

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Lamentations

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Lamentations

ALEPH

1 Jerusalem, the city that was once so full of people,
is now empty and deserted.
It was once the greatest city among all the nations,
but now it is like a widow—alone and
without protection.
It was once honored among the provinces like a princess,
but now her people are forced to do slave labor.

BETH

2 Jerusalem's inhabitants weep and cry bitterly
all through the night;
tears run down their cheeks.
None of the nations that loved them
have come to comfort them.
All their allies have turned against them;
they have all become their enemies.

GIMEL

3 Enemies drove the people of Judah out to other countries,
and made them suffer greatly as slaves.
They live among foreign nations,
where they find no peace or rest.
Their enemies caught up with them;
they were trapped and could not escape.

DALETH

4 No one comes to Zion anymore for the sacred festivals,
so the roads to the city are silent and empty.
The city gates stand deserted;
the priests groan in sorrow.
The young women of the city are grieving,
and the whole city is filled with bitterness.

HE

5 Jerusalem's enemies have become rulers over it;
its adversaries are doing well.
Yahweh has caused it to suffer greatly,
because of all the ways its people sinned against him.
Its children have been taken captive
and marched away before the enemy.

WAW

6 All the glory and beauty that Zion once had
has left it completely.
Its leaders are like deer that are starving
because they cannot find any grass to eat.
They stumble along weakly
with the enemy chasing them.

ZAYIN

7 Now as Jerusalem suffers in exile and misery,
its people remember all the good things that
they had in former times.
When the enemy conquered the people,
no one came to help them.
Some enemies watched
and laughed contemptuously as others
destroyed the city.

HETH

8 Jerusalem's people sinned so greatly
that the city became something everyone treated
as filthy and defiling.
All those who had honored it now despise it,
because they have seen how shamefully
disgraced it has become.
Now its people moan
and humbly hide.

TETH

9 Everyone can see that the people in Jerusalem have
made themselves impure by sinning,
but its people never thought about what would
happen to them as a result.
The enemy devastated Jerusalem in a terrible way;
no one has come to comfort its people.
They cried out, "Yahweh, see how we are suffering!
The enemy has triumphed over us!"

YODH

10 The enemy took possession of all its precious treasures.
Its people watched as foreign nations
entered the temple—
the nations that you, Yahweh, had commanded
to stay out of your holy place.

KAPH

11 All the people groan and search for food.
They have traded their precious things just
to get something to eat
so that they can stay alive.
They cried out, "Yahweh, look at us!
See how people treat us contemptuously!"

LAMEDH

12 Jerusalem's people cried out to those passing
by the ruined city,
"Do you not care at all about what has happened to us?
Look around you and see—
has anyone ever suffered as much as we have suffered?
Yahweh inflicted this terrible pain on us
on the day when he was fiercely angry.

MEM

13 He sent fire down from above
that burned deep inside us.
He set a trap that caught our feet
and forced us to turn back.
He left us devastated and abandoned,
exhausted and miserable all day long.

NUN

14 God tied our sins around our necks like a heavy yoke;
they are twisted tightly together so that we
cannot remove them.
They are piled onto our necks and weigh us down,
so that we have no strength left.
The Lord handed us over
to enemies we have no power to defeat.

SAMEKH

15 The Lord has despised and rejected all our warriors.
He called our enemies together at the right time
to destroy our young men.

The Lord has crushed the people of Judah
like someone treading on grapes in a winepress.

AYIN

16 These are the things we weep over, weeping
without stopping;
our eyes overflow with tears.
There is no one near us to comfort us
or to restore our strength.
Our children have been left with nothing,
because the enemy has overcome us."

PE

17 Zion's people reach out their hands, pleading for help,
but no one comes to comfort them.
Yahweh ordered that all the nations surrounding
Jacob would become his enemies.
Jerusalem has become something all the neighboring
nations treat as defiling and avoid.

TSADHE

18 Jerusalem's people said, "Yahweh is righteous,
because we disobeyed his commands.
Listen, all you peoples of the world,
and see what great pain we are in.
Our young women and young men
have been taken away as captives.

QOPH

19 We called to our allies for help,
but they completely betrayed us.
Our priests and our elders
died in the city,
while they were desperately searching for food
just to stay alive.

RESH

20 Yahweh, look at how much we are suffering!
Our stomachs churn with anguish;
our hearts are completely devastated within us,
because we have deeply and truly rebelled against you.
In the streets, the sword kills people;
inside the city, people are dying like a plague.

