

A Lament for Jerusalem – Part 2 (c. September 587 BC)

Lamentations 3–5

The Prophet Speaks:*Aleph*

- 3:1 I am the man who has seen affliction
Because of the rod of His wrath.
- 2 He has driven me and made me walk
In darkness and not in light.
- 3 Surely against me He has turned His hand
Repeatedly all the day.

Beth

- 4 He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away,
He has broken my bones.
- 5 He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship.
- 6 In dark places He has made me dwell,
Like those who have long been dead.

Gimel

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

Daleth

- 10 He is to me like a bear lying in wait,
Like a lion in secret places.
- 11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me to pieces;
He has made me desolate.
- 12 He bent His bow
And set me as a target for the arrow.

He

- 13 He made the arrows of His quiver
To enter into my inward parts.
- 14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people,
Their *mocking* song all the day.
- 15 He has filled me with bitterness,
He has made me drunk with wormwood.

Waw

- 16 He has broken my teeth with gravel;
He has made me cower in the dust.
- 17 My soul has been rejected from peace;
I have forgotten happiness.
- 18 So I say, "My strength has perished,
And *so has* my hope from the LORD."

Zayin

- 19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness.
20 Surely my soul remembers
And is bowed down within me.
21 This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.

Heth

- 22 The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,
For His compassions never fail.
23 *They* are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.
24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I have hope in Him."

Teth

- 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
To the person who seeks Him.
26 *It is* good that he waits silently
For the salvation of the LORD.
27 *It is* good for a man that he should bear
The yoke in his youth.

Yod

- 28 Let him sit alone and be silent
Since He has laid *it* on him.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust,
Perhaps there is hope.
30 Let him give his cheek to the smiter,
Let him be filled with reproach.

Kaph

- 31 For the Lord will not reject forever,
32 For if He causes grief,
Then He will have compassion
According to His abundant lovingkindness.
33 For He does not afflict willingly
Or grieve the sons of men.

Lamed

- 34 To crush under His feet
All the prisoners of the land,
35 To deprive a man of justice
In the presence of the Most High,
36 To defraud a man in his lawsuit—
Of these things the Lord does not approve.

Mem

- 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass,
Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High
That both good and ill go forth?

39 Why should *any* living mortal, or *any* man,
Offer complaint in view of his sins?

Nun

40 Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the LORD.

41 We lift up our heart and hands
Toward God in heaven;

42 We have transgressed and rebelled,
You have not pardoned.

Samech

43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger
And pursued us;
You have slain *and* have not spared.

44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud
So that no prayer can pass through.

45 *You have made us mere* offscouring and refuse
In the midst of the peoples.

Pe

46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

47 Panic and pitfall have befallen us,
Devastation and destruction;

48 My eyes run down with streams of water
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Ayin

49 My eyes pour down unceasingly,
Without stopping,

50 Until the LORD looks down
And sees from heaven.

51 My eyes bring pain to my soul
Because of all the daughters of my city.

Tsade

52 My enemies without cause
Hunted me down like a bird;

53 They have silenced me in the pit
And have placed a stone on me.

54 Waters flowed over my head;
I said, "I am cut off!"

Qoph

55 I called on Your name, O LORD,
Out of the lowest pit.

56 You have heard my voice,
"Do not hide Your ear from my *prayer for* relief,

From my cry for help.”

57 You drew near when I called on You;
You said, “Do not fear!”

Resh

58 O Lord, You have pleaded my soul’s cause;
You have redeemed my life.

59 O LORD, You have seen my oppression;
Judge my case.

60 You have seen all their vengeance,
All their schemes against me.

Shin

61 You have heard their reproach, O LORD,
All their schemes against me.

62 The lips of my assailants and their whispering
Are against me all day long.

63 Look on their sitting and their rising;
I am their mocking song.

Taw

64 You will recompense them, O LORD,
According to the work of their hands.

65 You will give them hardness of heart,
Your curse will be on them.

66 You will pursue them in anger and destroy them
From under the heavens of the LORD!

The Prophet Speaks:

Aleph

4:1 How dark the gold has become,
How the pure gold has changed!
The sacred stones are poured out
At the corner of every street.

