




WHAT THE
BIBLE
IS ABOUT

2021
1
SESSION

WHAT THE
BBIBLE
Is ABOUT

The book of
Lamentations



The
Wailing Wall
of the
Old Testament

The Western Wall כֶּתֶל (Kotel), Wailing Wall

- Jews of all ages and genders venerate the Western Wall, where an ancient wall 57m long and 19m high is the only remains of the retaining wall surrounding the site of the First and Second Temples. They push papers with prayers (*petek*) into cracks in the wall.
- It dates to the 2nd century BC, and now forms part of a larger wall that surrounds the Muslim Dome of the Rock.
- Lamentations are read yearly to commemorate the burning of the Temple.



The Western Wall (The Wailing Wall)

"It is a touching sight to watch the line of Jews of many nations, in their black gabardines, as a sign of grief, lamenting aloud the ruin of that House whose very memory is still so dear to their race, and reciting the sad verses of Lamentations and suitable Psalms, amid tears, as they fervently kiss the stones."

(Pearlman, 1935)



2021
1
SESSION

MICRV. SALOM.

LAMENTATIONS



Background

“And the Chaldeans burned the king’s house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

“Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained.”

Jeremiah 39:8-9



‘Capture of Jerusalem’ by Chagall, 1956.

HISTORY!



'The Flight of the Prisoners' by James Tissot, c.1896 - c.1902.

The background is a painting titled 'The Flight of the Prisoners' by James Tissot, depicting a city under attack and a large crowd of people fleeing. The scene is filled with smoke and fire, with buildings in the background. In the foreground, a large group of people, including men, women, and children, are shown in various states of distress and flight. Some are carrying bundles on their heads, while others are being led away. The overall atmosphere is one of chaos and suffering.

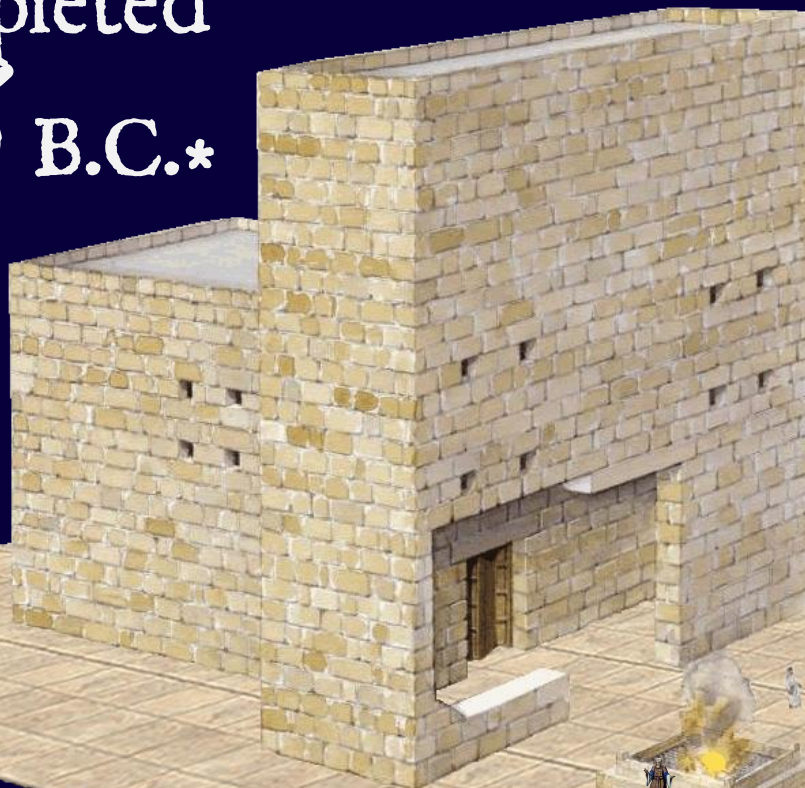
There is no Hebrew words for

HISTORY!

זכירה

Zakira = remembrance

Completed
516 B.C.*



*70 years after Jerusalem fell to Babylon for the final time.

