



The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Lamenting the Conditions

Lamentations 1:1-22

- I. THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH (Lamentations 1:1-11)
 - A. The Conditions of the City (Lamentations 1:1-2)
 1. The twofold astonishment (Lamentations 1:1)
 - a. A solitary city
 - (1) The statement of astonishment
 - a) How doth the city sit solitary!
 - b) How is she become as a widow!
 - c) Note: Consider the exclamatory nature of the statements. This verse contains no questions. In fact, there is no question as to how the present conditions came to be. These statements are meant to be exclamatory, such as a statement of pain or mourning. Consider other examples:
 - i) “How is the faithful city become an harlot!” (Isaiah 1:21).
 - ii) “They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down!” (Jeremiah 48:39).
 - iii) That this is no question is clear from the answer provided in Lamentations 1:8.
 - (2) The statement of past conditions—“that was full of people”
 - a) The desire of God (Genesis 22:17; Genesis 32:12)
 - i) Seed as the STARS of the heaven
 - ii) Seed as the SAND which is upon the sea shore
 - b) The previous conditions (Psalm 122:3-4)
 - i) Jerusalem was builded as a city that was compact together (Psalm 122:3).
 - ii) This was where the tribes went up unto the testimony of Israel (Psalm 122:4).
 - c) The promised consequences (Isaiah 47:7-15)
 - b. A tributary city (see 1 Corinthians 10:12)
 - (1) Consider the biblical concept of tribute.
 - a) Issachar...became a servant unto tribute (Genesis 49:14-15).
 - b) [A]ll the people that is found therein shall be tributaries...they shall serve thee (Deuteronomy 20:11).
 - c) Serve under tribute (Joshua 16:10)
 - (2) Consider the past conditions:
 - a) She was great among the nations (Ezra 4:20).
 - b) She was princess among the provinces.



- (3) Consider the warnings of God:
 - a) God told Israel to drive out the nations in the land of promise (Exodus 23:22-33).
 - b) When Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute and did not drive them out (Judges 1:28).
 - c) The city where God's name was placed was now under servitude. This is the way it is with sin. Most tend to start down the wrong path citing strength to start or stop in their own power but eventually become conquered by that which they initially "controlled."
2. The twofold assessment (Lamentations 1:2)
 - a. Her weeping
 - (1) She weepeth sore in the night (see Lamentations 1:16).
 - a) This is the time when things should be peaceful and calm.
 - b) Instead, there was sleeplessness and sore weeping.
 - (2) Her tears are on her cheeks.
 - b. Her discomfort
 - (1) Her lovers
 - a) Among all her lovers (see Ezekiel 23:4-24)
 - i) They had played the harlot with many lovers (Jeremiah 3:1).
 - ii) God promised their lovers would come to despise them (Jeremiah 4:30).
 - iii) God promised to destroy the lovers (Jeremiah 22:20, 22).
 - iv) Their lovers had forgotten her (Jeremiah 30:14).
 - v) This involved idolatrous behaviour among the other nations (Ezekiel 16:33, 36-37).
 - vi) The lovers deceived them (Lamentations 1:19).
 - b) She hath none to comfort her.
 - (2) Her friends
 - a) All her friends have dealt treacherously with her.
 - b) They are become her enemies.
 - (3) Note: This reminds us of the life of the prodigal son.
 - a) He determined living at home in the care of the father was insufficient.
 - b) He went out and wasted his substance on riotous living (Luke 15:13).
 - c) When he spent all, there arose a famine and he was in want (Luke 15:14).
 - d) He had to take a job feeding the swine (an unclean animal) (Luke 15:15).
 - e) He sunk so low that he would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine ate, but no man would give that to him (Luke 15:16).
 - f) His only hope was to return to his father (Luke 15:17).

