

# The Garment of Grief

## Lamentations



### 3 Bible Studies

## **Study 1 – Lamentations 1-2**

1. Collectively, as a society – how do we lament?

2. Collectively, as a church – how do we lament?

### **Setting**

The setting of the book of Lamentations, is thought to be reflecting back on the destruction of Jerusalem following the Babylonians invasion in 587/586BC by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Lamentations is one of the five 'festive scrolls' which was read by the Jews at their festivals – this one read on the anniversary of the sacking of Jerusalem (mid July)

### **Structure**

Each chapter follows an acrostic form. Chapter 1-4 are acrostic poems (chapter 3, as the mid-point chapter of the book is three times the length of the others). Chapter 5 is an acrostic prayer.

### **Authorship**

The Hebrew Bible titles the book the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah' presumably accepting his authorship. There is debate as to if Jeremiah could in fact be the author and it is suggested that a younger disciple of Jeremiah's may have been the original author (under God).

The uncertain takes nothing away from what the book offers.

**Read Lamentations 1-2** *(with a view of breaking the book up into sections – not more than four sections per chapter) – use the print-out of Lamentations NIV 2011 to mark the text.*

### **Chapter 1**

3. Break Lamentations 1 into sections and give each section a title.

4. Verses 1-7 – How is Jerusalem pictured? How is her fate described? Is there any hope?

## **Bible Text - Lamentations**

5a. Verses 8-11 – What is stated as the reason for Jerusalem's trouble?

5b. What is their cry?

6a. Verses 12-22 – Who brings the trouble? What is Jerusalem hoping to gain by their cry?

6b. What is Jerusalem asking or saying to God? Are they after sympathy? rescue?

## **Chapter 2**

7. Break Lamentations 2 into sections and give each section a title.

8. This chapter shows the clear defeat of Jerusalem – including the destruction of the temple (c.f. verses 6-7). Does it depict Yahweh also being defeated? Does he lose out as well?

9. Verses 10-13 – What has become of the people of Jerusalem – of the elders/young women/children/mothers?

10. Verses 14-17 - Where have the prophets failed? (Note: clearly this is not referring to Jeremiah as this is exactly what Jeremiah had said would happen)

11. Verse 20 – The question asked implies a revolting reality, the women in their starvation restore to eating their offspring (and picture which is repeated in 4:10). Look up and read Deuteronomy

## **Bible Text - Lamentations**

28:53-58 and notice the prediction of what will happen under the judgement of God when Israel's cities are overthrown. What were Israel being warned about?

Lamentations 2 closes with a devastating picture (2:22).

12a. Read Luke 23:26-43 (take special note of verse 28). Who lamenting here? Why are the mourning women told not weep for Jesus?

12b. What is the time to come which Jesus references in verse 29? Why will it be so bad?

12c. What is the warning (perhaps compare Hosea 10:8 which is quoted here in Lk 23:30 – note it is talking about what happen to the Northern Kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians)

13. Is there any way that Lamentations can help/serve us today?

To close, ask each member of the group to summarise what has been learnt from Lamentations. Practically you could ask: 'If you were to explain to someone the significance of what we looked at from Lamentations in this study – what would you say?'

*Pray – without need to pray for the positives or the happy concerns/desires that we might have today.*

## **Study 2 – Lamentations 4-5**

*Note: it is intentional that we have jumped over Chapter 3 – we come to that in the next study.*

1. An expectation of God (both by Christians and our world) is that he will always be loving. Is that a fair expectation?

2. Do you think that God has the same expectation of Christians or of our world?

### **Chapter 4**

Read Lamentations 4

Again acrostic, this poem breaks roughly into two parts. Verses 1-12, the fate of Jerusalem followed by verse 13-22, the consequences of sin.

3. From verses 1-11...

a. What can we learn about Jerusalem's former glory?	b. What can we learn about Jerusalem's new reality?

4. What has led to this fall of Jerusalem? (v12)

## Bible Text - Lamentations

5. Who is blamed for this fall? Why? (v13-14)

6. What is the response...

- from the people (vv15, 17)?

- from the LORD (v16)?

- from the people of the Babylon/enemies (v18-19)?

