

The Lamentations of Jeremiah

¹ Oh how doth she sit solitary—the city that was full of people is become like a widow! she that was so great among the nations, the princess among the provinces, is become tributary! ² She weepeth sorely in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; she hath none to comfort her among all her lovers; all her friends have dealt treacherously toward her, they are become her enemies. ³ Exiled is Judah because of affliction, and because of the greatness of servitude she dwelleth indeed among the nations, she findeth no rest: all her pursuers have overtaken her between the narrow passes. ⁴ The ways to Zion are in mourning, because none come to the solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh; her virgins moan, and she suffereth herself from bitter grief. ⁵ Her adversaries are become chiefs, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath caused her to grieve because of the multitude of her transgressions: her babes are gone into captivity before the adversary. ⁶ And there is gone forth from the daughter of Zion all her splendor: her princes are become like harts that have found no pasture, and they flee without strength before the pursuer. ⁷ Jerusalem remembereth in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her magnificent things which

have been in the days of old: when her people fell into the hand of the adversary, with none to help her; the adversaries looked at her; they laughed at the cessation [of her glory]. ⁸ A grievous sin did Jerusalem commit, therefore is she become a wanderer: all that honored her hold her in contempt, because they have seen her nakedness; she also sigheth, and turneth [ashamed] backward. ⁹ [With] her uncleanness on her skirts, she thought not of her latter end: therefore is she come down wonderfully, without one to comfort her. Behold, O Lord, my affliction; for the enemy hath become great [above me]. ¹⁰ His hand hath the adversary spread out over all her magnificent things; for she hath seen nations entering into her sanctuary, of whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation. ¹¹ all her people sigh, they are seeking bread; they have given their precious things for food to refresh their soul: see, O Lord, and look, how I have been brought low. ¹² "I adjure you, all that pass this way, behold, and see if there be any pain like unto my pain, which hath been inflicted on me, wherewith the Lord hath aggrieved me on the day of his fierce anger. ¹³ From on high hath he sent a fire into my bones, and breaketh [them] one by one: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath caused me to return backward; he hath made me desolate, sick all the day. ¹⁴ Bound fast is the yoke of my transgressions by his hand,—they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck; he hath made my strength to stumble: the Lord

hath given me up into the hands of [those against whom] I am not able to rise up. ¹⁵ The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me; he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: a winepress hath the Lord trodden over the virgin, the daughter of Judah. ¹⁶ For these things do I weep; my eye, my eye runneth down with water; because far from me is the comforter that should refresh my soul: my children are in misery, because the enemy hath prevailed.” ¹⁷ Zion spreadeth forth her hands, without one to comfort her; the Lord hath given a charge concerning Jacob to all his adversaries round about him: Jerusalem is become as an unclean woman among them. ¹⁸ “Righteous is the Lord; for against his orders have I rebelled: oh do hear, all ye people, and see my pain! my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. ¹⁹ I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and my elders perished in the city; for they sought food for themselves to refresh their soul. ²⁰ See, O Lord! how I am in distress; my bowels are heated; my heart is turned round within me; because I have grievously rebelled: abroad bereaveth the sword, at home, like the pestilence. ²¹ They hear how greatly I sigh, [yet] there is none to comfort me; all my enemies have heard of my misfortune, they are glad that thou hast done it: oh that thou wouldst bring the day which thou hast proclaimed [against me], that they may become like me. ²² Let all their wickedness come before thee, and do unto them as thou hast done

unto me because of all my transgressions; for many are my sighs, and my heart is sick.”

