

# HOW DO WE FEEL?

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Jeremiah is commonly called “the weeping prophet” because of the tears he shed for Judah and Jerusalem even before the destruction that he prophesied came to pass. Jeremiah was also present as a witness to the entire siege and destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah chapters 32,33,34,39). As such, he was in the perfect position to be used by God to give the book of Lamentations, which is clearly presented in an eyewitness fashion (Lam 2:11-12; 3:22-51; 4:17-20; 5:1-22). And God used the prophet Jeremiah to give many other lamentations for the sins of Israel. For example, 2 Chronicles 35:25 says, “*And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.*” But the affect that the sins of his people had upon this prophet should not be unique to him.

## **A sad time in Israel**

In Jeremiah’s time, the people of Judah and Jerusalem had essentially become numb to the wickedness that was in their midst. Jeremiah 6:13-15 says, “*For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.*” Jeremiah was left all alone (Jer 15:17). But he refused to “follow a multitude to do evil” (Exod 23:2). The more evil the multitude became, the more it bothered him. In Jeremiah 9:1, he said, “*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*” In versed 10 of the same chapter, he said, “*For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone.*” Similar words are found in Jeremiah 13:17: “*But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord’s flock is*

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*carried away captive.*” And in Jeremiah 14:17, he said, “*Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.*”

### **A telling prophecy**

While Jeremiah was among the rebels in Jerusalem, lamenting their coming destruction, his counterpart, the prophet Ezekiel, was in Babylon among the captives who had been led away there. Though from afar, he also foretold of the coming destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. In Ezekiel 9:1-6, the prophet was given this vision of it: “He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, *and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.* And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary.” Notice that the ones who would be marked for mercy would be those who sighed and cried for the abominations being committed in the land. All others would be destroyed. Today, it remains true that “*the whole world lieth in wickedness*” (1 John 5:19). The description given in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 of the characteristics of “perilous times” accurately depicts what we can see all around us at this very time. Do we sigh and cry for what we see? Christ warns us that “*because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*” (Matt 24:12). Is that happening to us? This is why the Lord also warns us to “remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). We need to be like her husband Lot, whose soul was “vexed day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2 Pet 2:7-8). Indeed, we need to be just like Jeremiah.