- from the king 'the LORD's anointed' (most likely Zedekiah, Judah's last king c.f. 2 Ki 25:4-7)?

7. In verses 21-22 the 'Daughter of Edom' is told to 'rejoice and be glad'

Edom (family line of Esau), were related to Judah. It is thought that when Jerusalem was set upon, that Edom fled ignoring the fate of their kinspeople (c.f. Ob 11-14) or worse that they were complicit in the destruction of Jerusalem (c.f. Ps 137:7-9) - as such, they were resented.

a. Why say: 'rejoice and be glad'?

- Because for now, the time is good - they may have avoided judgement (notice they have a time of feasting 'the cup is passed' to them)?

- Because the author is being ironic?

- Because Edom would eventually get what the rest of Judah was now experiencing (notice that a time will come when the feast will be exposed 'you will be drunk and stripped naked' (21) and their wickedness will be exposed (22)?

b. In contrast, verse 22, what will happen for 'Daughter Zion' (another name for Jerusalem or the Jewish people)? Read Malachi 3:2-5.

## Chapter 5

### Read Lamentations 5

This is a prayer (rather than a poem as in chapters 1-4) and it does not completely follow the acrostic pattern which we have become accustomed to in the rest of the book. It seems to reflect back and operates as an impassioned plea to the Lord.

8. What is being asked of the LORD?

9. For the more visual among us, verses 2-18 describes as devastating new reality for the people of Judah. Draw the account of these verses depicting [*Butchers Paper*]:

a. the *condition* in which we find the people of Judah (e.g. fatherless, widowhood v3; having to purchase the necessities of life v4 etc.)

b. the *causes* or perpetrators (e.g. Egypt and Assyria – in the past v6 etc.)

c. the *characters* or demographics of the people who have been individually affected (e.g. women, virgins v11 etc.)

10. What is the mood – sorrow? resentment? regret? shame? other?

11. Again, why or what is stated as the fundamental reason for all this destruction (v16)?

12. Lamentations closes (vv. 19-22) leaving the reader with something *proclaimed*, a *question*, and a *petition*? What are these last words? Is there anyway that these three concepts hold together?

13. Did God reject his people?

## **Bible Text - Lamentations**

14. How do we hold God's sovereignty over Israel (his power over all things) alongside the sin of Judah (and their human responsibility)?

Read Romans 11:1-6

15. How should we think about the place of grace? Is it something that God promises to show? Is he obligated to show it? Is it something that we should consider given?

16. If God chooses to give his grace (a gift) to one and not the other, does that mean he is being unjust?

17. Is there a difference between God's grace and his love?

It is possible for God to love all (which also involves holding all accountable), give his grace to a few, and yet still be sovereign over all matters and people.

To close, ask each member of the group to summarise what has been learnt from Lamentations. Practically you could ask: 'If you were to explain to someone the significance of what we looked at from Lamentations in this study – what would you say?'

*Pray*



### **Study 3 – Lamentations 3**

1. Before someone is 'converted' (in faith to Christ), what must they recognise? What must they do?

We have been looking at the book of Lamentations – and unusually we have looked at it out of order. So, having already considered the acrostic poems which make up Chapters 1-2 (in Study 1) and Chapters 4-5 (in Study 2) we now return to Chapter 3 – the heart of the book.

**Read Lamentations Chapter 3** (*and like we did in Chapters 1-2, look to break up the chapter into sections*) – *use the print-out of Lamentations NIV 2011 to mark the text.*

2. Break Lamentations 3 into sections and give each section a title.
3. Thinking back what you read previous in Chapters 1-2, 4-5 – what is different in the way this chapter reads?
4. Having being introduced to a man in verse 1, what do we learn about him in verses 1-21?
- 5a. In verse 22-39, what does the man tell us about the LORD?
- 5b. What does he say is 'good' for a person and what should a person do?
- 5c. Why? What is his argument? Is this a natural/logical/remarkable conclusion?

## **Bible Text - Lamentations**

6. In many ways Lamentations 3:22-27 is the heart and key to understanding Lamentations. These verses are often cited as stand-alone quotes. How does understanding more about the context into which these verses were written, help us understand these verses more deeply?

