

Jeremiah-Lamentations

1. Authorship:

The twenty-fourth book of the Bible is named after its author. Jeremiah means something like *whom Yahweh appoints*. Seven other men in the Bible have this name. This Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah the priest, possibly the famous high priest of this period (2 Kings 22:4). Jeremiah came from the village of Anathoth within eyesight of the northern wall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah has been called the *Weeping Prophet* and the *Martyr Prophet*. He is one of the more interesting prophets simply because so much is known about his life.

According to Jewish and Christian tradition the author of Lamentations was Jeremiah. The tone and viewpoint of this book is the same as Jeremiah.

2. Background:

Jeremiah began to prophesy during the last great revival of Judah under King Josiah. That revival effort reached its climax in 621 BC with the discovery of the lost law book in the temple. After Josiah was killed in battle at Megiddo by Pharaoh Neco (609 BC), the political situation deteriorated rapidly in Judah. Pharaoh put Josiah's son Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah. This king hated Jeremiah and attempted on more than one occasion to kill him. During the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, Jeremiah saw the progressive decay, both moral and political in Jerusalem, and he warned insistently that Judah's unrepentant sin would lead to destruction at the hands of the Babylonians. He watched the Babylonians sweep through in successive conquests over Assyria (607), Judah (606), and Egypt (605). He saw the dreaded fulfillment of his prophecies with the final destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The book of Jeremiah's prophecies was committed to writing by Baruch, his companion and scribe. It was destroyed by King Jehoiakim, and was later reproduced, with the prophecies arranged according to content, rather than chronological.

Lamentations was written shortly after the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Lamentation describes the funeral of the city.

3. Special Features:

--Daniel studied the book of Jeremiah in Babylon (Daniel 9:2).

--There is more repetition in Jeremiah than in any other biblical book.

--While Isaiah was married, Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord not to marry.

--Jeremiah is the only Old Testament book that actually describes the way it came into being (chapter 36)

--Lamentations is the saddest book in the Bible, the only book made up entirely of mournful songs.

--Many Jews today read Lamentations at the Western (Wailing) Wall, where they still lament the destruction of the temple.

4. November Reading Guide

Week of Oct 30-Nov 5	Jeremiah 1-18
Week of Nov 6-12	Jeremiah 19-35
Week of Nov 13-19	Jeremiah 36-52
Week of Nov 20-26	Lamentations 1-5