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Lamentations 1

(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 1.

Topics.

- Jerusalem was a princess among nations, but has become a slave.
- The priests of Zion mourn and she herself suffers bitterly.
- All the majesty has departed from the daughter of Zion.
- Jerusalem enemies have seen her nakedness.
- Foreign nations have entered the sanctuary of Jerusalem.
- The LORD sent fire; into Jerusalem bones and bound her sins together.
- The inhabitants of Jerusalem have gone into captivity.
- Jerusalem called to her lovers, but they deceived her.

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 1:1-2

Jerusalem was a Princess among Nations, but has become a Slave.

- **Lament. 1:1-2:** How lonely sits the city (of Jerusalem) that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. ²She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.

Jerusalem is personified as a beautiful and famous woman that is in morning and who had multitudes of friends and lovers, but they have all betrayed her and now she sits lonely with no one to comfort her.

Judah has gone into Exile and Dwells amongst the Nations.

- **Lament. 1:3:** Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude; she dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

The LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. He used Assyria to bring judgment on Israel in the land of Samaria and Babylon to bring judgment on Judah at Jerusalem. Many times, God through the prophets warned Judah and Israel of their impending doom but they would not listen. Assyria eventually invaded the land of Samaria and took Israel captive, later Babylon's armies surrounded Jerusalem and after a bitter siege of a year and a half the city fell to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and was destroyed. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken captive there with him (587 B.C.). Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist, but the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

LAMENT 1:4

The Priests of Zion Mourn and She Herself Suffers Bitterly.

- **Lament. 1:4:** The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the festival; all her gates are desolate; her priests groan; her virgins have been afflicted, and she herself suffers bitterly.

Zion: is the ancient name for Jerusalem, primarily used in poetic and prophetic passages. It can refer to an ancient castle, a fortress or stronghold of Jerusalem or the Hill Jerusalem sits on or the whole city itself and sometimes refers to the Temple of God. By extension the name can apply to the people of Judah and is used figuratively for heaven or the Jewish church, meaning the religious and political aspect of society that is seen as an entity oriented to politics and government.

Jerusalem's virgins: refer to those who remained faithful to the LORD in contrast to those who turn to idols and pagan gods.

LAMENT 1:5

The LORD has Afflicted Jerusalem her Enemies became Her Head.

- **Lament. 1:5:** Her (Jerusalem's) foes have become the head; her enemies prosper, because the LORD has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe.

NOTICE: God is given the credit for the destruction of Jerusalem; this is because He used Babylon as His servant to bring judgment upon the inhabitants of the city. (See the notes following verse eighteen under the title: "The inhabitants of Jerusalem have gone into Captivity.")

Sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem: following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. The following 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 1:6-7

All the Majesty has departed from the Daughter of Zion.

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- **Lament. 1:6-7:** From the daughter of Zion all her majesty has departed. Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer.
⁷Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and wandering all the precious things that were hers from days of old. When her people fell into the hand of the foe, and there was none to help her, her foes gloated over her; they mocked at her downfall. The daughter of Jerusalem and Zion are the same (Lament. 2:13) they are the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Isaiah 10:32).

The daughters of Zion contrasted with sons of Judah or sons of God: figuratively the word "daughters" implies the weaker or poorer people because daughters need looking after whereas son's carries the implication of standing on their own feet. Jerusalem is often personified as a mother with children her children are all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, prophets, husbands, wives and their children. The daughters of Jerusalem embraces, all the children or inhabitants of Jerusalem. When they are spoken of as virgin daughters it carries the idea of them having only one husband (God).

LAMENT 1:8-9

Jerusalem Enemies have seen her Nakedness.

- **Lament. 1:8-9:** Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns her face away. ⁹Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her future; therefore her fall is terrible; she has no comforter. "O LORD, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed!"

Jerusalem sinned grievously: means their sin resulted in a very severe and extremely painful wound. The wound was so great Judah's houses were burned, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the LORD'S Temple

was pillaged of all its sacred items of worship and the people of Judah were taken captive into Babylon for seventy years.

