

A Lament for Jerusalem – Part 1 (c. September 587 BC)

Lamentations 1–2

The Prophet Speaks:*Aleph*

1:1 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!

Beth

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.

Gimel

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.

Daleth

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.

He

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.

Waw

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.

Zayin

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.

Heth

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.

Teth

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!”

Yod

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.

Kaph

11a All her people groan seeking bread;
They have given their precious things for food
To restore their lives themselves.

Jerusalem Speaks:

11b “See, O LORD, and look,
For I am despised.”

Lamed

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.

Mem

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.

Nun

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.

Samech

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.

Ayin

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.”

The Prophet Speaks:

Pe

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.

Jerusalem Speaks:

Tsade

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.

Qoph

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.

Resh

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.

Shin

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.

Taw

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.”

The Prophet Speaks:

Aleph

2:1 How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion
With a cloud in His anger!
He has cast from heaven to earth
The glory of Israel,
And has not remembered His footstool
In the day of His anger.

Beth

2 The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared
All the habitations of Jacob.
In His wrath He has thrown down
The strongholds of the daughter of Judah;
He has brought *them* down to the ground;
He has profaned the kingdom and its princes.

Gimel

3 In fierce anger He has cut off
All the strength of Israel;
He has drawn back His right hand
From before the enemy.
And He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire
Consuming round about.

Daleth

4 He has bent His bow like an enemy;
He has set His right hand like an adversary
And slain all that were pleasant to the eye;
In the tent of the daughter of Zion
He has poured out His wrath like fire.

He

5 The Lord has become like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel;
He has swallowed up all its palaces,
He has destroyed its strongholds
And multiplied in the daughter of Judah
Mourning and moaning.

Waw

6 And He has violently treated His tabernacle like a garden *booth*;
He has destroyed His appointed meeting place.
The LORD has caused to be forgotten
The appointed feast and sabbath in Zion,
And He has despised king and priest
In the indignation of His anger.

Zayin

7 The Lord has rejected His altar,
He has abandoned His sanctuary;
He has delivered into the hand of the enemy
The walls of her palaces.
They have made a noise in the house of the LORD
As in the day of an appointed feast.

Heth

8 The LORD determined to destroy
The wall of the daughter of Zion.
He has stretched out a line,
He has not restrained His hand from destroying,
And He has caused rampart and wall to lament;
They have languished together.

Teth

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground,
He has destroyed and broken her bars.
Her king and her princes are among the nations;
The law is no more.
Also, her prophets find
No vision from the LORD.

Yod

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion
Sit on the ground, they are silent.

They have thrown dust on their heads;
They have girded themselves with sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem
Have bowed their heads to the ground.

Kaph

11 My eyes fail because of tears,
My spirit is greatly troubled;
My heart is poured out on the earth
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
When little ones and infants faint
In the streets of the city.

Lamed

12 They say to their mothers,
“Where is grain and wine?”
As they faint like a wounded man
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
On their mothers’ bosom.

Mem

13 How shall I admonish you?
To what shall I compare you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
To what shall I liken you as I comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your ruin is as vast as the sea;
Who can heal you?

Nun

14 Your prophets have seen for you
False and foolish *visions*;
And they have not exposed your iniquity
So as to restore you from captivity,
But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles.

Samech

15 All who pass along the way
Clap their hands *in derision* at you;
They hiss and shake their heads
At the daughter of Jerusalem,
“Is this the city of which they said,
‘The perfection of beauty,
A joy to all the earth?’”

Pe

16 All your enemies
Have opened their mouths wide against you;
They hiss and gnash *their* teeth.

They say, “We have swallowed *her* up!
Surely this is the day for which we waited;
We have reached *it*, we have seen *it*.”

Ayin

17 The LORD has done what He purposed;
He has accomplished His word
Which He commanded from days of old.
He has thrown down without sparing,
And He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you;
He has exalted the might of your adversaries.

Tsade

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord,
“O wall of the daughter of Zion,
Let *your* tears run down like a river day and night;
Give yourself no relief,
Let your eyes have no rest.

Qoph

19 “Arise, cry aloud in the night
At the beginning of the night watches;
Pour out your heart like water
Before the presence of the Lord;
Lift up your hands to Him
For the life of your little ones
Who are faint because of hunger
At the head of every street.”

Jerusalem Speaks:

Resh

20 See, O LORD, and look!
With whom have You dealt thus?
Should women eat their offspring,
The little ones who were born healthy?
Should priest and prophet be slain
In the sanctuary of the Lord?

Shin

21 On the ground in the streets
Lie young and old;
My virgins and my young men
Have fallen by the sword.
You have slain *them* in the day of Your anger,
You have slaughtered, not sparing.

Taw

22 You called as in the day of an appointed feast
My terrors on every side;

And there was no one who escaped or survived
In the day of the LORD's anger.
Those whom I bore and reared,
My enemy annihilated them.

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