

Jeremiah 20-52; Lamentations

(CFM Jer. 30-33; 36; Lam. 1; 3)

Messages concerning Judah's kings and false prophets: Jeremiah 21-23

1. Oracles concerning Judah's kings (Jer. 21:1-23:8).
 - a. Zedekiah's request and Jeremiah's response (Jer. 21:1-10).
 - b. Messages to the government leaders (Jer. 21:11-14).
 - c. A warning for the king (Jer. 22:1-5).
 - d. A message of coming judgment on the royal palace (Jer. 22:6-9).
 - e. A message about King Jehoahaz (Shallum) (Jer. 22:10-12).
 - f. A message about King Jehoiakim's behavior (Jer. 22:13-17).
 - g. A message about King Jehoiakim's death (Jer. 22:18-19).
 - h. A call to lament Jerusalem's destruction (Jer. 22:20-23).
 - i. The prophesied exile of King Jehoiachin (Coniah) (Jer. 22:24-27).
 - j. The fate of King Jehoiachin's (Coniah's) posterity (Jer. 22:28-30).
 - k. A condemnation of Judah's irresponsible kings and leaders (Jer. 23:1-4).
 - l. The promise of a righteous king (Jer. 23:5-6).
 - m. God's covenantal promise of a return to the land (Jer. 23:7-8).
 - n. Jeremiah castigates false prophets (Jer. 23:9-40).
 - i. The abundance of adulterous false prophets in Judah (Jer. 23:9-12).
 - ii. The depravity of Judah's false prophets (Jer. 23:13-15).
 - iii. The dangerous message of the false prophets (Jer. 23:16-17).
 - iv. The unauthorized character of the false prophets (Jer. 23:18-22).
 - v. The false prophets' false dreams (Jer. 23:25-32).
 - vi. The Lord tells them they will be forgotten and cast out (Jer. 23:33-40).

Jeremiah's Message to Help the Jews Prepare for the Exile: Jeremiah 24-29

1. The two baskets of figs (Jer. 24). [This is another symbolic prophecy, similar to the other [symbolic acts of Jeremiah](#), such as the yoke,¹ the earthen bottle,² linen girdle,³ and the potter's wheel.⁴

¹ Jer. 27.

² Jer. 19-20.

³ Jer. 13.1-11.

⁴ Jer. 18.

- a. Those carried away into Babylon during the siege that took Jeconiah (Dec 9, 598-Mar 15/16, 197)⁵ are the “good figs” (Jer. 24.1-5).⁶
2. Indictments of Judah and the nations (Jer. 25).
 - a. The length of the exile and Babylon's fate (Jer. 25:1-14).
 - b. Yahweh's cup of wrath for the nations (Jer. 25:15-29).
 - c. Universal judgment to come (Jer. 25:30-31).
 - d. The extent of the coming judgment (Jer. 25:32-33).
 - e. The coming judgment on national leaders (Jer. 25:34-38).
3. Jeremiah is arraigned, tried, and acquitted (Jer. 26).
 - a. The unsuccessful attempt to kill Jeremiah (Jer. 26:1-19).
 - b. King Jehoiakim sends his guys to Egypt to assassinate Urijah (Jer. 26.20-24).
 - i. Ahikam saves Jeremiah's life (Jer. 26.24).⁷

⁵ Also known as Jehoiachin or Coniah, this king only reigned for three months. He succeeded Jehoiakim as king of Judah after raiders from surrounding lands invaded Jerusalem and killed his father. It is likely that the king of Babylon was behind this effort, as a response to Jehoiakim's revolt, starting sometime after 601 BCE. Three months and ten days after Jeconiah became king, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar II seized Jerusalem, with the intention to take high class Judahite captives and assimilate them into Babylonian society. On March 15/16th, 597 BCE, Jeconiah, his entire household and three thousand Jews were exiled to Babylon. According to 2 Kings 25:27–30, Jeconiah was released from prison "in the 37th year of the exile", in the year that Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach) came to the throne, and given a prestigious position at court. The author of Matthew 1 puts this king into the genealogical line of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1.11).

⁶ This report is coming some twelve years after the death of good King Josiah, in the days of Zedekiah, who will prove to be Judah's last king. King Jehoiachin, Josiah's grandson, has already been taken as a prisoner of King Nebuchadnezzar, along with a number of the key skilled craftsmen of Judah, including the golden vessels from the temple (2 Kgs 24:13). It is easy to see how many in Judah were perhaps thinking that with the removal of King Jehoiachin, the temple's golden vessels, and the skilled workers of the nation, that now the worst is over and the Babylonians will think that this is a tough-enough lesson for God to impose on the land of Judah! No, they conjecture, things will calm down, and Jeremiah's predictions of the extent of the coming destruction will not take place—or so they hope. Things will normalize very soon, for the worst just has to be past already... As Jeremiah describes what he has seen of these two baskets of figs, **the assumption among the people would be that those who have already been exiled were the bad figs in God's sight, but those who remain in the land constitute the good figs. But that is not the case at all.** Now, after thirty years of ministry, Jeremiah finally has some good news about “building” or “planting” that had been promised in Jer. 1.10 as he was called. But the good news is for those who have already been exiled to Babylon with King Jehoiachin; they are the ones likened to good figs (v. 5). God will set his eyes to “watch over” them for good (v. 6; cf. Amos 9:4), and ultimately he will bring them back home to their land in Judah (v. 6b), as he had pledged to the patriarchs and as later confirmed in the Sinaitic covenant and in the promises made to David. Why our Lord uses figs here instead of some other fruit is not clear, but these suggestions can be made: 1) There were two fig harvests each year, which would lend itself to the discussion of a second wave of exiles, or 2) ripe figs can be quite delectable, whereas rotten figs are inedible and noxious. Walter C. Kaiser, *Walking the Ancient Paths: A Commentary on Jeremiah*, Lexham Press, 2019, p. 164-165.

⁷ Ahikam was a true friend to Jeremiah. Elder Rasband said, “Our most prized friend is Jesus Christ Himself. Is there any greater assurance than His “I will be on your right hand and on your left, ... and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88)? So often those “angels round about” are our friends... Why do I emphasize that? Because in today's world **so many people willingly trade those friendships for video characters and quick text messages.** They spend their time identifying with television personalities who for them are only faces on a screen. Think about it. True friendships are based on love of God and sharing that love with others.

