

Insurmountable Grief

Lamentations Series Number 1

Lamentations 1:1–22 (ESV) — **1** How lonely sits the city 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. **2** She 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. **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. **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. **5** Her 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. **6** 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. **7** Jerusalem 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. **8** 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. **9** Her 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!” **10** The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things; for she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, those whom you forbade to enter your congregation. **11** All 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. **13** “From on high he sent fire; into my 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. **16** “For these things I 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.” **17** Zion 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. **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. **19** “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. **21** “They heard my groaning, yet there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that you have done it. You have brought the day you announced; now let them 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.”

I. Grief Observed (Verses 1-11)

A. The bitter reversal (1-3)

Ezekiel 26:16 (ESV) — **16** Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you.

Jeremiah 3:8 (ESV) — **8** She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.

Jeremiah 30:14 (ESV) — **14** All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant.

Exodus 1:11–13 (ESV) — **11** Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. **12** But the more they were oppressed,

the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. **13** So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves

Psalms 116:3 (ESV) — 3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.

B. Abandoned and afflicted (4-6)

Psalms 68:16 (ESV) — 16 Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for his abode, yes, where the LORD will dwell forever?

Isaiah 3:24–26 (ESV) — 24 Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. **25** Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. **26** And her gates shall lament and mourn; empty, she shall sit on the ground.

Deuteronomy 28:13–14 (ESV) — 13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, **14** and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deuteronomy 30:1–2 (ESV) — 1 “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, **2** and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul,

C. Jerusalem’s torment (7-9)

Genesis 1:26 (ESV) — 26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Daniel 9:5–6 (ESV) — 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. **6** We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

Deuteronomy 32:28–29 (ESV) — 28 “For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. **29** If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!

Exodus 15:11–12 (ESV) — 11 “Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? **12** You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

Psalms 22:4–5 (ESV) — 4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. **5** To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Psalms 91:14–15 (ESV) — 14 “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. **15** When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.

D. Ruined and starving (10-11)

Jeremiah 37:21 (ESV) — 21 So King Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard. And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers’ street, until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Habakkuk 1:13 (ESV) — 13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

II. Grief Felt (Verses 12-22)

A. Zion’s plea for sympathy (12-16)

Jeremiah 15:5 (ESV) — 5 “Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you? Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?

Psalms 31:11 (ESV) — 11 Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

Psalms 6:2 (ESV) — 2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

Isaiah 38:13 (ESV) — 13 I calmed myself until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end.

Jeremiah 9:1 (ESV) — 1 Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Jeremiah 14:17 (ESV) — 17 “You shall say to them this word: ‘Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease, for the virgin daughter of my people is shattered with a great wound, with a very grievous blow.

B. Overwhelmed by sorrow (17)

Psalms 143:6 (ESV) — 6 I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah

Isaiah 1:15 (ESV) — 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Psalms 66:18 (ESV) — 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Isaiah 64:6 (ESV) — 6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

C. Zion’s admission (18-19)

Psalms 51:4 (ESV) — 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Deuteronomy 32:4 (ESV) — 4 “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

1 John 1:5 (ESV) — 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Jeremiah 22:20 (ESV) — 20 “Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers are destroyed.

Jeremiah 30:14 (ESV) — 14 All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant.

D. Zion’s plea (20-22)

Psalms 55:22 (ESV) — 22 Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Isaiah 45:22 (ESV) — 22 “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

Jeremiah 35:15 (ESV) — 15 I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, ‘Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.’ But you did not incline your ear or listen to me.

III. Grief Applied

Ecclesiastes 7:4 (ESV) — 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

2 Corinthians 1:3–5 (ESV) — 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **5** For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

Isaiah 53:3–4 (ESV) — 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. **4** Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.