

LAMENTATIONS

Author:

Jeremiah.

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Themes:

A lament about the fall of Jerusalem in poetic language; the reason for it; Jeremiah's mental anguish; the spiritual lessons he declares; his prayer for the people of Israel. In the midst of the mournful lament we have the beautiful and meaningful words of 3:21-27.

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- 1** How lonely the city sits,
she that was full of people!
 How she has become like a widow,
she that was great among
 the nations!
 And the princess among
 the provinces,
 how she has become a forced
 labourer!
- 2** She weeps bitterly in the night,
 and her tears *are* on her cheeks.
 Among all her lovers she has
 no one to comfort *her*.
 All her friends have dealt
 treacherously with her,
 they have become her enemies.
- 3** Judah has gone into captivity
 under affliction and under
 great servitude.
 She lives among the nations;
 she finds no rest.
 All her persecutors have caught up
 with her in *her* distress.
- 4** The roads of Zion mourn,
 because no one comes to the solemn
 feasts.
 All her gates are desolate.
 Her priests sigh,
 her virgins are afflicted,
 and she *is* in bitterness.
- 5** Her adversaries have become
 the masters, her enemies prosper.
 For the LORD has afflicted her
 because of her many transgressions.
 Her children have gone into captivity
 in the presence of the enemy.
- 6** And all her beauty has departed
 from the daughter of Zion.
 Her princes have become like deer
that find no pasture,
 and they have gone without strength
 before the pursuer.
- 7** In the days of her affliction
 and her miseries,
 when her people fell into the hands
 of the enemy,
 Jerusalem remembered all her
 pleasant things that she had
 in the days of old,
 but no one helped her.
Her adversaries saw her,
 and mocked at her Sabbaths.
- 8** Jerusalem has grievously sinned;
 therefore she has been removed.
 All who honoured her despise her,
 because they have seen her
 nakedness.
 Yes, she sighs and turns back.
- 9** Her filthiness *is* in her skirts.
 She did not consider her future,
 therefore her fall was amazing.
 She had no comforter. O LORD,
 see my affliction,
 for the enemy has exalted *himself*.
- 10** The adversary has spread out
 his hands on all her precious things,
 for she has seen the nations
 enter her sanctuary,
 those whom you had forbidden
 to enter your congregation.
- 11** All her people sigh; they seek bread;
 they have given their precious
 things for food to renew life.
 See, O LORD,

1:1 The prophet expresses his deep grief that Jerusalem, the city of the King of heaven, had fallen into her enemies' hands and was crushed and deserted.

"Princess"— 1 Kings 4:21; Ps 48:2; 87:1-3.

1:2 "Lovers", "friends"— these speak of those peoples or nations for whom she had forsaken God, those whom she thought would help her against the Babylonians (Jer 2:36-37; 3:12; 4:30).

1:3 "Captivity"— 2 Chron 36:15-20.

"No rest"— this happened just as Moses had foretold many centuries before (Deut 28:65. See also Ps 137:1-4).

1:4 "Feasts"— Ex 23:14-17; Lev 23:1-44.

"Bitterness"— Jer 9:17-22.

1:5 "Her many transgressions"— 2 Chron 36:14-16; Jer 2:8-9; 4:18; 6:19; 13:22,25. Jerusalem deserved all the destruction which came on her. And notice that it was "the LORD" Who brought

this destruction. He did so in perfect justice, after appealing to her many times to repent.

1:6 "Daughter"— compare Ps 9:14; 45:12; 137:8; Isa 1:8; Jer 6:2.

1:7 "No one helped her"— Jer 2:36-37; 37:7-8.

"Mocked"— v 21; Jer 48:26; Ezek 25:2-7; Oba 12; Zeph 2:8.

1:8 Verse 5.

1:9 "Future"— Deut 32:28-29. Compare Isa 47:7. Men close their eyes to the future and go on sinning without restraint. They do not think of the punishment God is going to send on them either in this world or the next.

"See my affliction"— the prophet writes as though Jerusalem were speaking.

1:10 "Precious things"— Jer 52:12-19.

