or idea that is doing or being something.

Object: the recipient of the action done by the subject

Pronouns: he, she, it, etc.

Verbs: action words.

Use different colours to mark out the subject, the object, the verbs, and the other key words mentioned. This makes it easier to make lists later on.

Look up cross-references
(help understand the context).

Ask questions
(and find answers).

• Make Connections •

Look for:

- **repeated words, similar ideas**
- **contrasts / comparisons** (*like, but*)
- **reasons** (*for, because*)
- **conclusions** (*now, therefore, so that*)

Make lists from the words you have highlighted (*verbs, repeated words, contrasts, comparisons, reasons, conclusions*).

Look up any words that you do not understand.

Break chapter into sections and summarize the main thought.

• Expand •

- ⇒ What does this passage teach about God?
- ⇒ What does this passage teach about ourselves?
- ⇒ What correct or incorrect actions or thoughts are presented that we can learn from?
- ⇒ What is being said that needs to be obeyed, followed, avoided, or rejoiced over, believed in?

• Use •

Choose a key verse to memorize and an action to take.

Introduction to Lamentations

Following the destruction and captivity of Israel in 721 BC by Assyria, the people of Judah did not take notice and change their ways, but continued to spiral downward spiritually. King Josiah made an effort at reform, but it was not a reformation of the people's hearts and therefore did not last. After King Josiah died, Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years before turning and rebelling against him. This brought Nebuchadnezzar back to Jerusalem, to besiege the city, ransack the temple, confiscate its treasures and take many of the people captive back to Babylon. Zedekiah was left in charge, but in his ninth year, he rebelled and Nebuchadnezzar came again to Jerusalem and besieged it for almost 18 months. It was a terrible time of starvation within the city, and when a breach was finally made, the inhabitants were massacred or carried away captive, and the city was completely destroyed and burned with fire, including the temple.

The book of Lamentations is a funeral dirge that outlines the suffering and misery of the people and the city. It is written in poetry in the form of alphabetic acrostics.

Jeremiah was a prophet from the LORD to the people from the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, right up until the final destruction. The book of Lamentations is a funeral dirge that outlines the suffering and misery of the people and the city. It is written in poetry in the form of alphabetic acrostics. Chapters 1, 2 and 4 have 22 verses so that each verse starts with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 has 3 verses assigned to each letter. Synonymous parallelism is also used in chapters 1,2 and 4, where each verse has three thoughts that repeat each other using different words. In chapter 3, each three verse section contains this thought rhyme.

There are several possible reasons for using acrostic poetry: to aid in memorization, to show the completeness of something (A-Z), to create unity and order especially in difficult situations, to make it visually and aurally stimulating (repeated sounds and letters), and it has also been noted that it was a means of preventing excess (just as there is an end to the alphabet, there is an end to lamenting). Lamentations is read in Jewish synagogues on Tisha B'Av, the fast day that commemorates the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians, and also the Second Temple which was destroyed by the Romans. Although it may seem at first glance that Lamentations is depressing and terrible, it actually is a book that is meant to help maintain faith in God despite overwhelming disaster, and a reminder that we must learn its lessons. Perhaps today we are more likely to emphasize the merciful part of God's justice, and forget that good cannot thrive where evil is also present, and there will be another day when the wrath of God finally puts an end to evil.

For a quick little visual overview of Lamentations, this website has a video that outlines the book, and you can also download the visual as a poster (scroll down to resources) if you want to keep it for reference.

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/lamentations/>

Lamentations Chapter 1

• Notice •

Who is the subject of this chapter?

Circle the subject and the pronouns that belong with it
– you will notice that the subject changes –
use different colours.

What has happened in this chapter?

Underline the verbs you can find, note any opposites.

Why did it happen?

Look for words such as “because” and “for”.

When did it happen?

Look for cross references that lead you to other passages
that tell you when it happened.

How does the subject react?

Circle the actions that are reactions.

Ask questions.

• Expand •

What is the main lesson that is being taught
about God in this chapter?

• Use •

Key verse to memorize

Action

• Make Connections •

Circle all the words related to sin

(i.e. transgression, rebellion)

Make this into a list – what are these sins?

Circle all the words related to enemies

(i.e. adversaries)

Make a list of what the enemies did.

Circle all the words related to affliction

– Who is the afflicter?

Circle all the words related to comfort

– Why is there no comfort?

Break this chapter into sections.

Give each section a title.

Lamentations Chapter 2

• Notice •

Who is the subject of this chapter?

Circle the subject and the pronouns that belong with it.

What has happened in this chapter?

Underline the verbs you can find, note any opposites.

Why did it happen?

Look for words that show emotion, and also the words "for" or "because".

How have the actions affected the people?

Circle the actions that are reactions.

Ask questions.

• Expand •

How does this chapter relate to today?

What is presented as the proper response to what God has done?

• Use •

Key verse to memorize

Action

• Make Connections •

Circle all the words related to suffering – *Make this into a list - this will probably elicit pity from you.*

Why do you think God did not pity?

Circle all the words related to enemies – *Who is the enemy?*

What was the message of the false prophets? *(Use cross-references)*

What was the word that God had fulfilled? *(Use cross-references)*

Break this chapter into sections.
Give each section a title.

Lamentations Chapter 3

• Notice •

Who is the subject of this chapter?

Circle the subject and the pronouns that belong with it.

What has happened in this chapter?

Underline the verbs you can find.

Why did it happen?

Look for words that show emotion, and also the words "for" or "because".

Ask questions.

• Expand •

If this is Jeremiah speaking, a faithful prophet of God, why did he also suffer?

Why is it important that God be the source of one's hope?

• Use •

Key verse to memorize

Action

• Make Connections •

List all the ways in which this man has experienced the rod of God's wrath – (v1-18).

Circle all the attributes of God you can find in this chapter – Make a list.

Circle all the words that tell what man should do in relation to God – Make a list.

Compare this chapter to Jeremiah 30 – How does it help us to understand God's anger?

Break this chapter into sections. Give each section a title.

Lamentations Chapter 4

• Notice •

Who is the subject of this chapter?

Circle the subject and the pronouns that belong with it.

What has happened in this chapter?

Underline the verbs you can find.

Why did it happen?

Look for words such as "because" and "for".

Ask questions.

• Expand •

What does this chapter tell us our responsibility is in who we choose to follow?

• Use •

Key verse to memorize

Action

• Make Connections •

Find all the instances of contrast

(they were one thing, now they are another) – *Make a list.*

Why is the punishment of Judah greater than that of Sodom?

(Use cross-references)

Why is Edom mentioned at the end of this chapter? *(Use cross-references)*

Break this chapter into sections. Give each section a title.

Lamentations Chapter 5

• Notice •

Who is speaking in this chapter?

Circle the pronouns that are being used.

What is different about the tone of this chapter?

Ask questions.



• Make Connections •

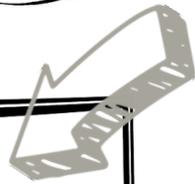
The chapter ends uncertainly, but had God forgotten? *(look up cross-references for the last 3 verses)*

Break this chapter into sections. Give each section a title.

• Expand •

How has suffering changed the attitude of this people?

How does this chapter help us to understand about the way God works with people?



• Use •

Key verse to memorize

Action