Beth

2 The precious sons of Zion,
Weighed against fine gold,
How they are regarded as earthen jars,
The work of a potter’s hands!

Gimel

3 Even jackals offer the breast,
They nurse their young;
But the daughter of my people has become cruel
Like ostriches in the wilderness.

Daleth

4 The tongue of the infant cleaves

To the roof of its mouth because of thirst;
The little ones ask for bread,
But no one breaks *it* for them.

He

5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those reared in purple
Embrace ash pits.

Waw

6 For the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the sin of Sodom,
Which was overthrown as in a moment,
And no hands were turned toward her.

Zayin

7 Her consecrated ones were purer than snow,
They were whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy *in* body than corals,
Their polishing *was like* lapis lazuli.

Heth

8 Their appearance is blacker than soot,
They are not recognized in the streets;
Their skin is shriveled on their bones,
It is withered, it has become like wood.

Teth

9 Better are those slain with the sword
Than those slain with hunger;
For they pine away, being stricken
For lack of the fruits of the field.

Yod

10 The hands of compassionate women
Boiled their own children;
They became food for them
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Kaph

11 The LORD has accomplished His wrath,
He has poured out His fierce anger;
And He has kindled a fire in Zion
Which has consumed its foundations.

Lamed

12 The kings of the earth did not believe,
Nor *did* any of the inhabitants of the world,

That the adversary and the enemy
Could enter the gates of Jerusalem.

Mem

13 Because of the sins of her prophets
And the iniquities of her priests,
Who have shed in her midst
The blood of the righteous;

Nun

14 They wandered, blind, in the streets;
They were defiled with blood
So that no one could touch their garments.

Samech

15 “Depart! Unclean!” they cried of themselves.
“Depart, depart, do not touch!”
So they fled and wandered;
Men among the nations said,
“They shall not continue to dwell *with us.*”

Pe

16 The presence of the LORD has scattered them,
He will not continue to regard them;
They did not honor the priests,
They did not favor the elders.

The People of Jerusalem Lament:

Ayin

17 Yet our eyes failed,
Looking for help was useless;
In our watching we have watched
For a nation that could not save.

Tsade

18 They hunted our steps
So that we could not walk in our streets;
Our end drew near,
Our days were finished
For our end had come.

Qoph

19 Our pursuers were swifter
Than the eagles of the sky;
They chased us on the mountains,
They waited in ambush for us in the wilderness.

Resh

20 The breath of our nostrils, the LORD’s anointed,

Was captured in their pits,
Of whom we had said, "Under his shadow
We shall live among the nations."

The Prophet Speaks:*Shin*

21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,
Who dwells in the land of Uz;
But the cup will come around to you as well,
You will become drunk and make yourself naked.

Taw

22 *The punishment* of your iniquity has been completed, O daughter of Zion;
He will exile you no longer.
But He will punish your iniquity, O daughter of Edom;
He will expose your sins!

The People of Jerusalem Pray:

5:1 Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us;
Look, and see our reproach!
2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
Our houses to aliens.
3 We have become orphans without a father,
Our mothers are like widows.
4 We have to pay for our drinking water,
Our wood comes *to us* at a price.
5 Our pursuers are at our necks;
We are worn out, there is no rest for us.
6 We have submitted to Egypt *and* Assyria to get enough bread.
7 Our fathers sinned, *and* are no more;
It is we who have borne their iniquities.
8 Slaves rule over us;
There is no one to deliver 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 has become as hot as an oven,
Because of the burning heat of famine.
11 They ravished the women in Zion,
The virgins in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes were hung by their hands;
Elders were not respected.
13 Young men worked at the grinding mill,
And youths stumbled under *loads* of wood.
14 Elders are gone from the gate,
Young men from their music.
15 The joy of our hearts has ceased;
Our dancing has been turned into 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 are dim;
- 18 Because of Mount Zion which lies desolate,
Foxes prowl in it.
- 19 You, O LORD, rule forever;
Your throne is from generation to generation.
- 20 Why do You forget us forever?
Why do You forsake us so long?
- 21 Restore us to You, O LORD, that we may be restored;
Renew our days as of old,
- 22 Unless You have utterly rejected us
And are exceedingly angry with us.

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