

# INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Lamentations 1 - 5*

The Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah is the 25th book in the Old Testament. It is written by Jeremiah as a “lament” over the destruction of Jerusalem. The writing style is metrically precise, poetic in nature - a form called qinah, known as a special “elegiac meter,” used to express deep grief and giving a melancholy tone to the reading. The dominant message in the book of Lamentations is that sin always has its consequences. And when consequences come, there is never any reason to blame God. Chapter five is a prayer for the restoration of the nation from captivity.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

c. 650 - 582 B.C.

Jeremiah's prophetic years

c. 586-580 B.C.

Jeremiah writes the book of Lamentations

## TRIP PLANNER:

There are 5 chapters, each containing a eulogy to the Kingdom of Judah.

Chapter 1 - Jerusalem Personified

Chapter 2 - The Acts of the Lord Proclaimed

Chapter 3 - The Voice of the Prophet

Chapter 4 - The Emptiness of Possessions

Chapter 5 - The Lament of the People

Each chapter contains 22 verses, each verse alphabetically corresponding with the Hebrew alphabet – except Chapter 5; while it has 22 verses it is not alphabetical in arrangement and each has only two lines. And in chapter 3 there are 66 verses; each letter of the alphabet has three verses.

## PLACES OF INTEREST:

**Jerusalem** – Capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, also known as the city of David, now reduced to rubble and ravaged by fire.

**Zion** – The mountain of the Lord where the temple stood; referred to as the dwelling place of the Lord

**Land of Uz** – Mentioned in Lamentations 4:21 as a specific target of God's judgment for its sin. Also the home of Job.

**Edom** - According to Psalm 137:7, the Edomites played a strategic role in tearing down the walls of Jerusalem. The land of Edom is located to the south and west of Jerusalem, across the Dead Sea. Modern-day Petra is located there. Jeremiah prophesied its destruction in Jeremiah 49:7-22: "Edom shall become a horror; every one who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters..." An interesting tidbit is that the New Testament views the conflict between the flesh and the spirit as typified by the conflict between Jacob and Esau.

## PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

**Jeremiah** – A Benjamite, son of the priest Hilkiah. He remained in Jerusalem after the destruction of the city, but was taken to Egypt by the remnant Jews who refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah died in Egypt, reportedly stoned to death by his own countrymen.

**Edomites** – Sons of Esau; a nation continually at war with the Israelites. Their destruction was foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi. In Malachi 1:1-4 the LORD of hosts says of Edom, "They may build, but I will tear down, till they are called the wicked country, the people with whom the LORD is angry forever."

**Teman** – ruler of Edom specifically mentioned in Jeremiah 49:7. Also a place with this name in the land of Edom.

### FUN FACTS:

**The Scrolls** - Lamentations is one of the "Five Scrolls" (megillot) in the Hebrew Bible. (The others are Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Kohelet, also known as Ecclesiastes.) Each of these scrolls is read in synagogue on a different Jewish holiday.

**Destruction of Jerusalem** - The Temple, the palace, and all of the houses of Jerusalem were burnt, the walls of the city were torn down, and the remaining treasures from the Temple were taken to Babylon (II Kings 25:8-17). The extent of destruction by the Babylonians went far beyond the walls of Jerusalem.

**Sin and Rebellion** - Lamentations makes it clear that sin and rebellion were the causes of God's wrath being poured out. Lamenting is appropriate in a time of distress, but it should quickly give way to contrition and repentance.

**Forewarning** - Read Deuteronomy 28 and compare to the actual events in Lamentations to see the fulfillment of God's promise of judgment if His people failed to obey His commands. They were forewarned!



