Lamentations

1

1 How the city sits alone, once full of people!
She has become like a widow, she who was great among the nations.
The princess among the provinces has been put to forced labor.

2 She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks.
Among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

3 Judah has gone into exile amid affliction and harsh servitude.
She dwells among the nations and finds no rest.
All her pursuers have overtaken her in the narrow places.

4 The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the appointed festivals.
All her gates are desolate;
her priests groan, her virgins grieve, and she is in bitter distress.

5 Her foes have become her masters;

her enemies prosper, for the LORD has
afflicted her because of her many
transgressions.
Her little ones have gone into captivity
before the foe.

6 All her splendor has departed from daughter
Zion.
Her officials have become like deer that find
no pasture;
they go without strength before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and wandering,
Jerusalem remembers all the precious
things she had in the days of old.
When her people fell into the enemy's hand,
no one helped her.
Her foes saw her and mocked her downfall.

8 Jerusalem has sinned grievously;
therefore she has become unclean.
All who honored her despise her, for they
have seen her nakedness.
She herself groans and turns away.

9 Her uncleanness is on her skirts;
she did not consider her end.
Her downfall was astonishing, and she has
no one to comfort her.
"Look, LORD, at my affliction, for the enemy
has exalted himself!"

10 The foe has stretched out his hand over all her
precious things.

She has seen nations enter her sanctuary,
those whom you commanded not to enter
your assembly.

11 All her people groan as they seek bread.
They trade their precious things for food to
keep themselves alive.
"Look, LORD, and see, for I have become
despised.

12 Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look and see if there is any pain like my
pain, which was inflicted on me, with
which the LORD afflicted me on the day of
his burning anger.

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

14 The yoke of my transgressions was bound by
his hand.
They are woven together and have come
upon my neck.
He has made my strength fail.
The Lord has given me into hands I cannot
withstand.

15 The Lord has rejected all my warriors in my
midst.

He has called an assembly against me to
crush my young men.
The Lord has trodden virgin daughter Judah
in a winepress.

16 For these things I weep.
My eye, my eye pours out tears, for a
comforter who would restore my soul is
far from me.
My children are desolate, for the enemy has
prevailed."

17 Zion stretches out her hands, but she has no
one to comfort her.
The LORD has commanded that Jacob's
neighbors be his foes.
Jerusalem has become unclean among them.

18 "The LORD is righteous, for I have rebelled
against his word.
Please listen, all you peoples, and see my
pain.
My virgins and young men have gone into
captivity.

19 I called to my lovers, but they deceived me.
My priests and elders perished in the city as
they sought food to keep themselves alive.

20 Look, LORD, for I am in distress.
My inward parts churn;
my heart turns over within me, for I have
rebelled grievously.

Outside the sword bereaves me;
inside the house it is like death.

21 They have heard that I groan, but I have no
one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my disaster;
they rejoice that you have done it.
You have brought the day you proclaimed;
may they become like me!

22 Let all their evil come before you.
Deal with them as you have dealt with me
for all my transgressions, for my groans
are many and my heart is faint."

2

1 How the Lord has covered daughter Zion with
a cloud in his anger!
He has cast the splendor of Israel from
heaven to earth and has not remembered
his footstool on the day of his anger.

2 The Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of
Jacob without pity.
In his wrath he has torn down the
strongholds of daughter Judah and
brought them to the ground.
He has profaned the kingdom and its
officials.

3 In burning anger he has cut off every horn of
Israel.

He has drawn back his right hand before
the enemy and burned in Jacob like a
flaming fire that devours all around.

4 He has bent his bow like an enemy, his right
hand set like a foe, and killed all that was
precious to the eye.
In the tent of daughter Zion he has poured
out his wrath like fire.

5 The Lord has become like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel, swallowed up
all her palaces, and ruined his
strongholds.
He has multiplied mourning and
lamentation in daughter Judah.

6 He has torn apart his booth like a garden
shelter and destroyed his meeting place.
The LORD has made festival and Sabbath
forgotten in Zion;
in his burning anger he has despised king
and priest.

7 The Lord has rejected his altar and spurned his
sanctuary.
He has given the walls of her palaces into
the enemy's hand.
They have raised a shout in the house of the
LORD as on a festival day.

8 The LORD determined to destroy the wall of
daughter Zion.

He stretched out the measuring line and did
not withdraw his hand from swallowing it
up.
He made rampart and wall mourn;
together they languished.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground;
he has destroyed and broken her bars.
Her king and officials are among the
nations;
the law is no more.
Her prophets too find no vision from the
LORD.

10 The elders of daughter Zion sit on the ground
in silence.
They have thrown dust on their heads and
put on sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem have bowed their
heads to the ground.

11 My eyes are spent with tears;
my inward parts churn.
My liver is poured out on the ground
because of the destruction of the daughter
of my people, as children and nursing
infants faint in the city's squares.