4. Jeremiah's yokes and messages of servitude (Jer. 27).
 - a. Jeremiah puts a yoke on himself (Jer. 27.2).
 - b. The nation who will not wear the yoke of Babylon will be punished with the sword, famine, and pestilence (Jer. 27.8).
 - c. Your prophets all lie to you! (Jer. 27.9-10).
 - d. Serve the king of Babylon, and live! (Jer. 27.17).
5. Jeremiah and Hananiah have a showdown (Jer. 28).
 - a. Jeremiah foretells the death of Hananiah (Jer. 28.16).
 - b. Hananiah dies (Jer. 28.17).
6. Jeremiah's letters to the exiles (Jer. 29).
 - a. Encouragement to settle in Babylon for a long captivity (Jer. 29.1-23).

From my earliest days growing up in the Cottonwood Stake in the Salt Lake Valley, friends have been a special blessing to me. The closest friends made in my youth remain my friends to this day. We have always been there for each other. And I have been grateful to make new friends who have been a strength and blessing to me as well.

When I think of friendship, I think of the example of President Thomas S. Monson. Consider this teaching of our beloved prophet. He said: "Friends help to determine your future. You will tend to be like them and to be found where they choose to go. Remember, the path we follow in this life leads to the path we follow in the next. In a survey made in selected wards and stakes of the Church, we learned a most significant fact: Those persons whose friends married in the temple usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. This same fact pertained also to full-time missionary service. The influence of one's friends appeared to be a highly dominant factor—even equal to parental urging, classroom instruction, or proximity to a temple. The friends you choose will either help or hinder your success." (Thomas S. Monson, "In Harm's Way," April 1998 General Conference)

Those are sobering words. Ronald A. Rasband, ["True Friendship," October 2016 General Conference](#), emphasis added.

Commenting on this passage, one scholar explained, "Jer. 26.24 offers a note on how Jeremiah has done in light of the tragic outcome of Uriah's life. The point is that Jeremiah did not meet the same end because of the protection of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, who supported him. **This same Ahikam must have been a rather influential figure in Jerusalem, for six members of his family were known to be active during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah.** For example, his father Shaphan had been a scribal secretary to King Josiah (2 Kgs 22:12, 14; 2 Chr 34:20), if the name refers to the same man. Moreover, he and his father had served as members of the high-ranking delegation that King Josiah had sent to the prophetess Huldah after the scroll of the law was found in the temple. Three of Shaphan's sons were also named: Ahikam, Elasa, and Gemariah. Elasa also served as one of Zedekiah's messengers to Nebuchadnezzar as well as serving as the messenger who carried Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon (29:3). Ahikam does not appear to have been part of Jehoiakim's government cabinet, as his brother Gemariah was, but Ahikam's son, Gedaliah, appears to have been chief minister in King Zedekiah's cabinet and later was named by the Babylonians as the governor of Judah under the Babylonians after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (39:14; 40:5). **In general, this family seems to favor the prophet Jeremiah. Whether their attitude comes from the remaining influence of Josiah's reign and those who surrounded him is unknown.** It is this same Gemariah who puts a room at Baruch's disposal (36:10, 25) and who also tries with all in his power to prevent King Jehoiakim from cutting up and throwing Jeremiah's scroll into the fire. One more generation is also active in protecting and favoring Jeremiah— Gemariah's son, Micaiah. He is the first person who hears Baruch read the scroll and reports the same to the officials (36:11). Given all this family lineage with their high standing in the community, it is no wonder then that they favor Jeremiah." Kaiser, p. 177, emphasis added.

- b. Judgment on Shemaiah⁸ and his descendants (Jer. 29.24-32).

Jeremiah's Book of Consolation: Jeremiah 30-33

1. The restoration of all Israel (Jer. 30-31).
 - a. The superscription and introductory oracle (Jer. 30.1-3).
 - b. Yahweh's patience and grace (Jer. 30:4—31:22).
 - i. “In that day- declares the Lord of Hosts, I will break the yoke from off your neck and I will rip off your bonds” (Jer. 30.8 JPS trans).
 - ii. A promise of a future Davidic King (Jer. 30.9).⁹
 - iii. “I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of the captivity, and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest” (Jer. 30.10).
 - iv. “All thy lovers have forgotten thee” (Jer. 30.14).¹⁰ This reminds us of the words of Hosea: “Pursue her lovers as she will, she shall not overtake them; and seek them as she may, she shall never find them. Then she will say, “I will go and return to my first husband, for then I fared better than now” (Hosea 2.8-9 JPS trans, Hosea 2.7 in the KJV).
 - v. Israel will grow and expand (Jer. 30.18-20).
 - vi. “Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jer. 30.22).¹¹
 - c. The future glory of Israel (Jer. 31:23-40).
 - i. “I have watched over them... to pluck up... to break down... to throw down... to destroy... so I will watch over... to build... to plant” (Jer. 31.28). This has Christian meaning/themes that were used in the early Christian church.¹²

⁸ Shemaiah the Nehelamite is apparently a prominent member of the exile who wrote to Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to demand that Jeremiah be rebuked. He is otherwise unknown. Zephaniah son of Maaseiah is the deputy priest of the Temple, who was later put to death after the fall of Jerusalem. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 985.

⁹ The oracle alludes to the exodus tradition by promising that God will restore Israel from its oppressive slavery to other nations so that it might serve God and its Davidic king. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 986. Christians will interpret verses like these to the Savior Jesus Christ, the one true king.

¹⁰ Some Jewish commentators see this as a reference to the nations Israel has appealed for assistance against Babylon, that is, Egypt. *The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 986.

¹¹ President Nelson quoted this passage in the announcement of 17 new temples planned to be built in the April 2022 General Conference address “[Now is the Time](#).”