1:11 "Seek bread"— a famine attended the destruction of Jerusalem — 2:20; Jer 14:12; 15:2; 16:4.

and consider, for I am despised.
¹² *Is it* nothing to you,
 all you who pass by?
 Look and see if there is any sorrow
 like my sorrow,
 which has been brought on me,
 which the LORD has inflicted
 on *me* in the day of his fierce
 anger.
¹³ He has sent fire from above into
 my bones,
 and it has prevailed.
 He has spread a net for my feet;
 he has turned me back;
 he has made me desolate *and*
 faint all day long.
¹⁴ The yoke of my transgressions
 was bound, woven by his hands.
They have come onto my neck.
 He has made my strength fall.
 The Lord delivered me into the hands
 of *those whom* I was not able to
 withstand.
¹⁵ The Lord has trampled underfoot
 all my mighty *men* in my midst.
 He called an assembly against me
 to crush my young men.
 The Lord has trampled the virgin,
 the daughter of Judah,
 as in a winepress.
¹⁶ For these *things* I weep.
 My eye, my eye flows with water,
 because the comforter who could
 relieve my soul is far from me.
 My children are desolate,
 because the enemy prevailed.
¹⁷ Zion spreads out her hands,
 but *there is* no one to comfort her.

Concerning Jacob the LORD has
 commanded *that* his adversaries
should surround him.
 Jerusalem has become an unclean
 thing among them.
¹⁸ The LORD is righteous;
 for I have rebelled against his
 commandment.
 Please listen, all you people,
 and see my sorrow.
 My virgins and my young men
 have gone into captivity.
¹⁹ I called for my lovers,
 but they deceived me.
 My priests and my elders expired
 in the city,
 while they sought their food
 to renew their lives.
²⁰ Look, O LORD, for I *am* in
 distress.
 My inner being is troubled.
 My heart turns over inside me;
 for I have grievously rebelled.
 Outside, the sword bereaves;
 at home *it is* like death.
²¹ They have heard that I sigh.
There is no one to comfort me.
 All my enemies have heard of
 my trouble;
 they are glad that you have
 done *it*.
 You will bring the day *that*
 you have announced,
 and they will become like me.
²² Let all their wickedness come
 before you,
 and do to them as you have done
 to me for all my transgressions;

1:12 From this verse to the end of the chapter it is as though Jerusalem herself were speaking as an individual. The prophet who is speaking for her has been enabled by God's Spirit to understand the deep grief that was in the mind of the people and to experience it with them (see Jer 4:19-20; 6:24-25; 9:1,10).

"*Fierce anger*"— Jer 4:8,26; 12:13; 25:37-38; 30:24. See notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

1:13 "*Fire*"— Jer 52:12-13.

"*Net*"— this refers to falling into the hands of the Babylonians.

1:14 "*Yoke*"— Deut 28:48; Isa 47:6; Jer 27:1-11.

1:15 "*Daughter*"— v 6.

"*Winepress*"— a symbol of God's judgment (Isa 63:2-3; Joel 3:13; Rev 14:19-20; 19:15).

1:16 Jer 9:1,10,18. Sin and its consequences

(punishment and grief) are closely bound together and follow each other.

1:17 "*The LORD has commanded*"— all that happened to Jerusalem, including the enmity shown by neighboring peoples, was a result of God's action (Lev 26:16,18,23-25; Jer 25:8-11).

1:18 "*Righteous*"— God will never punish the innocent. And He will never punish anyone more than they deserve. All of His decrees and ways are just and good (Rev 15:3; 16:5-7).

"*Rebelled*"— Jer 2:8,20; 5:23; 6:19; 7:25-26. It is men's rebellion against the true and living God that brings punishment on them.

1:19 Verse 7.

1:20 Jer 2:19; 9:21-22.

1:21 "*They are glad*"— v 7.

"*The day that you have announced*"— Jer 25:15-28.

1:22 Ps 109:14-15; 35:8.

for my sighs *are* many,
and my heart *is* faint.

- 2** How the Lord has covered
the daughter of Zion
with a cloud in his anger!
And he has thrown down
the beauty of Israel from
heaven to the earth,
and has not remembered
his footstool in the day
of his anger.
- 2** The Lord has swallowed up
all the dwelling places of Jacob,
and has not shown pity.
In his wrath he has thrown down
the strongholds of the daughter
of Judah.
He has brought *them*
down to the ground;
he has dishonoured the kingdom
and its princes.
- 3** In *his* fierce anger he has cut off
all the horn of Israel.
He has drawn back his right hand
from before the enemy,
and burned against Jacob
like a flaming fire *which*
devours all around.
- 4** He has bent his bow like an enemy.
He stood with his right hand
like an adversary,
and has slain all *who were*
pleasant to the eye.
In the tent of the daughter of Zion,
he has poured out his fury like fire.
- 5** The Lord was like an enemy;
he has swallowed up Israel,
he has swallowed up all her palaces.
He has destroyed its strongholds,
and has multiplied mourning
and lamentation in the daughter
of Judah.