7. What does the writer suggest as a response in verses 40-42? What does he mean by saying 'lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven'?

8. In this man's experience, what might change and what might stay the same in a person's relationship with the LORD, once they repent (vv 43-54)?

9. In verses 55-66, it seems the man is under duress...

a. What does he cry out in prayer?

b. Is he justified in what he asks?

c. Is he comforted?

## **Read Psalm 22**

10. This is a Psalm of David, and reflects a time when he is under duress...

a. What does he cry out in prayer?

b. Is he justified in what he asks?

c. Is he comforted?

**Read Matthew 27:45-50**

11. Here we see Jesus under great duress.

a. What does he cry out in prayer?

b. Is he justified in what he asks?

c. Is he comforted?

12. How does Jesus, on the cross, and praying this way, help us understand Lamentations 3:22-27?

13. How could calling someone to repent and convert (to faith in Jesus), comfort a person who thinks God causes all the suffering, shows no compassion, is unloving or brings affliction or grief upon the world? (c.f. Lamentations 3:31-33)?

To close, ask each member of the group to summarise what has been learnt from Lamentations. Practically you could ask: 'If you were to explain to someone the significance of what we looked at from Lamentations in this study – what would you say?'

*Pray – perhaps for people we know to understand the reasons why repentance for the forgiveness of sins is a good thing.*

**New International Version (NIV 2011)**

1 <sup>[a]</sup>How deserted lies the city,  
once so full of people!  
How like a widow is she,  
who once was great among the nations!  
She who was queen among the provinces  
has now become a slave.

2 Bitterly she weeps at night,  
tears are on her cheeks.  
Among all her lovers  
there is no one to comfort her.  
All her friends have betrayed her;  
they have become her enemies.

3 After affliction and harsh labour,  
Judah has gone into exile.  
She dwells among the nations;  
she finds no resting place.  
All who pursue her have overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

4 The roads to Zion mourn,  
for no one comes to her appointed festivals.  
All her gateways are desolate,  
her priests groan,  
her young women grieve,  
and she is in bitter anguish.

5 Her foes have become her masters;  
her enemies are at ease.  
The LORD has brought her grief  
because of her many sins.  
Her children have gone into exile,  
captive before the foe.

6 All the splendour has departed  
from Daughter Zion.  
Her princes are like deer  
that find no pasture;  
in weakness they have fled  
before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and wandering  
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures  
that were hers in days of old.  
When her people fell into enemy hands,  
there was no one to help her.  
Her enemies looked at her  
and laughed at her destruction.

8 Jerusalem has sinned greatly  
and so has become unclean.  
All who honoured her despise her,  
for they have all seen her naked;  
she herself groans  
and turns away.

9 Her filthiness clung to her skirts;  
she did not consider her future.  
Her fall was astounding;  
there was none to comfort her.  
“Look, LORD, on my affliction,  
for the enemy has triumphed.”

10 The enemy laid hands  
on all her treasures;  
she saw pagan nations  
enter her sanctuary—  
those you had forbidden  
to enter your assembly.

11 All her people groan  
as they search for bread;  
they barter their treasures for food  
to keep themselves alive.  
“Look, LORD, and consider,  
for I am despised.”

12 “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?  
Look around and see.  
Is any suffering like my suffering  
that was inflicted on me,  
that the LORD brought on me  
in the day of his fierce anger?”

13 “From on high he sent fire,  
sent it down into my bones.  
He spread a net for my feet  
and turned me back.  
He made me desolate,  
faint all the day long.

14 “My sins have been bound into a yoke<sup>[b]</sup>;  
by his hands they were woven together.  
They have been hung on my neck,  
and the Lord has sapped my strength.  
He has given me into the hands  
of those I cannot withstand.

15 “The Lord has rejected  
all the warriors in my midst;  
he has summoned an army against me  
to<sup>[c]</sup> crush my young men.

In his winepress the Lord has trampled  
Virgin Daughter Judah.

<sup>16</sup> "This is why I weep  
and my eyes overflow with tears.  
No one is near to comfort me,  
no one to restore my spirit.  
My children are destitute  
because the enemy has prevailed."