Tisha B'Av

1312 BC



Tisha B'Av

586 BC



The Flight of the Prisoners, James Tissot, 1902

Tisha B'Av

AD 70



Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, Francesco Hayez, 1867

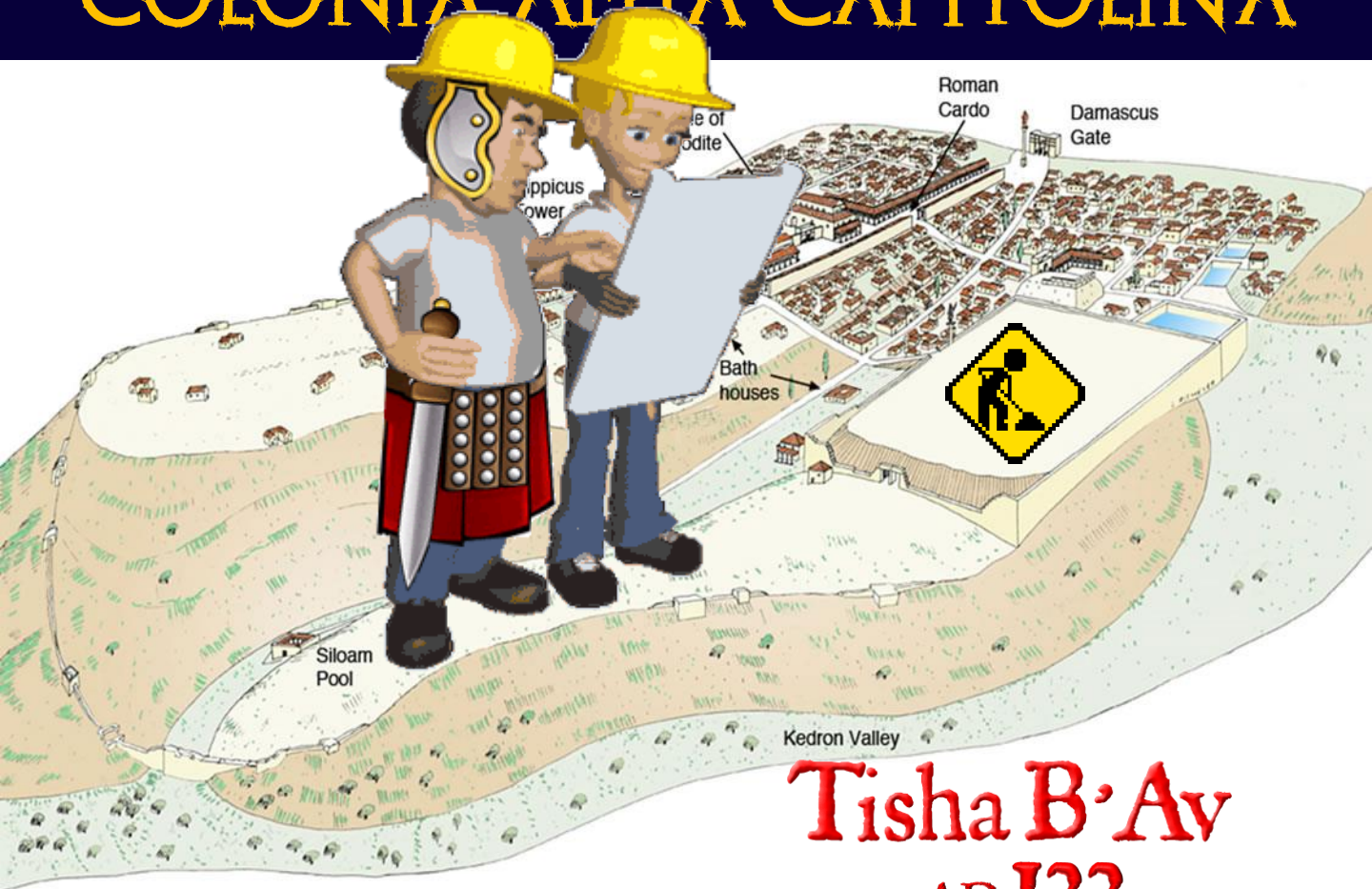
Tisha B'Av

AD 135



The Bar Kokhba Revolt, Peter Dennis, 2017

COLONIA AELIA CAPITOLINA



Tisha B'Av
AD 133

COLONIA AELIA CAPITOLINA



Camp of the
10th Roman
Legion

Hippicus
Tower

Temple of
Aphrodite

Roman
Cardo

Damascus
Gate

Bath
houses

Temple of
Jupiter?

