

Lamentations 5

Note: *Chapter 5* is not in acrostic form, but it is still 22 verses long

-This chapter is more of a prayer to God for his help; the people are casting themselves on the mercy of God

Lamentations 5.1-6

V1 – Does God remember things? Yes

-Examples of his remembering? He remembered Noah at the end of the flood, etc.

V2 – A reference to the Babylonians – they had taken over the houses and wealth of Israel

V3 – How did the Israelites describe themselves in the face of the Babylonians? As orphans and widows (helpless)

V4 – How did they get water and wood? They had to pay the Babylonians for it (they had always just taken it for granted)

V5 – There was no rest from the Babylonians

V6 – Their "friends" had turned against them

-The Israelites had to submit themselves to these "allies" just to get enough bread to eat

Lamentations 5.7-18

V7 – What did they say about their fathers? They were sinners

-But did they blame their fathers? No – they bore their own sins, but they had imitated their fathers

V8 – What had happened to the former slaves of Israel? They had become masters of the people ("carpet baggers" after the U. S. Civil War)

V9 – They had to risk their lives just to get bread to eat

-What is "the sword in the wilderness"? Robbers and bandits in the wilderness (because of the breakdown of civil law)

V10 – Famine produces "hot" skin

-Apparently, famine produces a fever in the human body

V11 – What had happened to the women of Israel? They had been raped (common in warfare – remember Kosovo and Serbia)

V12 – The breakdown of law and order

V13 – The young people of Israel now ground grain and carried wood

V 14 – There were no elders at the gate anymore, no music from the young people

V 15 – Their dancing had turned to mourning

V 16 – They admitted their own sin (a good sign)

V 17 – The heart was faint, and the eyes were dim

V 18 – **What animals were on the loose in Israel?** Foxes

Lamentations 5.19-22

V 19 – **What did Jeremiah confess on behalf of the people?** That God rules forever

-In contrast to the pagan gods that they had worshipped

-See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Lamentations, p. 527b

-Everything else in the world may crumble, but God will still be there

V 20 – They know that God will not forsake them forever – the Messiah is still coming

V 21 – **What is their request?** To have Jerusalem restored – it was rebuilt beginning in 536 BC

V 22 – They knew that God had not utterly rejected them

-All and all, this is a very hopeful passage

-They have thrown everything on the mercy of God

-They might have remembered the prophecy of Jeremiah that the enslavement would last 70 years (the counting started with the first attack of the Babylonians in 606 BC and lasted until the first return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel in 536 BC)

Read Jeremiah 25.11-12, 29.10

Lessons from the book of *Lamentations*:

1. The importance of a nation obeying the Word of God
2. God eventually takes his vengeance against evil doers.
3. The mercy of God abides forever.

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