

LAMENTATIONS

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. Compare ^{<2437>}Jeremiah 13:7; ^{<4236>}Matthew 23:36-38; and ^{<8101>}Romans 9:1-5. — Scofield Reference Bible

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. — Lange's Commentary

In the first place it contains just five songs, each limited to a single chapter. In the second place, there is a marked climax in the third song, with an ascent and a descent, a crescendo and decrescendo movement before and after it. About the middle of this song at verse eighteen, the prophet seems to have reached the deepest night of his misery, but where the exigency is greatest, help is nearest. The night is succeeded by the morning (vv. 19-21), and with verse 22 breaks the full day.

Each of the songs contains twenty-two verses according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet; in other words, it is an acrostic — a favorite form of Hebrew poetry. But in the third song each verse is divided into three members making in our English setting sixty-six verses. Other of its poetical features we cannot dwell upon.

LAMENTATIONS — ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTERS

In chapter 1 the lament is over the ruin of Jerusalem and Judah, and is divided into two parts of equal length. The first is a description of the city, and the second the lamentation strictly considered. In both the speaker is the prophet himself (or an ideal person like the daughter of Zion, for example).

In chapter 2, the lament is over the destruction of the city, which is described and attributed to Jehovah. This also is in two nearly even

sections. Verses 1-10 describe the judgment; verses 12-22 are the lamentation proper.

In chapter 3 is the climax where Israel's brighter day is contrasted with the gloomy night of sorrow experienced by the prophet himself. There are three parts in this chapter, divided as follows: Verses 1-18, 19-42, 43-66.

In chapter 4, Zion's guilt and punishment are described, the whole consisting of four parts which will be readily distinguished as verses 1-6; 7-11; 12-16; 17-22.

In chapter 5, the distress and hope of the prisoners and fugitives are expressed in the form of a prayer. Here the author lets the people speak, not as an ideal person but in the first person plural as a concrete multitude. There is an introduction (v. 1), two principal parts, verses 2-7 and 8-16, and a conclusion, verses 17-22.

GOLDEN TEXTS

There are some richly laden verses in this beautiful book, full of comfort and instruction for the saint and of homiletic value to the preacher. We indicate a few: 1:12; 1:16; 2:13; 2:14; 3:21-26; 3:31-33; 3:37; 3:39-41; 5:7; 5:16-17; 5:21.

QUESTIONS

1. What fact gives this book peculiar significance?
2. Have you read ~~◀SIDE▶~~Romans 11:1-5?
3. How does the literary structure of this book compare with other Scriptures?
4. Describe the third song.
5. What is an acrostic?
6. Have you memorized any of the Golden Texts?