- 6** And he has done violence to his
tabernacle like a garden.
He has destroyed his place of
assembly.
The LORD has caused the appointed
feasts and Sabbaths to be
forgotten in Zion,
and in the indignation of his anger
has despised the king and the
priest.
- 7** The Lord has rejected his altar;
he has abhorred his sanctuary;
he has given up the walls of her
palaces into the hands of the
enemy.
They have made a noise in
the house of the LORD,
as in the day of an appointed feast.
- 8** The LORD purposed to destroy
the wall of the daughter of Zion.
He stretched out a *measuring* line.
He did not withdraw his hand
from destroying;
therefore he caused the rampart
and the wall to lament.
They languish together.
- 9** Her gates are sunk into the ground.
He has destroyed and broken
her bars.
Her king and her princes *are*
among the Gentiles.
The law *is* no *more*,
and her prophets find no vision
from the LORD.
- 10** The elders of the daughter of Zion
sit on the ground, *and* keep silent.
They have thrown dust on their
heads.
They have tied sackcloth around
themselves.
The virgins of Jerusalem hang down
their heads to the ground.
- 11** My eyes fail with tears,

2:1 In this whole chapter up to verse 20 the prophet himself is speaking of Jerusalem.

"Daughter"— 1:6.

"Anger"— see notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

This sentence can also be translated "How the Lord in His anger has treated the Daughter of Zion with contempt".

"His footstool"— Ps 99:5,9; 1 Chron 28:2.

2:2 *"Not shown pity"*— v 17; Jer 13:14; Ezek 5:11; 7:4,9; 8:18; 9:5. God knows when to show mercy and when not to show mercy.

2:3 *"Horn"*— here indicates strength.

2:4 *"Bow"*— Deut 32:42; Ps 7:12-13.

2:5 God was their true friend, but was an enemy of their sins and rebellion and wickedness.

2:6 *"His tabernacle"*, *"His place"*— the temple in Jerusalem (Ps 27:4-5; 74:4).

2:7 Ezek 10:4,18,19; 11:23; Jer 52:13.

2:8 1:17.

2:9 Ps 74:9; Amos 8:11; Micah 3:6-7.

2:10 Job 2:12-13; Ps 35:13-14.

2:11 Compare 1:20; Jer 9:1; Luke 19:41-44. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophet. The grief of the prophet indicated beforehand the grief of Christ.

my inner being is troubled,
 my heart is poured out on the earth,
 because of the destruction of
 the daughter of my people,
 because the children and the infants
 faint in the streets of the city.

¹² They say to their mothers,
 “Where *is* grain and wine?”
 as they faint like the wounded
 in the streets of the city,
 as their life pours out into
 their mothers’ bosom.

¹³ What thing shall I take
 to testify for you?
 To what can I liken you,
 O daughter of Jerusalem?
 To what can I compare you,
 that I may comfort you,
 O virgin daughter of Zion?
 For your fracture *is* as vast
 as the sea.
 Who can heal you?

¹⁴ The things your prophets saw
 for you were empty and foolish
 visions.
 And they did not expose your guilt,
 to turn you away from captivity,
 but their visions for you were false
 oracles, leading *you* astray.

¹⁵ All who pass by clap *their*
 hands at you.
 They hiss and wag their heads
 at the daughter of Jerusalem,
 saying, “Is *this* the city
 that *men* called The Perfection of
 Beauty,
 The Joy of the Whole Earth?”

¹⁶ All your enemies have opened
 their mouth against you.

They hiss and gnash the teeth.
 They say, “We have swallowed
her up!
 Certainly, we have looked forward
 to this day.
 We have found it,
 we have seen it”.

¹⁷ The LORD has done what
 he planned.
 He has fulfilled his word that
 he commanded in the days of old.
 He has thrown down,
 and has not shown pity.
 And he has caused *your*
 enemy to rejoice over you.
 He has set up the horn of
 your adversaries.

¹⁸ Their hearts cried to the Lord.
 O wall of the daughter of Zion,
 let *your* tears run down like
 a river day and night.
 Give yourself no rest.
 Do not let your eyes get relief.