Equestrian
Statue of
Hadrian in
Holy Place

Temple Mount

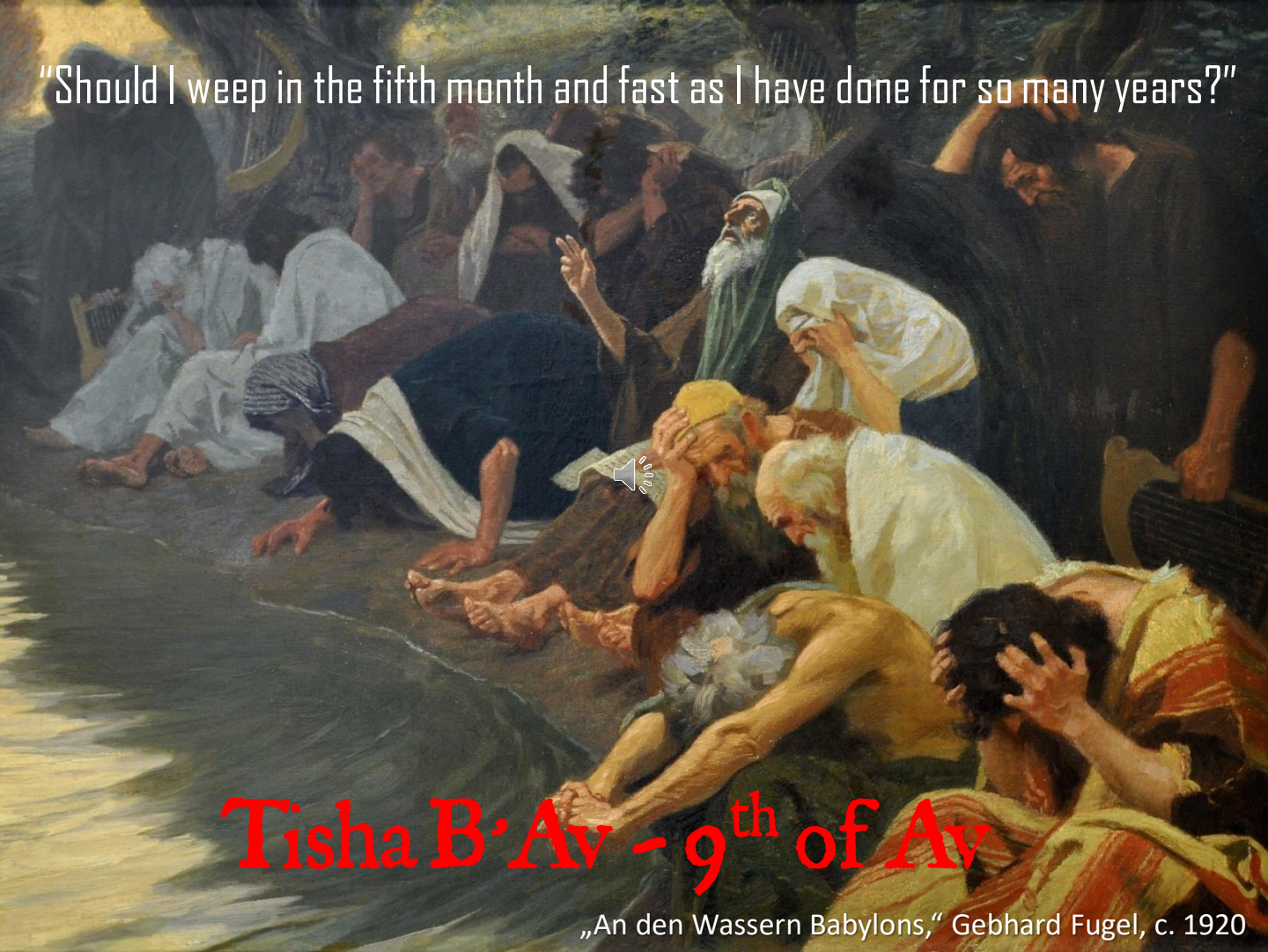
Kedron Valley

Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem **shall** become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.

[Micah 3:12]

Tisha B'Av
AD 136

"Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?"



Tisha B'Av - 9th of Av

„An den Wassern Babels,“ Gebhard Fugel, c. 1920

Tisha B'Av

1096

Pope Urban II declared the First Crusade, murdering masses of Jews (and Muslims).



Tisha B'Av

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Pope Urban II declared the First Crusade, murdering masses of Jews (and Muslims).

1290

Jews expelled from England.