¹² Bruegemann relates: “We have pondered at some length that the structural assumption of the Book of Jeremiah (signaled in 1:10) is a twofold movement *into the abyss and out of the abyss*. That is, the lived reality of Jerusalem is outlined in Jeremiah and understood both in and out of the abyss as the will of YHWH (see Jer 31:28). That twofold movement is evident everywhere in the New Testament, as, for example, in the primal Christian hymn of 1 Corinthians 15:3–4: “that Christ died . . . that he was raised on the third day.” **Thus the theological drama of displacement and restoration is readily transposed, in Christian testimony, into crucifixion and resurrection.** Another counterpart is found in John 2:19–22. The *destruction of the temple* (read: plucking up and tearing down) and the *raising of the temple* (read: building and planting) turn out now *to be a reference to “his body” in Christ’s death and resurrection*. In this way, the dramatic movement of Jeremiah (more so than anywhere else in the Old Testament) readily becomes the Friday– Sunday dramatic narrative of the church. **It is clear that Jeremiah’s**

- ii. Paying for sins: “In those days they shall say no more, “The Fathers have eaten sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on the edge, but every one shall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on the edge” (Jer. 31.29-30).¹³
- iii. A New Covenant: “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel” (Jer. 31.31).¹⁴

2. Jeremiah's purchase of land (Jer. 32).¹⁵

cruciality for New Testament faith consists not in particular citations but in the imaginative redescription of the crisis of Jerusalem according to the large purposes of YHWH. Walter Brueggemann, [*The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*](#), Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 191-192.

¹³ This passage, as well as one similar in Ezekiel 18.1-9, is emphasizing a radical shift in Israel’s thinking about sin and accountability. Rather than the children paying for the past transgressions of the fathers (corporate punishment), this passage introduces the idea that we pay for the things we have done. James Kugel explains, “This passage is remarkable in part (for several reasons)... **this passage (changes the views) of vicarious or deferred punishment, that is, the notion that people are sometimes punished for the sins of others, particularly their own forebears. This was a commonplace in the ancient Near East.** How better to understand the suffering of apparently innocent people than to suppose that they were being punished for something that their parents, or grandparents, or still more remote ancestors, had done? It is apparently in this sense as well that God is described as “visiting the punishment of the parents on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject Me” (Exod. 20:5). Indeed, the Deuteronomistic historian’s idea that it was the “sin of Manasseh” (2 Kings 21:10–16), Josiah’s grandfather, that caused the fall of Jerusalem in the generation after Josiah likewise presumes the idea of vicarious punishment (although Deut. 24:16 specifically rejected vicarious punishment, at least in human jurisprudence). What (Jeremiah and) Ezekiel assert here is quite the opposite. It is not a matter of the parents “eating sour grapes,” racking up a big tab of sins, and their sons paying the bill (Jer. 31:30). God holds each person responsible for his or her own actions. Indeed, even the person who sins is not necessarily doomed: “But if the wicked person turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all My statutes and does what is right and just, he will live; he will not die. None of the transgressions he has committed will be counted against him. By virtue of the righteousness that he has done, he will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? says the Lord GOD. Do I not instead [take pleasure] in his turning from his ways and living? (Ezek. 18:21–23) Here truly was an important message of consolation for the exiled community—and a sharp break with an ancient conception of divine justice.” James Kugel, [*How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*](#), Free Press, 2007, p. 609-611.

¹⁴ A new covenant (בְּרִית הַדְּשָׁה) will be cut with Israel and Judah. The fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in stages. First, in the universal sense, this prophecy was fulfilled by Christ. On the eve of his arrest, at the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples celebrated, through the symbolism of the Passover meal, the miraculous deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and the destruction of Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea — events that are types of the Atonement, which delivers us from the bondage of sin and death. Joseph Smith, in a letter in 1833, taught that in a more specific sense the “new covenant” was not completely fulfilled in the meridian of time: “Christ, in the days of His flesh, proposed to make a covenant with them, but they rejected Him and His proposals, and in consequence thereof, they were broken off, and no covenant was made with them at that time. But their unbelief has not rendered the promise of God of none effect: no, for there was another day limited in David, which was the day of His power; and then His people, Israel, should be a willing people; —and He would write His law in their hearts, and print it in their thoughts; their sins and their iniquities He would remember no more.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 13-18.) David Seely, [*Studies in Scripture, Volume 4: 1 Kings – Malachi*](#), (edited by Kent Jackson), Deseret Book, 1993.

¹⁵ **Jeremiah's attempt to redeem family property in Anathoth.** The tenth year of King Zedekiah would be 588 BCE when the **Babylonian army invaded Judah a second time to put down the Judean revolt. Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah for treason because of his claims that God had given Jerusalem into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.** He was apparently arrested when he attempted to leave the city during a lull in the fighting to redeem family property

- a. Jeremiah is imprisoned by Zedekiah (Jer. 32:1-5).¹⁶
- b. The official land transaction (Jer. 32:6-15).¹⁷
 - i. Jeremiah's instructions are specific: put the documentation of the land purchase in an earthen jar, seal it with pitch, for this land will again be possessed by our descendants (Jer. 32:14-15).¹⁸
- c. Jeremiah's prayer asking for clarification (Jer. 32:16-25).

in Anathoth (Jer 37.11-21). Jer. 32.6-27 is the [haftarah](#) for the [parashah](#) of [Be-har](#) (Lev. 25.1-26.2), which relates the laws concerning the redemption of property in sabbatical and jubilee years. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 992.

¹⁶ The tenth year of King Zedekiah would be 588 BCE when the Babylonian army invaded Judah a second time to put down the Judean revolt. Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah for treason because of his claims that God had given Jerusalem into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. He was apparently arrested when he attempted to leave the city during a lull in the fighting to redeem family property in Anathoth (see Jer. 37.11-21). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 992. The legal procedure here is similar to what is evident in the Book of Ruth. Hanamel appears to be in need of money—in this period, silver ingots that are weighed out, not coin—and thus turns to a kinsman to “redeem” the property, which thus will not be lost to the family. But **the economic transaction in this instance is directed by God with the purpose of having the prophet purchase the land as a symbolic act, signifying that after the impending destruction a time will come when the Judahites will again possess their lands.** Robert Alter, [The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary](#), Volume 2, W.W. Norton & Co., 2019, p. 969, emphasis added. Jeremiah's cousin Hanamel is the messenger who carries this request for the family. Just as Yahweh predicted, Hanamel comes into the court of guard of the palace (v.8), where he makes his formal proposal to Jeremiah to “possess” and “redeem” this land in the territory of Benjamin, some two or so miles north of Jerusalem. It not clear what sort of land Jeremiah is purchasing for a priestly family, for priestly families generally were not allowed to own land (Num 18:20–24). Some suggest that some Levitical cities, of which Anathoth might be one, had pasture- lands attached to them for raising sheep, goats, and cattle (Lev 25:34; Num 35:5). Or perhaps this property had come to the priestly family through marriage. Kaiser, p. 212.

