

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

Lamentations 1–2

The Prophet Speaks:*Aleph*

1:1 How desolate the city sits
that was full of people!
She has become like a widow,
once great among the nations!
Like a woman of nobility in the provinces,
she has become a forced laborer.

Beth

2 She weeps bitterly in the night,
her tears *are* on her cheeks;
she has no comforter
among all her lovers.
All her friends have been unfaithful to her;
they have become her enemies.

Gimel

3 Judah has gone into exile with misery
and under hard servitude;
she lives among the nations,
she has not found a resting place;
all her pursuers have overtaken her
amidst *her* distress.

Daleth

4 The roads of Zion *are* mourning
because no one comes to the festival.
All her gates *are* desolate,
her priests groan;
her young women *are* worried,
and she herself suffers bitterly.

He

5 Her foes have become *her* master,
her enemies are at ease;
Yahweh has made her suffer
because of the greatness of her transgressions.
Her children have gone away,
captive before the foe.

Waw

6 All her majesty has gone away
from the daughter of Zion;
her princes have become like young stags
that have not found pasture;
they have gone away without strength,
before the pursuer.

Zayin

7 Jerusalem remembers
the days of her misery and wanderings,
all her treasures
that were from the days of long ago.
When her people fell into *the* hand of the enemy,
there was no one helping her;

the enemies saw her, they mocked
at her destruction.

Heth

8 Jerusalem sinned grievously,
thus she became an objection of derision;
all those who honored her despise her
because they have seen her nakedness.
She herself groans
and turns away.

Teth

9 Her uncleanness *was* in her skirts;
she did not remember her future,
she has descended beyond understanding,
there is no comforter for her.
See, O Yahweh, my persecution!
My enemy has been made great!

Yod

10 The enemy has stretched out his hand
over all her treasures;
for she has seen the nations,
they entered her sanctuary,
those whom you commanded not to enter
in your assembly.

Kaph

11 All her people groan,
they are searching for bread.
They give their treasures for food,
to bring back life.

Jerusalem Speaks:

See, O Yahweh, and look,
how I am despised.

Lamed

12 Is it nothing to you, all who pass by?
Look and see
if there is sorrow like my sorrow,
which was dealt to me,
which Yahweh inflicted
on the day of his wrath.

Mem

13 From heaven he sent fire,
into my bones he let it descend.
He spread out a net for my feet;
he turned me back,
he gave me devastation,
fainting all day.

Nun

14 My rebellion was bound *as* a yoke,
with his hand it was fastened together;
it was put on my neck
and caused my strength to fail.

The Lord gave me into the hands
of those whom I cannot withstand.

Samech

15 The Lord has rejected
all my mighty ones in my midst.
He called an assembly against me,
to crush my young men;
like in a wine press,
the Lord has trodden *on*
the virgin daughter of Judah.

Ayin

16 For these *things*, I am weeping,
my eyes flow with tears;
because a comforter is far from me,
one to restore my life.
My sons are desolate
because *the* enemy has prevailed.

The Prophet Speaks:

Pe

17 Zion stretches out her hands;
there is no one to comfort her.
Yahweh has commanded against Jacob,
that those surrounding him *should be* his enemies;
Jerusalem has become
a defilement among them.

Jerusalem Speaks:

Tsade

18 Yahweh is righteous;
I have rebelled *against* his word.
Please hear, all *the* nations,
And see my pain;
My young women and young men
went into captivity.

Qoph

19 I have called to my lovers,
they themselves deceived me;
my priests and elders perished in the city
when they sought food for themselves
to revive their life.

Resh

20 See, O Yahweh, that I am in distress;
my stomach is in torment,
my heart has turned inside me
because I have certainly rebelled.
From outside a sword brings bereavement,
inside the house *it is* like death.

Shin

21 They hear that I was groaning;
there is no comforter for me.
All my enemies have heard my misery,
they are pleased that you have done it.

Bring *that* day that you have proclaimed,
And let them be like me.

Taw

22 Let all their evil come before you;
and deal with them
just as you have dealt with me
because of all my crimes;
for my groaning is much and my heart *is* faint.

The Prophet Speaks:

Aleph

2:1 How, in his anger,
the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion in a cloud!
He has thrown down from heavens *to* earth
the splendor of Israel,
and he has not remembered his footstool
in the day of his anger.

