

Lamentations

Jerusalem Cries Over Her Destruction

- 1 Jerusalem once was a city full of people.
 But now the city is so deserted!
 Jerusalem was one of the greatest cities
 in the world.
 But now she* has become like a widow.
 She was once a princess among cities.
 But now she has been made a slave.
- 2 She cries bitterly in the night.
 Her tears are on her cheeks.
 She has no one to comfort her.
 Many nations were friendly to her.
 But none of them comforts her now.
 All of her friends turned their backs on her.
 Her friends became her enemies.
- 3 Judah suffered very much.
 And then Judah was taken into captivity.
 Judah lives among other nations.
 But she has found no rest.
 The people that chased her caught her.
 They caught her in the narrow valleys.
- 4 The roads to Zion* are very sad.
 They are sad because no person comes
 to Zion for the holidays anymore.
 All of Zion's gates have been destroyed.
 All of Zion's priests groan.
 Zion's young women
 have been taken away.*
 And all of this is a bitter sadness to Zion.
- 5 Jerusalem's enemies have won.
 Her enemies have been successful.
 This happened because the Lord
 punished her.

- He punished Jerusalem for her many sins.
 Her children have gone away.
 Their enemies captured them
 and took them away.
- 6 The beauty of the Daughter of Zion*
 has gone away.
 Her princes became like deer.
 They were like deer
 that can't find a meadow to feed in.
 They ran away without strength.
 They ran away from those people
 that chased them.
- 7 Jerusalem thinks back.
 Jerusalem remembers the time
 when she was hurt
 and when she lost her home.
 She remembers all the nice things
 that she had in the past.
 She remembers those nice things
 that she had in the old days.
 She remembers when her people
 were captured by the enemy.
 She remembers when there was no person
 to help her.
 When her enemies saw her, they laughed.
 They laughed because she
 was destroyed.
- 8 Jerusalem sinned very badly.
 Because Jerusalem sinned,
 she became a ruined city
 that people shake their heads about.
 In the past people respected her.
 Now those people hate her.
 They hate her because they abused her.
 Jerusalem groans.
 She turns away.

she Throughout this poem, the city of Jerusalem is figuratively portrayed as a woman.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

have been taken away Following the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has "are upset."

Daughter of Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

- 9 Jerusalem's skirts became dirty.
 She didn't think about the things
 that would happen to her.
 Her fall was amazing.
 She had no person to comfort her.
 She says,
 "Lord, see how I am hurt!
 See how my enemy thinks he is so great!"
- 10 The enemy stretched out his hand.
 He took all of her nice things.
 In fact, she saw the foreign nations
 go inside her temple.
 And Lord, you said those people
 could not join in our assembly!
- 11 All the people of Jerusalem are groaning.
 All of her people are looking for food.
 They are giving away all their nice things
 for food.
 They are doing this to keep alive.
 Jerusalem says,
 "Look, Lord. Look at me!
 See how people hate me."
- 12 All you people that pass by on the road,
 you don't seem to care.
 But look at me and see.
 Is there any pain like my pain?
 Is there any pain like the pain
 that has come to me?
 Is there any pain like the pain
 that the Lord has punished me with?
 He has punished me on the day
 of his great anger.
- 13 The Lord sent fire from above.
 That fire went down into my bones.
 He stretched out a net for my feet.
 He turned me all the way around.
 He made me into a wasteland.
 I am sick all day.
- 14 "My sins were tied up like a yoke.
 My sins were tied up in the Lord's hands.
 The Lord's yoke is on my neck.
 The Lord has made me weak.
 The Lord has given me to people
 that I can't stand up against."
- 15 "The Lord rejected all my strong soldiers.
 Those soldiers were inside the city.
 Then the Lord brought a group of people
 against me.
- He brought those people to kill my
 young soldiers.
 The Lord has stepped on the grapes
 in the winepress.
 That winepress belongs to the virgin
 daughter of Jerusalem.*
- 16 "I cry about all these things.
 My eyes, my eyes run down with water.
 There is no comforter near me.
 There is no person that can make me
 feel better.
 My children are like a wasteland.
 They are like that because the enemy won."
- 17 Zion* spread out her hands.
 There was no person to comfort her.
 The Lord had given orders to Jacob's*
 enemies.
 The Lord ordered Jacob's enemies
 to surround the city.
 Jerusalem has become something dirty.
 She is something dirty among
 those enemies.
- 18 Now Jerusalem says,
 "I refused to listen to the Lord.
 So the Lord is right for doing these things.
 So listen, all you people!
 Look at my pain!
 My young women and men
 have gone into captivity."
- 19 I called out to my lovers.
 But they tricked me.
 My priests and my elders
 have died in the city.
 They were looking for food for themselves.
 They wanted to keep themselves alive.
- 20 "Look at me, Lord. I am in distress!
 My insides are upset!
 My heart feels like it has turned
 upside down inside me!
 My heart feels this way
 because I have been so stubborn!"

virgin daughter of Jerusalem This is another figurative name for the city of Jerusalem.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.