¹⁷ God's command to purchase a family plot in Anathoth is **another example of the symbolic acts found in this book** (13:1–4; 16:1–13; 19:1–15). Long ago, in the days of Abraham, God had the patriarch purchase land in Canaan (Gen 23) as a burial plot for Sarah, for it, too, was a sign that God would one day give the land to the people of Israel. **What makes this command difficult for Jeremiah to act on is that there is almost total certainty that Nebuchadnezzar will soon enter the city and all will be lost to the Babylonians. So what is the use of investing in land?** Back in Jer. 12.6, where we last heard anything about Jeremiah's relatives, relationships between the relatives and this prophet were not going well at all; in fact, **the relatives from Anathoth were trying to find a way to kill him**, for they must have assumed that he had lost his mind by prophesying the way he had. He is an embarrassment to them. In the mean- time, due to his prophetic calling, Jeremiah has been required by Yahweh to remove himself from all family weddings and funerals (Jer. 16.5–9), so it is a surprise when an appeal comes from his family to bail them out of their trouble by purchasing land in his hometown of Anathoth. **The law calls for a kinsman to redeem any land that is likely to pass out of the control of the family** (Lev 25.25). It appears that this is what drives the family to ask Jeremiah to purchase the ancestral property. **Is this a sign that an unrecorded reconciliation with the family has taken place in the meantime**, or, instead, does this indicate that Jeremiah's family is desperate and has no other options but to come to him and, as it were, eat humble pie and beg Jeremiah to rescue them in their financial plight? It is not clear either whether Jeremiah is the first one approached in the family. All we know is that is now Jeremiah's “right” (משפט) “to redeem” (גאל) the field as “kinsmen redeem” (Jer. 32.6-7). Kaiser, p. 211-212, emphasis added.

¹⁸ The instructions given by the prophet to Baruch come from Yahweh himself (v.14). Baruch is to take both documents and place them in an earthenware jar, which was no doubt sealed with pitch, as evidenced from examples from Elephantine and Qumran's DSS. This is to protect the contents, for they are to last a long time, since “houses, fields and vineyards will once again be bought in this land” (v. 15), declares Yahweh. Therefore, Jeremiah's purchase will have very long-range implications for the exiled Judeans coming back into the land at some distant time in the future. The picture of the present distress will not prevail, for the dislocation of Israel and Judah will one day come to an end as Yahweh relocates them in the very land they had left. Kaiser, p. 212-213.

- d. Yahweh's reply to Jeremiah's prayer (Jer. 32:26-35).
 - e. Yahweh's promised salvation (Jer. 32:36-44).
 - i. "As I have brought this terrible disaster upon this people, so I am going to bring upon them the vast good fortune which I have promised for them... for I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord" (Jer. 31.42-44 JPS trans).
3. Jeremiah prophesies that Judah and Israel will be gathered (Jer. 33).
- a. "I will cure them"... Israel and Judah will return... "I will cleanse them!" (Jer. 33.6-9).
 - b. They will be to God a name, a joy, a praise and an honor (Jer. 33.9).
 - c. A Branch of righteousness will grow up unto David and he will execute judgment (Jer. 33.15).
 - d. "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33.17). This can be tied directly to the promise of the Lord through the mouth of Nathan when he said to David, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7.16).
 - e. "**I will multiply the seed of David my servant!**" (Jer. 33.22). Abinadi explains that the believers are the seed of Christ. Christ is the Davidic King (Mosiah 15.11).¹⁹
 - f. God promises to remember the seed of Jacob and David: "I will restore their fortunes and take them back in love" (Jer. 33.26 JPS trans).²⁰

Broken and kept covenants: Jeremiah 34-36

- 1. Covenant unfaithfulness (Jer. 34).
 - a. King Zedekiah's unfaithfulness and fate (Jer. 34:1-7).
 - b. The Jerusalemites' unfaithfulness and fate (Jer. 34:8-22).
- 2. Covenant faithfulness (Jer. 35).
 - a. Jeremiah's meeting with the Rechabites (Jer. 35.1-11).²¹

¹⁹ Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that **all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed**, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God. For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, **are they not his seed?** (Mosiah 15.11-12, emphasis added).

²⁰ The KJV reads, "for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." (Jer. 33.26). The covenant with David (Jer. 33.19-22) and the Levites (Jer. 33.21) is equated with the covenant that ensures the stability of the cosmos (Gen. 9.8-17; cf. Exod. 31.16-17; Ps. 89.20-38). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 996.

²¹ Hugh Nibley had this to say concerning the Rechabites: "Well, what happened to Jeremiah? I mentioned that he dictated and circulated a book. Then in chapter 35 he tested the integrity of the Rechabites who were very important people. Chapter 35 tells us how he dealt with the Rechabites (they come out earlier in the history of Israel). This tells us that he set them up to the Jews as an example of integrity. The Rechabites were given a permanent position in the temple. **Lehi and his family were Rechabites; they joined that particular movement. They were the people who went out into the wilderness and tried to live the gospel in its purity out there.**"

- i. “All your days you will dwell in tents” (Jer. 35.7).
 - b. Jeremiah's rebukes of the Judahites (Jer. 35:12-17).²²
 - c. Jeremiah's promise to the Rechabites (Jer. 35:18-19).²³
3. Jehoiakim’s Burning of Jeremiah’s scroll (Jer. 36).²⁴
 - a. The fourth year of Jehoiakim.²⁵ This would be 605 BCE.

