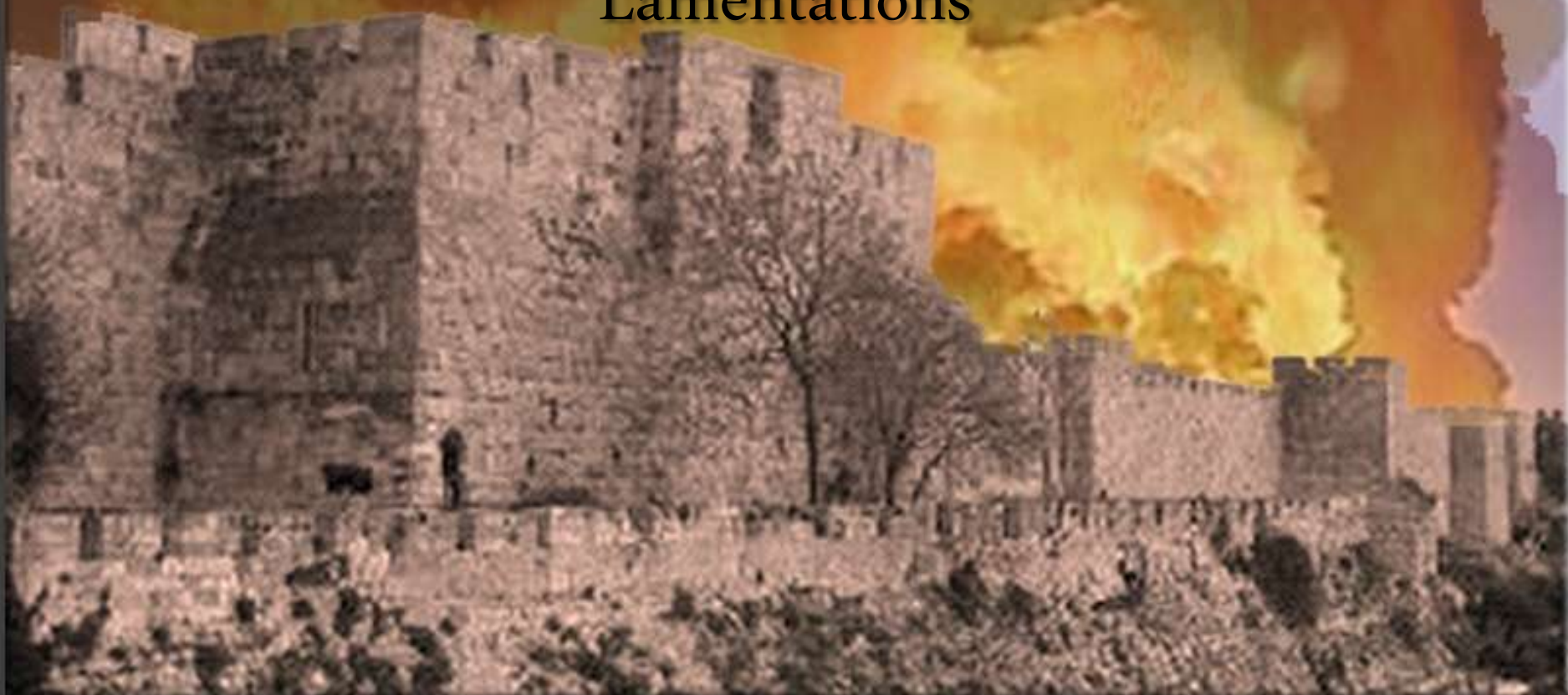


איכה

Lamentations



Lamentations

- Hebrew title איכה 'êkā^h
 - איכה יושבה בדד העיר "how lonely sits the city"
 - The first letter of the phrase is an aleph
 - This is the beginning of several acrostic songs
- The Hebrew alphabet has 22 consonants
 - Chapters 1, 2, & 4 are each 22 vss. long
 - Chapter 3 has 66 vss.
 - Chapters 2-4 have the ayin before peh
 - Chapter 5 is 22 vss long, but not acrostic

Authorship

- Author not stated in the Hebrew text
 - LXX begins... And it came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, *that* Jeremias sat weeping, and lamented *with* this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said...
 - Targum of Jonathan reads אמר ירמיהו נביא וכהנא
- The author must have been an eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem on the 9th of Av in 586
 - The city was breached after Zedekiah revolts
 - Zedekiah is captured fleeing Jerusalem he sees his children killed and is then blinded.
 - Gedaliah is appointed governor.

Authorship

- In 585 after the murder of Gedaliah, the Jews compel Jeremiah to go to Egypt
 - 2 traditions diverge here
 - Was Jeremiah stoned by the Jewish refugees in Egypt
 - Was Jeremiah deported when Nebuchadnezzar invades lower Egypt. This tradition has him see Jeconiah released from prison in 561

Similar Themes

- Jerusalem as Daughter
 - **Lamentations 1:15** "The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty *men* in my midst; He has called an assembly against me To crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a winepress The virgin daughter of Judah.
 - **Jeremiah 8:21** For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; Astonishment has taken hold of me.

Similar Themes

- **Jeremiah 9:1** Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!
- **Lamentations 1:16** "For these *things* I weep; My eye, my eye overflows with water; Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me. My children are desolate Because the enemy prevailed."
- **Lamentations 2:11** My eyes fail with tears, My heart is troubled; My bile is poured on the ground Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, Because the children and the infants Faint in the streets of the city.