<sup>17</sup> Zion stretches out her hands,  
but there is no one to comfort her.  
The LORD has decreed for Jacob  
that his neighbours become his foes;  
Jerusalem has become  
an unclean thing among them.

<sup>18</sup> "The LORD is righteous,  
yet I rebelled against his command.  
Listen, all you peoples;  
look on my suffering.  
My young men and young women  
have gone into exile.

<sup>19</sup> "I called to my allies  
but they betrayed me.  
My priests and my elders  
perished in the city  
while they searched for food  
to keep themselves alive.

<sup>20</sup> "See, LORD, how distressed I am!  
I am in torment within,  
and in my heart I am disturbed,  
for I have been most rebellious.  
Outside, the sword bereaves;  
inside, there is only death.

<sup>21</sup> "People have heard my groaning,  
but there is no one to comfort me.  
All my enemies have heard of my distress;  
they rejoice at what you have done.  
May you bring the day you have announced  
so they may become like me.

<sup>22</sup> "Let all their wickedness come before you;  
deal with them  
as you have dealt with me  
because of all my sins.  
My groans are many  
and my heart is faint."

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[d]</sup>How the Lord has covered Daughter Zion  
with the cloud of his anger<sup>[e]</sup>!  
He has hurled down the splendour of Israel  
from heaven to earth;  
he has not remembered his footstool  
in the day of his anger.

<sup>2</sup> Without pity the Lord has swallowed up  
all the dwellings of Jacob;  
in his wrath he has torn down  
the strongholds of Daughter Judah.  
He has brought her kingdom and its princes  
down to the ground in dishonor.

<sup>3</sup> In fierce anger he has cut off  
every horn<sup>[f]</sup><sup>[g]</sup> of Israel.  
He has withdrawn his right hand  
at the approach of the enemy.  
He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire  
that consumes everything around it.

<sup>4</sup> Like an enemy he has strung his bow;  
his right hand is ready.  
Like a foe he has slain  
all who were pleasing to the eye;  
he has poured out his wrath like fire  
on the tent of Daughter Zion.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is like an enemy;  
he has swallowed up Israel.  
He has swallowed up all her palaces  
and destroyed her strongholds.  
He has multiplied mourning and lamentation  
for Daughter Judah.

<sup>6</sup> He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden;  
he has destroyed his place of meeting.  
The LORD has made Zion forget  
her appointed festivals and her Sabbaths;  
in his fierce anger he has spurned  
both king and priest.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord has rejected his altar  
and abandoned his sanctuary.  
He has given the walls of her palaces  
into the hands of the enemy;  
they have raised a shout in the house of the  
LORD  
as on the day of an appointed festival.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD determined to tear down  
the wall around Daughter Zion.  
He stretched out a measuring line

and did not withhold his hand from  
destroying.  
He made ramparts and walls lament;  
together they wasted away.

<sup>9</sup> Her gates have sunk into the ground;  
their bars he has broken and destroyed.  
Her king and her princes are exiled among the  
nations,  
the law is no more,  
and her prophets no longer find  
visions from the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> The elders of Daughter Zion  
sit on the ground in silence;  
they have sprinkled dust on their heads  
and put on sackcloth.  
The young women of Jerusalem  
have bowed their heads to the ground.

<sup>11</sup> My eyes fail from weeping,  
I am in torment within;  
my heart is poured out on the ground  
because my people are destroyed,  
because children and infants faint  
in the streets of the city.

<sup>12</sup> They say to their mothers,  
“Where is bread and wine?”  
as they faint like the wounded  
in the streets of the city,  
as their lives ebb away  
in their mothers’ arms.

<sup>13</sup> What can I say for you?  
With what can I compare you,  
Daughter Jerusalem?  
To what can I liken you,  
that I may comfort you,  
Virgin Daughter Zion?  
Your wound is as deep as the sea.  
Who can heal you?

<sup>14</sup> The visions of your prophets  
were false and worthless;  
they did not expose your sin  
to ward off your captivity.  
The prophecies they gave you  
were false and misleading.

<sup>15</sup> All who pass your way  
clap their hands at you;  
they scoff and shake their heads

at Daughter Jerusalem:  
“Is this the city that was called  
the perfection of beauty,  
the joy of the whole earth?”

