OLD TESTAMENT · MAJOR PROPHETS · BOOK 25 OF 66

Lamentations

Great is Thy faithfulness (3:23)

5	Jeremiah	c. 586 B.C.	3:22–23
Poems, 154 Verses	The Weeping Prophet	Jerusalem Burned	Hope at the Centre

STRUCTURE

The Book in Four Parts

Grief builds through chapters 1 and 2, turns to hope at the very centre of chapter 3, and ends in prayer.



Each bar shows that part's share of the 154 verses.

I 1 · 22 verses

The City

Jerusalem sits alone like a widow, with none to comfort her.

II 2 · 22 verses

The LORD's Anger

The Lord has become as an enemy; the poet weeps.

III 3 · 66 verses

Hope

"Great is Thy faithfulness"; a call to return.

IV 4–5 · 44 verses

Prayer

The siege remembered; "Turn Thou us unto Thee."

HOW IT IS BUILT

Five Poems on the Alphabet

Four of the five poems are acrostics: each verse begins with the next letter of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet.

1 22 VERSES

Chapter 1

Acrostic: the city weeps alone.

2 22 VERSES

Chapter 2

Acrostic: the LORD's anger.

3 66 VERSES

Chapter 3

Triple acrostic: three verses for each letter.

4 22 VERSES

Chapter 4

Acrostic: the siege remembered.

5 22 VERSES

Chapter 5

Not an acrostic: a prayer of the people.

★ 3:21–23

The Centre

Hope stands at the very middle of the book.

The City Sits Solitary

LAMENTATIONS 1–2

The City Sits Solitary

Jerusalem is pictured as a widow, weeping in the night with none to comfort her.

> *"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."*
>
> Lamentations 1:12 (KJV)

1:1
As a Widow
She that was great among the nations.

1:2
No Comforter
Among all her lovers, none to comfort her.

1:18
The LORD Is Righteous
"I have rebelled against His commandment."

2:5
As an Enemy
"The Lord was as an enemy."

2:11
Eyes Fail with Tears
Children swoon in the streets.

2:19
Pour Out Thine Heart
Like water before the face of the Lord.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

LAMENTATIONS 3

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

In the darkest place, one man remembers who God is, and hope rises.

> *"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 (KJV)

3:24
My Portion
"Therefore will I hope in Him."

3:25
The LORD Is Good
Unto them that wait for Him.

3:26
Quietly Wait
For the salvation of the LORD.

3:31–33
Not for Ever
"He doth not afflict willingly."

3:40
Turn Again
"Let us search and try our ways."

3:57
Fear Not
The LORD drew near in the day I called.

Before and After, and the Closing Prayer

LAMENTATIONS 4

How Is the Gold Become Dim

The poet sets Jerusalem's glory beside what the siege left behind.

BEFORE	AFTER
The most fine gold 4:1	**Become dim and changed** 4:1
Precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold 4:2	**Esteemed as earthen pitchers** 4:2
Brought up in scarlet 4:5	**Embrace dunghills** 4:5
Nazarites purer than snow 4:7	**Their visage is blacker than a coal** 4:8

"The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; He will no more carry thee away into captivity" (4:22).

LAMENTATIONS 5

Remember, O LORD

The survivors pray together, telling God what they have lost and looking up to His throne.

5:2
Homes Lost
Our inheritance turned to strangers

5:4
Water Bought
Our wood is sold unto us

5:15
Joy Ceased
Our dance turned into mourning

5:16
The Crown Fallen
"Woe unto us, that we have sinned!"

> *"Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; Thy throne from generation to generation … Turn Thou us unto Thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."*
>
> Lamentations 5:19, 21 (KJV)

Christ in Lamentations

LOOKING FORWARD

Christ in Lamentations

The grief of Lamentations points to the One who wept over Jerusalem and bore the sorrow of His people.

1:12 · LUKE 19:41

He Wept over the City

Jesus beheld Jerusalem, “and wept over it.”

3:1 · ISAIAH 53:3

The Man of Sorrows

“A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

3:30 · MATTHEW 26:67

He Gave His Cheek

“He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him”; they struck Jesus.

3:22–23 · LAMENTATIONS 3:32

Compassion

He will have compassion, “according to the multitude of His mercies.”

Key Themes and Key Verse

BIG IDEAS

Key Themes

Honest Grief
Bringing pain to God.
1:12; 2:20

Sin Has Consequences
The LORD is righteous.
1:18

God Keeps His Word
He fulfilled what He said.
2:17

False Prophets
They saw vain things.
2:14; 4:13

God's Faithfulness
New every morning.
3:22–23

Waiting
Quietly hope in the LORD.
3:26

Repentance
Turn again to the LORD.
3:40

God Reigns
Thou remainest for ever.
5:19

Restoration
Renew our days as of old.
5:21

KEY VERSE

"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 (KJV)