

Survey of the Bible **Jeremiah Recap/Lamentations 1 - 5**

The last time we were together we ended the book of Jeremiah with God's judgment pronounced upon all nations including Israel, and the surrounding nations of Egypt, the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammorites, the Edomites, Damascus, Kedar and Hazor, Elam and then in chapter 50 God speaks to the judgment on Babylon.

And as we saw this was the precursor of the final judgment of all the nations on the last day when Christ returns for His people.

The last chapter of Jeremiah recaps those last days leading up to Israel's captivity as the final king of Jerusalem is under siege from the Babylonians. His name was Zedekiah.

Jeremiah 52:1-11 ^{NAU} Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ² He did evil in the sight of the LORD like all that Jehoiakim had done. ³ For through the anger of the LORD *this* came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴ Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth *day* of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. ⁵ So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ⁶ On the ninth *day* of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁷ Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled and went forth from the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls which *was* by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. ⁸ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. ⁹ Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him. ¹⁰ The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and he also slaughtered all the princes of Judah in Riblah. ¹¹ Then he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death.

Thus ends the nation of Judah and by extension the entire nation of Israel which was divided into the southern and northern kingdoms.

From this point the nation of Israel ceases to exist and has not existed as its own nation, under its own sovereign rule, since that time.

While it is true that at the end of the captivity a remnant of Israel was allowed to go back and rebuild the city and the temple it was always under the auspices of those who ruled over them as they have been governed by others until 1948 when they were allowed to establish a Jewish state in the land of Palestine, as it was known, under the sanction of the United Nations.

Many have confused this with God blessing Israel as He brings them back into the land as He reestablishes them as the nation Israel, but this is simply not the case.

While all that God does with any nation is certainly under His control and will, including the movement of Jewish refugees from all over Europe to inhabit parts of Palestine in 1948 as the state of Israel is recognized by many, this is much different from the biblical mandate to establish the Israel spoken of in Jeremiah and other portions of the O.T. as returning to the land to be set up by God as an eternal kingdom.

Speaking of a future time of blessing for Israel we see a number of specific prophecies.

^{NAU} **Isaiah 55:3** "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *According to the faithful mercies shown to David.*

^{NAU} **Jeremiah 32:40** "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

Ezekiel 37:26-28 ²⁶ "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. ²⁷ "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. ²⁸ "And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.""

Keep in mind that all of these promises are given after Israel has rebelled against the Lord and He has judged them accordingly. But these promises are given to a people known as Israel, but it is an Israel that will be finally put into a N.T.context.

There can be no confusion about the Israel of old, the national Israel under kings who rebelled against God and were finally dispelled from history as a nation, and the Israel spoken of in a future context, as anything approaching what we have in the Mideast today.

There is nothing about the present Israel that resembles any aspect of the Israel of old except one.

Does anyone know what that one aspect is that characterizes Israel today that parallels the Israel in Jeremiah?

Rebellion against a holy God and His Messiah.

To suggest that the present day Israel is back in the land because God has or is about to bless them as His special people with the promises we see in those prophecies we just read, is simply to misread the plain meaning of those passages that deal with a people who embrace this new and everlasting covenant.

In fact, what is this new and everlasting covenant that Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of?

Today in Israel it is against the law to proselytize Jews.

From the website JEWJEWSJEWISH.ORG we read this:

“Israel allows individuals to practice their own religion but there are laws that specifically prohibit proselytizing. Technically, proselytizing in Israel is not illegal and missionaries are therefore, supposedly, allowed to evangelize.

However, Christians are often harassed and there are laws that will specifically make it illegal. One example; it is illegal for any person to convert anyone under 18 years of age, from Judaism to any other religion, unless one of the minor's parents is already an adherent of the religious group that is seeking the conversion.

Furthermore, despite the legality of proselytism, Israel has taken steps to discourage it. Moreover, Israel actually encourages the perception that proselytizing in Israel is illegal and therefore a

criminal offense. It has been assumed that Israel does this to minimize proselytizing without actually having to enact strict and potentially embarrassing anti-proselytizing laws.