Tisha B'Av

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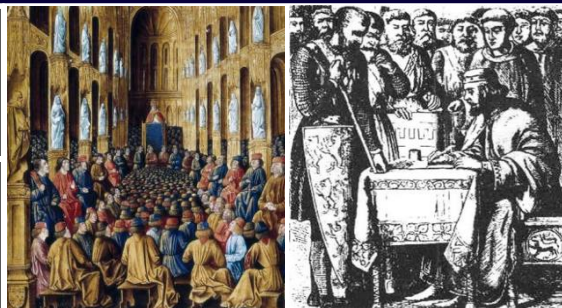
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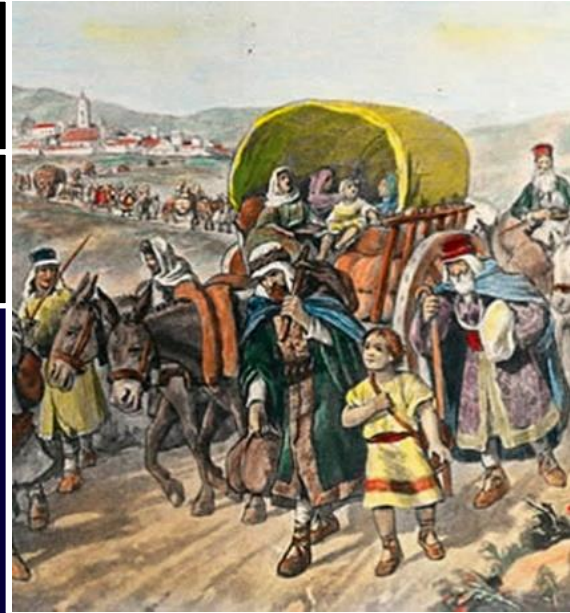
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1941

Nazi Party formally approved Himmler's "Final Solution". (1942-Warsaw Ghetto deport)

“If you
want to
understand
today, you
have to
search
yesterday.”



Pearl Buck (1892-1973)

Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winning writer



The Prophet Jeremiah

- Jeremiah's life (c.650-c.570 BC) is better documented in Scripture than any other prophet. Jewish literature parallels his life with Moses (Deut. 18:18, etc.).
- Rabbinic literature claims Ezekiel as his son.
- The son of Hilkiah, a *kohen* (Jewish priest) from the Benjamin village Anathot, he was called by God c. 626 BC to prophesy of Judah's destruction by northern invaders.
- The Prophet Zephaniah mentored him and his relative Huldah was a contemporary prophetess. Initially a preaching prophet, his unpopular message resulted in plots and persecution. When he complained to God, he is told that things would get worse – and they did.
- Upon predicting that Jerusalem would fall to Babylon, he was cast into a cistern to be forgotten and die, but was saved and imprisoned. The Babylonians freed him in 587 BC. He remained with the newly appointed governors, fleeing with one to Egypt, where he died.

Jeremiah on the ruins of Jerusalem
by Horace Vernet, 1844.



Jeremiah – Chosen by God, Rejected by Men

He proclaimed an unpalatable warning for forty years: this world, this Kingdom, this comfortable way of life is coming to an end!



Where is
Jeremiah
today?
Who is
listening?

'Jeremiah Lamenting the
Destruction of Jerusalem'
by Rembrandt, 1630.



Jeremiah

- rejected by the people
- wept over the city of Jerusalem because of knowledge that destruction was coming
- hated without cause
- ridiculed by the leaders
- rejected by his family (Jer. 11:18–23)
- emphasized a “heart religion” and not just ritual
- taught by means of visual images using common objects and activities
- Jewish leaders rejected Jeremiah and his messages
- ended up in Egyptian exile
- considered a failure in his day
- proved right by history



Jesus

- rejected by the people
- wept over the city of Jerusalem because of knowledge that destruction was coming
- hated without cause
- ridiculed by the leaders
- rejected by His family (John 7:1–8)
- emphasized a “heart religion” and not just ritual
- taught by means of visual images using common objects and activities
- Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and His messages
- ended up on a Roman cross
- considered a failure in His day
- proved right by history

Man of Sorrows

The Messiah is central to every book in the Bible (Psa 40:7; Heb 10:7). In Lamentations, Jeremiah weeping over Jerusalem foreshadows Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows who weeps for His people.



'Jesus weeps over Jerusalem' by Enrique Simonet, 1892.

- “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” Luke 19:43
- “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! Mat 23:37

‘Jésus pleura’ by James Tissot, c.1886.



North of Jerusalem outside the Damascus Gate lie cliffs called ① Golgotha that resemble the face of a skull. To the west of the skull is the ② Garden Tomb, and to the east is a cave called ③ Jeremiah's Grotto. Golgotha, the peak of ancient Mount Moriah, looks down over the city of Jerusalem. Per tradition, Jeremiah sat in this grotto when he wrote the book of Lamentations; there he wept and cried over the desolation of Jerusalem as buildings were leveled and walls torn down.