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In the streets, the sword killed my children.
Inside the houses, death was there.

- 21 “Listen to me, because I am groaning!
I have no person to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble.
They are happy.
They are happy that you did this to me.
You said there would be a time
of punishment.
You said you would punish my enemies.
Now do what you said.
Let my enemies be like I am now.

- 22 “Look at how evil my enemies are.
Then you can treat them
the same way you treated me
because of all my sins.
Do this because I am groaning
again and again.
Do this because my heart is sick.”

The Lord Destroyed Jerusalem

- 2** Look how the Lord has set
the Daughter of Zion* under a cloud.
He has thrown the glory of Israel
from the sky to the ground.
The Lord didn’t keep in mind that Israel
was his footstool,
on the day of his anger.
- 2 The Lord destroyed the houses of Jacob.*
He destroyed them without mercy.
He destroyed in his anger
the fortresses of the Daughter of Judah.*
The Lord threw the kingdom of Judah
and its rulers to the ground.
He ruined the kingdom of Judah.
- 3 The Lord was angry and he destroyed
all the strength of Israel.
He took away his right hand from Israel.
He did this when the enemy came.
He burned like a flaming fire in Jacob.*
He was like a fire that burns all around.
- 4 The Lord bent his bow like an enemy.
He held his sword in his right hand.

He killed all the good looking men of Judah.
The Lord killed them
as if he were the enemy.
The Lord poured out his anger.
He poured it out on the tents of Zion.

- 5 The Lord has become like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel.
He has swallowed up all her palaces.
He has swallowed up all her fortresses.
He has made much sadness
and crying for the dead
in the Daughter of Judah.*
- 6 The Lord pulled up his own tent*
as if it were a garden.
He has ruined the place where the people
went to meet to worship him.
The Lord has made people forget
the special assemblies
and special days of rest* in Zion.
The Lord rejected the king and the priests.
He was angry and rejected them.
- 7 The Lord rejected his altar.
He rejected his Holy Place of worship.
He let the enemy pull down the walls
of the palaces of Jerusalem.
The enemy shouted with joy
in the Lord’s temple.
They made noise, as if it were a holiday.
- 8 The Lord planned to destroy
the wall of the Daughter of Zion.*
He marked the wall with a measuring line
to show where the wall
should be torn down.
He didn’t stop himself from destroying.
So he made all the walls
cry out in sadness.
Together they wasted away.
- 9 Jerusalem’s gates have sunk into the ground.
He destroyed and smashed the bars
of the gates.
Her king and princes are in other nations.
There is no more teaching for them.

Daughter of Zion This is a figurative name for the city of Jerusalem.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.

Daughter of Judah This is a figurative name for the nation of Judah.

his own tent This is a reference to the Lord’s temple in Jerusalem.

special days of rest Or, “Sabbaths.” This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all of the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

