

THE CHRISTMAS LAMENTATION

Matthew listed four prophecies fulfilled in the second Christmas of Jesus Christ.

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| • (Matt.2:6) | (Micah 5:2) | The birth place of Christ |
| • (Matt.2:15) | (Hos.11:1) | The family's visit to Egypt of Christ |
| • (Matt.2:18) | (Jer.31:15) | The massacre of Bethlehem boys, under two |
| • (Matt.2:23) | (Ps.22:6; Isa.53:3) | [prophets/ plural] Christ called a Nazarene
(John 1:44-45; Acts 4:10-11; 22:8; 24:5-8) |

Many Bible teachers shy away from this Christmas story because it is a story of families in great grief. This very reason I teach it.

This lesson will study four aspects of the Christmas Lamentation.

1. This Christmas Massacre was prophesied in a passage in the Book of Jeremiah known as LAMENTATION (Jer.31:15-22).

The Christmas massacre at Bethlehem is the last recorded biblical cruel act of Herod before his death in 4BC.

“The last month of Herod’s life was filled with acts of cruelties. He murdered forty Zealots and his last son.” (Gospel of Matthew by C.W. Clark, pg.34)

The feast of Holy Innocents is celebrated on December 28 in remembrance of Christmas massacre of Bethlehem male children by Herod by Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Greek Orthodox churches.

The Prophecy: (Jer.31:15) “Thus says the Lord, ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, **Lamentation** and bitter weeping. Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.’”

The fulfillment: (Matt.2:18) “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

2. (Jer.31:15) has a triple application in biblical history:

- The 5th cycle of divine discipline placed upon Judah in **586 BC** (Jer.1:1-3; 7:30-34; 21:7-10)
- The Christmas Lamentation in Bethlehem in 4BC (Matt.2:13-18)
- The 5th cycle of divine discipline placed upon Judah in **70AD** (Luke 19:41-44; 23:27-31).

The 5th cycle divine discipline placed upon Judah always brought suffering to the poor, elderly, and children.

- (Deut.28:1-13) Divine blessings
- (Deut.28:14-68) Divine discipline

(Deut.28:50) “A nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor how favor to the young.”

(Deut.28:18a) “Cursed shall be the offspring of your body.”

During the Babylonian captivity (586BC), **Ramah** was the final collecting and processing of all POWs before the final lag to Babylon (Jer.40:1-3). These POWs were composed largely of young Jews like Daniel (**Jer.31:15; Matt.2:18**).

(Job 1:12) “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth you hand on him.’ So, Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.” (Job 1:21; 2:6, 10)

3. Satan attacked the Bethlehem male children two and under in an attempt to kill Jesus (Gen.3:15; 4:8; 1 John 3:12).

It shows how evil fallen mankind can become apart from grace salvation in Jesus Christ (Jer.17:9).

(Rev.20:10) “And **the devil** who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the **beast and the false prophet** are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Satan promotes evil as an angel of light (2 Cor.11:3, 14). The only rule he must obey is the same as believers, the will of God (Eph.5:16-17).

Question: What did Ramah (Jer.31) and Bethlehem (Matt.2) have in common?

4. Ramah and Bethlehem were both placed into biblical messianic history by giving prophetic testimony to the faithfulness of God to His word amidst great Jewish messianic tragedy.

(1 Thess.5:24) “**Faithful is He** who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

(1 Cor.1:9) “**God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

As a pastor, **our lesson text** is reality in so many families going through Christmas without a loved one because of death or divorce or distance or disagreements (**Phil.4:6-7; James 1:2-4**).

Be assured that God understands the lost of a loved one from your life (John 3:16; Rom.5:8).

It is because of gospel of Christ we can always have the JOY of Christmas in our hearts (Ga.5:22-23; Luke 2:10-11).

Because of God’s grace, these suffering Bethlehem children and families were memorialized in the eternal word of God with the birth of Christ (Matt.2:13-18).

(Rev.20:15) “And if **anyone’s name** was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.”