<sup>16</sup> All your enemies open their mouths  
wide against you;  
they scoff and gnash their teeth  
and say, “We have swallowed her up.  
This is the day we have waited for;  
we have lived to see it.”

<sup>17</sup> The LORD has done what he planned;  
he has fulfilled his word,  
which he decreed long ago.  
He has overthrown you without pity,  
he has let the enemy gloat over you,  
he has exalted the horn <sup>[h]</sup> of your foes.

<sup>18</sup> The hearts of the people  
cry out to the Lord.  
You walls of Daughter Zion,  
let your tears flow like a river  
day and night;  
give yourself no relief,  
your eyes no rest.

<sup>19</sup> Arise, cry out in the night,  
as the watches of the night begin;  
pour out your heart like water  
in the presence of the Lord.  
Lift up your hands to him  
for the lives of your children,  
who faint from hunger  
at every street corner.

<sup>20</sup> “Look, LORD, and consider:  
Whom have you ever treated like this?  
Should women eat their offspring,  
the children they have cared for?  
Should priest and prophet be killed  
in the sanctuary of the Lord?

<sup>21</sup> “Young and old lie together  
in the dust of the streets;  
my young men and young women  
have fallen by the sword.  
You have slain them in the day of your anger;  
you have slaughtered them without pity.

<sup>22</sup> “As you summon to a feast day,  
so you summoned against me terrors on  
every side.

In the day of the LORD's anger  
no one escaped or survived;  
those I cared for and reared  
my enemy has destroyed."

**3** <sup>[U]</sup> I am the man who has seen affliction  
by the rod of the LORD's wrath.

<sup>2</sup> He has driven me away and made me walk  
in darkness rather than light;

<sup>3</sup> indeed, he has turned his hand against me  
again and again, all day long.

<sup>4</sup> He has made my skin and my flesh grow old  
and has broken my bones.

<sup>5</sup> He has besieged me and surrounded me  
with bitterness and hardship.

<sup>6</sup> He has made me dwell in darkness  
like those long dead.

<sup>7</sup> He has walled me in so I cannot escape;  
he has weighed me down with chains.

<sup>8</sup> Even when I call out or cry for help,  
he shuts out my prayer.

<sup>9</sup> He has barred my way with blocks of stone;  
he has made my paths crooked.

<sup>10</sup> Like a bear lying in wait,  
like a lion in hiding,

<sup>11</sup> he dragged me from the path and mangled me  
and left me without help.

<sup>12</sup> He drew his bow  
and made me the target for his arrows.

<sup>13</sup> He pierced my heart  
with arrows from his quiver.

<sup>14</sup> I became the laughingstock of all my people;  
they mock me in song all day long.

<sup>15</sup> He has filled me with bitter herbs  
and given me gall to drink.

<sup>16</sup> He has broken my teeth with gravel;  
he has trampled me in the dust.

<sup>17</sup> I have been deprived of peace;  
I have forgotten what prosperity is.

<sup>18</sup> So I say, "My splendor is gone  
and all that I had hoped from the LORD."

<sup>19</sup> I remember my affliction and my wandering,  
the bitterness and the gall.

<sup>20</sup> I well remember them,  
and my soul is downcast within me.

<sup>21</sup> Yet this I call to mind  
and therefore I have hope:

<sup>22</sup> Because of the LORD's great love we are not  
consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.

<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup> I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him."

<sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those whose hope is in  
him,  
to the one who seeks him;

<sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> It is good for a man to bear the yoke  
while he is young.

<sup>28</sup> Let him sit alone in silence,  
for the LORD has laid it on him.

<sup>29</sup> Let him bury his face in the dust—  
there may yet be hope.

<sup>30</sup> Let him offer his cheek to one who would  
strike him,  
and let him be filled with disgrace.

<sup>31</sup> For no one is cast off  
by the Lord forever.

<sup>32</sup> Though he brings grief, he will show  
compassion,  
so great is his unfailing love.

<sup>33</sup> For he does not willingly bring affliction  
or grief to anyone.

<sup>34</sup> To crush underfoot  
all prisoners in the land,  
<sup>35</sup> to deny people their rights  
before the Most High,  
<sup>36</sup> to deprive them of justice—  
would not the Lord see such things?