- Also Jerusalem's prophets have not found
any visions from the Lord.
- 10 The elders of Zion* sit on the ground.
They sit on the ground and are quiet.
They pour dust on their heads.
They put on sackcloth.*
The young women of Jerusalem
bow their heads to the ground in sorrow.
- 11 My eyes are worn out with tears!
My insides are upset!
My heart feels like it has been poured
on the ground!
I feel this way because of the destruction
of my people.
Children and babies are fainting.
They are fainting in the public squares
of the city.
- 12 Those children say to their mothers,
“Where is bread and wine?”
They ask this question as they die.
They die on their mother's laps.
- 13 Daughter of Zion,*
what can I compare you to?
What can I compare you to,
Virgin Daughter of Zion*?
How can I comfort you?
Your destruction is as big as the sea!
I don't think anyone can heal you.
- 14 Your prophets saw visions for you.
But their visions were only worthless
lies.
They didn't preach against your sins.
They didn't try to make things better.
They preached messages for you,
but they were false messages
that fooled you.
- 15 The people that pass by on the road
clap their hands at you in shock.
They whistle and shake their heads
at the Daughter of Jerusalem.
- They ask,
“Is this the city that people called,
‘The Perfectly Beautiful City’ and
‘The Joy of all the Earth’?”
- 16 All your enemies laugh at you.
They whistle and grind their teeth at you.
They say,
“We have swallowed them up!
This is truly the day we were hoping
for.
We have finally seen this happen.”
- 17 The Lord did what he planned to do.
He has done what he said he would do.
He has done what he commanded
from times of long ago.
He destroyed, and he had no pity.
He made your enemies happy
because of what happened to you.
He made your enemies strong.
- 18 Cry out* with your hearts to the Lord!
Wall of the Daughter of Zion,*
let tears roll down like a stream!
let your tears roll down day and night.
Don't stop!
Don't let your eyes be still!
- 19 Get up! Cry out in the night!
Cry out at the beginning of each of the
parts of the night!
Pour out your heart as if it were water!
Pour out your heart before the Lord!
Lift up your hands in prayer to the Lord.
Ask him to let your children live.
Ask him to let your children live that are
fainting with starvation.
They are fainting with starvation
in all the streets of the city.
- 20 Look at me, Lord!
See who it is
that you have treated this way!
Let me ask this question:
Should women eat the children
they have given birth to?
Should women eat the children
that they have cared for?

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sackcloth A kind of cloth that people wore to show they were
sad or crying for dead people.

Daughter of Zion This is a figurative name for the city
of Jerusalem.

Cry out The Hebrew says, “Their hearts cried out.”

- Should priest and prophet
be killed in the temple of the Lord?
21 Young men and old men
lie on the ground in the streets
of the city.
My young women and young men
have been killed by the sword.
You, Lord, killed them on the day
of your anger!
You killed them without mercy!
- 22 You invited terror to come to me
from all around.
You invited terror like you were inviting it
to a holiday.
No person escaped
on the day of the Lord's anger.
My enemy has killed
those that I raised and brought up.

The Meaning of Suffering

- 3 I am a man that has seen much trouble.
The Lord beat us with a stick.
And I saw it happen!
- 2 The Lord led and brought me
into darkness, not light.
- 3 The Lord turned his hand against me.
He did this again and again, all day.
- 4 He wore out my flesh and skin.
He broke my bones.
- 5 The Lord built up bitterness
and trouble against me.
He made bitterness and trouble
come all around me.
- 6 He made me sit in the dark.
He made me like some person
that has been dead a long time.
- 7 The Lord shut me in, so I could not get out.
He put heavy chains on me.
- 8 Even when I cry out and ask for help,
the Lord does not listen to my prayer.
- 9 He has blocked up my path with stones.
He has made my path crooked.
- 10 The Lord is like a bear about to attack me.
He is like a lion that is in a hiding place.
- 11 The Lord led me off my path.
He tore me to pieces.
He ruined me.
- 12 He made his bow ready.
He made me the target for his arrows.

- 13 He shot me in the stomach.
He shot me with his arrows.
- 14 I have become a joke to all of my people.
All day long they sing songs about me
and make fun of me.
- 15 The Lord gave me this poison (*punishment*)
to drink.
He filled me with this bitter drink.
- 16 The Lord pushed my teeth
into rocky ground.
He pushed me into the dirt.
- 17 I thought I would never have peace again.
I forgot about good things.
- 18 I said to myself,
"I no longer have any hope
that the Lord will help me."
- 19 Lord, remember,
I am very sad.
And I have no home.
Remember the bitter poison (*punishment*)
that you gave me.
- 20 I remember well all my troubles.
And I am very sad.
- 21 But then I think of something else,
then I have hope. What I think of is this:
- 22 The Lord's love and kindness never ends.*
His compassion never ends.
- 23 Every morning he shows it in new ways!
Lord, you are so very true and loyal!
- 24 I say to myself,
"The Lord is my God,
and I trust him."*
- 25 The Lord is good to people
that wait for him.
The Lord is good to people
that look for him.
- 26 It is good for a person to wait quietly
for the Lord to save him.
- 27 It is good for a person to wear the yoke*
of the Lord.
It is good for a person to wear that yoke
from the time he is young.

never ends The Hebrew reads, "we don't come to an end."