2

¹ Oh how hath the Lord covered in his anger the daughter of Zion with a cloud; he hath cast down from heaven unto the earth the ornament of Israel; and he hath not remembered his footstool on the day of his anger! ² The Lord hath destroyed and hath not pitied all the habitation of Jacob: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong-holds of the daughter of Judah: he hath thrown them down to the ground; he hath defiled the kingdom and its princes. ³ He hath hewn away in his fierce anger the whole horn of Israel; he hath drawn back his right hand before the enemy; and he burnt against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. ⁴ He bent his bow like an enemy; he held out his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye: in the tent of the daughter of Zion did he pour out like fire his fury. ⁵ The Lord became like an enemy; he destroyed Israel, he destroyed all her palaces, he ruined her strong-holds, and he increased in the midst of the daughter of Judah groaning and wailing. ⁶ And he violently wasted, as if it were a garden, his tabernacle; he destroyed his place of assembly: [yea,] the Lord hath caused to be forgotten in Zion the solemn feast and the day of rest, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger both king and priest. ⁷ The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath made void his sanctuary,

he hath surrendered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces: they have made their voice to resound in the house of the Lord, as on a day of a solemn feast. ⁸ The Lord hath resolved to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion; he stretched out the measuring-line, he withdrew not his hand from destroying: and he caused the rampart and the wall to mourn; together they languish. ⁹ Sunk into the ground are her gates, he hath ruined and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the nations without any law; her prophets also obtain no more any vision from the Lord. ¹⁰ The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, they keep silence: they have thrown dust upon their head; they have girt themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem have brought down low their head to the ground. ¹¹ My eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are heated, my liver is poured upon the earth because of the breach of the daughter of my people; because babes and sucklings faint away in the streets of the town. ¹² To their mothers they say, Where is corn and wine? when they faint away like the deadly wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul is poured out on the bosom of their mother. ¹³ What shall I take to witness for thee? what shall I compare unto thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I find equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for great like the sea is thy breach; who can bring healing to thee? ¹⁴ Thy prophets foresaw for thee vain and deceptive things; and they did

not lay open thy iniquity, to cause thy backsliders to return: but they foresaw for thee prophecies of falsehood and seduction. ¹⁵ All that pass by [this] way clap their hands on account of thee; they hiss and shake their head over the daughter of Jerusalem: [saying,] Is this the city that men called The perfection of beauty. The joy for all the earth? ¹⁶ All thy enemies open wide their mouth against thee; they hiss and gnash their teeth; they say, We have swallowed her up: ah, truly this is the day that we hoped for; we have found, we have seen it. ¹⁷ The Lord hath done what he had resolved; he hath accomplished his word which he had ordained already in the days of old; he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied; and he hath caused to rejoice over thee thy enemy, he hath raised on high the horn of thy adversaries. ¹⁸ Their heart crieth unto the Lord, O thou wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a stream day and night; allow thyself no rest; let not the apple of thy eye be still. ¹⁹ Arise, complain aloud in the night, in the beginning of the watches; pour out like water thy heart before the face of the Lord: lift up toward him thy hands because of the life of thy babes, that faint away for hunger at the corner of all the streets. ²⁰ See, O Lord, and behold! to whom hast thou ever done the like? Shall women, then, eat their own fruit, the babes they have tenderly nursed? or shall there be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord the priest and the prophet? ²¹ There lie down on the ground in the streets the lad and the ancient: my virgins and my young men

are fallen by the sword: thou hast slain on the day of thy anger; thou hast slaughtered, thou hast not pitied. ²² Thou hast called, as it were on a festive day, my evil neighbors from round about; and there was not on the day of the Lord's anger one that escaped or remained: those that I had tenderly nursed and reared up my enemy brought to their end.

3

¹ I am the man who hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. ² Me hath he driven out, and led into darkness, but not into light. ³ Surely against me doth he turn again and again his hand all the day. ⁴ He hath caused my flesh and my skin to wear out, he hath broken my bones. ⁵ He hath built around me, and encompassed me with poison and hardship. ⁶ In dark places hath he set me to dwell, like the dead of olden times. ⁷ He hath placed a fence round about me, that I cannot get out; he hath made heavy my chain. ⁸ Also when I cry aloud and make entreaty, he shutteth out my prayer. ⁹ He hath fenced up my ways with hewn stone, my paths hath he made crooked. ¹⁰ A bear lying in wait is he to me, a lion in secret places. ¹¹ On my ways hath he placed thorns, and torn me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. ¹² He hath bent his bow, and placed me as a mark for the arrow. ¹³ He hath caused to enter into my reins the children of his quiver. ¹⁴ I am become a laughing-stock to all my people, their [jeering] song all the day. ¹⁵ He hath sated me with bitter things, he hath made me drunken