¹⁹ Arise, cry out in the night!
 In the beginning of the watches pour
 out your heart like water before
 the face of the Lord.
 Lift up your hands toward him
 for the life of your young children,
 who faint for hunger at the head
 of every street.

²⁰ See, O Lord, and consider whom
 you have treated like this.
 Should the women eat their
 offspring,
 children a span long?
 Should the priest and the prophet be
 slain in the sanctuary of
 the LORD?

“Heart”—the Hebrew has the word for “liver”, but it is symbolic here of the inner person, or, as we say, heart.

2:12 1:11.

2:13 Jer 14:17; 30:12-15.

2:14 See Jer 5:12-13; 6:13-15; 8:10-12; 14:13-15; 23:9-40; 27:9—28:17. Perhaps if those called prophets had exposed and rebuked the sins of the people the people might have repented and this calamity might not have come on them. But those prophets preferred to speak lies. And the people wanted to hear and believe lies (Jer 5:31). The results of all this are seen here in this book of Lamentations. Compare 2 Thess 2:9-12.

2:15 “Hiss”—Jer 19:8; Deut 28:37.

“Joy”—Ps 48:2.

2:16 3:46; Jer 51:34; Ps 35:25; Ezek 36:3;

Micah 4:11.

2:17 “Fulfilled His Word”—Lev 26:23-39; Deut 28:15-68.

“Not shown pity”—v 2.

“Horn”—power and authority.

2:18 Jer 14:17. Here the word “daughter” signifies all that remained in the city.

2:20-22 Here once again it seems that Jeremiah is presenting Jerusalem herself as speaking. Speaking of himself he could hardly have used words like “my virgins and my young men” (v 21), “those whom I nursed and reared” (v 22). See Jer 16:1-2.

2:20 “Eat their offspring”—Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57; Jer 19:9. This is one of the punishments that God Himself said would come on them if they rejected Him and disobeyed His Word.

²¹ The young and the old lie
 on the ground in the streets.
 My virgins and my young men have
 fallen by the sword.
 You have slain *them* in the day
 of your anger.
 You have killed, *and* not pitied.
²² You summoned my terrors all around
 as to a feast day,
 so that in the day of the LORD's
 anger no one escaped or remained.
 My enemy has consumed those whom
 I nursed and reared.

3 I *am* the man *who* has seen
 affliction by the rod of his wrath.
² He has led me and brought *me*
 into darkness, but not *into* light.
³ Surely he has turned against me;
 he turns his hand *against me*
 all day long.
⁴ He has made my flesh and
 my skin grow old.
 He has broken my bones.
⁵ He has built *siege works* against me,
 and surrounded *me* with bitterness
 and hardship.
⁶ He has set me in dark places,
 like *the* dead of long ago.
⁷ He has hedged me in,
 so that I cannot get out.
 He has made my chain heavy.

⁸ Also when I cry and shout,
 he shuts out my prayer.
⁹ He has blocked up my ways with
 cut stones.
 He has made my paths crooked.
¹⁰ He *was like* a bear lying
 in wait for me,
and like a lion in secret places.
¹¹ He has turned aside my ways,
 and pulled me in pieces.
 He has made me desolate.
¹² He has bent his bow,
 and set me as a target
 for the arrow.
¹³ He has caused the arrows of his
 quiver to enter my inner being.
¹⁴ I was an *object of* derision
 to all my people,
and their mocking
 song all day long.
¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness.
 He has made me drunk with
 wormwood.
¹⁶ He has also broken my teeth
 with gravel.
 He has covered me with ashes.
¹⁷ And you have moved my soul
 far from peace.
 I have forgotten prosperity.
¹⁸ And I said, "My strength,
 and my hope from the LORD
 have perished.

2:21 Jer 9:21-22.

2:22 "Anger"— v 1.

3:1 In this chapter the prophet again is speaking. Here and there he uses the word "we" – vs 22,40-47. Even when he is speaking of his own experiences the people are never far from his thoughts and feelings. This chapter is the heart of this little book. In it we see deep sorrow, the beginning of hope as he thinks of God's goodness, the willingness to quietly accept the will of God, to learn the lessons God was teaching through chastisement, and the prayer that justice would prevail. When the people suffered calamities it was as though Jeremiah suffered them. Their inner experiences were his inner experiences.

"Rod of His wrath"— the Babylonian army (compare Isa 10:5. See Jer 51:20). Job also spoke of the rod of God's anger punishing him (Job 9:34). Many words of the first 18 verses of this chapter are quite similar to words in the book of Job and in other poetical books of the Old Testament.