The Lord ... him. Or, "The Lord is my portion and I trust him."

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

- 28 That person should sit alone and be quiet
when the Lord puts his yoke on him.
- 29 That person should bow to the Lord
with his face to the ground.
Maybe there is still hope.
- 30 That person should turn his cheek
to the one that hits him.
That person should let people insult him.
- 31 That person should remember that
the Lord does not reject people forever.
- 32 When the Lord punishes,
he also has mercy.
He has mercy because of his great love
and kindness.
- 33 The Lord does not want to punish people.
He does not like to make people unhappy.
- 34 The Lord does not like these things:
He does not like for someone to crush
all the prisoners of the earth under
his feet.
- 35 He does not like for someone
to be unfair to another person.
But some people do those bad things
right in front of God Most High.
- 36 The Lord does not like for a person
to cheat another person.
The Lord does not like any of these things.
- 37 Nobody can say something
and have it happen,
unless the Lord orders it to happen.
- 38 God Most High commands
both good and bad things to happen.
- 39 No person alive can complain
when the Lord punishes him for his sins.
- 40 Let us check and see what we have done.
Then let us turn back to the Lord.
- 41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to the God of heaven.
- 42 Let us say to him,
“We have sinned and have been
stubborn.
Because of this, you haven’t forgiven us.
- 43 You wrapped yourself with anger.
You chased us.
You killed us without mercy!
- 44 You wrapped yourself in a cloud.
You did that so that no prayer
could get through.
- 45 You made us like garbage and dirt
to the other nations.
- 46 All of our enemies
speak angrily to us.
- 47 We have been frightened.
We have fallen into a pit.
We have been hurt bad!
We have been broken!”
- 48 My eyes flow with streams of tears!
I cry because of the destruction
of my people!
- 49 My eyes will flow without stopping!
I will keep on crying!
- 50 I will continue to cry
until you look down and see us, Lord!
I will continue to cry
until you see us from heaven!
- 51 My eyes make me sad,
when I see what happened
to the girls in my city.
- 52 Those people were my enemies
for no good reason,
but they hunted me like a bird.
- 53 They threw me into a pit
while I was still alive.
They threw stones at me.
- 54 Water came up over my head.
I said to myself,
“I am finished.”
- 55 Lord, I called your name.
I called out your name
from the bottom of the pit.
- 56 You heard my voice.
You didn’t close your ears.
You didn’t refuse to rescue me.
- 57 You came to me
on the day that I called out to you.
You said to me,
“Don’t be afraid.”
- 58 Lord, you defended me.
You bought back my life for me.
- 59 Lord, you have seen my trouble.
Now judge my case for me.
- 60 You have seen how my enemies
have hurt me.
You have seen all the evil plans
that they made against me.
- 61 You heard them insult me, Lord.
You have heard all the evil plans
that they made against me.

62 The words and the thoughts of
my enemies
are against me all the time—
63 when they sit down
and when they stand up.
Lord, look how they make fun of me!
64 Give them back what they deserve, Lord!
Pay them back for what they have done!
65 Give them stubbornness of heart!
Then put your curse on them!
66 Chase them in anger!
Destroy them!
Destroy them from under the sky, Lord!

The Horrors of the Attack on Jerusalem

4 See how the gold has grown dark.
See how the good gold is changed.
There are jewels* scattered all around.
They are scattered at every street corner.
2 The people of Zion* were worth a lot.
They were worth their weight in gold.
But now the enemy treats those people
like old clay jars.
The enemy treats them
like clay jars made by a potter.
3 Even a wild dog feeds her babies.
Even the jackal lets her pups suck
at her breast.
But the daughter of my people* is cruel.
She is like the ostrich
that lives in the desert.
4 The little baby's tongue sticks
to the roof of its mouth from thirst.
Young children ask for bread.
But no one gives any bread to them.
5 The people that at one time ate rich food
now are dying in the streets.
The people that grew up
wearing nice red clothes
now pick through garbage piles.
6 The sin of the daughter of my people*
was very great.