Chapter 35 of Jeremiah is the official history, you might say, of the Rechabites.” Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 1, Lecture 6, 1 Ne. 1; Jeremiah 29: Souvenirs from Lehi’s Jerusalem, emphasis added. Margaret Barker shares this concerning this religious group: “**The Rechabite who tried to save James was one of a priestly family.** In the time of Jeremiah they had been ascetics, refusing to build houses or to plant crops, and abstaining from wine (Jer.35.6-7). John the Baptist, also of a priestly family, abstained from wine all his life and lived in the desert. He could well have been a Rechabite. There is a work of uncertain date, the *History of the Rechabites*, extant in many ancient languages but probably originating in Hebrew. The present form of the text is Christian, but underlying it is a pre-Christian original which tells how **the Rechabites left Jerusalem after the king who succeeded Josiah [the king who purged the temple in about 621 BCE]** had tried to persuade them to abandon their way of life. This is described as ‘forsaking the LORD and abandoning the covenant’ (*History of the Rechabites* 10). Abstaining from wine must have been the outward sign of a particular religious tradition. They had been rescued from prison by angels and led to a paradise place, a holy land. **They were called the Blessed Ones**, and no ordinary mortals were able to visit them. Their assembly was like the angels of heaven, and the angels of God lived with them. **They were dressed in garments of glory and they offered prayer day and night.** Their wives accompanied them, but they lived apart. Who might these Rechabites have been and how did they come to be called the Blessed Ones? Perhaps we have here the memory of another *rechab*, the chariot throne in the temple which the chosen few were able to contemplate and thus achieve the angelic state. The sons of *rechab* would have been priests devoted to the heavenly chariot throne, and when the temple ‘reformers’ had wanted them to abandon their traditions, they refused. They left Jerusalem for another place, where they lived a monastic existence, the life of the angels. The Talmud records that they were also known as *nozerim* ‘the diligent observers’, a significant name, perhaps, because the Christians were known as Nazoreans. **It was one of these Rechabites who tried to prevent the death of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Christians and a guardian of the secret tradition**, a man, says Eusebius, ‘universally regarded as the most righteous of men because of the heights of philosophy and religion which he scaled in his life’ (*History* 2.23).” Margaret Barker, *The Secret Tradition*, p. 46-47. Accessed 9.20.22. Ellis Rasmussen offers the following, “The Rechabites, here presented as an example for Judah, were descendants of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. He served as a guide to Israel in the wilderness, and his people were given an inheritance in the promised land with Israel. **The Druze people of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel have traditions connecting them back to those ancient people** (Jer. 35.2a; BD, “Kenites”).” Rasmussen, [Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament](#), Jeremiah, Deseret Book, 2004, emphasis added.

²² The exact reasons for these prohibitions are unclear, though possibly the Rechabites are to live as a bedouin group after the manner of their ancestor Jethro, priest of Midian. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 999.

²³ Although punishment in Jeremiah is generally viewed as corporate, i.e., all Israel is to be punished for the sins of any of its members, these verses exempt the extremely righteous Rechabites from the full fury of the impending disaster. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 999.

²⁴ This chapter gives important evidence for the writing and re-editing of prophetic books.

²⁵ Jehoiakim reigns from 609-598 BCE. This king switches his allegiances from Babylon to Egypt in about 601 BCE, probably due to the failed invasion of Egypt that set back Babylon. This king will die in the siege of Jerusalem in 598 BCE. The year 605 BCE is also noteworthy, as this is the year that the Babylonians defeated Egypt at [the Battle of Carchemish](#) (an important ancient capital in the northern part of the region of Syria) and took control of Judah. The date suggests that this narrative coincides with Jeremiah's oracle that calls for a seventy-year period of Babylonian rule (Jer. 25.1). The Egyptians met the full might of the Babylonian and Median army at [Carchemish](#), where the combined Egyptian and Assyrian forces were destroyed. Assyria ceased to exist as an independent power, and Egypt retreated and was no longer a significant force in the Ancient Near East. Babylonia reached its economic peak after 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar led the army of his country in this victory, and became king right after this battle.

- b. “Take a roll and write... from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, ***even unto this day***” (Jer. 36.2).²⁶
- c. Jeremiah calls for his scribe Baruch, and he writes the oracle (Jer. 36.4).²⁷
- d. “I am shut up” (Jer. 36.5). This seems to indicate that Jeremiah is in hiding at this point.²⁸
- e. Baruch does as he is commanded (Jer. 36.8). Many interpreters maintain that Baruch is the final compiler of the Book of Jeremiah and the author of its narratives concerning Jeremiah’s life.²⁹
- f. Baruch reads the scroll (Jer. 36.10) in the chamber of Gemariah.³⁰
- g. Baruch gives a second reading of the scroll to a second group (Jer. 36.15). They respond that they must report this prophecy to the king (Jer. 36.16).
 - i. These leaders instruct Baruch and Jeremiah to go into hiding (Jer. 36.19).
- h. The king has the scroll read to him, and as he hears portions of the prophecy, he cuts them up and puts them into the fire (Jer. 36.21-23).
- i. Several men beg the king not to burn the scroll (Jer. 36.25).³¹
- j. King Jehoiakim orders the arrest of Baruch and Jeremiah, but “the Lord hid them” (Jer. 36.26).
- k. The Lord tells Jeremiah to get another scroll, and more information is added thereto (Jer. 36.27-32).
 - i. “There were added besides unto them may like words” (Jer. 36.32).³²

Events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem 37:1—40:6

- 1. The beginning of Jeremiah's prison experiences (Jer. 37:1-16).
 - a. The hardened condition of the nation (Jer. 37:1-2).
 - b. Zedekiah's request for prayer and God's answer (Jer. 37:3-10).
 - i. The Egyptian army won't help you! (Jer. 37.7-8).

²⁶ Many interpreters maintain that this would be an early edition of the book of Jeremiah, comprising elements from chapters 1-20 or 1-25. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1000.

²⁷ Some use this verse to suggest that Jeremiah was illiterate. I see this in a similar way that Joseph Smith used scribes to issue prophetic revelations.

²⁸ “I am in hiding” is the translation from *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1000. Alter (p. 980), translates this as “I am confined.” He explains, “this indicates some sort of confinement on the palace grounds in which he has a certain amount of freedom of movement and visitors had access to him.”

²⁹ Several apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books are attributed to him (Baruch; 2-4 Baruch). His name appears on a clay bulla found in the excavations of the scribe's house in Jerusalem. His brother Seraiah was also a royal official (51.59). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1000. Richard Friedman puts forth the theory that Baruch the scribe of Jeremiah was the Deuteronomist who assembled the Deuteronomists’ history and used the original words of Jeremiah as the inspiration to assemble this history using the conceptions of the prophet Jeremiah. Friedman seems open to the possibility that Baruch may be the recorder, the author, or the collaborator of the Deuteronomistic History. See Friedman, [Who Wrote the Bible?](#) Harper Collins, 1997, p. 147-149.

³⁰ Gemariah son of Shaphan is a son of Josiah's secretary (2 Kings 24-3) and brother of Ahikam son of Shaphan who interceded on the Jeremiah’s behalf at his sedition trial (26.24)..

³¹ These men are Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah.

³² This passage opens up the idea that scripture can be added to, for this is how it is described in this circumstance.