3:2 Job 12:25; 19:8.

3:3 Job 19:21; Ps 38:2.

3:4 Job 13:28; 16:8; 30:30; Ps 51:8; Isa 38:13.

3:5 This may refer to the siege of the Babylonian armies.

3:6 Ps 143:3; 88:5-6; Isa 59:10; 50:10.

3:7 Job 3:23; 19:8; Ps 88:8.

3:8 Verse 44. Job 30:20; Ps 22:2; 28:1.

3:9 Verse 7; Isa 63:17; Hos 2:6. If God apparently does not hear the prayers of a person and does not help him, if God brings darkness on him, it will seem to him that his ways have been made crooked. Compare Ps 5:8.

3:10-11 Job 10:16; Jer 4:7; 5:6; 49:19; 50:44; Hos 6:1; 13:7-8. Men acted like wild animals toward them and toward Jerusalem, but it was God who appointed it.

3:12-13 2:4; Job 6:4; 7:20; 16:12-14; Ps 38:2.

3:14 Job 17:2; 30:9; Ps 22:6-7; 69:12; Jer 20:7.

3:15 Verse 19; Job 9:18; Jer 9:15.

3:16 Since God had appointed all this the prophet is attributing all of it to God.

3:17 Job 3:26; Ps 77:2-4.

"Prosperity"— the Hebrew word also means "happiness", "good", etc.

3:18 Job 7:6; 17:15. The prophet here draws near to the borders of despair.

19 I remember my affliction and
 my misery,
 the wormwood and the bitterness,
 20 My soul still remembers *them*, and
 sinks down within me.
 21 This I recall to my mind,
 therefore I have hope:
 22 *Because of* the LORD's mercies
 we are not consumed,
 for his compassions do not fail.
 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 hope and 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 keep silent,
 because 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 one
 who strikes him.
 Let him be filled with disgrace.
 31 For the Lord will not reject
 forever.
 32 For though he causes grief,
 he will have compassion in
 accordance with the abundance
 of his mercies.
 33 For he does not willingly afflict
 or grieve the children of men.
 34 To crush under his feet all the
 prisoners of the earth,
 35 To turn aside a man's rights before
 the face of the Most High,
 36 To defraud a man in his case,

3:19-21 The prophet cannot forget the fearful things which he has experienced. But by thinking again of the wonderful truths found in the following verses (up to v 39), he is able to stand in faith instead of falling into despair. By doing so he shows the way for anyone to endure discouragement, mental distress, and inner pain and to come out safely on the other side.

3:19 "*I remember*"— Deut 8:2-5; 32:7; Ps 42:4-5; 63:6; 77:1-12.

3:22-23 The prophet remembers what God is like, and by contemplating God's loving and gracious qualities finds peace for his troubled heart. He knows very well that both himself and Jerusalem have deserved even worse punishment than has actually come on them (compare Ps 103:10). He realizes afresh that only one thing kept them from complete destruction and gave them hope for the future, and that one thing was the grace of God. God loves those whom He has chosen with an eternal love (Jer 31:3; Rom 8:37-39). So His love remains on them forever (Ps 78:38; 103:13-14). Every morning believers can make new beginnings. They can receive fresh encouragement every day by understanding that their sins are blotted out, and that God's love and mercy will surround them in the future. They can go on from the failures and mistakes of the past to higher, better things in the future, knowing that God will always be faithful to His covenant and promises (Ex 34:6; Ps 89:1-2; 108:4; 115:1).

3:24 Ps 73:26; 119:57; 142:5; Num 18:20. The truths he has been considering have strengthened his faith and brought peace of mind, and rest of heart. No despair can stand against these powerful truths when they are understood and believed.

3:25 Ps 25:3; 34:8; 86:5; Jer 29:14; Matt 7:7-11.

In spite of the experiences recorded in vs 1-18 he knows that God is good and does good. This is the victory faith achieves over every circumstance that seems against faith.

3:26 Ps 37:7; 40:1; Isa 26:3; 30:15.

3:27 "*Yoke*"— in other words it is good for a person to fully obey God and heartily accept the discipline, chastisement, training, and the pains that go with such things, and he should learn to do this when he is young. The older he is when he begins this the harder it will be for him. The word "yoke" brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 11:29.