Seen her nakedness: means the sins of the inhabitants of Jerusalem's have been exposed to all nations.

She took no thought of her future: one aspect of wisdom that the book of Proverbs teaches is having the ability to make a choice or a decision or perform an action in the present moment and know and foresee what the ramifications or end result of it will be in the future. It is having the wisdom to see if an action made in the present moment is going to end in a good or bad result in the future. The inhabitants of Jerusalem did not have this wisdom or they would have listened to the prophets God sent them and turned from their wicked and corrupt ways.

LAMENT 1:10-12

Foreign Nations have Entered the Sanctuary of Jerusalem.

- **Lament. 1:10-12:** The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her (Jerusalem) precious things; for she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, those whom you forbade to enter your congregation. ¹¹All her people groan as they search for bread; they trade their treasures for food to revive their strength. "Look, O LORD, and see, 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 was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.

Jerusalem's enemies have taken all the treasures of the city and entered the LORD'S sanctuary (i.e., the Most Holy Place of the Temple of God) which only the high priest was permitted and taken all the sacred furniture of the Temple for themselves.

Added to this the people of Judah themselves are in enormous sorrow and have to sell their own treasured possessions so they can buy food.

LAMENT 1:13-15

The LORD sent fire; into Jerusalem Bones and Bound Her Sins.

- **Lament. 1:13-15:** "From on high he sent fire; into my (Jerusalem) bones he made it descend; he spread a net for my feet; he turned me back; he has left me stunned, faint all the day long. ¹⁴"My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; they were set upon my neck; he caused my strength to fail; the Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand. ¹⁵"The LORD rejected all my mighty men in my midst; he summoned an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord has trodden as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah.

Jerusalem is personified as the parent of her inhabitants, who have committed multitudes of sins, while the LORD is pictured as collecting every sin and tying them with His own hand together and placing them on the neck of Jerusalem (meaning upon her inhabitants).

LAMENT 1:16-17

Jerusalem has become a Filthy thing among Her Neighbours.

- **Lament. 1:16-17:** "For these things I (Jerusalem) weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed." ¹⁷Zion stretches out her hands, but there is none to comfort her; the LORD has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should be his foes; Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them.

Jerusalem is personified as a parent in great sorrow. Poor Jerusalem she is like a parent who has done no wrong, but her children have rebelled and acted wickedly bringing absolute destruction to everything the parent held precious. It is not surprising God's Holy city is personified as a parent full of tears and in great sorrow.

LAMENT 1:18

The inhabitants of Jerusalem have gone into Captivity.

- **Lament. 1:18:** "The LORD is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word; but hear, all you peoples, and see my suffering; my young women and my young men have gone into captivity.

Israel set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets they rebelled against the LORD they turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. This is why verse five says, "The LORD has afflicted Jerusalem." (v5). 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 1:19-20

Jerusalem called to Her Lovers, but they Deceived Her.

- **Lament. 1:19-20:** "I called to my lovers, but they deceived me; my priests and elders perished in the city, while they sought food to revive their strength. ²⁰"Look, O LORD, for I am in distress; my stomach churns; my heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious. In the street the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death.

Jerusalem was named the Holy city of God so her lovers where her faithful priests and elders, but sadly they corrupted their positions and their power.

There is No One to Comfort Jerusalem.

- **Lament. 1:21-22:** "They heard my (Jerusalem) groaning, yet there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that you (the LORD) have done it. You have brought the day you announced; now let them (Jerusalem's enemies) be as I am. ²²"Let all their evildoing come before you, and deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my transgressions; for my groans are many, and my heart is faint."

The day the LORD announced: refers to the day of the LORD that the prophets forewarned Judah was coming, it was also called, "A day of gloom and darkness", and "The day of God's judgment." Jerusalem is personified as the voice of her inhabitants expressing the cry of their heart. She is praying that the LORD will bring the same judgment onto her enemies that He has brought on her inhabitants (the people of Judah), because they are glad the LORD has judged Judah.

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.

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