Their sin was greater than the sins
of Sodom and Gomorrah.*
Sodom and Gomorrah
were destroyed suddenly.
No human hand caused that destruction.*
7 Some of the men of Judah
were dedicated to God in a special way.
Those men were very pure.
They were whiter than snow.
They were whiter than milk.
Their bodies were red like coral.
Their beards were sapphire stones.
8 But now their faces are blacker than soot.
No one even recognizes them in the streets.
Their skin is wrinkled over their bones.
Their skin is like wood.
9 The people that were killed by the sword
had it better than
the people that were killed by famine.
The starving people were very sad.
They were hurt.
They died because they got no food
from the field.
10 At that time, even very nice women
cooked their own children.
Those children became food
for their mothers.
This happened when my people
were destroyed.
11 The Lord used all of his anger.
He poured out all his anger.
He made a fire in Zion.*
That fire burned down Zion
to its foundations.
12 The kings of the earth could not believe
what had happened.
The people of the world could not believe
what had happened.
They could not believe
that enemies would be able to come
through the city gates of Jerusalem.
13 This happened because the prophets
of Jerusalem sinned.
This happened because the priests
of Jerusalem did evil things.

jewels The meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.
Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
daughter of my people This is a figurative way of referring
here to the women of Jerusalem.
daughter of my people These words refer to all the people
of Jerusalem.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because
the people were so evil.
No human hand caused that destruction The Hebrew of this
line is unclear.

Those people were shedding blood
in the city of Jerusalem.
They were shedding the blood
of good people.

14 The prophets and priests walked around
like blind men in the streets.
They had become dirty with blood.
No one could even touch their clothes
because they were dirty.

15 People shouted,
“Go away!
Go away!
Don’t touch us.”
Those people wandered around
and had no home.
People in other nations said,
“We don’t want them to live with us.”

16 The Lord himself destroyed those people.
He didn’t look after them anymore.
He didn’t respect the priests.
He was not friendly to the elders
of Judah.

17 We have worn out our eyes
looking for help.
But no help comes.
We kept on looking for a nation
to save us.
We kept watch from our watchtower,
But no nation came to us.

18 Our enemies hunted us all the time.
We could not even go out into
the streets.
Our end came near. Our time was up.
Our end came!

19 The men that chased us
were faster than eagles in the sky.
Those men chased us into the mountains.
They hid in the desert to catch us.

20 The king was very important to us.
He was like the breath we breathe.
But the king was trapped by them.
The king was chosen by the Lord himself.
We had said about the king,
“We will live in his shadow.
He protects us from the nations.”

21 Be happy, people of Edom.
Be happy, you people that live
in the land of Uz.
But remember, the cup of the Lord’s anger
will come around to you, too.

When you drink from that cup (*punishment*),
you will get drunk
and will make yourselves naked.

22 Your punishment is complete, Zion.*
You will not go into captivity again.
But the Lord will punish your sins,
people of Edom.
He will uncover your sins.

A Prayer to the Lord

5 Remember, Lord, what happened to us.
Look and see our disgrace.

2 Our land has been turned over to strangers.
Our houses have been given to foreigners.

3 We have become orphans.
We have no father.
Our mothers have become like widows.

4 We have to buy the water that we drink.
We have to pay for the wood that we use.

5 We are forced to wear a yoke* on
our necks.
We get tired, and we have no rest.

6 We made an agreement with Egypt.
We also made an agreement
with Assyria*
to get enough bread.

7 Our ancestors sinned against you.
Now they are dead.
Now we are suffering because of their sins.

8 Slaves have become our rulers.
No person can save us from them.

9 We risk our lives to get food.
There are men in the desert with swords.

10 Our skin is hot like an oven.
We have a high fever
because of our hunger.

11 The enemy raped the women of Zion.*
They raped the women
in the cities of Judah.

12 The enemy hanged our princes.
They didn’t honor our elders.

13 The enemy made our young men
grind grain at the mill.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to
help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a
person was a slave.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

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- Our young men stumbled
under loads of wood.
- 14 The elders no longer sit at the gates
of the city.
The young men no longer make music.
- 15 We have no more joy in our hearts.
Our dancing was changed into
crying for the dead.
- 16 The crown has fallen from our head.
Things have gone bad for us
because we sinned.
- 17 Because of these things,
our hearts have become sick,
our eyes cannot see clearly.
- 18 Mount Zion is a wasteland.
Foxes run around on Mount Zion.
- 19 But you rule forever, Lord.
Your kingly chair lasts forever and ever.
- 20 You seem to have forgotten us forever,
Lord.
You seem to have left us alone
for such a long time.
- 21 Bring us back to you, Lord.
We will gladly come back to you.
Make our lives like they were before.
- 22 You were very angry at us.
Have you completely rejected us?

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