- ii. The Chaldeans will take Jerusalem and burn it with fire (Jer. 37.10).
- c. Jeremiah's arrest and imprisonment in a house (Jer. 37:11-16).
 - i. He is accused of defecting (Jer. 37.13).
- 2. Jeremiah's transfer to the court of the guardhouse (Jer. 37:17-21).
- 3. Jeremiah's confinement in a muddy cistern (Jer. 38:1-6).
- 4. Jeremiah's rescue from the cistern (Jer. 38:7-13).
 - a. Ebed-melech the Cushite³³ petitions the king so that Jeremiah can be saved from the pit (Jer. 38.7-13).
- 5. Zedekiah's last interview with Jeremiah (Jer. 38:14-28).
- 6. The fall of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:1-14).
 - a. Zedekiah's capture (Jer. 39:1-10).
 - i. Zedekiah is blinded by the Babylonians (Jer. 39.9).
 - b. Jeremiah's release from prison (Jer. 39:11-14).
- 7. God's grace to the faithful (Jer. 39:15—40:6).
 - a. The Lord's blessing of Ebed-melech (Jer. 39:15-18).
 - b. Jeremiah's release to live anywhere (Jer. 40:1-6).

Incidents after the fall of Jerusalem: Jeremiah 40.7-44.30

- 1. Turmoil in the land (Jer. 40:7—41:18).
 - a. Gedaliah's leadership of the surviving community (Jer. 40:7-12).
 - b. The plot to assassinate Gedaliah (Jer. 40:13-16).
 - c. The murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41:1-3).
 - i. Ishmael “of the royal seed” kills Gedaliah (Jer. 41.2-3).³⁴
 - d. The arrival of visitors from Israel's north (Jer. 41:4-6).
 - e. The murder of the visitors from the north (Jer. 41:7-10).
 - f. Ishmael's escape to Ammon (Jer. 41:11-15).
 - g. The community's flight south (Jer. 41:16-18).
- 2. Desire for God's guidance (Jer. 42).
 - a. The refugees' request for divine guidance (Jer. 42:1-6).
 - b. The Lord's answer through Jeremiah (Jer. 42:7-22).
- 3. Refuge in Egypt (Jer. 43).
 - a. The refugees' rejection of God's command (Jer. 43:1-4).
 - b. The trip to Egypt (Jer. 43:5-7).
 - c. Jeremiah's prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt (Jer. 43:8-13).

³³ A Cushite is a Nubian. One assumes that this is an accurate historical identification, but it is ironic that a foreigner should take the initiative to save the prophet. Alter, p. 986.

³⁴ *This* “of the seed royal” (Jer. 41.1), *is a politically significant notation*. Gedaliah is the grandson of Shaphan, a court scribe, and not a member of the dynastic family. Ishmael thus regards him as both usurper and a quisling, while his own biological connection to the royal line may have encouraged him to make a move for the throne, once he has eliminated Gedaliah and at such time as there might be a possibility to shake off the Babylonian yoke. Alter, p. 993.

4. Jeremiah's final prophecies in Egypt (Jer. 44).
 - a. Prophecies against Queen of Heaven worship (Jer. 44:1-25).³⁵
 - b. Prophecies of the refugees' and Egypt's destruction (Jer. 44:26-30).

Baruch's Despair and Consolation: Jeremiah 45

1. I will break down... I will pluck up, even this whole land (Jer. 45.4).
2. "I will grant you your life in all the places where you may go!" (Jer. 45.5 JPS Trans).

Prophecies about other Nations: Jeremiah 46-51

A superscription to the foreign nations oracles (Jer. 46.)

1. Oracles against Egypt (Jer. 46:2-28).
 - a. Egypt's defeat in Syria (Jer. 46:2-12).
 - b. Pharaoh's impotence (Jer. 46:13-17).
 - c. Invasion, destruction, and exile for Egypt (Jer. 44:18-26).
 - d. Israel's deliverance (Jer. 46:27-28).
2. A prophetic message against the Philistines and a speech by Jeremiah (Jer. 47).
 - a. An introduction to the poems (Jer. 47:1).
 - b. The oracle against the Philistines (Jer. 47:2-5).³⁶
 - c. Jeremiah's commentary on this vision (Jer. 47:6-7).
3. Oracles against Moab (Jer. 48).
 - a. The destruction of Moab (Jer. 48:1-10).
 - b. The complacency of Moab (Jer. 48:11-13).
 - c. The object of shame (Jer. 48:14-24).
 - d. The object of ridicule (Jer. 48:25-27).
 - e. Homelessness (Jer. 48:28).
 - f. The pride of Moab (Jer. 48:29-31).
 - g. Joy transformed to mourning (Jer. 48:32-34).
 - h. Lamentation everywhere (Jer. 48:35-38a).

³⁵ This is probably a Deuteronomistic editing of the text.

³⁶ The Philistines were descended from the so-called "Sea Peoples" who advanced by land and sea from the Greek islands through Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean beginning in the 14th century BCE. They destroyed the ancient Hittite empire in Asia Minor, which has prompted some to identify them with Odysseus and his warriors in the *Odyssey*. They continued down the eastern Mediterranean coast, where they destroyed the city of Ugarit in Syria and attacked Egypt during the reign of Rameses III (1182-1152). Following their defeat by Rameses III, some groups of the Sea Peoples settled along the Mediterranean coast of Canaan, where they merged with the local population to become the Philistines. The Philistine coalition included five major cities (a pentapolis): Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gaza, and Gath. Herodotus reports that Neco conquered Gaza, at the border of the desert on the way to Egypt, after his battle with Josiah at Megiddo (*History*; 2.159). **Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Philistia in 604 and his subsequent deportation of major elements of the population brought an end to Philistia as a cohesive ethnic and national group.** Although the Philistines play a major role in texts describing the early monarchy, especially in the story of Saul, they are hardly mentioned in texts from the divided monarchy. Yet archeological finds and various texts confirm that they remained important and active through the period of Jeremiah. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1019, emphasis added.