SIN

21 People have heard us groaning in misery,
but no one has come to comfort us.
All our enemies have heard about the disaster
that came upon us;
they are glad about it,
because you are the one who brought it.
Bring the day of punishment that you promised,
when they will suffer as we have suffered!

TAW

22 Let all the evil things they have done come
to your attention,
and punish them for what they have done.
Treat them the way you treated us
for all the ways we sinned against you.
We are constantly sighing and groaning,
and we grieve greatly."

ALEPH

2 The Lord was very angry with the people of Jerusalem,
so he brought darkness and judgment on them.
Jerusalem used to be a beautiful and glorious city,
but he humiliated it and brought it down to nothing.
When the day came for him to punish Israel,
he did not even spare his own temple.

BETH

2 The Lord completely destroyed all the homes
of Jacob's descendants
and was not merciful to them.
Because he was furious,
he tore the fortresses of the people of Judah
down to the ground.
He disgraced their kingdom and its rulers.

GIMEL

3 Because he was extremely angry,
he took away all of Israel's power.
He refused to protect his people
when their enemies attacked them.
He destroyed everything among Jacob's descendants
like a raging fire that burns up everything around it.

DALETH

4 He got ready to shoot his bow at us, his own people,
as though we were his enemies.
He used his power to kill everyone we loved most
among the people of Jerusalem.
He was extremely angry with us;
his anger burned like a fire.

HE

5 The Lord started treating us like an enemy;
he destroyed Israel.
He destroyed all of Jerusalem's palaces
and turned its fortresses into ruins.
He caused the people of Judah
to grieve and weep even more.

WAW

6 He wrecked his own temple as easily as someone
tears down a garden hut;
he destroyed the place where people gathered
to worship him.
Yahweh caused the people of Zion to stop celebrating
their sacred festivals and Sabbath days.
Because he was so furiously angry,
he rejected both the king and the priest.

ZAYIN

7 The Lord turned away from his own altar;
he abandoned his own holy place.
He let the enemies have power over the walls
of Jerusalem's palaces.
Those enemies shouted triumphantly inside
Yahweh's temple,
as if they were celebrating one of the sacred festivals.

HETH

8 Yahweh planned to destroy the wall of Jerusalem.
He carefully measured it out for destruction
and then he did not stop himself from devouring it.
He made the outer wall and the inner wall fall into ruin;
together they crumbled.

TETH

9 Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the ground;
Yahweh smashed the bars that held them shut.
The enemy has taken the king and the officials
away to foreign nations;
no one teaches them God's instruction anymore.

The prophets also no longer receive any
messages from Yahweh.

YODH

10 The old men of Jerusalem sit on the ground
and say nothing.
They have thrown dust on their heads
and put on rough sackcloth *to show how deeply they grieve*.
The young women of Jerusalem bow their faces
all the way down to the ground.

KAPH

11 I have cried until my eyes can produce no more tears;
my stomach is churning with anguish.
I feel as if my insides are spilling out on the ground,
because so many of my people have died.
Even children and babies are fainting
in the city streets because they have nothing to eat.

LAMEDH

12 The children cry out to their mothers,
"We need food and drink!"
They collapse in the city streets like fatally
wounded soldiers,
and they die slowly
in the arms of their mothers.

MEM

13 People of Jerusalem,
there is nothing I can say to help you.
Nothing that has ever happened to anyone else
compares to what has happened to you
people who live on mount Zion;
I do not know how to comfort you.
The disaster that struck you is as vast as the sea;
no one can restore you.

NUN

14 The prophets among you claimed to hear
messages from Yahweh,
but what they said was false and worthless.
They did not rebuke you when you sinned
so that you could have changed your ways
and avoided disaster.
Instead, the messages they told you were lies that
caused you to do wrong things.

SAMEKH

15 Everyone who passes by on the road
claps their hands to mock you.
They hiss with contempt and shake their heads
at Jerusalem:
"Can this really be the city that people used to say was
the perfectly beautiful city, the city that made
all the earth rejoice?"

AYIN

16 All your enemies open their mouths wide
against you to mock you.
They hiss with contempt and grind their
teeth with hatred;
they say, "We have devoured her!
This is the very day we waited for;
we have lived to see it!"

PE

17 Yahweh has done what he planned to do;
he has carried out the threat
that he announced long ago.
He has torn the city down and shown no mercy;
he has let your enemies celebrate over you,
and he has made those who attack you more
powerful than ever.

TSADHE

18 The people of Jerusalem cried out to the Lord
from deep within themselves.
People of Jerusalem,
let your tears flow like a river
all day and all night!
Do not stop weeping;
do not let your eyes rest from crying.

