

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

Conversational Yahveh Covenant

Jerusalem Deserted

- 1¹**How lonely the city sits that used to bustle with people!
 She's like a widow that was once great among the nations!
 The princess among the provinces has become a slave!
- 2**She cries bitterly at night; tears are on her cheeks.
 Nobody among her lovers is there to comfort her.
 Her friends have betrayed her
 and become her enemies.
- 3**Judah has gone into exile in affliction and hard servitude;
 she's spread out among the nations now
 with no resting place.
 Her pursuers have caught up with her in the middle of her distress.
- 4**The roads to Zion are in mourning,
 because nobody attends the appointed festivals.
 Her gates are desolate, her priests groan,
 her virgins suffer, and she suffers bitterly herself. **Lam 1:1-4**
- 5**Her adversaries have become her masters; her enemies prosper.
 Yahveh has made her suffer for her many sins.
 Her children have gone away captive to the foe.
- 6**The majesty is gone from Zion;
 her officials are like bucks that can't find pasture;
 they've fled away weak before their pursuers.
- 7**In her time of suffering and homelessness,
 Jerusalem remembers her treasured things from before;
 when her people fell to her adversaries and nobody helped her,
 the enemies gloated over her and mocked her downfall.
- 8**Jerusalem sinned grievously, so she's become filthy.
 Everybody that honored her before despises her now,
 because they've seen her nakedness.
 She groans and turns away. **Lam 1:5-8**
- 9**Her uncleanness was in her skirts;
 she didn't give any thought for her doom;
 so she's fallen terribly with no comforter.
- 10**The foe has reached out for her treasured things;
 she has watched the nations invade her sanctuary,

people you commanded not to enter your community.

¹¹The people are groaning as they look for bread;
they've given their treasured things for food to stay alive;
"Look, Yahveh, I'm despised.

¹²*Is it nothing to you that go by?
Look and see if there's any pain like my pain
that was severely dealt out to me,
that Yahveh inflicted in his fierce anger.*

Lam 1:9-12

¹³*He sent fire from on high into my bones, and it descended on them.
He spread a net for my feet and turned me back;
he left me desolate and faint all day long.*

¹⁴*He has tied my sins together into a yoke around my neck;
he has made my strength fail,
and turned me over to those I can't withstand.*

¹⁵*The Lord has rejected the strong men that are with me;
he has called an appointed time against me to crush my young men;
like a winepress he has trodden down the young virgin Judah.*

¹⁶*I weep for those things; my eyes run down with tears,
because there's no comforter near to restore my soul.
My children are desolate because the enemy has prevailed."*

Lam 1:13-16

¹⁷*Zion holds out her hands, but there's no one to comfort her;
Yahveh has commanded against Jacob
that his neighbors would be his enemies;
Jerusalem has become something filthy in their minds.*

¹⁸*"Yahveh is good; I've rebelled against his command;
listen now, all you nations, and look at my pain;
my virgins and young men have gone into captivity.*

¹⁹*I called to my lovers, but they deceived me;
my priests and elders perished in the city
as they looked for food to stay alive.*

²⁰*Look, Yahveh, because I'm in distress; my soul is in turmoil.
My heart's upset because I've been rebellious.
The sword bereaves in the street; it's like death in the house.*

Lam 1:17-20

²¹*They've heard that I'm groaning with nobody to comfort me.
My enemies have heard about my trouble;
they're glad you've done it.
Bring the time you've promised
and let them be like me.*

²²*Pay attention to their sinfulness,
and deal with them like you've dealt with me for my sins.
I groan a lot, and my heart is faint."*

Lam 1:21-22

Destruction for Sin

^{2:1}How the Lord in his anger has covered Zion under a cloud!
He has thrown down Israel's splendor from heaven to earth;
he hasn't remembered his footstool in his wrath.
²Without mercy the Lord has swallowed up the residents in Jacob.
In his anger he has thrown down Judah's fortresses
and leveled the kingdom and its officials to the ground in dishonor.
³In his fury he has cut down Israel's power
and stopped restraining the enemy.
He has burned like a fire in Jacob
and consumed it everywhere.
⁴He has bent his bow like an enemy;
he has set his right hand like an adversary
and killed everybody we took pride in.
He has poured out his anger like fire in the tent of Zion.

