

Lamentations 1 - First Dirge: Jerusalem's Desolation Because of Her Sin

I. Jerusalem's desolation resulting from her sin (Lam 1:1-22)

- (1) Jeremiah laments Jerusalem's desolation (1:1-11)
 - (A) Population decreased (1:1a)
 - (B) Prominence among the nations decreased (1:1b)
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- (2) Jerusalem's personified response (1:12-22)
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Lamentations 1

I. Jerusalem's desolation resulting from her sin (Lam 1:1-22)

- (1) Jeremiah laments Jerusalem's desolation (1:1-11)
 - (A) Population decreased (1:1a)
 - (B) Prominence among the nations decreased (1:1b)

1 How lonely sits the city That *once* had many people! She has become like a widow *Who was once* great among the nations! *She who was* a princess among the provinces Has become a forced laborer!

1 How lonely sits the city That was full of people! She has become like a widow Who was *once* great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces Has become a forced laborer!

1 How lonely she lies, the city that thronged with people! Like a widow she has become, this great one among nations! The princess among provinces has become a vassal.

1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

- The city that had once been great among the nations was now reduced to the status of a widow.

— The concept of widowhood is used throughout the Old Testament to depict a position of helpless despair; it is often linked with aliens and orphans as individuals who could not protect themselves (Cf. Ex 22:22; Deut 10:18; 24:19-21; 26:13; 27:19; Is 1:17)

(C) Former allies have turned upon her (1:2-3)

2 She weeps bitterly in the night, And her tears are on her cheeks; She has no one to comfort her Among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies.

2 She weeps bitterly in the night And her tears are on her cheeks; She has none to comfort her Among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies.

2 Bitterly she cries in the night, as tears stream down² her cheeks. No one consoles her of all her friends. All her neighbors have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

2 She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

- Cf. Matt 23:37-39: Jesus wept over the same city about six centuries later because of what was going to happen to her.

— To Jeremiah the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of history. To Jesus the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of prophecy.

3 Judah has gone into exile out of affliction And harsh servitude; She lives among the nations, *But* she has not found a resting place; All those who pursued her have overtaken her In the midst of distress.

3 Judah has gone into exile under affliction And under harsh servitude; She dwells among the nations, *But* she has found no rest; All her pursuers have overtaken her In the midst of distress.

3 Judah has gone into exile to escape affliction and servitude. She that sat among the nations, has found no rest. All her pursuers overtook her amid narrow passes.

3 Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits.

(D) Feasts no longer followed (1:4)

4 The roads of Zion are in mourning Because no one comes to an appointed feast. All her gates are deserted; Her priests groan, Her virgins are worried, And as for *Zion* herself, it is bitter for her.

4 The roads of Zion are in mourning Because no one comes to the appointed feasts. All her gates are desolate; Her priests are groaning, Her virgins are afflicted, And she herself is bitter.

4 The roads that lead to Zion are in mourning, because no one travels to the festivals. All her gates are desolate; her priests are moaning. Her young women are grieving, and she is bitter.

4 The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

(E) Enemies rule over her (1:5-7)

5 Her adversaries have become her masters, Her enemies are secure; For the LORD has caused her grief Because of the multitude of her wrongdoings; Her little ones have gone away As captives led by the enemy.

5 Her adversaries have become her masters, Her enemies prosper; For the LORD has caused her grief Because of the multitude of her transgressions; Her little ones have gone away As captives before the adversary.

5 Her adversaries dominate her, her enemies prosper. For the LORD has made her suffer because of her many transgressions. Her children have gone away, taken into captivity in the presence of the enemy.

5 Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.

6 All of her splendor Is gone from the daughter of Zion; Her leaders have become like deer That have found no pasture, And they have fled without strength From the pursuer.

6 All her majesty Has departed from the daughter of Zion; Her princes have become like deer That have found no pasture; And they have fled without strength Before the pursuer.

6 Fled from cherished Zion are all that were her splendor. Her princes have become like deer that cannot find their feeding grounds. They flee with strength exhausted from their pursuers.

6 And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and homelessness Jerusalem remembers all her treasures That were *hers* since the days of old, When her people fell into the hand of the adversary And no one helped her. The adversaries saw her, They laughed at her ruin.

7 In the days of her affliction and homelessness Jerusalem remembers all her precious things That were from the days of old, When her people fell into the hand of the adversary And no one helped her. The adversaries saw her, They mocked at her ruin.