Beth

2 The Lord has devoured; he has not shown mercy
to all the dwellings of Jacob;
he has broken down in his wrath
the fortifications of the daughter of Judah;
he has leveled to the ground, he has dishonored
the kingdom and its commanders.

Gimel

3 He has cut down in fierce anger
all the might of Israel;
he has withdrawn his right hand
from the faces of *the* enemy,
and he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire,
it has consumed all around.

Daleth

4 He has bent his bow like an enemy;
he has set his right hand
like a foe, and he has slain
all *the* treasures of *the* eye;
in the tent of the daughter of Zion,
he has poured out his anger like fire.

He

5 The Lord has become like an enemy;
he has destroyed Israel;
he has destroyed all its citadel fortresses;
he has ruined all its fortifications
and multiplied lamentation and mourning
in the daughter of Judah.

Waw

6 He has broken down his dwelling place like the garden;
he has ruined his appointed feasts;
Yahweh has made *them* forget in Zion
festival and Sabbath,
and he has despised in his anger
king and priest.

Zayin

7 The Lord has rejected his altar;
he has rejected his sanctuary;
he has delivered into the hands of the enemy
the walls of its citadel fortresses.
They have cried out in the house of Yahweh
like a day of an appointed feast.

Heth

8 Yahweh has planned to destroy
the wall of the daughter of Zion.
He measured *with* a line; he has not restrained
his hand from destroying;
he caused rampart and wall to mourn;
together they have languished away.

Teth

9 Her gates have sunk into the earth;
he has ruined and broken her bars,
her kings and its princes *are* among the nations;
there is no more law.
Also, her prophets have not found
a revelation from Yahweh.

Yod

10 They sit on the ground,
the elders of the daughter of Zion are silent.
They cast dust on their head,
they have put on sackcloth;
the young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their head down to the ground.

Kaph

11 My eyes have spent all their tears;
my stomach is in torment,
my heart is poured out on the earth
because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
because child and babe faint
in *the* public squares of a city.

Lamed

12 To their mothers they say,
“Where is the bread and wine?”
as they faint like the wounded
in *the* public squares of a city,
as their life is being poured out
onto the bosom of their mothers.

Mem

13 What can I say for you? What can I compare to you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
To what can I liken you so that I can comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your destruction *is* as vast as the sea;
who can heal you?

Nun

14 Your prophets had a vision for you,

false and worthless;
they have not exposed your sin,
to restore your fortune;
they have seen oracles for you,
false and misleading.

Samech

15 They clap hands over you,
all who pass along the way;
they hiss and they shake their head,
at the daughter of Jerusalem.
Is this the city of which it is said,
“A perfection of beauty, a joy for all the earth?”

Pe

16 They have opened their mouths against you,
all your enemies.
They hiss and gnash a tooth,
and they say, “We have destroyed *her*!
Surely this *is* the day we have hoped for;
we have found *it*, we have seen *it*!”

Ayin

17 Yahweh has done what he has planned;
he has fulfilled his promise
that he ordained from the days of old;
he has demolished and not shown mercy;
he has made an enemy rejoice over you,
he has exalted the might of your foes.

Tsade

18 Their heart cried to the Lord,
“O wall of the daughter of Zion,
let tears stream down like a river;
day and night,
do not give yourself relief,
do not give your eyes rest.

Qoph

19 “Arise, cry out in the night,
at the beginning of the night watches;
pour out your heart like water,
before the face of the Lord.
Lift to him your hands,
for the life of your children,
who faint in starvation,
at the head of all streets.”

Jerusalem Speaks:

Resh

20 See, Yahweh, and take note!
With whom have you dealt thus?
Should women eat their young
children of tender care?
Should priest and prophet be slain
in the sanctuary of the Lord?

Shin

21 They lie in *the* soil of *the* streets,
young and old;
my young women and young men,
they have fallen by the sword;
you have slain on the day of your anger,
you have slaughtered and not shown mercy.

Taw

22 You have summoned my horror from all around,
as if for a feast day;
no one on the day of Yahweh's anger
is a fugitive and a survivor;
whoever I have cared for and reared,
my enemy has destroyed.

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