with wormwood. ¹⁶ He hath also broken my teeth with gravel-stones, he hath covered me with ashes. ¹⁷ And my soul hath given up all thoughts of peace: I forget happiness. ¹⁸ And I said, Lost is my strength, my expectation also from the Lord. ¹⁹ Remembering my affliction and [the cause of] my complaint, wormwood and poison. ²⁰ Remembering [this] continually my soul is bowed down deeply within me. ²¹ [Yet] this answer will I give to my heart: therefore will I wait [in confidence]. ²² It is through the Lord's kindness that we are not consumed, because his mercies have no end; ²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. ²⁴ The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I wait for him. ²⁵ The Lord is good unto those that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait and this in silence for the salvation of the Lord. ²⁷ It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; ²⁸ That he sit in solitude and be silent; because He hath laid it upon him; ²⁹ That he put his mouth in the dust; perhaps there still is hope; ³⁰ That he offer his cheek to him that smiteth him; that he be satisfied with reproach. ³¹ For the Lord will not cast off for ever; ³² But though he have caused grief, yet will he have mercy according to the abundance of his kindnesses. ³³ For he doth not afflict of his own will, and aggrieve the children of men. ³⁴ To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, ³⁵ To pervert the justice [due to man] before the face of the Most High. ³⁶ To subvert a man in his contest

—should the Lord not see this? ³⁷ Who is he that saith aught, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord hath not ordained it? ³⁸ Do not out of the mouth of the Most High come both the evil things and the good? ³⁹ Wherefore should a living man complain? let every man complain because of his sins. ⁴⁰ Let us search through and investigate our ways, and let us return to the Lord. ⁴¹ Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. ⁴² We have indeed transgressed and rebelled: thou hast truly not pardoned. ⁴³ Thou hast covered [us] with thy anger, and made pursuit after us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. ⁴⁴ Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that no prayer should pass through. ⁴⁵ As something loathsome and rejected hast thou rendered us in the midst of the people. ⁴⁶ Wide have all our enemies opened against us their mouth. ⁴⁷ Terror and a snare are come upon us, [with] desolation and breaches. ⁴⁸ With streams of water runneth my eye down, because of the breach of the daughter of my people. ⁴⁹ My eye trickleth down, and resteth not, without any intermission, ⁵⁰ Till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven. ⁵¹ My eye affecteth my soul because of all the daughters of my city. ⁵² Those who are my enemies, without a cause, have chased me about like a bird. ⁵³ They have shut up in the dungeon my life, and have cast stones upon me. ⁵⁴ Waters streamed over my head: I said, I am cut off. ⁵⁵ I called on thy name, O Lord, out of the dungeon of the lowest depth. ⁵⁶ Thou didst hear my voice: hide not thy ear to give

me enlargement at my cry. ⁵⁷ Thou wast ever near on the day that I called on thee: thou saidst, Fear not. ⁵⁸ Thou didst plead, O Lord, the causes of my soul: thou didst [before this] redeem my life. ⁵⁹ Thou hast [now] seen, O Lord, the wrong I suffer: judge thou my cause. ⁶⁰ Thou hast seen all their vengeance, all their plans against me. ⁶¹ Thou hast heard their reviling, O Lord, all their plans against me, ⁶² The speeches of these that rise up against me, and their device against me all the day. ⁶³ Oh look upon their sitting down, and their rising up: I am their [jeering] song. ⁶⁴ Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. ⁶⁵ Give them confusion of heart, thy curse be upon them. ⁶⁶ Pursue them in anger and destroy from under the heavens of the Lord.