Similar Themes

- **Abandoned by her lovers**

- **Jeremiah 30:14** All your lovers have forgotten you; They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the chastisement of a cruel one, For the multitude of your iniquities, *Because* your sins have increased.
- **Lamentations 1:2** She weeps bitterly in the night, Her tears *are* on her cheeks; Among all her lovers She has none to comfort *her*. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies.

Similar Themes

- Edom will drink the same cup
 - **Jeremiah 49:12** ¶ For thus says the LORD:
"Behold, those whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And *are* you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink *of it*."
 - **Lamentations 4:21** Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, *You* who dwell in the land of Uz! The cup shall also pass over to you And you shall become drunk and make yourself naked.

Out of Character?

- **Looking for help from Egypt?**
 - **Lamentations 4:17** Still our eyes failed us, *Watching* vainly for our help; In our watching we watched For a nation *that* could not save *us*.
 - People argue that this implies the author had hoped for help from Egypt. Something that Jeremiah denounced.
 - **Jeremiah 42:19** "The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt!' Know certainly that I have admonished you this day.
 - Lamentations 4:17 does not specify Egypt and only states the mind of the people not the author

Literary Nonsense

- One of the greatest literary blunders is the statement by some Old Testament critics that the same author cannot be both negative and positive in his writings. As if an author can only have one mood.
 - Consider 3:
 - **Lamentations 3:18-23** And I said,
My strength and my hope Have perished from the LORD."
Remember my affliction and roaming,
The wormwood and the gall.
My soul still remembers And sinks within me.
This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.
Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning;
Great *is* Your faithfulness.
 - An acrostic poem is intentional and planned this is no gloss or interpolation
 - This is an intentional change in tone!

Formal Questions

- Poetic style is a dirge or elegaic style.
 - Funeral song
 - Cf. these passages
 - **2 Samuel 1:17-18** Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, 18 and he told *them* to teach the children of Judah *the Song of the Bow*; indeed *it is* written in the Book of Jasher:
 - **Amos 5:1** Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:
 - **2 Chronicles 35:25** Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they *are* written in the Laments.

Qinah Meter

- The only formal rhythm
 - "The short, throbbing structure of qinah is admirably suited to convey the emotional reaction of grief"

RKHarrison

- גַּלְתָּהּ יְהוּדָה מֵעֲנִי וּמְרֹב עֲבֹדָה
gāltā^h yəhûdā^h mē^ʿōnî ûmērōb ʿăbōdā^h

Outline

- 5 Poems
 - An elegy in the Qinah meter in which Jerusalem laments like a bereft widow
 - An appeal for pity 1:12
 - Cry for vengeance 1:22
 - The author laments the outpouring of God's anger
 - Culpability of the false prophets 2:14
 - The long poem 66 vss long
 - Dirge about the horrors of the seige
 - Each strophe is 2 lines
 - Priests & prophets culpable
 - A prayer for deliverence
 - Neither acrostic or qinah
 - 3:3 parallelism heightens the dramatic contrast of the prayer
 - 5:19-22

5:21, awkward

• הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה | אֵלֶיךָ
(וְנָשׁוּב) [וְנָשׁוּבָה]
חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

- hăšîbēnû yhw̄h (ʿādōnāy) ʿēleýkā
(wəṇāšûb) [wəṇāšûbā^h]
ḥaddēš yāmēnû kəqédem
- almost as if neither the kethiv or qere belongs there

1:1-3

- How lonely sits the city
That was full of people!
How like a widow is she,
Who was great among the nations!
The princess among the provinces
Has become a slave!
She weeps bitterly in the night,
Her tears are on her cheeks;
Among all her lovers
She has none to comfort her.
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her;
They have become her enemies.
Judah has gone into captivity,
Under affliction and hard servitude;
She dwells among the nations,
She finds no rest;
All her persecutors overtake her in dire straits.

1:4-7

- The roads to Zion mourn
 Because no one comes to the set feasts.
All her gates are desolate;
 Her priests sigh,
 Her virgins are afflicted,
And she is in bitterness.
Her adversaries have become the master,
 Her enemies prosper;
For the LORD has afflicted her
 Because of the multitude of her transgressions.
Her children have gone into captivity before the enemy.
And from the daughter of Zion
 All her splendor has departed.
Her princes have become like deer
 That find no pasture,
 That flee without strength
 Before the pursuer.
In the days of her affliction and roaming,
Jerusalem remembers all her pleasant things
 That she had in the days of old.
When her people fell into the hand of the enemy,
 With no one to help her,
The adversaries saw her
 And mocked at her downfall.

- Jerusalem has sinned gravely,
Therefore she has become vile.
All who honored her despise her
Because they have seen her nakedness;
Yes, she sighs and turns away.
Her uncleanness is in her skirts;
She did not consider her destiny;
Therefore her collapse was awesome;
She had no comforter.
"O LORD, behold my affliction,
For the enemy is exalted!"
The adversary has spread his hand
Over all her pleasant things;
For she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary,
Those whom You commanded
Not to enter Your assembly.
All her people sigh,
They seek bread;
They have given their valuables for food to restore life.
"See, O LORD, and consider,
For I am scorned."