7 Jerusalem remembers her time of affliction and misery; all her valued belongings of days gone by, when her people fell into enemy hands, with no one to help her, and her enemies stared at her, mocking her downfall.

7 Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.

(F) Dishonor (1:8-9)

8 **Jerusalem sinned greatly**, Therefore she has become an object of ridicule. All who honored her despise her Because they have seen her nakedness; Even she herself groans and turns away.

8 Jerusalem sinned greatly, Therefore she has become an unclean thing. All who honored her despise her Because they have seen her nakedness; Even she herself groans and turns away.

8 Jerusalem sinned greatly, and she became unclean. All who honored her now despise her, because they saw her naked. She herself groans and turns her face away.

8 Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

- "...Jerusalem sinned greatly" - this is the first explanation for the fall of the city

9 Her uncleanness was in her *garment's* seams; She did not think of her future. So she has fallen in an astonishing way; She has no comforter. "See, LORD, my affliction, For the enemy has honored himself!"

9 Her uncleanness was in her skirts; She did not consider her future. Therefore she has fallen astonishingly; She has no comforter. "See, O LORD, my affliction, For the enemy has magnified himself!"

9 Uncleanness has soiled her skirts, and she gave no thought to what would follow. She fell in such a startling way, with no one to comfort her. Look, LORD, upon my affliction, because my enemy is boasting.

9 Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.

(G) Temple desecrated (1:10)

10 The adversary has stretched out his hand Over all her precious things, For she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, The ones whom You commanded That they were not to enter Your congregation.

10 The adversary has stretched out his hand Over all her precious things, For she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, The ones whom You commanded That they should not enter into Your congregation.

10 The adversary seized in his hands everything she valued. She watched the nations enter her sanctuary; those you forbade to enter your place of meeting.

10 The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.

The Temple

The building the people had falsely relied on for their security (Jer 7:2-15; 26:2-11) was now defiled before their eyes by Gentiles who were not supposed to enter it. Evidently the Jews viewed their temple as a giant talisman or good luck charm. They felt that Jerusalem was safe because God's house was there. He might let other places be destroyed, they argued, but surely not His own house. The people learned too late that God does not hold stones in higher regard than obedience. Disobedience brings destruction.

(H) Starvation (1:11)

11 All her people groan, seeking bread; They have given their treasures for food To restore their lives. "See, LORD, and look, For I am despised."

11 All her people groan seeking bread; They have given their precious things for food To restore their lives themselves. "See, O LORD, and look, For I am despised."

11 All her people groaned as they searched for food. They traded their valuables in order to eat, to keep themselves alive. Look, LORD, and see how I have become dishonored.

11 All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile.

(2) Jerusalem's personified response (1:12-22)

(A) Jerusalem's plea for mercy (1:12-19)

12 "Is it nothing to all you who pass *this* way?| Look and see if there is *any* pain like my pain Which was inflicted on me, With which the LORD tormented *me* on the day of His fierce anger.

12 "Is it nothing to all you who pass this way? Look and see if there is any pain like my pain Which was severely dealt out to me, Which the LORD inflicted on the day of His fierce anger.

12 May it not befall you, all who pass along the road! Look and see: Is there any grief like my grief dealt out to me, by which the LORD afflicted me in the time of his fierce wrath?

12 Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

- God judged Judah because of her sin, and He still will judge sin today. People don't like to hear about the fierce anger of God today.

The Greatest Sin

God has a remedy for the thief. The thief on the cross was saved. Paul was guilty of murder: he was responsible for the death of Stephen, but he got saved. Moses also was a murderer. God has a remedy for the murderer, the thief, and the liar. But God does not have a remedy for the man who rejects Jesus Christ. That is the greatest sin you can commit.

The second half of this first lament now changed its focus. Instead of standing on the outside looking in, Jeremiah moved inside and looked out. Jerusalem herself called to those around to take note of her condition:

- Verses 12-19: Jerusalem's call to those who had observed her desolation
- Verses 20-22: Jerusalem's call to the Lord

13 "From the height He sent fire into my bones, And it dominated *them*. He has spread a net for my feet; He has turned me back; He has made me desolate, Faint all day long.

13 "From on high He sent fire into my bones, And it prevailed *over them*. He has spread a net for my feet; He has turned me back; He has made me desolate, Faint all day long.

13 He sent fire from on high, making it penetrate my bones. He stretched out a net at my feet, forcing me to turn back. He made me desolate; I'm fainting all day long.

13 From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevailed against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.

14 "The yoke of my wrongdoings is bound; By His hand they are woven together. They have come upon my neck; He has made my strength fail. The Lord has handed me over To *those against whom* I am not able to stand.