<sup>37</sup> Who can speak and have it happen  
if the Lord has not decreed it?

<sup>38</sup> Is it not from the mouth of the Most High  
that both calamities and good things come?

<sup>39</sup> Why should the living complain  
when punished for their sins?

<sup>40</sup> Let us examine our ways and test them,  
and let us return to the LORD.

<sup>41</sup> Let us lift up our hearts and our hands  
to God in heaven, and say:

<sup>42</sup> “We have sinned and rebelled  
and you have not forgiven.

<sup>43</sup> “You have covered yourself with anger and  
pursued us;  
you have slain without pity.

<sup>44</sup> You have covered yourself with a cloud  
so that no prayer can get through.

<sup>45</sup> You have made us scum and refuse  
among the nations.

<sup>46</sup> “All our enemies have opened their mouths  
wide against us.

<sup>47</sup> We have suffered terror and pitfalls,  
ruin and destruction.”

<sup>48</sup> Streams of tears flow from my eyes  
because my people are destroyed.

<sup>49</sup> My eyes will flow unceasingly,  
without relief,

<sup>50</sup> until the LORD looks down  
from heaven and sees.

<sup>51</sup> What I see brings grief to my soul  
because of all the women of my city.

<sup>52</sup> Those who were my enemies without cause  
hunted me like a bird.

<sup>53</sup> They tried to end my life in a pit  
and threw stones at me;

<sup>54</sup> the waters closed over my head,  
and I thought I was about to perish.

<sup>55</sup> I called on your name, LORD,  
from the depths of the pit.

<sup>56</sup> You heard my plea: “Do not close your ears  
to my cry for relief.”

<sup>57</sup> You came near when I called you,  
and you said, “Do not fear.”

<sup>58</sup> You, Lord, took up my case;  
you redeemed my life.

<sup>59</sup> LORD, you have seen the wrong done to me.  
Uphold my cause!

<sup>60</sup> You have seen the depth of their  
vengeance,  
all their plots against me.

<sup>61</sup> LORD, you have heard their insults,  
all their plots against me—

<sup>62</sup> what my enemies whisper and mutter  
against me all day long.

<sup>63</sup> Look at them! Sitting or standing,  
they mock me in their songs.

<sup>64</sup> Pay them back what they deserve, LORD,  
for what their hands have done.

<sup>65</sup> Put a veil over their hearts,  
and may your curse be on them!

<sup>66</sup> Pursue them in anger and destroy them  
from under the heavens of the LORD.

**4** <sup>1</sup> How the gold has lost its luster,  
the fine gold become dull!  
The sacred gems are scattered  
at every street corner.

<sup>2</sup> How the precious children of Zion,  
once worth their weight in gold,  
are now considered as pots of clay,  
the work of a potter’s hands!

<sup>3</sup> Even jackals offer their breasts  
to nurse their young,  
but my people have become heartless  
like ostriches in the desert.

<sup>4</sup> Because of thirst the infant’s tongue  
sticks to the roof of its mouth;  
the children beg for bread,  
but no one gives it to them.

<sup>5</sup> Those who once ate delicacies  
are destitute in the streets.  
Those brought up in royal purple  
now lie on ash heaps.

<sup>6</sup> The punishment of my people  
is greater than that of Sodom,  
which was overthrown in a moment  
without a hand turned to help her.

<sup>7</sup> Their princes were brighter than snow  
and whiter than milk,  
their bodies more ruddy than rubies,  
their appearance like lapis lazuli.

<sup>8</sup> But now they are blacker than soot;  
they are not recognized in the streets.  
Their skin has shriveled on their bones;  
it has become as dry as a stick.

<sup>9</sup> Those killed by the sword are better off  
than those who die of famine;  
racked with hunger, they waste away  
for lack of food from the field.



<sup>10</sup> With their own hands compassionate  
women  
have cooked their own children,  
who became their food  
when my people were destroyed.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD has given full vent to his wrath;  
he has poured out his fierce anger.  
He kindled a fire in Zion  
that consumed her foundations.