**B. The Conditions of the People (Lamentations 1:3-7)**

1. Judah is gone into captivity (Lamentations 1:3).
 - a. Judah was gone into captivity.
 - (1) Because of affliction
 - (2) Because of great servitude
 - (3) Note: The wording here is somewhat troubling. Some would interpret it to mean that Judah went into captivity in order to be afflicted and in servitude. Others might interpret the passage to mean that they went into captivity to avoid affliction and servitude to other enemies. While this would not typically make sense, it was obvious that the better choice was to willingly go into captivity (Jeremiah 21:1-10).
 - b. Judah dwelt among the heathen.
 - (1) Moses had warned the people of God of this very thing (Deuteronomy 4:23-28).
 - (2) God promised to scatter Israel among the heathen because they forsook His law (Jeremiah 9:12-16).
 - (3) The heathen entered the sanctuary (Lamentations 1:10) and now the people dwelt among the heathen.
 - c. Judah found no rest.
 - (1) It is interesting how sinners hope to find rest in sin.
 - (2) When sin brings consequences, men think the answer to peace is to run from the consequences.
 - d. All her persecutors overtook her between the straits.
 - (1) A strait is a difficult place often because of its confined or narrow passage.
 - (2) Israel's enemies overtook them by driving them to a place of no escape.
 - (3) This could be a reference to Jeremiah 52:7-8; see 2 Kings 25:1-30. Regardless, we know it is true that some thought the answer was to run from the captivity, but they could not escape (Jeremiah 16:16; Lamentations 4:17-19).
2. The ways of Zion do mourn (Lamentations 1:4).
 - a. The ways of Zion mourned, because none came to her solemn feasts.
 - b. All her gates were desolate.
 - c. Her priests sighed.
 - d. Her virgins were afflicted.
 - e. She was in bitterness.
 - f. Note: Judah refused to walk in God's law and to follow His commandments, but now they are mourning because God is nowhere to be found. They could not have it both ways. God often gives man what he wants so that man can learn he does not truly know what he wants. Judah did not want the temple, the worship, the priesthood, the obedience, and now they had none of it. What did they do? They mourned! They sighed! They considered it affliction! They became bitter!



3. Her adversaries are chief (Lamentations 1:5).
 - a. The enemy's rise
 - (1) The expression
 - a) Her adversaries were the chief.
 - b) Her enemies prospered.
 - (2) The cause
 - a) The LORD hath afflicted her.
 - i) The people no doubt looked around and thought their affliction was at the hand of the Babylonians.
 - ii) However, it was the LORD that afflicted her.
 - b) For the multitude of her transgressions
 - i) Again, the people looked around and thought of all sorts of strategical reasons why they might be in captivity.
 - ii) However, the problem was sin—their sins.
 - iii) The only weapon that could destroy the people of God was their own sins. Apart from that, no weapon formed against them could prosper (Isaiah 54:17).
 - b. Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.
4. Her beauty is departed (Lamentations 1:6).
 - a. From the daughter of Zion all her beauty was departed.
 - (1) The only beauty possessed by the daughter of Zion had to do with her fellowship with God.
 - (2) When that departed, the beauty departed (see 1 Samuel 4:21-22).
 - b. Her princes were become like harts that found no pasture.
 - (1) This would be harts as in the wild deer.
 - (2) The picture is that they find no sustenance and are withered away to nothing.
 - c. They were gone without strength before the pursuer.
5. She remembered the days of old (Lamentations 1:7).
 - a. The time of Jerusalem's remembrance
 - (1) In the days of affliction
 - (2) In the days of her miseries
 - (3) Note: Men rarely appreciate the great things they possess until they no longer possess those things. Judah waited until days of affliction and misery to remember how great they used to have it.
 - b. The substance of Jerusalem's remembrance
 - (1) All her pleasant things
 - (2) In the days of old
 - c. The change in Jerusalem's remembrance
 - (1) Her people fell into the hand of the enemy.
 - (2) None did help her.
 - (3) The adversaries saw her and mocked at her sabbaths.
 - (4) Note: It is amazing how difficulties in life will change your perspective!