It is also common for Israel's Ministry of Interior to detain individuals suspected of being Christian missionaries, and require such persons to obtain bail, and then pledge to abstain from Christian missionary activity. In addition many have been refused entry into the country. Israel has also cited Christian proselytism as a reason to deny student visas, work visas, religious visa extensions, and permanent residency petitions.

Therefore, it should also be of no surprise that Christian organizations, such as The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, who have held rallies in over 185 different countries and territories, including numerous Communist, and North African countries, have never been allowed to hold a Christian evangelistic rally in Israel.

Moreover, [The Voice of the Martyrs](#), a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization dedicated to assisting the persecuted Church worldwide, lists Israel as a country Hostile to Christianity.”

The present state of Israel in no way, shape or form holds to the promises found in a Messiah who establishes an everlasting and new covenant with His people, called the Israel of God in the N.T. and Jesus makes it very clear the consequences of this.

Luke 9:26 ²⁶ "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory* of the Father and of the holy angels.

Having said that this is the reason we should be evangelizing all people's including the Jews. But it is the Jewish people of Jeremiah's day whom Jeremiah laments over for this very reason of rebellion and rejection of God's promise of hope found in the Messiah foretold in their own O.T. Scriptures.

And though his name is not attached to it, it is the book of Lamentations that has traditionally be linked to the prophet Jeremiah who has been an eye witness to the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews into Babylon.

[The title to the book in Hebrew is hkyā ('Ekah). This is the Hebrew term for "How," "Alas," or "Oh" that appears as the

*first word in the Hebrew text in 1:1; 2:1; 4:1. This word was commonly used in Israelite funeral dirges (cf. [2 Sam 1:19](#); [Isa 42:12](#))¹ The title to the book in Greek is *QRHNOI* (*Threnos*) meaning “lament.” (<https://bible.org/article/introduction-book-lamentations>)]*

The word lament simply means to feel or express sorrow or regret for something, to mourn deeply.

And so, after all is said and done, the Jewish nation from this point no longer exists. Babylon has now taken Judah into captivity and Jeremiah expresses his sorrow and grief as he mourns for his brethren, thus the title to the book, Lamentations.

Lamentations 1:1-3 ^{NAU} How lonely sits the city That was full of people! She has become like a widow Who was *once* great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces Has become a forced laborer! ² She weeps bitterly in the night And her tears are on her cheeks; She has none to comfort her Among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies. ³ Judah has gone into exile under affliction And under harsh servitude; She dwells among the nations, *But* she has found no rest; All her pursuers have overtaken her In the midst of distress.

Again it would be easy to miss Jeremiah’s point here in what he and the Jews have experienced if this were simply what one might view as an unfortunate turn of events for the Jews.

There was nothing unfortunate here and there was nothing that was not expected as Babylon crushed Judah.

In his lamenting Jeremiah continues to bring to the forefront why this all took place.

Lamentations 1:8 ⁸ Jerusalem sinned greatly, Therefore she has become an unclean thing. All who honored her despise her Because they have seen her nakedness; Even she herself groans and turns away.

But this is the result of a holy and righteous God taking an active role in judging the Jews of Jeremiah’s day. This was not bad luck on the part of the Jews, this was not a coincidence that they were taken captive. This was the direct result of God orchestrating their downfall once and for all.

Lamentations 2:1-3 ^{NAU} How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion With a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth The glory of Israel, And has not remembered His footstool In the day of His anger. ² The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared All the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down The strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought *them* down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes. ³ In fierce anger He has cut off All the strength of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand From before the enemy. And He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire Consuming round about.

The entire second chapter of Lamentations is summed up in this statement.

Lamentations 2:17 ¹⁷ The LORD has done what He purposed; He has accomplished His word Which He commanded from days of old. He has thrown down without sparing, And He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the might of your adversaries.

Chapter 3 covers the despair that Jeremiah feels, but it should not be lost on us that this is the attitude that the Jews felt collectively.

Lamentations 3:1-8 ^{NAU} I am the man who has seen affliction Because of the rod of His wrath. ² He has driven me and made me walk In darkness and not in light. ³ Surely against me He has turned His hand Repeatedly all the day. ⁴ He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away, He has broken my bones. ⁵ He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship. ⁶ In dark places He has made me dwell, Like those who have long been dead. ⁷ He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy. ⁸ Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer.