2

1

3



McNAUGHTON
FINE ART



Gross Stuff - I

- The Bible is a history book. It claims that **eating children** occurred in two sieges, the Aramean siege of Samaria in 842 BC and Nebuchadnezzar's 586 BC Jerusalem siege.
- These were prophesied in Lev. 26:29 and Deut. 28:53-57 (written c. 1451 BC).

29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

30 I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you.

31 I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas.

Leviticus 26:29-31

Lamentations 2:20 and 4:10 and 2 Kings 6:26-29 (the 9th cent. BC Samaritan siege) are fulfillments of prophecies in Lev. 26:29 and Deuteronomy 28:53-57.

Gross Stuff - II

- Another atrocity is the Psalm 137:9, “⁹ Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”
- This is a lament, not a commandment. It refers to the fact that in 586 BC the Edomites preyed on the Judeans being deported to Babylon using this hideous technique.

7 Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem,
Who said, “Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!”

8 O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!

9 Happy the one who takes and dashes
Your little ones against the rock!

Psalm 137 - By the rivers of Babylon

Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land

1 By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.

2 We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.

3 For there those who carried us away
captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us
requested mirth,
Saying, "Sing us *one* of the songs of
Zion!"

4 How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?


5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*

6 If I do not remember you,
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my
mouth—
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of
Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, "Raze *it*, raze *it*,
To its very foundation!"

8 O daughter of Babylon, who are to be
destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you as you
have served us!

9 Happy the one who takes and dashes
Your little ones against the rock!



The LORD'S loving kindness
never cease,
For His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness. (Lam. 3:22–23)
Why should any living mortal, or any man,
Offer complaint in view of his sins?
Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the LORD.

(Lam. 3:39–40)

Five Hymns of Lament

A

Chapter 1: The prophet dwells on the manifold miseries oppressed by which the city sits as a solitary widow weeping sorely.

B

Chapter 2: These miseries are described in connection with the national sins that had caused them.

C

- A. Sins of Jerusalem
- B. Wrath of the LORD
- C. Glimpse of hope

Chapter 3: Speaks of hope for the people of God. The chastisement would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them.

B'

Chapter 4: Laments the ruin and desolation that had come upon the city and temple, but traces it only to the people's sins.

A'

Chapter 5: A prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people.

A(1:1) 1:1 How lonely she is now, the once crowded city!
B(1:2) 1:2 With not one to console her of all her dear ones;
C(1:3) 1:3 Yet where she lives among the nations she finds no place to rest:
D(1:4) 1:4 All her gateways are deserted, her priests groan,
E(1:5) 1:5 The LORD has punished her for her many sins.
F(1:6) 1:6 Her princes, like rams that find no pasture
G(1:7) 1:7 she had no one to help her
H(1:8) 1:8 She herself groans and turns away.
I(1:9) 1:9 Her filth is on her skirt
J(1:10) 1:10 She has seen those nations enter her sanctuary
K(1:11) 1:11 Look O LORD, and see how worthless I have become!
K'(1:12) 1:12 look and see Whether there is any suffering like my suffering
J'(1:13) 1:13 He left me desolate, in pain all the day.
I'(1:14) 1:14 They have settled about my neck, he has brought my strength to its knees
H'(1:15) 1:15 The LORD has trodden in the wine press virgin daughter Judah.
G'(1:16) 1:16 Far from me are all who could console me, any who might revive me
F'(1:17) 1:17 Zion stretched out her hands, but there was no one to console her
E'(1:18) 1:18 I had defied his command
D'(1:19) 1:19 My priests and my elders perished in the city
C'(1:20) 1:20 Look, O LORD, upon my distress
B'(1:21) 1:21 there is no one to console me
A'(1:22) 1:22 My groans are many, and I am sick at heart.

First Song

A: Lamentation.

E: Rebellion.

I: Dirty.

B: No one to console.

F: No one to console.

J: Devastation.

C: Sufferings.

G: No one to console.

K: See my suffering.

D: Priests.

H: Her sufferings.