12 They say to their mothers, "Where are grain
and wine?"
as they faint like the wounded in the city's
squares, as their life is poured out in their
mothers' laps.

13 What testimony can I give you?
To what can I compare you, daughter
Jerusalem?
What can I liken to you, to comfort you,
virgin daughter Zion?
For your ruin is as vast as the sea.
Who can heal you?

14 Your prophets saw false and foolish visions
for you.
They did not expose your iniquity to restore
your fortunes, but saw false and
misleading oracles for you.

15 All who pass by clap their hands at you.
They hiss and shake their heads at daughter
Jerusalem: “Is this the city they called ‘the
perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole
earth’?”

16 All your enemies open their mouths against
you.
They hiss and gnash their teeth, saying, “We
have swallowed her up!
This is indeed the day we waited for.
We have reached it;
we have seen it!”

17 The LORD has done what he planned.
He has fulfilled the word he commanded in
the days of old.

He has torn down without pity, made the
enemy rejoice over you, and raised the
horn of your foes.

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord.
Wall of daughter Zion, let tears flow like a
torrent day and night.
Give yourself no rest;
let the pupil of your eye never be still.

19 Rise! Cry out in the night, at the beginning of
the watches!
Pour out your heart like water before the
presence of the Lord.
Lift your hands to him for the lives of your
little ones, fainting with hunger at the
head of every street.

20 “Look, LORD, and see whom you have treated
this way.
Should women eat their offspring, the little
ones they tenderly nurtured?
Should priest and prophet be killed in the
sanctuary of the Lord?

21 Young and old lie on the ground in the streets.
My virgins and young men have fallen by
the sword.
You have killed on the day of your anger;
you have slaughtered without pity.

22 As on a festival day, you summoned my
terrors from every side.

On the day of the LORD's anger no one
escaped or survived.
Those I tenderly nurtured and raised, my
enemy has consumed."

3

1 I am the man who has seen affliction under the
rod of his wrath.
2 He has led me and made me walk in darkness,
without light.
3 Surely he turns his hand against me again and
again, all day long.

4 He has worn away my flesh and skin and
broken my bones.
5 He has built a siege around me and surrounded
me with bitterness and hardship.
6 He has made me dwell in dark places, like
those long dead.

7 He has walled me in so that I cannot escape;
he has made my chain heavy.
8 Even when I cry out and plead for help, he
shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone and
twisted my paths.

10 He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in
hiding.
11 He has turned me from my ways and torn me
apart;
he has left me desolate.

12 He has bent his bow and set me as a target for
the arrow.

13 He has driven the arrows of his quiver into
my kidneys.
14 I have become a laughingstock to all my
people, their song all day long.
15 He has filled me with bitter herbs and made
me drink my fill of wormwood.

16 He has broken my teeth with gravel and made
me cower in ashes.
17 You have cast my soul far from peace;
I have forgotten well-being.
18 I said, “My endurance and my hope from the
LORD have perished.”

19 Remember my affliction and my wandering,
the wormwood and the gall.
20 My soul remembers them continually and is
bowed down within me.
21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have
hope:

22 Through the LORD’s steadfast love we have
not perished, for his compassions have
not failed.
23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness!
24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.
26 It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of
the LORD.
27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his
youth.

28 Let him sit alone and be silent, for the yoke
has been laid upon him.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust;
perhaps there is hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek to the one who strikes
him and be filled with reproach.

31 For the Lord will not reject forever.
32 Though he causes grief, he will have
compassion according to the abundance
of his steadfast love.
33 For it is not from his heart that he afflicts or
grieves human beings.

34 To crush underfoot all the prisoners of the
earth,
35 to deny a man justice before the presence of
the Most High,
36 to wrong a person in his case—the Lord does
not approve.

37 Who has spoken and brought it to pass unless
the Lord commanded it?
38 Do not calamities and good come from the
mouth of the Most High?
39 Why should a living man complain, a man
about the punishment for his sins?

40 Let us search and examine our ways and
return to the LORD.
41 Let us lift our heart with our hands to God in
the heavens.
42 We have transgressed and rebelled;
you have not forgiven.

43 You have covered yourself with anger and
pursued us;
you have killed without pity.
44 You have covered yourself with a cloud so that
no prayer can pass through.
45 You have made us filth and refuse among the
peoples.

46 All our enemies have opened their mouths
against us.
47 Terror and pit have come upon us,
devastation and destruction.
48 My eye pours out streams of water over the
destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 My eye flows without ceasing, without rest,
50 until the LORD looks down and sees from
heaven.
51 My eye brings grief to my soul because of all
the daughters of my city.

52 My enemies hunted me like a bird, without
cause.
53 They cut off my life in the pit and cast a stone
at me.
54 Waters rose over my head, and I said, “I am
cut off!”