- i. The broken jar (Jer. 48:38b-39).
 - j. Perils on every hand (Jer. 48:40-44).
 - k. Coming desolation but future restoration (Jer. 48:45-47).
- 4. Oracles against Ammon (Jer. 49:1-6).
 - a. Judgment for confiscating Gad's territory (Jer. 49:1-2).
 - b. Judgment for self-sufficiency but future restoration (Jer. 49:3-6).
- 5. Oracles against Edom (Jer. 49:7-22).
 - a. The thorough destruction of Edom (Jer. 49:7-11).
 - b. Judgment for Edom's pride (Jer. 49:12-18).
 - c. Yahweh's lion-like and eagle-like attacks on Edom (Jer. 49:19-22).
- 6. An oracle against Damascus (Jer. 49:23-27).
- 7. Oracles against the Arab tribes (Jer. 49:28-33).
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar's attack (Jer. 49:28-30).
 - b. The Arabs' scattering (Jer. 49:31-33).
 - c. An oracle against Elam (Jer. 49:34-39).
- 8. Oracles against Babylon (Jer. 50—51).
 - a. An overview of Babylon's fall (Jer. 50:1-3).
 - b. Israel's return to Zion and her lost condition (Jer. 50:4-7).
 - i. “The children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten” (Jer. 50.5).³⁷
 - c. The command to leave Babylon & God’s anger against Babylon (Jer. 50:8-13).
 - d. Yahweh's command to attack Babylon (Jer. 50:14-15).
 - e. The agricultural impact (Jer. 50:16).
 - f. The restoration of Israel (Jer. 50:17-20).
 - i. “I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan” (Jer. 50.19).³⁸

³⁷ Speaking of this verse, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “The word of the Lord stands sure, so let it be done.” [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 22).

³⁸ The Carmel is the mountain range that runs along the Mediterranean coast from Haifa to the south. The Bashan is now known as the Golan. Ephraim is the hill country of Israel that now comprises the northern part of the West Bank of Samaria (Shomron). Gilead is the Trans-Jordanian region to the south of the Golan in modern Jordan. All of these areas were a part of Israel in antiquity. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1030. Bashan is the mythological headquarters of the enemies of God as described in the Book of Enoch. Michael Heiser explains the significance of this location: [Matthew 16](#) takes place in Caesarea Philippi, situated near a mountainous region containing Mount Hermon. In the Old Testament, **this region was known as Bashan—a place with a sinister reputation.**

According to the accounts in Old Testament, Bashan was controlled by two kings—Sihon and Og—who were associated with the ancient giant clans: the Rephaim and the Anakim (Deut 2:10–12; Josh 12:1–5). The two main cities of their kingdom were Ashtaroth and Edrei, home to the Rephaim (Deut 3:1, 10–11; Josh 12:4–5).

- ii. "I will pardon them" (Jer. 50:20).
- g. Divine vengeance on Babylon (Jer. 50:21-28).
- h. Human arrogance in Babylon (Jer. 50:29-30).
- i. Yahweh's opposition to Babylon's arrogance (Jer. 50:31-32).
- j. Israel's future redemption (Jer. 50:33-34).
- k. Judgment on the Chaldeans (Jer. 50:35-38a).
- l. The coming desolation of Babylon (Jer. 50:38b-40).
- m. Babylon's fearsome foe from the north (Jer. 50:41-43).
- n. Babylon's real enemy: Yahweh (Jer. 50:44-46).
- o. Babylon to be blown away (Jer. 51:1-5).
- p. The end of Babylon's evil influence (Jer. 51:6-10).
- q. Babylon's destroyers (Jer. 51:11-14).
- r. Yahweh's superiority to Babylon's gods (Jer. 51:15-19).
- s. Babylon's role as Yahweh's war-club (Jer. 51:20-24).
- t. The destroyed "mountain" Babylon (Jer. 51:25-26).
- u. Babylon's overwhelming enemies (Jer. 51:27-33).
- v. Yahweh's answer to His people's prayers (Jer. 51:34-45).
- w. Justice for Babylon (Jer. 51:46-51).
- x. Assurance of Babylon's complete destruction (Jer. 51:52-57).
- y. The demolition of Babylon's great walls (Jer. 51:58).

These cities and their Rephaim inhabitants are mentioned by name in Canaanite (Ugaritic) cuneiform tablets. The people of Ugarit believed the Rephaim were the spirits of dead warrior-kings. **They also believed that the cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei were the entryway to the Underworld—the gates of Sheol.** Also, during Israel's divided kingdom period, Jereboam built a pagan religious center at Dan—just south of Mount Hermon—where the Israelites worshiped Baal instead of Yahweh.

For the disciples of Jesus, Bashan was an evil, otherworldly domain. But they had two other reasons to feel queasy about where they were standing. **According to Jewish tradition, Mount Hermon was the location where the divine sons of God had descended from heaven—ultimately corrupting humankind via their offspring with human women** (see Gen 6:1–4). These offspring were known as Nephilim, ancestors of the Anakim and the Rephaim (Num 13:30–33). In Jewish theology, the spirits of these giants were demons ([1 Enoch 15.1–12](#)).

To make the region even spookier, Caesarea Philippi had been built and dedicated to Zeus. This pagan god was worshipped at a religious center built a short distance from the more ancient one in Dan—at the foot of Mount Hermon. Aside from the brief interlude during the time of Joshua through Solomon, the gates of hell were continually open for business. Jesus at this point declares war on the forces of darkness. The rock which Jesus referred to in this passage, the rock on which they were standing—was the foot of Mount Hermon, the demonic headquarters of the Old Testament and the Greek world. We often presume that the phrase "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" describes a Church taking on the onslaught of evil. But the word "against" is not present in the Greek. Translating the phrase without it gives it a completely different connotation: "the gates of hell will not withstand it." It is the Church that Jesus sees as the aggressor. **He was declaring war on evil and death.** Jesus would build His Church atop the gates of hell—He would bury them. Michael Heiser, "Burying Hell," [Bible Study Magazine](#), accessed 9.28.22. For a more in-depth discussion of these ideas, I suggest reading his books that delve into this subject. See: [Reversing Hermon](#) (2017) and [The Unseen Realm](#) (2019). I would add that Carmel can be added to this list of cosmic reversals if we see Elijah's confrontation with the forces of darkness on Carmel in this light (See [1 Kings 18](#)).

- z. Babylon's fall dramatized (Jer. 51:59-64).