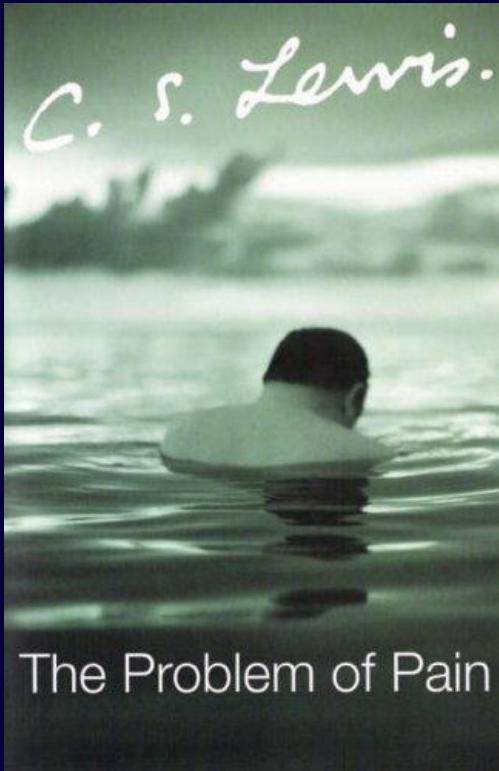
The Acrostic Structure

The first four chapters use an acrostic structure:

- Chapters 1, 2, and 4 consist of 22 verses each, one for each of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse starts with the next letter.
- Chapter 3 is the fullest confession of sin, the sin of Judah. That has sixty-six verses, six is the number of man one short of seven, incomplete. Six is also the number of sin. In this case, the first three verses start with alph, the next three verses start with beth. So Chapter 3 is an acrostic but in groups of three.
- For some reason, the last chapter of the book, Chapter 5, also has 22 verses, but they do not form an acrostic because the chapter is divided into two parts. However, there is a hidden surprise.

Theme

- Lamentations combines elements of the *qinah*, a funeral dirge for the loss of the city, and the "communal lament" pleading for the restoration of its people. It reflects the view, traceable to the Sumerian literature of a thousand years earlier, that the destruction of the holy city was a punishment by God for the communal sin of its people.
- Beginning with the reality of disaster, Lamentations concludes with the bitter possibility that God may have finally rejected Israel (chapter 5:22).
- Nevertheless, it also affirms confidence that the mercies of Yahweh (the God of Israel) never end, but are new every morning (3:22–33).



“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Lewis argues that not only is it possible to find God when life is hard, but that it is in some sense easier than when life is good.

Outline

Jerusalem's Devastation

(Lamentations 1)

- Jeremiah's Sorrow (1:1–11)
- Jerusalem's Sorrow (1:12–22)

The Lord's Anger Explained

(Lamentations 2)

- The LORD'S Perspective (2:1–10)
- A Human Perspective (2:11–19)
- Jeremiah's Prayer (2:20–22)

Jeremiah's Griefs Expressed

(Lamentations 3)

- Jeremiah's Distress (3:1–20)
- Jeremiah's Hope (3:21–38)
- Jeremiah's Counsel/Prayer (3:39–66)

God's Wrath Detailed

(Lamentations 4)

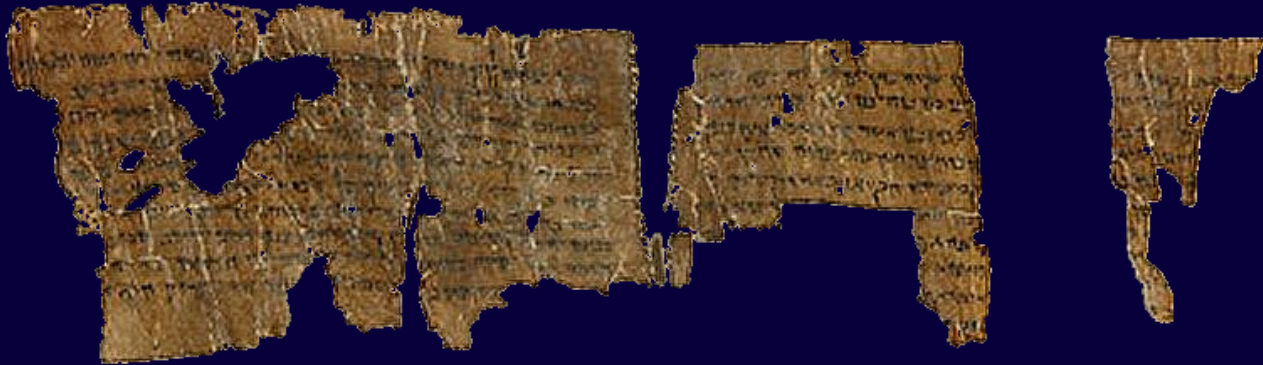
- For Jerusalem(4:1-20).
- For Edom (4:21-22).

The Remnant's Prayers

(Lamentations 5)

- To Be Remembered by the LORD (5:1-18).
- A plea to Be Restored by the LORD (5:19-22).