3:28 If God has put certain things on us to bear we should not try to escape from them by fellowship with other people, but face up to them in God's presence. Compare Jer 15:17.

3:29 "*Dust*"— indicates a sincere and humble acceptance of those things God has caused to happen and obedience to His will.

3:30 Compare Isa 50:6; Matt 5:39.

3:31-32 Ps 30:5; 66:10-12; 94:14; Isa 54:7-8; Heb 13:5. The prophet encourages himself by the thought that the troubles and griefs that God causes His people to undergo are only for a comparatively short time. See 2 Cor 4:17-18.

3:33 Ps 103:13-14; Jer 48:36-38; Isa 63:9; Ezek 18:23,32; Hos 11:8; Heb 12:10-11. God, in accordance with His absolute justice, brings troubles and distress on people because of their sins. But this gives him no pleasure at all. In all that He does He has good motives and grand purposes.

3:34-36 God sees the cruel and unjust acts of men such as those displayed by the leaders of Judah and the armies of Babylon, but He does not approve of them — quite the opposite.

- the Lord does not approve
of such things.
- ³⁷ Who is he who speaks,
and it comes to pass,
when the Lord has not
commanded it?
- ³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of
the Most High that disaster and
good things come?
- ³⁹ Why should a living man complain,
a man *undergoing* punishment
for his sins?
- ⁴⁰ Let us search and examine our ways,
and turn back to the LORD.
- ⁴¹ Let us lift up our heart *together*
with our hands to God in the
heavens.
- ⁴² We have transgressed and have
rebelled;
you have not pardoned.
- ⁴³ You have covered us with anger,
and pursued us.
You have slain us;
you have not shown pity.
- ⁴⁴ You have covered yourself
with a cloud, so that our prayer
cannot pass through.
- ⁴⁵ You have made us *like* scrapings
and trash in the midst of the people.
- ⁴⁶ All our enemies have opened
their mouths against us.
- ⁴⁷ Fear and a snare have come upon us,
desolation and destruction.
- ⁴⁸ My eye runs down with rivers
of water for the destruction
of the daughter of my people.
- ⁴⁹ My eye will flow without
interruption, and will not stop,
- ⁵⁰ Until the LORD looks down,
and sees from heaven.
- ⁵¹ My eye affects my heart because
of all the daughters of my city.
- ⁵² My enemies hunted me down
like a bird, without cause.
- ⁵³ They cut off my life in the dungeon,
and hurled a stone on me;
- ⁵⁴ Waters flowed over my head.
Then I said, "I am cut off".
- ⁵⁵ I called on your name,
O LORD, out of the deep dungeon.
- ⁵⁶ You heard my voice:
"Do not hide your ear at my
breathing, at my cry".
- ⁵⁷ You drew near in the day that
I called to you. You said,
"Do not fear".
- ⁵⁸ O Lord, you have pleaded the case
for my soul.
You have redeemed my life.
- ⁵⁹ O LORD, you have seen the wrong
done to me. Judge my case.
- ⁶⁰ You have seen all their vengeance
and all their plots against me.
- ⁶¹ You have heard their insults,
O LORD, and all their plots
against me,
- ⁶² The words of those who rose up
against me,
and their whispering against me
all day long.
- ⁶³ Look at their sitting down,
and their rising up.
I am their mocking song.
- ⁶⁴ Repay them, O LORD,

3:37-39 If God had not decreed the disaster that came on Jerusalem and its people then it would not have happened (1:17; Amos 3:6; Isa 14:26-27). But all left alive in Jerusalem (and all men everywhere) should understand that any punishment from God comes because of their sins. Micah 7:9 perfectly describes the kind of attitude we should have when God causes troubles to come to us.

3:39 "*Why...complain*"— see Ex 14:11-12; 15:24; 16:2; Num 11:1; 14:2-3; 16:11; 17:5.

3:40 There will be good results from the troubles and griefs which come to us if we are able to do this (Ps 119:59; 139:23-24; 1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5).

3:41-42 This was the way for the people of Jerusalem to obtain forgiveness and restoration, and the only way. Compare Ps 32:3-5; Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9.

3:43-47 This happened just as God foretold in

Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28.

3:48-51 The prophet has humbly submitted to what God has done to him and to Jerusalem and is looking with hope to the future. But this has not removed the grief he feels for his people. He determines that he will go on lamenting until God shows mercy and compassion on them. Having peace in our personal relationship with God does not mean that we will not feel sorrow at the troubles and pains of others. Compare Luke 19:41; Rom 9:1-3; Ps 126:5.