55 I called on your name, LORD, from the deepest
pit.
56 You heard my voice: “Do not close your ear to
my sighing, to my cry for help.”
57 You drew near on the day I called to you;
you said, “Do not fear.”

58 You have pleaded the causes of my soul, Lord;
you have redeemed my life.
59 You have seen the wrong done to me, LORD;
judge my case.
60 You have seen all their vengeance, all their
plots against me.

61 You have heard their reproach, LORD, all their
plots against me,
62 the words of those who rise against me and
their muttering against me all day long.
63 Look at them as they sit and rise;
I am their mocking song.

64 Repay them, LORD, according to the work of
their hands.
65 Give them hardness of heart;
let your curse be upon them.
66 Pursue them in anger and destroy them from
under the heavens of the LORD.

4

1 How the gold has grown dim, how the fine gold
has changed!
The holy stones lie scattered at the head of
every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion, worth their weight
in fine gold—how they are regarded as
clay jars, the work of a potter's hands!

3 Even jackals offer the breast and nurse their
young, but the daughter of my people has
become cruel, like ostriches in the
wilderness.

4 The nursing infant's tongue clings to the roof of
his mouth from thirst.
Little children ask for bread, but no one
breaks it for them.

5 Those who ate delicacies lie desolate in the
streets;
those raised in scarlet embrace refuse
heaps.

6 The punishment of the daughter of my people
is greater than the punishment of Sodom,
which was overthrown in a moment, with
no hands acting against her.

7 Her consecrated ones were purer than snow,
whiter than milk, ruddier in body than
coral;
their form was like sapphire.

8 Now their appearance is blacker than soot;
they are not recognized in the streets.
Their skin clings to their bones;
it is dry as wood.

9 Those slain by the sword are better off than
those slain by hunger, who waste away,
pierced through for lack of the field's
produce.

10 The hands of compassionate women have
cooked their own children.
They became their food during the
destruction of the daughter of my people.

11 The LORD has spent his wrath and poured out
his burning anger.
He kindled a fire in Zion that consumed her
foundations.

12 The kings of the earth and all the inhabitants
of the world did not believe that foe and
enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem.

13 This was because of the sins of her prophets
and the iniquities of her priests, who shed
the blood of the righteous in her midst.

14 They wandered blind in the streets, defiled
with blood, so that no one could touch
their clothes.

15 "Away! Unclean!"
people cried to them.
"Away!
Away!
Do not touch!"
So they fled and wandered.

Among the nations people said, “They shall
no longer reside here.”

16 The face of the LORD has scattered them;
he will no longer look upon them.
They showed no respect to priests and no
favor to elders.

17 Our eyes still failed, looking in vain for help.
From our watch we watched for a nation
that could not save.

18 They hunted our steps so that we could not
walk in our squares.
Our end drew near;
our days were fulfilled, for our end had
come.

19 Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles of
the heavens.
They chased us on the mountains and lay in
wait for us in the wilderness.

20 The breath of our nostrils, the LORD’s
anointed, was caught in their pits, the one
of whom we said, “In his shadow we will
live among the nations.”

21 Rejoice and be glad, daughter Edom, dwelling
in the land of Uz!
The cup will pass to you too;
you will become drunk and strip yourself
naked.

22 Your punishment is complete, daughter Zion;

he will not exile you again.
He will punish your iniquity, daughter
Edom, and expose your sins.

5

1 Remember, LORD, what has happened to us.
Look and see our disgrace.
2 Our inheritance has passed to strangers, our
houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans, without a father;
our mothers are like widows.
4 We pay to drink our own water;
our wood comes at a price.
5 Our pursuers are at our necks;
we are weary and given no rest.
6 We have given our hand to Egypt and Assyria,
to have our fill of bread.
7 Our fathers sinned and are no more, but we
bear their iniquities.
8 Slaves rule over us;
no one delivers us from their hand.
9 We get our bread at the risk of our lives
because of the sword in the wilderness.
10 Our skin burns like an oven from the
scorching heat of famine.
11 Women have been raped in Zion, virgins in
the cities of Judah.
12 Officials have been hung by their hands;
elders have not been honored.
13 Young men bear the burden of grinding, and
boys stumble under loads of wood.
14 The elders have left the gate;
the young men have left their music.
15 The joy of our heart has ceased;

our dancing has turned to mourning.
16 The crown has fallen from our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our heart is faint;
because of these things our eyes grow dim,
18 because Mount Zion lies desolate, with foxes
roaming over it.

19 But you, LORD, remain enthroned forever;
your throne endures from generation to
generation.
20 Why do you forget us forever and forsake us
for so long?
21 Restore us to yourself, LORD, and we will
return.
Renew our days as of old,
22 unless you have utterly rejected us and are
exceedingly angry with us.

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