

# PRAYING In The Bible

## Prayer in the Bible: Lamentation prayer

I did not know? The book of Lamentations is five poems. Not only poems but acrostic dirge poems. Each chapter uses a combination of all 22 Hebrew letters in their alphabet and 66 lines. Although this book is a lament (cry out to God) there is more going on. I suspect I could write a whole book on these chapters and verses. However, this is a five-minute Bible study of around three pages. It is intentional to give you Gods word and get on with your day. This book of Lamentations is giving you the same thing. A way to pray to God. How to express your feelings to God. Plus (for Hebrews) a way to remember these words using poetic language.

Remember that our original writings (we call the Bible) were on scrolls or parchment. There were not the chapter breaks that we have today. Some have placed this book in with Jerimiah. Yet, scholars wisely placed this book within Hebrew poetry. I suspect upon further study; these five chapters flow together. They are different, yet the same. I would; however, like to point out that this can be interpreted as a prayer. People should talk to God with their heart and soul. Look at these two verses below.

Matthew 22:37 *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”*

Deuteronomy 6:5 *“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*

Jesus and Moses knew. That praying to God should reflect honesty and passion towards the Lord. People in the Christian world tend to lessen anger and strife. How often is it hidden only to explode later. Why not offer it to the Lord for healing and understanding right away. I think one of the reasons the Bible is great is its honesty. David struggled and lamented in Psalm 51. Moses struggled near the mountain of God. Even Jesus struggled with the humanity and divine. How to reconcile humans to God the Father? I suspect the answer is found within the lament prayer. Just be honest and real. Fake and stuffy prayers are just that: fake and stuffy.

Lamentations chapter 1 opens with a few words that have stood out to me. "*How does a city?*" It then goes on to say that she is a widow. Meaning: many of the people within have died or been captured. There is a strong hint within the whole book that many walked away from God and deserved trouble. This prayer is an honest reflection on how the writer got here. How Israel got here. Yet, throughout this book is a cry to the Lord to remember them within this assumed punishment.

Let us pull out a few lines and words. Verse 5 says "*Her adversaries have become the master, Her enemies prosper; For the Lord has **afflicted** her because of the multitude of her transgressions. Her children have gone into captivity before the enemy.*" Israel is afflicted. Many of these lines say "*the Lord has.*" We also see the words "*been delivered, distress and do unto them.*" Look at verse 16 "*Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me.*" This person is in affliction and distress. The enemy has come and they are overwhelmed with grief.

There are two verses in chapter two that sum up the heart of this man. Verse 5 says "*The Lord was like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel, He has swallowed up all her palaces; He*

*has destroyed her strongholds, and has increased mourning and lamentation in the daughter of Judah.”*

“*He has*” is an interesting statement. It is not the “enemy” has. The writer Jerimiah acknowledges that God did it. There is a verse John 10:29 that says “*my Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*” Christian understanding believes that God allows trouble and blessings to happen. God is not surprised. Jerimiah believes it too. One other verse collaborates this thought. Verse 20 says “*See, O Lord, and consider! To whom have You done this?*” There are times when we are in distress. Usually, it is of our own making but not always. God does not mind if we remind Him. Remind Him of His word. Remind Him of His promises. Oh of course, that goes both ways.

I think this whole book is one narrative. We are the afflicted. Then we cry out to God. In the third chapter we find Jerimiah describing the affliction. The chains are heavy. Then we read words like forgetting prosperity in verse 17. He is humbled in verse 20 while we see a heart revelation in verse 21 “*This I recall to my mind; therefore, I have hope.*” Then in verse 22 of chapter it declares “*The punishment of your iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion.*”

Chapter 5 begins with “*Remember, O Lord, what has come upon us.*” Then verse 16 asks God to remember the fallen. Finally, we have the outcome of prayer. Verse 19 mentions “*you, O Lord, remain forever; your throne from generation to generation.*” Read through this short book as one. Notice our complaint in prayer. Then see how it slowly turns us into humble people acknowledging the throne of God. That is the place where God can do His best work. A Lamentation prayer is a really great way to get clarity from God.