Lam 2:1-4

⁵The Lord has become like an enemy;
he has swallowed up Israel,
laid its palaces in ruins,
destroyed its fortresses,
and multiplied mourning and groaning in Judah.
⁶He's violently treated his Tabernacle like a garden shed
and laid in ruins his appointed meeting place.
Yahveh has stricken from memory
the appointed festivals and Sabbaths in Zion,
and deposed king and priest in his angry indignation.
⁷The Lord has rejected his altar, disowned his sanctuary,
and delivered to the enemy the walls of its palaces.
A clamor was raised in Yahveh's Temple
like that of an appointed festival day.
⁸Yahveh decided to destroy the wall around Zion.
He stretched out a line
and didn't restrain his destroying.
He made rampart and wall mourn;
they've broken down together.
⁹Its gates have sunk into the ground;

Lam 2:5-8

- he has ruined and broken its bars
and *scattered* its king and officials among the nations.
There's no law anymore;
prophets don't have visions from Yahveh.
- ¹⁰The elders of Zion sit silent on the ground;
they've thrown dust on their heads
and wrapped themselves in burlap.
The virgins of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground.
- ¹¹My eyes are worn out from crying;
my spirit is in turmoil;
my heart is poured out on the ground
because my people have been destroyed;
the little ones and babies pass out in the street.
- ¹²They ask their mothers, "*Where is the bread and wine?*"
as they faint like wounded men in the city streets,
as their life dies out on their mother's chest. Lam 2:9-12
- ¹³What can I say for you?
What can I compare you to, young woman in Jerusalem?
What can I liken you to, as I comfort you, young virgin in Zion?
Your ruin is as wide as the sea; who can restore you?
- ¹⁴Your prophets have deceived you with false visions;
they haven't exposed your iniquity to restore you from sin;
they've seen false, misleading oracles for you.
- ¹⁵Everybody that goes by claps their hands at you;
they gasp and shake their heads at Jerusalem,
"*Is this the city they used to say was 'perfectly beautiful,
a delight to the whole world'?*"
- ¹⁶Your enemies mock you;
they scoff and snarl,
and shout, "*We've swallowed you up!
That's what we've been waiting for;
at last it's here to see.*" Lam 2:13-16
- ¹⁷Yahveh has accomplished his purpose
and carried out the threat he ordained long ago.
He has destroyed without pity
and enabled your enemies to celebrate over you
and increased the power of your adversaries.
- ¹⁸Their heart appealed to the Lord,
"*Resident of Zion, let your tears run down like a river day and night;*

don't give yourself any relief or let your eyes rest.

¹⁹*Get up, cry out loud at the beginning of the night watches;
pour your heart out like water to the Lord;
lift your hands up to him for the life of your little ones
who are faint from hunger at the end of every street."*

²⁰See, Yahveh, look! Who else have you ever dealt with this way?
Should women eat their offspring, little babies born healthy?
Should prophet and priest be killed in your sanctuary?

Lam 2:17-20

²¹Young and old lie on the ground in the streets;
my virgins and young men have fallen by the sword.
You've slain them in your anger,
slaughtered them without mercy.

²²You invited terrors on every side of me as to an appointed festival.
Nobody escaped or survived your anger.
My enemy destroyed the ones I cared for and raised.

Lam 2:21-22

Hope in Yahveh's Faithfulness

^{3:1}I have seen suffering
under the rod *God* used in his anger.
²He has driven me out and made me walk in the dark;
³he has turned his hand against me repeatedly all day.

⁴He made my skin and body waste away,
and broke my bones.

Lam 3:1-4

⁵He besieged me with bitterness and hardship.

⁶He made me live in dark places
like the dead from long ago.

⁷He walled me in so I couldn't escape
and put heavy chains on me.

⁸Even when I call for help,
he shuts out my prayer.

Lam 3:5-8

⁹He has blocked my road with hewn stones
and made my paths crooked.