14 "The yoke of my transgressions is bound; By His hand they are knit together. They have come upon my neck; He has made my strength fail. The Lord has given me into the hands Of *those against whom* I am not able to stand.

14 The yoke of my sins was bound on, fastened together by his hand. They settled on my neck; he caused my strength to fail. The LORD placed me in the power of those I cannot resist.

14 The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their

hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.

15 "The Lord has thrown away all my strong men In my midst; He has called an appointed time against me To crush my young men; The Lord has trodden *as in* a wine press The virgin daughter of Judah.

15 "The Lord has rejected all my strong men In my midst; He has called an appointed time against me To crush my young men; The Lord has trodden *as in* a wine press The virgin daughter of Judah.

15 He rejected all the valiant men— the LORD, in my midst. He set a time to meet with me to crush my young warriors. The LORD has trampled, as in a winepress, the fair virgin that is Judah.

15 The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress.

- The winepress is often used as a picture of divine judgment (Is 63:3; Rev 14:19-20; 19:15)

16 "For these things I weep; My eyes run down with water; Because far from me is a comforter, One to restore my soul. My children are desolate Because the enemy has prevailed."

16 "For these things I weep; My eyes run down with water; Because far from me is a comforter, One who restores my soul. My children are desolate Because the enemy has prevailed."

16 Because of all this, I weep; my eyes stream with tears because far from me is the comforter of my soul. My children are sorrowful, because the enemy has won.

16 For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.

17 Zion stretches out with her hands; There is no one to comfort her; The LORD has commanded regarding Jacob That those around him become his adversaries; Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them.

17 Zion stretches out her hands; There is no one to comfort her; The LORD has commanded concerning Jacob That the ones round about him should be his adversaries; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.

17 Zion spreads out her hands; no one is there to comfort her. The LORD has issued an order against Jacob, that all who are around him are to be his enemies; Jerusalem has become unclean among them.

17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.

18 "The LORD is righteous, For I have rebelled against His command; Hear now, all peoples, And see my pain; My virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity.

18 "The LORD is righteous; For I have rebelled against His command; Hear now, all peoples, And behold my pain; My virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity.

18 The LORD is in the right, but I rebelled against his commands. Listen, please, all you people, and look at my pain— my young men and women have gone into captivity.

18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.

- This key verse explains the reason Jerusalem lay in ruin

— Jeremiah mourned the destruction of Jerusalem alone. He stood among the ashes weeping. Why had the city been destroyed? The city had sinned.

— The second explanation is "The Lord is righteous." He cannot shut His eyes to evil.

19 "I called to my lovers, *but* they deserted me; My priests and my elders perished in the city While they sought food to restore their strength themselves.

19 "I called to my lovers, *but* they deceived me; My priests and my elders perished in the city While they sought food to restore their strength themselves.

19 I called out to my lovers, but they deceived me. My priests and my elders have died within the city while looking for something to eat to keep themselves alive.

19 I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.

(B) Jerusalem's concluding prayer to God (1:20-22)

20 "See, LORD, for I am in distress; My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. In the street the sword has made *women* childless; In the house it is like death.

20 "See, O LORD, for I am in distress; My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is overturned within me, For I have been very rebellious. In the street the sword slays; In the house it is like death.

20 Look, LORD, how distressed I am; all my insides are churning. My heart is troubled within me, because I vigorously rebelled. Outside the sword brings loss of life, while at home death rules.

20 Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as

death.

21 "They have heard that I groan; There is no one to comfort me, All my enemies have heard of my disaster; They are joyful that You have done *it*. Oh, that You would bring the day which You have proclaimed, So that they will become like me.

21 "They have heard that I groan; There is no one to comfort me; All my enemies have heard of my calamity; They are glad that You have done *it*. Oh, that You would bring the day which You have proclaimed, That they may become like me.

21 People heard how I groan, with no one to comfort me. All my adversaries have heard about my troubles; they rejoice that you have caused them. Bring on the day you have promised, so my adversaries will become like me.

21 They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.

22 "May all their wickedness come before You; And deal with them just as You have dealt with me For all my wrongdoings. For my groans are many and my heart is faint."

22 "Let all their wickedness come before You; And deal with them as You have dealt with me For all my transgressions; For my groans are many and my heart is faint."

22 May all of their wickedness come to your attention, and deal with them as you have done with me because of all my transgressions. For I am constantly groaning, and my heart is faint.

22 Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.