QOPH

19 Get up and cry out during the night,
right when the night watches begin!
Tell the Lord everything that is in your heart, holding
nothing back, like water pouring out.
Raise your hands and pray to him
for your children to survive,
because they are fainting from hunger
on every street corner.

RESH

20 Yahweh, look at what you have done and pay attention!
Think about whom you have treated this way!
Women should never have to eat their own children,
the babies they lovingly cared for!
No one should kill priests and prophets
inside your own holy place!

SIN

21 People of every age lie dead on the ground in the streets.
The enemy has killed all our youth.
On the day you were angry, you *let the enemy* kill them;
you let them slaughter them mercilessly.

TAW

22 You called enemies to attack me from every direction,
as if you were summoning guests to come to a feast.
On the day Yahweh was angry,
no one escaped and no one survived.
The children I carried and raised,
my enemy has destroyed them all.

ALEPH

3 I am a man who has suffered greatly
because God punished me when he was very angry.
2 He sent me into a place where I only suffer
and nothing good happens to me.
3 He keeps acting against me again and again,
all day long.

BETH

4 He afflicted my body
and broke my bones.
5 He attacked me on every side
and caused me to suffer terribly.
6 He made me feel hopeless,
like no one remembers me.

GIMEL

7 He has completely trapped me
so that I cannot escape.
8 Even though I beg him to help me,

he refuses to listen when I pray.
9 He has blocked every way forward for me
so that I cannot make any progress in my life.
DALETH
10 He waited to attack me like a bear hiding to ambush its prey,
like a lion crouching in a hidden place.
11 He ruined my plans
and destroyed me;
he made me poor.
12 He deliberately chose to attack me
and made me the one he would harm.
HE
13 He deliberately caused me intense suffering.
14 All my own people mock me
constantly with their songs.
15 He has caused me to suffer
so much that I cannot bear it.
WAW
16 He completely humiliated me
and degraded me.
17 God took away all my peace;
I no longer remember what happiness feels like.
18 So I said to myself, "I cannot endure any longer,
and I have no more reason to hope in Yahweh."
ZAYIN
19 Yahweh, remember how I have suffered and wandered;
I have suffered so very greatly.
20 I keep thinking about it over and over,
and it makes me deeply depressed.
21 Yet when I think about this one thing,
I find reason to hope:
HETH
22 Yahweh never stops faithfully loving us,
and he never stops showing us mercy.
23 Every morning he shows us mercy again;
he is always faithful to us.
24 I said to myself, "Yahweh is all that I need;
so I will confidently wait for him."
TETH
25 Yahweh is good to everyone who depends on him,
to everyone who hopes that Yahweh will help him.
26 It is good to wait quietly
for Yahweh to save us.
27 It is good for a person
to endure suffering patiently while still young.
YODH
28 A person should accept his situation quietly and not complain
when God causes him to suffer.
29 He should bow down with his face to the ground,
because there may still be reason to hope.
30 He should offer his cheek to the one who hits him
and accept all the insults people give him.
KAPH
31 The Lord does not reject people forever.
32 Even though he causes people to grieve,
he will show them mercy because he always faithfully loves them.
33 He does not enjoy causing people to suffer
or making them grieve.
LAMEDH
34 When people crush all the prisoners in a land under their feet,
35 when they cheat someone and deny him what he deserves
right in front of the Most High God,
36 when they treat someone unfairly in his legal dispute—the Lord does not approve
of any of these things.
MEM
37 No one can simply speak and make something happen
unless the Lord has commanded it.
38 The Most High God is the one who decides
both the bad things and the good things that happen.
39 No living person should complain
when God punishes him for his sins.
NUN
40 Instead, we should carefully examine how we have been living,
and we should turn back to Yahweh.
41 We should sincerely pray, raising our hands to God in heaven:
42 "We have sinned and rebelled against you,
and you have not forgiven us.
SAMEKH
43 Because you were angry, you chased after us;
you killed us without showing us any mercy.
44 You made yourself unreachable
so that you did not hear any of our prayers.
45 You have made the other nations treat us
as though we are nothing but garbage and filth.
AYIN
46 All our enemies
have spoken hateful things against us.
47 We have experienced nothing but fear and danger,
ruin and destruction."
48 Many tears flow from my eyes
because enemies have destroyed my people.
PE
49 My tears pour out and will not stop;
they will not end
50 until Yahweh looks down
and sees us from heaven.
51 What I see makes me grieve deeply
because of what has happened to all the women of my city.
TSADHE
52 My enemies relentlessly pursued me without any reason,
even though I had done nothing wrong.
53 They threw me into a pit to kill me
and dropped stones on top of me.
54 Water rose over my head,
and I said to myself, "I am going to die!"
QOPH
55 I called out to you, Yahweh,
from the deepest part of that pit.
56 You heard me;
do not ignore me when I cry out to you for help!
57 You came near when I called to you
and said, "Do not be afraid!"

