

Through the Bible Book by Book

Old Testament

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Lamentations

(Read the book)

Theme: The book of Lamentations is an appendix to the prophecy of Jeremiah, recording the keen, heart-breaking sorrow of the prophet for the miseries and desolations of Jerusalem resulting from her siege and destruction. The grief and lamentations expressed in Jeremiah's prophecy find their culmination here; the river of tears that flowed there becomes a torrent in this book. The leading object of the book was to teach the Jews to recognize GOD's chastening hand in their calamities and to turn to Him in sincere repentance.

Jeremiah's mournful dirge has been taken up by the Jewish nation, for they chant this book every Friday at the wailing place in Jerusalem, and they read it in the synagogue on the fast of the ninth day of August, the day set apart to mourn over the five great calamities that had befallen the nation.

We shall sum up the theme of Lamentations as follows: The desolations of Jerusalem, the result of her sins, and a chastisement from a faithful GOD to lead her to repentance.

Author: Jeremiah.

CONTENTS:

We shall give here the outline suggested by Mr. Robert Lee of London. The book consists of five poems.

- I. First poem: the city represented as a weeping widow. Chap. 1.
- II. Second poem: the city represented as a veiled woman mourning midst the ruins. Chap. 2.
- III. Third poem: the city represented as, and by, the weeping prophet mourning before the Lord the Judge. Chap. 3.
- IV. Fourth poem: the city represented as gold dimmed, changed, degraded. Chap. 4.
- V. Fifth poem: the city represented as a suppliant pleading with the Lord. Chap. 5.

This book is still used by the Jews today to breathe out their sorrow at the sufferings and dispersion of Israel.

The Lamentations are still read yearly to commemorate the burning of the Temple. Every Friday, Israelites, old and young, of both sexes, gather at the Wailing Place in Jerusalem, near the southeast corner of the old temple grounds, where an ancient wall 52 yards in length and 56 feet in height, is still revered as a memorial of the sanctuary of the race.

Writes Dr. Geikie: It is a touching sight to watch the line of Jews of many nations, in their black gabardines, as a sign of grief, lamenting aloud the ruin of that House whose very memory is still so dear to their race, and reciting the sad verses of Lamentations and suitable Psalms, amid tears, as they fervently kiss the stones.

On the ninth of the month Ab nearly our July, this dirge, composed about six hundred years before CHRIST, is read aloud in every synagogue over the world.

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