Lesson—A Plea for Restoration

Text: Lamentations 5

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. **UNDERSTAND** why the writer of Lamentations pleaded with God for the restoration of Israel,
2. **SENSE** the writer’s feelings over the oppression of his nation, and
3. **PRAY** for and engage in the restoration of broken relationships with God.

Key Verse— “Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old” (Lamentations 5:21, KJV).

II. People Places and Times

The Exile. Israel and Judah were told that God would lead them away into exile if they became unfaithful to the covenant He made with them through Moses (Deuteronomy 28:36-37, 64; 29:28). When they did break that covenant, Israel and Judah underwent periods of exile and were removed from the Promised Land. Consequently, the Jews were scattered throughout the known world, where they became known as the Diaspora, which is the Greek word for “scattering.” The phrase “the Exile” is most often associated with the 70-year Babylonian captivity of Judah.

III. Background

While some scholars question the authorship of Lamentations, it is traditionally attributed to the prophet Jeremiah as an appendix to his book of prophesy. Jeremiah was known as the “weeping prophet” who spent over forty years calling out Israel’s displeasing ways and pleading with them to repent and avert the promised doom for disobedience. The major theme of Lamentations 1-4 expresses personal and community cries to God for their affliction. However, right in the middle of those cries, Jeremiah digs deep and pivots to place his hope in the God of his salvation (Jeremiah 3:21-26). Jeremiah provides a voice to their overwhelming grief: repentance and hope in God’s love and mercy because of His covenant.

IV. The Lesson At-A-Glance...

1. A Plea to Consideration (Lamentations 5:1-6)
2. A Plea For Sins (vv. 7-16)
3. A Plea For Mercy (vv. 17-22)
V. **In Depth with More Light on the Text**

1. **A Plea for Consideration (Lamentations 5:1-6)** Jeremiah, as an eyewitness to the calamity, paints the scenes of the devastation through these laments. The people of Israel were enduring great horror and punishment. Such disgrace included loss of their inheritance. The prophet’s petition was for the Lord God to intently look upon the reproach and suffering of His covenant people. In essence, all the curses for disobedience God proclaimed through Moses were realized (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

2. **A Plea For Sins (vv. 7-16)** In his distress, Jeremiah calls out that his generation’s suffering was a direct result of the sins from past generations. There was no one to protect them because the young men were burdened from survival. On behalf of the community, Jeremiah woefully cries out that there is no joy in living, and the glory of Israel is gone as past and present sins are taking their toll.

3. **A Plea For Mercy (vv. 17-22)** As any human would amid the depth and length of this suffering, Jeremiah questions why God continues to allow their suffering. Although he feels forsaken by God, he still unshakably believes that God is eternal and almighty. He pleads in true penitence for God to show mercy by restoring and renewing His people and their land.

*Liberating Lesson—see Sunday School book for additional comments*

*Application for Activation—see Sunday School book*

**Vocabulary—New Words**

Lament—to feel or express sorrow or regret.¹ one of the many commentary references in the bible for Lament is directly linked to music. The book of Lamentations in some classifications is rendered as a book of poetry, this the reference to a “stanza” in the lesson book and commentary for today. However, a more broader definition from Wikipedia is "A lament or lamentation is a passionate expression of grief, often in music, poetry, or song form. The grief is most often born of regret, or mourning.

**Notes:**

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**Scripture References**

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¹ Dictionary.com