



“The End . . . Or Is It?”

Lamentations 5:11-22

March 28, 2021

Lam 5:11-22

11 They ravished the women in Zion, The virgins in the cities of Judah.

12 Princes were hung by their hands; Elders were not respected.
13 Young men worked at the grinding mill, And youths stumbled under loads of wood.
14 Elders are gone from the gate, Young men from their music.
15 The joy of our hearts has ceased; Our dancing has been turned into mourning.
16 The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us, for we have sinned!

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The price of sin:

10. Abuse.

“ravished” - **רָאָה** - hurt, abuse, defile, afflict, rape.

- Often when a city was conquered in Jeremiah’s time. An army would abuse and rape the women, the young women, the married women, of the enemy not only to inflict pain on the women but to inflict mental pain on the King, the leaders, the men, and the husbands. It showed that the men couldn’t even defend their women.

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11. Humiliation.

- This was the practice of the day – enemies hanging the captured by their hands.
- So princes were suspended from hooks in the wall by their hands until they died from exhaustion. A terrible way to die.
- Elders held important positions in Jerusalem, including settling legal disputes and giving advice. They were respected and honored.
- Now they were treated with rudeness and contempt – zero respect.

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12. Physical pain.

- Young men were often seen at the gates of the city where they played music with their instruments, bringing joy and happiness into the people's lives.
- Now they had to grind grain like animals. Very hard, difficult labor to push the pole attached to the millstone the crushed the grain.



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- Boys in their youth would be loaded on their backs with stacks of wood used for firewood, so heavy that they would stumble and no doubt fall under the weight.

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13. Emptiness.

- The Elders would conduct business and meetings and city affairs and transactions at the gates and the young men would play music.
- Now, their harps were hanging upon the willows on the banks of Euphrates, which ran through the city of Babylon (Ps. 137:1).
- Now the gates are empty.

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14. No more joy.

- Joy, celebration, and dancing at the Feasts used to fill the streets of Jerusalem.
- All of it was gone. Only mourning and feelings of oppression are left. So very sad.

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15. Position.

- A crown was a symbol of honor and glory and blessing.
- Jerusalem acknowledged that these conditions were the consequences of her sins.
- “Woe” – judgment, calamity, suffering.
- Jeremiah is saying, “judgment to us” because of our sin.

17 Because of this our heart is faint,

Because of these things our eyes are dim;

- 18 Because of Mount Zion which lies desolate,
Foxes prowl in it.
19 You, O Lord, rule forever;
Your throne is from generation to generation.
20 Why do You forget us forever?
Why do You forsake us so long?
21 Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored;
Renew our days as of old,
22 Unless You have utterly rejected us
And are exceedingly angry with us.

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16. Depression.

- The spirit had been taken from Israel. Sapped of vitality. They were demoralized and devastated.
- They could scarcely see. They were blinded from weeping.

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17. Sense of loss.

- The major reason for Israel's grief was the desolation and abandonment of "Mount Zion."
- Wild foxes (or jackals) prowled on the now-desolate holy place (Solomon's Temple), which formerly had been the site of God's throne on earth.

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- So with Jerusalem in shambles, and with all of the lament, mourning, and sadness, where can Jeremiah go for some stability, some reassurance?
- He goes straight to the sovereignty of God.
 - God has not stopped ruling His universe. He was not taking a coffee break and then all of this happened to Jerusalem.
 - God has not stopped ruling His people.
 - God has a plan, a plan that will take disaster and turn it to triumph.

“(God is) the same in His nature and perfections; in His grace and goodness; in His power and faithfulness; in His purposes and promises; though all things else change, are fickle and inconstant, He changes not, but abides the same, without any variability or shadow of turning; whatever revolutions there are in the world, or alterations in the course of Providence, yet He remains firm and unalterable in His counsel and covenant; though all material things are subject to decay, and even His own sanctuary lay in ruins, yet He himself continued just as He ever was. The eternity and unchangeableness of God are of great use and comfort to His people in times of distress, and to be regarded and observed.”

“The kingdom of God moves in history
from triumph to triumph,
all of them cleverly disguised as disasters.”

Herbert Schlossberg
Idols for Destruction

20 Why do You forget us forever?

Why do You forsake us so long?

- In view of God's sovereignty, Jeremiah could not understand why the Lord waited so long to show His people mercy and restore them.
- So if God is forever, why has He forgotten His people forever?
- If You are always on the throne, then why don't you act, what is the delay?
- Those are real questions when you think God is not acting.

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- The only hope for the people is that God Himself will enable them to do what they cannot do by themselves and that is repent.
- Jeremiah knew Israel didn't even have the power to repent on their own; they needed God to turn them back to Himself. If He would, then they will be restored.
- Repentance and restoration must come first before renewal.
- Jeremiah desired that their good days might be renewed; that they might enjoy the same peace and prosperity, and all good things in their own land, as they had done in days and years past.

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- This is the last verse of the book of Lamentations.
- Jeremiah declares the unthinkable, “Maybe it’s all over. Based on the devastation I see, maybe it’s true.”
- Lamentations ends on a sad note. There is no book in the Bible that ends this way.
- There is no “they lived happily ever after” here.
- The book ends the way God intended it to end, with this kind of unresolved anguish. We are pretty much where we started . . .

“How lonely sits the city

That was full of people”

Lam. 1:1

7. Delayed judgment does not equal Divine acceptance. A delay in judgment for sin is a display of God’s grace not God’s acceptance of the sin.

8. Great is God’s faithfulness. He will uphold His covenants and promises, though we sin.

Ps 102:16-17

16 For the Lord shall build up Zion;

He shall appear in His glory.

17 He shall regard the prayer of the destitute,

And shall not despise their prayer.

9. Watch your life. Who and what are your idols? Do you see any of the sins of Israel in your own life? If you do, are you mourning over the sin that’s brought you to this point?

10. Confession is important. Keep your accounts short with God. Confess your sin quickly.

10 principles Lamentations teaches us about sin:

1. **God hates sin.** Sin offends God. Great sin greatly offends God.
2. **There are consequences to sin.** The greater the sin, the greater the consequence.
3. **Don’t ignore warnings.** The wrath of God fell on Israel’s heads because Jeremiah’s voice fell on deaf ears.
4. **Feel the weight of sin.** Regret, sadness, even mourning may and will be found in our confessions to some degree.
5. **If God is your problem, then God is your solution.** Do not seek other solutions or escapes.
6. **God disciplines us to cleanse us.**

Discipline can come on many levels –

1. Conviction by the Holy Spirit.
2. A word of correction by another believer.
3. Circumstances arranged by God.
4. Death.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9