The book of Lamentations



Fragments found at Qumran Caves

Fragment No.	Location	Contents
3Q3	Cave 3	Lamentations 1:10–12; 3:53–62
4Q111 (above)	Cave 4	Lamentations 1:1–15, 17, 16, 18; 2:5
5Q6	Cave 5	Lamentations 4:5–8, 11–16, 19–22; Lamentations 5:1–13, 16–17
5Q7	Cave 5	Lamentations 4:17–20

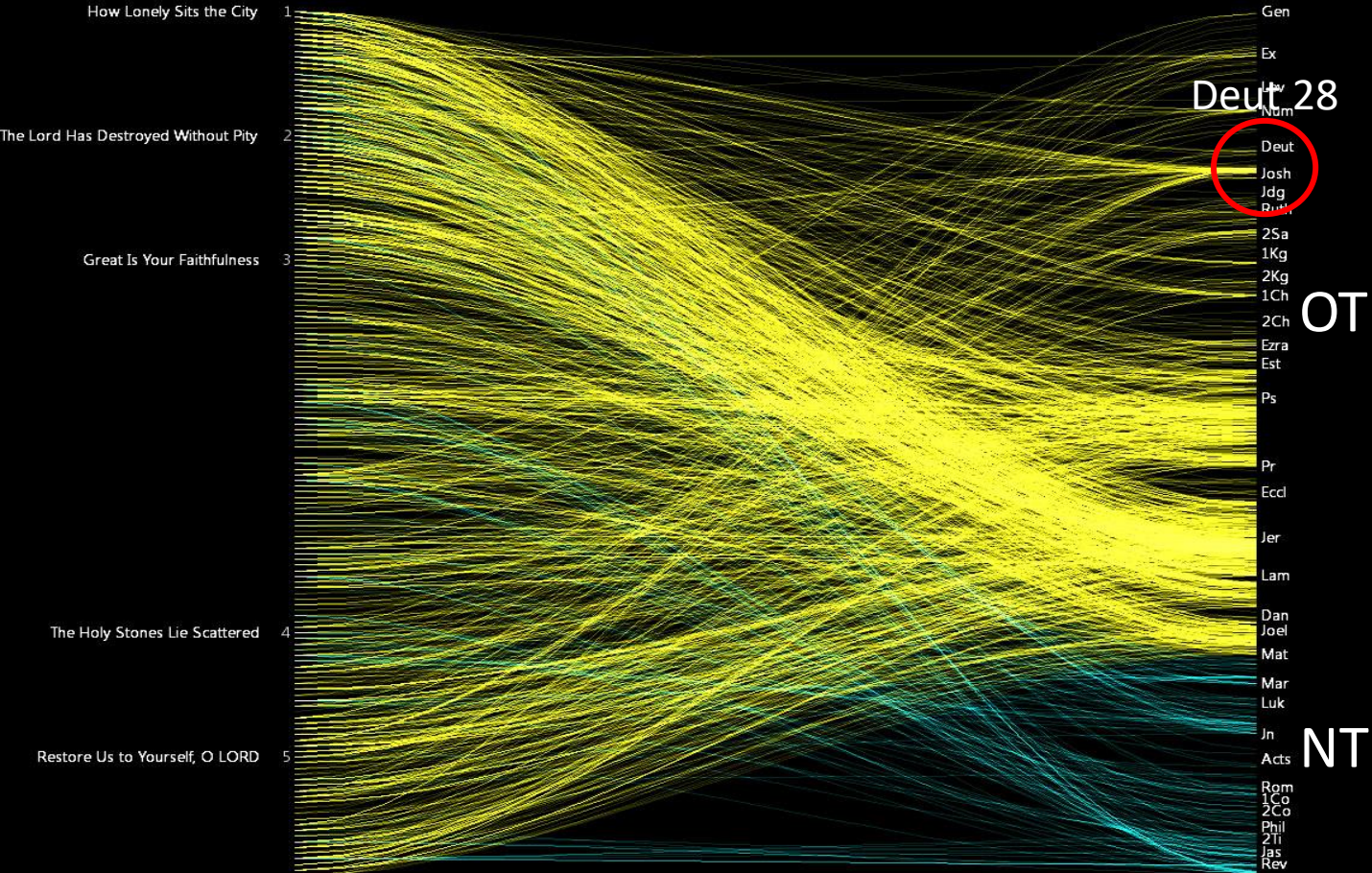
Recitation

- Lamentations is recited annually by Jews on the fast day of Tisha B'Av ("Ninth of Av"), mourning the destruction of both the First Temple by Babylon in 586 BC and the Second Temple by Rome in AD 70.
- The Scroll of Lamentations (*Megillat Eikhah*) These voices interact, producing a drama, or rather a series of dramas, from within the dialogues of which the text is composed.
- Lamentations is the third of the five Megillot or Scrolls (See also Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, and Esther)
- While our ignorance of Lamentations is to be lamented, it has to be admitted that there are reasons for our failure to get to know the book better. Though it is a book of poetry, closely related in style and theme to the Bible's Wisdom Literature, it is found among the Major Prophets, and easy to neglect among its larger neighbours. But the main reason we tend to neglect Lamentations is that – apart from some statements in chapter 3 – the sombreness of its tone is almost unrelieved.

