



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Lamentations 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Lamentations 2.

Topics.

- The LORD has cast down from heaven to earth the splendour of Israel.
- The LORD has become like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel.
- The LORD laid waste his meeting place and spurned king and priest.
- Virgin daughter of Zion? Your prophets have spoken deceptive visions.
- Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of earth?
- The LORD carried out His word and made the enemy rejoice over you.
- Pour out your heart like water before the LORD! For your children.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Lamentations is made up of five poems, each an expression of grief over the fall of Jerusalem. Like a eulogy at a funeral, these laments are intended to mourn a loss—in this case, the loss of a nation. The latter half of chapter three implies that the purpose behind Lamentations' graphic depictions of sorrow and suffering was to produce hope in the God whose compassion is "new every morning" (v23) and whose faithfulness is great even to a people who have been condemned for their own unfaithfulness. Lamentations was probably written shortly after Jerusalem's fall to Babylon in 586 B.C.

The author, while not identified in the book itself, may be the prophet Jeremiah, who was said to have "uttered a lament for Josiah" (2 Chron. 35:25). Lamentations is primarily the woes of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) after the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, but prior to this event the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) had also been taken into captivity to Assyria. Therefore, Lamentations sometimes includes the collective cry of both Judah and Israel because at this time of it being written both Judah and Israel were in sorrow and scattered throughout the nations

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

LAMENT 2:1

The LORD Cast Down from Heaven to Earth the Splendour of Israel.

- **Lament. 2:1:** How the LORD in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendour of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger.

Jerusalem was not in heaven, but on mount Zion on earth, "Cast down from heaven to earth" is biblical lofty language to depict how glorious the city of Jerusalem was before God, it was the city God called, His Holy city and the city He put His name on, but now it is in ruin. In this context heaven is a symbol of absolute splendour and glory and God's favour whereas earth in this context is a symbol of decay, ruin and God's judgment. For further information concerning lofty Language see the title: "Lofty Language," in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The LORD has become like an Enemy; he has Swallowed up Israel.

- **Lament. 2:2-5:** The LORD has swallowed up without mercy all the habitations of Jacob; in his wrath he has broken down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he has brought down to the ground in dishonour the kingdom and its rulers. ³He has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn from them his right hand in the face of the enemy; he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob, consuming all around. ⁴He has bent his bow like an enemy, with his right hand set like a foe; and he has killed all who were delightful in our eyes in the tent of the daughter of Zion; he has poured out his fury like fire. ⁵The LORD has become like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel; he has swallowed up all its palaces; he has laid in ruins its strongholds, and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.

The Focus now includes the Southern Kingdom of Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria).

Withdrawn from them His right hand: means the LORD has withdrawn His power and His protection and His strength to fight for His people and His favour and His blessings.

Bent His bow: God is pictured as a mighty warrior going to war with a bow against the people of Judah and Israel, the bow in God's hand was the nation of Assyria and the nation of Babylon. God used Assyria to invade the land of Samaria and take the ten tribes' captive, and He used Babylon to besiege Jerusalem and take the people of Judah (the two tribes) captive for seventy years. Later Assyria was conquered by the kingdom of Babylon and so Judah and Israel were brought together and after seventy years in captivity to Babylon they were united and became the one nation called Israel that God had originally called them to be.

The LORD Laid waste His Meeting Place and King and Priest.

- **Lament. 2:6-9:** He has laid waste his booth (violently taken away his tabernacle in the KJV) like a garden, laid in ruins his meeting place; the LORD has made Zion forget festival and Sabbath, and in his fierce indignation has spurned king and priest. ⁷The LORD has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they raised a clamor in the house of the LORD as on the day of festival. ⁸The LORD determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion; he stretched out the measuring line; he did not restrain his hand from destroying; he caused rampart and wall to lament; they languished together. ⁹Her gates have sunk into the ground; he has ruined and broken her bars; her king and princes are among the nations; the law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the LORD.

The focus now shifts to Jerusalem, in contrast to LORD protecting Jerusalem and restraining destruction He determined to destroy everything His people held sacred. We are told that the LORD violently destroyed the Temple, the altar, the sanctuary, Jerusalem's palaces, the gates to the city and the festival and Sabbath Days, the king and priest, the law and the prophets and caused the people of Judah to be in extreme sorrow and mourning. The LORD is given credit for all this destruction because He used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem and pillaged the temple and took the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) into captivity later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two

rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. While in captivity God molded them like a master potter molds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

LAMENT 2:10-12

I am Spent with Weeping; because infants Cry, "Where is food?"