¹⁰He's like a bear lying in wait for me,
like a lion in unexpected places.

¹¹He dragged me off the road, tore me to pieces;
and made me desolate.

¹²He bent his bow and made me a target for his arrow;

Lam 3:9-12

¹³he shot deep into me the arrows from his quiver.

¹⁴I'm a laughingstock to my people,
mocked in musical ditties all day.

¹⁵He filled me with bitterness
and made me drink wormwood.

¹⁶He cracked my teeth with gravel
and made me grovel in the dust.

Lam 3:13-16

¹⁷I've been set apart from peace
and forget what happiness is like.

¹⁸So I say, "*My strength is gone,
and so is my hope in Yahveh.*"

¹⁹Remember my suffering and homelessness.

²⁰I certainly remember
and am humbled within.

Lam 3:17-20

²¹I recall this and have hope *from it*:

²²Yahveh love never stops *coming*;
his mercies don't end.

²³His faithfulness is great;
it's renewed every morning.

²⁴I say to myself, "*Yahveh is my portion;
so I have hope in him.*"

Lam 3:21-24

²⁵Yahveh is good to those who depend on him,
people that look for him.

²⁶They do well to wait silently for his salvation.

²⁷It's good for people to bear the yoke when they're young,

²⁸to sit alone in silence, since *God* has laid it on them,

²⁹to put their mouth in the dust—maybe there's hope,

³⁰to turn their cheek to their abuser,

to be filled with disgrace;

³¹because Yahveh won't reject forever.

Lam 3:25-31

³²If he causes grief, he'll have mercy
according to his enduring love;

³³because he doesn't willingly hurt people or grieve them.

³⁴⁻³⁶God doesn't approve
of crushing every prisoner in the land under his feet,
of depriving people of justice in the presence of the Most High,
of defrauding people in his lawsuit.

³⁷Who is there that speaks and it happens
unless the Lord has commanded it?

³⁸Don't both good and bad come from the Most High?

Lam 3:32-38

³⁹Why should we complain in light of our sins?

⁴⁰Let's examine our ways and return to Yahveh.

⁴¹Let's lift up our heart and hands toward God in heaven;

⁴²we've sinned and rebelled; you haven't pardoned us.

⁴³You've covered yourself with anger and chased us;
you've slain without pity.

⁴⁴You've wrapped yourself in a cloud
so no prayer can get to you.

Lam 3:39-44

⁴⁵You've made us residue and refuse among the nations.

⁴⁶Our enemies rail out against us.

⁴⁷Panic and pitfall descend on us, devastation and destruction.

⁴⁸My eyes run with streams of tears
because my people are being destroyed.

⁴⁹My eyes will keep pouring out
⁵⁰till Yahveh looks down from heaven and sees.

⁵¹My eyes bring pain to my soul
because of all the residents in my city.

⁵²For no reason my enemies hunted me down like a bird;
⁵³they've silenced me in the pit, and put a stone over me;

⁵⁴water closed over my head; I said, "*I'm lost.*"

⁵⁵I called to you, Yahveh, from down in the pit.

Lam 3:45-55

⁵⁶You heard my plea,
and didn't hide from my prayer for relief, my call for help.

⁵⁷You came and said, "*Don't be afraid!*"

⁵⁸Lord, you pled my case and redeemed my life.

⁵⁹Yahveh, you've seen my oppression; judge my case.

⁶⁰You've seen their revenge, their schemes against me.

⁶¹You've heard their taunts.

⁶²My assailants' whispers aim at me all day.

⁶³Look at their sitting and rising;
I'm what they mock in their song.

⁶⁴Pay them back, Yahveh, according to what they've done;

⁶⁵harden their heart so your curse will fall on them.

⁶⁶Chase them in anger and destroy them from under the sky!

Lam 3:56-66

Yahveh's Anger Satisfied

^{4:1}How the gold has tarnished; how pure gold has changed!

The holy stones lie scattered at the beginning of every street.

²The precious sons of Zion, worth their weight in gold,
are treated like clay pots that potters make!