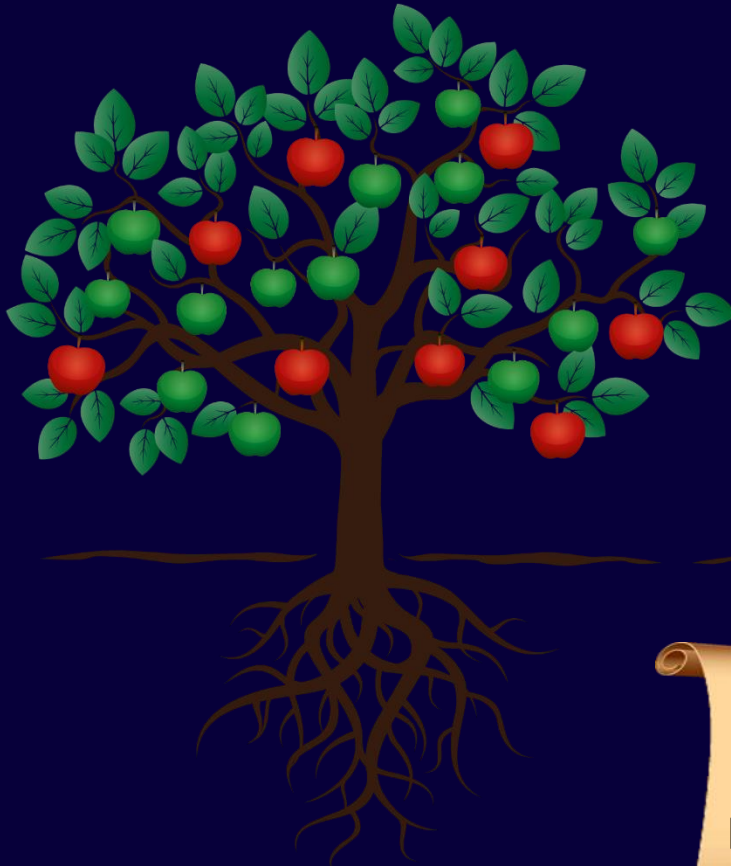
Cross-references with the Bible

Lamentations

Bible



Parallels with Deuteronomy



She dwells among
the nations; she finds
no resting place.
(Lam. 1:3)

Lamentations

Deuteronomy

Among those nations you will
find no repose, no resting
place for the sole of your foot.
(Deut. 28:65)

Parallels with Deuteronomy I

DEUTERONOMY	LAMENTATIONS
28:65 Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot.	1:3 She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place.
28:25 The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies.	1:6 In weakness they have fled before the pursuer. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven.
28:41 You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep them, because they will go into captivity.	1:18 My young men and maidens have gone into exile.
28:37 You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the Lord will drive you.	2:15 All who pass your way clap their hands at you; they scoff and shake their heads at daughter Jerusalem.
28:50 . . . a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young.	2:21 Young and old lie together in the dust of the streets.

Parallels with Deuteronomy II

DEUTERONOMY	LAMENTATIONS
28:56-57 The most gentle and sensitive among you will begrudge the husband she loves and her own son or daughter the afterbirth from her womb and the children she bears . . . for she intends to eat them secretly during the siege.	4:10 With their own hands compassionate women have cooked their own children
28:65 Among those nations you will find no repose.	5:5 We are weary and find no rest.
28:30 You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravish her.	5:11 Women have been ravished in Zion, and virgins in the towns of Judah.
28:50 . . . a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old	5:12 Elders are shown no respect.
28:26 Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.	5:18 Mount Zion . . . lies desolate, with jackals prowling over it . . .

DEUTERONOMY 28

BLESSINGS

AND

CURSES



Deuteronomy 28

Blessings

Deu 28:1 "And if you faithfully obey the voice of YHWH your Elohim, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, YHWH your Elohim will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of YHWH your Elohim.

Curses

Deu 28:15 "But if you will not obey the voice of YHWH your Elohim or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.