



Lamentations

Jesus Christ, the Righteous Branch

by Dana Burkinshaw

January 15, 2020

Meaning of the Name

The Hebrew title of the book is the word *'eka* ("How!") which appears at the beginning of 1:1.

The title of this book in the Septuagint means "Tears of Jeremiah."

F-L-I-G-H-T

F – Jewish tradition attributes authorship of the book to the prophet Jeremiah, though he goes unnamed in the book. The Septuagint and the Jewish Targum point to Jeremiah as the author. Style and content similarities between Jeremiah and Lamentations also point to Jeremiah as the best candidate.

Babylon sacked Jerusalem and the southern kingdom, Judah, in 586 BC; the book was written shortly thereafter.

F-L-I-G-H-T

L – As he grieved the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah is referred to as the weeping prophet. This poetic book reveals a man distressed for a nation under the consequences of its own sin and ends with a prayer for the restoration of the nation from captivity. The book is made up of 5 acrostic poems (poems beginning with a certain letter of the Hebrew alphabet), each a eulogy to the kingdom of Judah.

F-L-I-G-H-T

- I** -Pain of Zion's Fall (1)
a mourning widow
- Plight of Zion's Fall (2)
a weeping daughter
- Purpose of Zion's Fall (3)
an afflicted man
- Pondering Zion's Fall (4)
tarnished gold
- Plea on Behalf of Zion's Fall (5)
a fatherless child

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

4

F-L-I-G-H-T

- G** - The ultimate hope of Christ that provides the one bright spot in Lamentations-the single break in the clouds among 5 funeral dirges-came when Jeremiah recognized God's compassion in the midst of his sorrow: *"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"* (3:22-23). The Hebrew word for "mercies" is *chesed*, which can be translated as "lovingkindness" or "covenant love."

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

5

F-L-I-G-H-T

- G** - It's the kind of love that comes as a by-product of God's covenant with his people. Seventy years after their exile to Babylon, God brought the Jews back to the land because, in his mercy and lovingkindness, he said he would. When God makes a covenant, he keeps it. Even in the worst of times, Jeremiah understood this essential quality of God and praised him for it.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

6

F-L-I-G-H-T

- H** - The events described in the book took place when the Babylonians, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. Jerusalem's walls were taken first, then the temple, palaces, and other buildings followed. More than 4500 Jewish men (and probably 10,000-13,000 women and children) were taken as prisoners and sent to Babylon.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

7

F-L-I-G-H-T

H – The siege of Jerusalem began on July 10, 586 BC. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the 1st century AD, gave a record of the event, echoing 2 Kings 25:1-21, 2 Chron. 36:15-21, and Jer. 52:4-30. Jeremiah had previously predicted all of it, and because of his relentless commitment to proclaiming God’s message, he had been thrown in prison by Zedekiah and his officials. Ironically, Jeremiah was released from prison and set free, while Zedekiah and his cronies went into captivity.

F-L-I-G-H-T

T – **Lamentations is a stirring reminder of two realities: God’s judgment and his grace/love/mercy.** The judgment side gets more exposition here because of its immediate nature – the Jews were still grieving their losses at this moment in history. But, as Jeremiah attested, God’s steadfast faithfulness and mercy are what give us hope when hardship threatens to overwhelm us.

F-L-I-G-H-T

T – **God wants you to turn to him in hard times.** Jerusalem’s downfall resulted from God’s people persistently turning to other sources – nations and idols – for help and protection, instead of trusting God to protect them and sustain them.

F-L-I-G-H-T

T – **Relationship beats religion and rituals any day.** As Jeremiah lamented over how the presence of God’s enemies defiled the temple, he noted how the Jews had misplaced their trust by putting it in a building rather than in the God for whom the building was created. Our spiritual lives should not be about a place but a Person. The temples we create in our lives – work, activities, and even ministry – are empty and vulnerable to destruction.