Postscript: Jeremiah 52

1. The fate of Zedekiah (Jer. 52:1-11).
 - a. A summary of Zedekiah's reign (Jer. 52:1-3).
 - b. The capture of Jerusalem and Zedekiah (Jer. 52:4-11).
2. The fate of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:12-27).
 - a. The demolition of the city and the deportation of many people (Jer. 52:12-16).
 - b. The looting of the temple (Jer. 52:17-23).
 - c. The execution of many people (Jer. 52:24-27).
3. A summary of the deportees (Jer. 52:28-30).
4. The release of Jehoiachin from prison (Jer. 52:31-34).³⁹

Lamentations

Many scholars approach the Book of Lamentations as a post-exilic text. Robert Alter explains:

The only reasonably safe conclusion one can draw about the origins of the Book of Lamentations is the likelihood that it was composed in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C.E. A tradition that goes back to Late Antiquity attributes the book to the prophet Jeremiah. The obvious grounds for this attribution, embraced by both Jews and Christians, are that Jeremiah repeatedly and grimly prophesied the demise of the kingdom and the exile and that he himself lived through the Babylonian conquest with all its depredations. Jeremiah's authorship has not been accepted by modern scholars, and the poetry of these laments over the fate of Zion is altogether different stylistically and formally from the poetry one finds in Jeremiah.⁴⁰

Application of this text

This book describes the horror of the Babylonian conquest and destruction of the First Israelite Temple. In vivid detail we read of all the horrific predictions laid out in Deuteronomy 28. The author speaks of his continual tears as "rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people" (Lam. 3.48). The description of mothers killing their own children (Lam. 4.10) in the face of starvation and death is too much to read. Against this panorama of horror, the author of this mournful poem, not limiting himself to wailing over the destruction, *repeatedly affirms his faith in a just God who has punished Israel for its transgressions but who in the end will redeem it and exact retribution from its enemies for their cruel excesses.* **Lamentations, like most good**

³⁹ Much of this outline is from Thomas Constable's [Notes on Jeremiah](#). Accessed 9.20.22.

⁴⁰ Alter, p. 5801/6509 electronic version. He continues, "Lamentations is unique among books of the Bible in that four of its five chapters are composed as alphabetic acrostics, with the third chapter being a triple acrostic, showing three lines that begin with each of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet in their conventional sequence. Even the fifth chapter, which is not an acrostic, comprises twenty-two lines of poetry, the number of letters in the alphabet. The formal differences among the five chapters have led some analysts to conclude that this is a collection of poems by five different poets, but that is not an absolutely necessary inference."

literature, is a strong response to the historical circumstances for which it was framed while at the same time speaking to analogous situations in other times and places. Its catalogue of horrors is something that, alas, we continue to see reenacted in various guises across the globe. Its faith in the prospect of a restored order of justice is a sustaining belief that humankind may always need in the face of massive devastation and the traumatic displacement of exile. One readily understands why it is that Jewish tradition fixed the recitation of these five laments as an annual ritual, not merely in commemoration of the destruction of the First Temple or the Second but also as a way of fathoming the ghastly recurrent violence that has darkened two millennia of history.⁴¹

Jerusalem in Mourning, No One Comforts Her: Lamentations 1

1. The Poet's Lament (Lam. 1.1-11).
2. Personified Zion's Lament (Lam. 1.12-22).
 - a. **"Zion spreadeth forth her hands**, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them" (Jer. 1.17).⁴²

The Day of God's Anger: Lamentations 2

1. Details of how God Destroyed Judah (Lam. 2.1-9).
 - a. "The Lord... remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!" (Jer. 2.1).⁴³
2. The Survivors Bewail their Suffering (Lam. 2.10-19).
3. Direct Address to the Lord, the Lament Becomes a Prayer (Lam. 2.20-22).

Individual and Collective Laments: Lamentations 3

1. The Lament of an Individual (Lam. 3.1-20).
2. Expression of Faith and Hope (Lam. 3.21-24).
3. Wisdom Concerning Human Suffering (Lam. 3.25-39).
4. Communal Lament (Lam. 3.40-47).

⁴¹ Alter, p. 5805/6509 electronic version.

⁴² A thing unclean, lit. a menstruating woman, who is ritually impure. Again, ritual impurity serves as a metaphor for the moral impurity of adultery/idolatry. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1591. יְרוּשָׁלַם לְנִדָּה בְּיָנֶיהֶם = "Jerusalem is an unclean thing among them" (My translation). The word *nidâ* denotes something that is a separation, or unclean and that must be removed. This word is used in Ezekiel 18.6 in connection to a woman, "neither hath come near to a menstruous woman" וְאֶל-אִשָּׁה נְדָה לֹא יִקְרָב "and he will not approach an *ishah nida*" an "unclean woman." See: Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, Niddah (Menstruation): From Torah to Rabbinic Law, TheTorah.com. See also: Niddah, The Jewish Virtual Library.

⁴³ One scholar sees this as the removal of the Ark of the Covenant. He writes, "According to a prophecy in Jeremiah 3.16-17, the Ark from the destroyed First Temple was never to be replaced, since a soon-to-be-redeemed Jerusalem would herself become "Yahweh's Throne." Lamentations 2.1 was also understood to mean that Yahweh had completely abandoned the Ark, thanks to the continuing sins of Israel. Yet 2 Maccabees 2.4 records a legend that the prophet Jeremiah had actually hidden the ark in a cave, and that God was shielding it from the world until it could return to the Temple in the Messianic Days." Eugene Seach, A Great Mystery: The Secret of the Jerusalem Temple, Gorgias Press, 2008, p. 6.

5. Return to the Laments of an Individual (Lam. 3.48-63).
6. A Call for Retribution against Enemies (Lam. 3.64-66).

How the Pure Gold has Changed!: Lamentations 4

1. Contrasts between Former Glory and the Awful Present (Lam. 4.1-10).
 - a. “The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people” (Lam. 4.10).⁴⁴
2. Misery and Divine Chastisement (Lam 4.11-16).
3. Communal Lament (Lam. 4.17-22).

Communal Lament and Prayer for a Restoration: Lamentations 5

1. An Appeal to God to Take Note (Lam. 5.1).
2. Communal Recounting of Sufferings (Lam. 5.2-18).
 - a. “Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities” (Lam. 5.7).⁴⁵
3. Praise for the Lord and an Appeal for Restoration and Divine Favor (Lam. 5.19-21).
4. A Final Dire Pronouncement (Lam. 5.22).

⁴⁴ And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat (Lev. 26.29). This is also laid out in the curses section of Deuteronomy 28: “**Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and they daughters**, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege,... wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee... The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward **her young one that cometh out from between her feet**, and toward her children which she shall bear: for **she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness**, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates” (Deut. 28.53, 56-57, emphasis added).

⁴⁵ This is a classic example of corporate punishment, something that Ezekiel and Jeremiah (at times) push against. See Ezekiel’s explanation in Ezekiel 18, “Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. **The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father**, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” ([Ezk. 18.19-21](#)).