³Even jackals nurse their young,
but my people have become cruel like wild ostriches.

⁴The infant's tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst;
little ones beg for bread, but nobody gives them any.

⁵People that used to eat delicacies sit desolate in the streets;
the ones brought up in purple lie on ash heaps.

⁶The iniquity of my people is worse than the sin of Sodom,
which was overthrown without hands in one moment.

⁷Zion's Nazirites were purer than snow, whiter than milk,
healthier looking than corals, like polished lapis lazuli.

Lam 4:1-7

⁸Now they're darker than soot, not recognizable in the streets;
their skin is shriveled on their bones, withered like wood.

⁹Those killed with the sword are happier than those slain by hunger;
they pine away, stricken for lack of crops in the field.

¹⁰Merciful women boiled their own children;
they became their food because my people were being destroyed.

¹¹Yahveh has accomplished his wrath,
poured out his hot anger
and sparked a fire in Zion that has consumed its foundations.

¹²The kings of the earth and inhabitants of the region
didn't believe enemies could get in the gates of Jerusalem.

Lam 4:8-12

¹³Because of its prophets' sins and its priests' iniquities—
who shed the blood of good people in it—

¹⁴they wandered in the streets, blind and defiled with blood
so nobody would *even* touch their clothes.

¹⁵They shouted at them, "*Get away! Unclean! Don't touch!*"

So they fled and wandered.
 People in the nations said, "*They can't stay here anymore.*"

¹⁶Yahveh has scattered them;
 he won't continue to care *especially* about them;
 they didn't honor the priests or bless the elders. Lam 4:13-16

¹⁷Our eyes failed *us*; looking for help was useless;
 we certainly watched for a nation that couldn't save.

¹⁸People dogged our steps so we couldn't walk in the streets;
 our end came near, our days failed, we were through. Lam 4:17-18

¹⁹Our pursuers were faster than eagles in the sky;
 they chased us on the mountains and ambushed us in the desert.

²⁰Our very breath, Yahveh's anointed, was captured in their pits;
 we'd said about *him*, "*In his shadow we'll live among the nations.*"

²¹Celebrate and be happy, Edom that lives in Uz;
 the cup will come around to you as well; you'll be drunk and naked.

²²*The punishment for your sinfulness is finished, Zion*;
 he won't exile you any longer.
 But he'll punish your iniquity, Edom;
 he'll expose your sins! Lam 4:19-22

Prayer for Restoration

^{5:1}Yahveh, remember what's happened to us;
 look at our disgrace!

²Our inheritance has been turned over to foreigners,
 and our houses *belong* to aliens.

³We've become orphans without fathers;
 our mothers are like widows.

⁴We have to pay for drinking water and buy wood.

⁵Our drivers *put yokes* on our necks;
 we're worn out; we can't get any rest. Lam 5:1-5

⁶We've submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread.

⁷Our fathers sinned, and they're gone;
but we have to suffer for their sins.

⁸Slaves rule us; nobody can deliver us from them.

⁹We risk our lives *just* getting bread
because of the sword in the open country.

¹⁰Our skin is hot like an oven,
because of the burning heat of famine.

¹¹They rape the women in Zion,
and the virgins in the towns in Judah.

Lam 5:6-11

¹²They hang up officials by their hands,
and show no respect for old men.

¹³Young men work at the grinding mill;
and stagger under loads of wood.

¹⁴Elders are gone from the city gate,
young men *have quit* their music.

¹⁵The joy in our hearts is gone;
our dancing has turned into mourning.

¹⁶The crown has fallen from our head;
misfortune awaits us because we've sinned!

¹⁷Our heart is faint because of it;
our eyes are weak.

¹⁸Jackals prowl in desolate Zion.

Lam 5:12-18

¹⁹Yahveh, you rule forever;
your throne goes on for endless generations.

²⁰Why don't you keep us in mind forever?
Why abandon us so long?

²¹Restore us to yourself, Yahveh, so we can be restored;
renew our days as of old,

²²unless you've completely rejected us,
and are really angry with us.

Lam 5:19-22