3:52-63 These words bring before us Jeremiah's personal experiences. Compare v 53 with Jer 37:16 and Jer 38:6, v 58 with Jer 38:7-13, v 59 with Jer 18:19-20, v 60 and 61 with Jer 11:18-21; 12:6; 18:18.

3:62 "*Words*"— in Hebrew "lips".

3:64-66 This is a prayer that justice might prevail. See the note on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

- in accordance with the work
of their hands.
- ⁶⁵ Give them sorrow of heart.
Your curse *be* on them!
- ⁶⁶ In anger pursue and destroy them
from under the LORD's heavens!
- 4** How the gold has become dim!
How the most fine gold has
changed!
The stones of the sanctuary are
scattered at the head of every street.
- ² The precious sons of Zion,
worth their weight in fine gold,
how they are regarded like
earthenware pitchers,
the work of the potter's hands!
- ³ Even jackals offer the breast,
they give suck to their young ones,
but the daughter of my people
has become cruel,
like the ostriches in the desert.
- ⁴ The tongue of the sucking child clings
to the roof of his mouth for thirst.
The young children ask for bread,
and no one breaks *it* for them.
- ⁵ Those who ate delicacies are desolate
in the streets.
Those who were brought up
in scarlet embrace ash heaps.
- ⁶ For the punishment of the wickedness
of the daughter of my people is
greater than the punishment
of the sin of Sodom that was
overthrown in a moment,
with no hand turned to *help* her.
- ⁷ Her Nazirites were purer than snow;
they were whiter than milk;
their bodies were more ruddy
than rubies;
their appearance *was* like sapphire.
- ⁸ Now their faces are blacker than coal;
they are not recognized
in the streets.
Their skin clings to their bones;
it is withered;
it has become like a stick.
- ⁹ *Those* slain by the sword are better off
than *those* slain by hunger;
for these pine away,
stricken by the *lack of* the fruits
of the field.
- ¹⁰ The hands of compassionate women
have boiled their own children;
they were their food in the
destruction of the daughter of
my people.
- ¹¹ The LORD has brought his fury
to bear;
he has poured out his fierce anger,
and has kindled a fire in Zion;
and it has devoured its foundations.
- ¹² The kings of the earth,
and all the inhabitants of the world,
would not have believed that the
adversary and the enemy could
enter the gates of Jerusalem.
- ¹³ Because of the sins of her prophets,
and the evil deeds of her priests
who shed the blood of the just
in the midst of her,
- ¹⁴ They have wandered *like* blind men

3:65 Compare Isa 6:9-10.

3:66 "*Pursue...them*"— v 43; Ps 35:6.

4:2 The people of Judah and Jerusalem were God's special treasure – Ex 19:5. But all their beauty and splendor had vanished.

4:3 The people had become harsher than animals toward their children (2:20).

"*Ostriches*"— Job 39:13-17.

4:4 Verse 10; 2:11-12.

4:5 Neither wealthy people nor those of the royal family were able to escape (scarlet here probably indicates royalty).

4:6 Sodom was destroyed immediately by fire from heaven, but Jerusalem had to endure a siege of a year and a half, and then fell into the hands of savage enemies who destroyed her.

4:7 Verse 5.

4:8 This was the result of the famine that came to them.

4:10 Verse 4; Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57. Terrible

indeed is the curse that sin brings on people.

4:11 Sin not confessed and forsaken brings God's anger, and that anger brings terrible punishment.

4:12 Jer 21:13. Before this event Jerusalem had sometimes fallen into the hands of its enemies. But afterwards the kings of Judah had greatly strengthened the walls and defensive fortifications of the city (2 Chron 26:9; 33:14). Jerusalem withstood even a siege of one and a half years at the hands of the mighty Babylonian army. Perhaps the kings and peoples of the earth remembered how the armies of Sennacherib had perished outside Jerusalem's walls (Isa 36:1-2; 37:36-37), and thought the same thing might happen to the Babylonians.

4:13 Jer 2:8; 5:31; 6:13. Even a city thought to be impossible to conquer may be destroyed because of its sins. Sin is the great destroyer of cities and people.

4:14 Deut 28:28-29; Isa 29:9.