<sup>12</sup> The kings of the earth did not believe,  
nor did any of the peoples of the world,  
that enemies and foes could enter  
the gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> But it happened because of the sins of her  
prophets  
and the iniquities of her priests,  
who shed within her  
the blood of the righteous.

<sup>14</sup> Now they grope through the streets  
as if they were blind.  
They are so defiled with blood  
that no one dares to touch their garments.

<sup>15</sup> "Go away! You are unclean!" people cry to  
them.  
"Away! Away! Don't touch us!"  
When they flee and wander about,  
people among the nations say,  
"They can stay here no longer."

<sup>16</sup> The LORD himself has scattered them;  
he no longer watches over them.  
The priests are shown no honor,  
the elders no favor.

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, our eyes failed,  
looking in vain for help;  
from our towers we watched  
for a nation that could not save us.

<sup>18</sup> People stalked us at every step,  
so we could not walk in our streets.  
Our end was near, our days were numbered,  
for our end had come.

<sup>19</sup> Our pursuers were swifter  
than eagles in the sky;  
they chased us over the mountains  
and lay in wait for us in the desert.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD's anointed, our very life breath,  
was caught in their traps.  
We thought that under his shadow  
we would live among the nations.

<sup>21</sup> Rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom,  
you who live in the land of Uz.  
But to you also the cup will be passed;  
you will be drunk and stripped naked.

<sup>22</sup> Your punishment will end, Daughter Zion;  
he will not prolong your exile.  
But he will punish your sin, Daughter Edom,  
and expose your wickedness.

**5** Remember, LORD, what has happened to us;  
look, and see our disgrace.

<sup>2</sup> Our inheritance has been turned over to  
strangers,  
our homes to foreigners.

<sup>3</sup> We have become fatherless,  
our mothers are widows.

<sup>4</sup> We must buy the water we drink;  
our wood can be had only at a price.

<sup>5</sup> Those who pursue us are at our heels;  
we are weary and find no rest.

<sup>6</sup> We submitted to Egypt and Assyria  
to get enough bread.

<sup>7</sup> Our ancestors sinned and are no more,  
and we bear their punishment.

<sup>8</sup> Slaves rule over us,  
and there is no one to free us from their  
hands.

<sup>9</sup> We get our bread at the risk of our lives  
because of the sword in the desert.

<sup>10</sup> Our skin is hot as an oven,  
feverish from hunger.

<sup>11</sup> Women have been violated in Zion,  
and virgins in the towns of Judah.

<sup>12</sup> Princes have been hung up by their hands;  
elders are shown no respect.

<sup>13</sup> Young men toil at the millstones;  
boys stagger under loads of wood.

<sup>14</sup> The elders are gone from the city gate;  
the young men have stopped their music.

<sup>15</sup> Joy is gone from our hearts;  
our dancing has turned to mourning.

<sup>16</sup> The crown has fallen from our head.  
Woe to us, for we have sinned!

<sup>17</sup> Because of this our hearts are faint,  
because of these things our eyes grow dim

<sup>18</sup> for Mount Zion, which lies desolate,  
with jackals prowling over it.

- <sup>19</sup> You, LORD, reign forever;  
your throne endures from generation to  
generation.
- <sup>20</sup> Why do you always forget us?  
Why do you forsake us so long?
- <sup>21</sup> Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may  
return;  
renew our days as of old
- <sup>22</sup> unless you have utterly rejected us  
and are angry with us beyond measure.

**Footnotes:**

1. [Lamentations 1:1](#) This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
2. [Lamentations 1:14](#) Most Hebrew manuscripts; many Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint *He kept watch over my sins*
3. [Lamentations 1:15](#) *Or has set a time for me / when he will*
4. [Lamentations 2:1](#) This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
5. [Lamentations 2:1](#) *Or How the Lord in his anger / has treated Daughter Zion with contempt*
6. [Lamentations 2:3](#) *Or off / all the strength; or every king*
7. [Lamentations 2:3](#) *Horn* here symbolizes strength.
8. [Lamentations 2:17](#) *Horn* here symbolizes strength.
9. [Lamentations 3:1](#) This chapter is an acrostic poem; the verses of each stanza begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the verses within each stanza begin with the same letter.
10. [Lamentations 4:1](#) This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

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