4

¹ Oh how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! how are the stones of the sanctuary poured out at the corners of every street. ² The precious sons of Zion, valued equal to pure gold, how are they now esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! ³ Even wild beasts offer the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness. ⁴ The tongue of the suckling cleaveth to its palate by reason of thirst: babes ask for bread, there is not one to break it for them. ⁵ Those that used to eat dainty food are desolate in the streets: they that were reared up

on scarlet now embrace dunghills. ⁶ For greater is the iniquity of the daughter of my people than the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as it were in a moment, and no human hands were laid on her. ⁷ Her crowned princes were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more brilliant in body than pearls, more than the sapphire, their countenance: ⁸ Darker than black is now their visage; they are not to be recognized in the streets: their skin is shriveled fast upon their bones; it is dry, it is become like wood. ⁹ Happier are those slain by the sword than those slain by hunger; for those poured forth their blood, being pierced through, —[these perished] without the fruits of the field. ¹⁰ The hands of merciful women cooked their own children: they became food unto them in the downfall of the daughter of my people. ¹¹ The Lord hath let loose all his fury: he hath poured out the fierceness of his anger: and he hath kindled a fire in Zion, which hath devoured her foundations. ¹² The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not believe that an adversary or an enemy could ever enter within the gates of Jerusalem. ¹³ [But it hath happened] because of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests, that had shed in the midst of her the blood of the righteous. ¹⁴ They wandered about blindly in the streets, they became defiled with blood; so that men were not able to touch their garments. ¹⁵ Depart, ye unclean, they called out unto them: depart, depart, touch not. So they flee away and also wander about: men say

among the nations, They shall no more sojourn there. ¹⁶ The anger of the Lord hath divided them; he will no more look at them: the faces of the priests they respected not, and the elders they spared not. ¹⁷ Even now our eyes anxiously wait for our valueless help: in our waiting have we waited for a nation that cannot help. ¹⁸ They hunt our steps, that we cannot walk in our streets: our end is near, our days are full: for our end is come. ¹⁹ Swifter were our pursuers than the eagles of heaven: upon the mountains did they hotly follow us: in the wilderness did they lie in wait for us. ²⁰ The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was caught in their pits, he, of whom we said, Under his shadow shall we live among the nations. ²¹ Be glad and rejoice, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of 'Uz: also unto thee shall the cup pass; thou wilt be drunken, and make thyself naked. ²² Brought to an end is thy iniquity, O daughter of Zion; He will no more carry thee away into exile: He visiteth thy iniquity, O daughter of Edom; He layeth open thy sins.

5

¹ Remember, O Lord, what hath occurred to us, look down, and behold our disgrace. ² Our inheritance is turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens. ³ Orphans are we become, and [we are] without a father, our mothers are like widows. ⁴ Our water have we drunk for money: our wood cometh to us for a purchase price. ⁵ Up to our necks are we pursued: we

are fatigued, and no rest is allowed us. ⁶ To Egypt do we stretch out our hand, to Asshur, to be satisfied with bread. ⁷ Our fathers have sinned, and are no more; but we have indeed to bear their iniquities. ⁸ Servants rule over us: no one delivereth us out of their hand. ⁹ At the peril of our life must we bring home our bread, because of the sword of the wilderness. ¹⁰ Our skin gloweth like an oven, because of the heat of famine. ¹¹ Women have they ravished in Zion, virgins, in the cities of Judah. ¹² Princes were hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honored. ¹³ Young men they bore to the mill, and boys stumbled under the wood. ¹⁴ The elders have ceased from the gate, young men, from their singing. ¹⁵ Ceased hath the joy of our heart: our dance is changed into mourning. ¹⁶ Fallen is the crown of our head: woe to us, for we have sinned. ¹⁷ Because of this is our heart made sick; for these things are our eyes dimmed; ¹⁸ Because of the mount of Zion which is wasted, foxes walk about on it. ¹⁹ O thou, Lord, wilt truly abide for ever, thy throne existeth throughout all generations. ²⁰ Wherefore wilt thou forget us for ever! wilt thou forsake us for so long a time? ²¹ Cause us to return, O Lord, unto thee, and we will return: renew our days as of old. ²² For wouldst thou entirely reject us, be wroth with us to the uttermost?

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