- in the streets;
they have polluted themselves
with blood,
so that men could not touch
their garments.
- 15 They cried out to them, "Go away,
unclean! Go away,
go away! Do not touch!"
When they ran away and wandered,
people among the nations said,
"They will not settle *there* again".
- 16 The anger of the LORD has scattered
them;
he no longer regards them.
They did not respect the person
of the priests;
they did not show favour to the elders.
- 17 As for us, our eyes failed,
vainly *looking* for our help.
In our watching we looked for
a nation *that* could not save us.
- 18 They hunt our steps,
so that we cannot go into
our streets.
Our end is near;
our days are finished, for our end
has come.
- 19 Our pursuers are swifter than
the eagles of the sky.
They pursued us on
the mountains.
They lay in wait for us in the
wilderness.
- 20 The breath of our nostrils,
the anointed of the LORD,
was caught in their pits;
we had said of him,
"Under his shadow we will live
among the nations".
- 21 Rejoice and be glad,
O daughter of Edom,
- you who live in the land of Uz;
but the cup will also pass to you.
You will get drunk,
and make yourself naked.
- 22 The punishment of your guilt
is completed,
O daughter of Zion.
He will no longer lead you away
into captivity.
He will punish your guilt,
O daughter of Edom;
he will expose your sins.
- 5 Remember, O LORD,
what has come upon us. Consider,
and look at our disgrace.
- 2 Our inheritance has been turned
over to foreigners,
our houses to aliens.
- 3 We are orphans and fatherless;
our mothers are widows.
- 4 We have to lay out money for
our drinking water.
Our wood is sold to us.
- 5 Our necks are being pursued.
We labour, and have no rest.
- 6 We have given our
hand to the Egyptians,
and to the Assyrians,
to be satisfied with bread.
- 7 Our fathers sinned, and are
no more,
and we have borne their evil deeds.
- 8 Servants rule over us.
*There is no one to rescue
us out of their hands.*
- 9 We get our bread at *the peril of*
our lives, because of the sword
in the wilderness.
- 10 Our skin is black as an oven
because of the terrible famine.

4:15 The priests had changed their holy consecration and the glory of their priesthood into something abominable and evil.

4:16 Deut 28:49-50.

4:17 Jer 2:18,36; Ezek 29:16.

4:20 This refers to King Zedekiah – Jer 39:4-5.

4:21 Esau's descendants rejoiced when they saw the fall of Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 35:15; Oba 1:12). But the time of their destruction was near (Jer 25:15,21).

"Uz" – Job 1:1.

5:1 See 3:49-50.

5:2 "Inheritance" – their country.

5:4 "Money for our drinking water" – compare Deut 8:7. Sin can ruin the good gifts God has

given.

5:5 Isa 57:20-21.

5:6 The leaders of Judah thought that Egypt or Assyria would come to their help in the fight against Babylon (Jer 2:18,36; Ezek 29:16).

5:7 Since that generation bore the punishment of their ancestors we may be sure that they deserved it (v 16; Jer 14:20; 16:11-12; 31:29-30).

5:8-12 Let us learn this lesson well – sin was the one and only thing that brought cruel enemies to rule over them, that brought danger to life and limb, that brought them into a destitute state, that robbed them of all peace and happiness. The only cause of their pains, troubles, griefs and destruction was sin.

- ¹¹ They have ravished the women
in Zion,
and the maidens in the cities
of Judah.
- ¹² Princes have been hanged up
by their hands.
The faces of elders have not been
honoured.
- ¹³ They took the young men to grind,
and the children fell under
the *loads* of wood.
- ¹⁴ The elders have gone from the gate,
the young men from 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
are dim;
- ¹⁸ Because of Mount Zion,
which is desolate.
The foxes walk on it.
- ¹⁹ You, O LORD, remain forever,
your throne from generation
to generation.
- ²⁰ Why do you forget us permanently,
and forsake us for such a long time?
- ²¹ Turn us back to you, O LORD,
and we will turn back.
Renew our days as of old,
- ²² unless you have utterly rejected us,
and are very angry with us.

5:15 Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10. Compare Ps 30:11; Isa 61:3.

5:19-22 The prophet leaves all these matters where they belong – in the hands of the eternal God Who is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Verse 19 is similar to Ps 102:12. In fact the language of that whole psalm is something like this book

of Lamentations.

5:20 Ps 6:3; 13:1; 89:46.

5:21-22 Jer 31:18-19; Ps 80:3.

Jeremiah knows that if God does not turn the people back to Himself then they will not turn to Him. It is God Who enables men to repent and seek Himself (Acts 5:31; 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25).