- **Lament. 2:10-12:** The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground in silence; they have thrown dust on their heads and put on sackcloth; the young women of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground. ¹¹My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city. ¹²They cry to their mothers, "Where is bread 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.

3

Babylon conquered the inhabitants of Jerusalem by surrounding the city for three years so no-one could go in or come out, thus the city ran out of food, and eventually the people were forced to surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who took them into captivity for seventy years.

LAMENT 2:13-14

O Virgin Daughter of Zion? Your Prophets Speak Deceptive Visions.

- **Lament. 2:13-14:** What can I say for you, to what compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What can I liken to you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is vast as the sea; who can heal you? ¹⁴Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not exposed your iniquity to restore your fortunes, but have seen for you oracles that are false and misleading.

False prophets continually told the people what they wanted to hear, they did not speak against the idols and pagan gods the people of Israel worshipped or their corrupt ways. The true prophets of God did, but the people would not listen or believe their message calling them to repentance and their warning of the doom that would come if they did not turn from their rebellion, their wicked ways and their pagan gods.

Today in the Kingdom of Christianity: there are teachers who have turned much of message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of Christ into a positive thinking message, and the Bible into a prosperity book that is able to make one rich, successful and wealthy. Though these things are not bad in themselves they are not what the Bible or the Gospel of Christ is about.

The message of Salvation is about:

- Coming to God who is Holy with a broken and contrite heart because of our sin (wrong-doing).
- Deliverance from sin and death and resurrection from the dead and eternal life.
- Accepting Christ as our King and eternal Saviour and fellowship with Christ and God.
- Living a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus.

When a person seeking God stands before Him with a humble heart and honest attitude of repentance their life will be changed, sadly Israel and Judah in contrast to being humble and repentant were prideful, corrupt and refused to listen to the prophets God sent to them.

LAMENT 2:15-16

Is this the City called the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of Earth.

- **Lament. 2:15-16:** All who pass along the way clap their hands at you; they hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem; "Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?" ¹⁶All your enemies rail against you; they hiss, gnash their teeth and cry: "We have swallowed her! Ah, this is the day we longed for; now we have it; we see it!"

Jerusalem was once such a mighty city and a strong fortress, it was called, "the city of perfection and beauty, the joy of all the earth," but because the inhabitants of the city had become so prideful, arrogant and grossly corrupt (especially the priests and leaders) all the surrounding nations desired to see the destruction of the city. Now their desire has come to pass not only does the city lie in total ruin, all her enemies mock her inhabitants.

4

LAMENT 2:17

The LORD carried Out His Word and the Enemy Rejoices over You.

- **Lament. 2:17:** The LORD has done what he purposed; he has carried out his word, which he commanded long ago; he has thrown down without pity; he has made the enemy rejoice over you (Judah) and exalted the might of your foes.

The LORD sent prophet after prophet warning the people to repent and turn from their idols, pagan gods and corrupt ways, or the Day of the LORD would come upon them, a day of gloom and darkness, a day of destruction and sorrow, but they did not listen. The people continued to walk before God with a rebellious heart. Following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. The following list of sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.

They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land. They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley. They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on

their hills throughout their land. Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property.

Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The lesson for today: by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness.

LAMENT 2:18-19

Pour out your Heart like Water before the LORD! For your Children.

- **Lament. 2:18-19:** Their heart cried to the LORD. O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite! ¹⁹"Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the LORD! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street."

The people are told to cry to the LORD with tears streaming down like a torrent and give themselves no rest day or night or their eyes any sleep. They are told to pour out their heart like water before the presence of the LORD and to pray to the LORD for the lives of their children, who are fainting in every street because hunger.

5

LAMENT 2:20-22

Jerusalem is Personified as a Parent Crying for Her Children.

- **Lament. 2:20-22:** Look, O LORD, and see! With whom have you dealt thus? Should women eat the fruit of their womb, the children of their tender care? Should priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the LORD? ²¹In the dust of the streets lie the young and the old; my (Jerusalem's) young women and my young men have fallen by the sword; you have killed them in the day of your anger, slaughtering without pity. ²²You summoned as if to a festival day my (Jerusalem's) terrors on every side, and on the day of the anger of the LORD no one escaped or survived; those whom I held and raised my enemy destroyed.

The LORD slaughtered without pity, everywhere he looks there is terror.

- Caring women are so hungry they are eating the fruit of their womb.
- Priest and prophets have been killed in the Holy Place of the LORD.
- The young and the old lie dead in the dust of the streets.
- Young men and young women have been killed by war.

How appropriate is the name Lamentations for this Book, such enormous tragedy that could have been avoided if the LORD'S people had listened to His prophets and acted accordingly instead of setting their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace