

## LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

This short book of five chapters from the pen of Jeremiah was in all probability widely distributed first in Egypt and then to the captives in Babylon and later still within 150 years copied in multiples for the students of Ezra during the Second Temple period.

The reader will zero in on the deep tragedy of the temporary end of the blessings of a covenant relationship of Israel with God and on the remnant that holds faithful and believes that covenant *per se* stands good until the golden age of Messiah.

The book threads us through one of the blackest moments of Israel's long history. Jeremiah describes it in terms of the Passover experience rebounding in house by house bereavement on the entire disobedient people.

Jeremiah is wrestling not just with the suffering of the period but with the assurance of the God of Covenant. It is as if he says to God "Quo Vadis?-Where are you going now? As we know from his larger work –the prophecy of Jeremiah the LORD shows him that after 70 years the theocracy will be re-constituted. (Jeremiah 25.11)

As in each of the commentaries in the Westgate Series I have sprinkled Hebrew words through the English text where they convey to the reader of the original something of special interest or importance. Quite often I have taken trouble to *conjugate* to illustrate the meaning of a particular section. From long years of study of biblical text my heart is confirmed in the view that Holy Scripture as originally given is verbally inspired. It is not that I have forsaken the principle of conveying the meaning as the first principle of translation but to the contrary I desire to be as loyal as is ever possible to the meaning of the scripture. The Westgate Series affords both translation and commentary. The comments are interspersed with the text in *italic script*.

Because 4 chapters are alphabetical I have given the alphabetical letters in the body of the text at the heads of appropriate verses.

Please do not approach the book as a grind for the believer. Neither do I advise that it be read to satisfy the bible student that he has not glided over Lamentations. As you would in studying Job go in until it weighs you down as the prophet was weighed down in the cistern and come out of the experience with the full assurance that our prayer hearing God stays close when man's inhumanity practices its foulest deeds.

If you want a text to encapsulate the hope that Jeremiah never lost commit to memory those lovely words- **It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion", saith my soul, "Therefore will I hope in Him."**

**Bob Coffey**

**A BIBLE COMPANION**

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