As representing the nation, what do these words convey of that nation as they are now taken from their homeland?

Despair, hopelessness, rejection.

But there is a group that Jeremiah represents with words of wisdom and understanding and these are the words of one who acknowledges both his sin and his redeemer.

Lamentations 3:37-40 ³⁷ Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded *it*? ³⁸ *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? ³⁹ Why

should *any* living mortal, or *any* man, Offer complaint in view of his sins? ⁴⁰ Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD.

But there is no returning to the Lord. God's judgment is sure and it is the result of taking the blessings of God and trampling them under foot.

Lamentations 4:6 ⁶ For the iniquity of the daughter of my people Is greater than the sin of Sodom, Which was overthrown as in a moment, And no hands were turned toward her.

Lamentations 4:11-13 ¹¹ The LORD has accomplished His wrath, He has poured out His fierce anger; And He has kindled a fire in Zion Which has consumed its foundations. ¹² The kings of the earth did not believe, Nor *did* any of the inhabitants of the world, That the adversary and the enemy Could enter the gates of Jerusalem. ¹³ Because of the sins of her prophets *And* the iniquities of her priests, Who have shed in her midst The blood of the righteous;

There is very little in the book of Lamentations that provides us with a hope for the nation at this time. Jeremiah mourns over the people as he sees the judgment of God on them and what we see in these 5 chapters is a realization that when you turn from the Lord there is condemnation of judgment that cannot be turned back.

One would wish that Jeremiah would end this book with some hope to look forward to and that in that hope he would end with rejoicing in that hope. But it is not found. What is found is a sober realization that if any relief from God's mighty hand of judgment is to be enacted it must come from the One who brought that judgment.

Lamentations 5:1 ^{NAU} Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; Look, and see our reproach!

What does this verse tell us about the future of the people of God?

You've got to begin by looking up to the one who can deliver. And that looking up must identify the problem that caused the judgment in the first place which of course Jeremiah has been identifying all throughout this book. It is their unrepentant sin.

Lamentations 5:15-18 ¹⁵ The joy of our hearts has ceased; Our dancing has been turned into mourning. ¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us, for we have sinned! ¹⁷ Because of this our heart is faint, Because of these things our eyes are dim; ¹⁸ Because of Mount Zion which lies desolate, Foxes prowl in it.

Jeremiah calls it what it is. But in his mourning he does not acknowledge that this people will see God's deliverance. The one thing he does do is to point to the one with whom this people has to acknowledge.

Lamentations 5:19-22 ¹⁹ You, O LORD, rule forever; Your throne is from generation to generation. ²⁰ Why do You forget us forever? Why do You forsake us so long? ²¹ Restore us to You, O LORD, that we may be restored; Renew our days as of old, ²² Unless You have utterly rejected us *And* are exceedingly angry with us.

What does Jeremiah acknowledge in verse 19?

God is supreme. He has a kingdom that will never end.

But who will not be part of this kingdom from Jeremiah's perspective at this time in history?

None of all who have suffered His wrath. And yet, though the tone of this book is one of despair, this does not mean that Jeremiah didn't understand the hope that is seen in the God who not only judges sin but holds out hope for those He chooses to save.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ²³ Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah would later record these words of a future reign of one who would sit on David's throne.

Jeremiah 23:3-6 ³ "Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ "I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. ⁵ "Behold, *the* days are coming,"

declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

The context here is Israel having a new king as their head. This cannot be speaking about a national Israel, but rather the remnant of all peoples of the world who will come under the title, Israel. The name of this new king, according to Jeremiah, is The Lord our righteousness.

There is only one Lord of righteousness and it is Christ the King who is our only righteousness.

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 1:30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

This is the Righteous Branch of David who will reign as King and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days, Jeremiah says in verse 6, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell in security.

What Judah and Israel is Jeremiah talking about?

The one that bows the knee to Jesus Christ and none other; that people of God who has come under the everlasting covenant with Christ as its head.