RESH
58 Lord, you defended me;
you saved my life.
59 Yahweh, you have seen how my enemies
have wronged me;
make things right for me!
60 You have seen how they want to take revenge on me
and all the things they have planned to do to me.
SIN
61 Yahweh, you have heard them insult me
and all the things they have planned to do to me.
62 Those who oppose me whisper and mutter things
about me all day long.
63 Look at them! No matter what they are doing,
they make fun of me in their songs.
TAW
64 Yahweh, pay them back
for what they have done!
65 Make them stubborn,
and let your curse fall on them.
66 Because you are angry with them, chase them
and destroy them
so they no longer exist anywhere on earth.
ALEPH
4 How terrible that the people of Jerusalem, who
used to be so valuable, have now become
completely worthless!
The enemy has thrown out the precious young men
at every street corner.
BETH
2 People once considered the young men of Zion
to be extremely valuable,
but now everyone treats them as completely worthless,
like ordinary clay pots that a potter makes.
GIMEL
3 Even jackals nurse their young,
but the women among my people have
neglected their own children
and have stopped caring for them.
DALETH
4 The babies are so thirsty
that their tongues stick to the roofs of their mouths.
The children beg for food,
but no one gives them any.
HE
5 People who used to eat the finest food
now starve in the streets.
People whose parents raised them wearing
expensive clothes
now search through garbage heaps for
something to eat.
WAW
6 God has punished my people more severely
than he punished the people of Sodom.
He destroyed Sodom in an instant,
and nobody cried for it.
ZAYIN
7 Jerusalem's most honored people used to look
very pure and healthy.
They had strong, attractive bodies
and appeared very vigorous.
HETH
8 But now they look so dark and thin
that no one recognizes them in the streets.
Their skin has shriveled tightly over their bones
and has dried out completely.
TETH
9 Those who died quickly in battle were better off
than those who died slowly from starvation,
because the starving people wasted away gradually
since no food grew in the fields.
YODH
10 Women who were normally very compassionate
cooked their own children.
They ate them as food
when the enemy destroyed Jerusalem.
KAPH
11 Yahweh expressed all of his anger against Jerusalem.
He burned the city with fire
and destroyed it down to its very foundations.
LAMEDH
12 No king anywhere on the earth,
and no one else in the whole world,
believed that an enemy
could ever enter the city of Jerusalem.
MEM
13 But it happened because Jerusalem's prophets sinned
and her priests did evil things.
They killed innocent people
right there in the city.
NUN
14 Those prophets and priests wandered through the streets,
confused and unable to find their way.
The blood of the people they had killed made
them so unclean that no one would
touch even their clothes.
SAMEKH
15 People shouted at them, "Go away! You are unclean!
Do not touch us!"
So those priests and prophets fled and wandered
from place to place,
but even the people in other nations said,
"They cannot stay here."
AYIN
16 Yahweh himself scattered them
and no longer watches over them.
People in those nations do not respect our priests
and do not show any kindness to our elders.
PE
17 We kept watching and waiting for a nation
to come and help us,
but no help ever came.
The nation we hoped would rescue us could not save us.
TSADHE
18 Our enemies tracked us so closely
that we could not even walk through our
own city squares.
The time for our destruction was near,
and our final days had come.

QOPH

19 Those who chased us were extremely fast.
They pursued us over the mountains
and ambushed us in the desert.

RESH

20 Our enemies captured the king whom Yahweh had chosen to lead us,
the one who kept us alive.
We had said about him,
"He will protect us even if we have to live among other nations."

SIN

21 The people of Edom who live in the land of Uz
may be happy now about what has happened to Jerusalem,
but Yahweh will punish them too.
He will cause them to suffer greatly and be completely humiliated.

TAW

22 Yahweh will finish punishing the people of Jerusalem,
and he will not keep them in exile any longer.
However, he will punish the people of Edom
and expose all the evil things they have done.

A prayer for God's mercy

5 Yahweh, think about what has happened to us.
Pay attention and see how people have disgraced us.
2 Our enemies have taken our property and given it to people we do not know;
they have seized our homes and given them to people who are not Israelites.
3 We have no fathers to care for us;
our mothers have no husbands.
4 We have to pay money to drink our own water,
and we have to buy the wood that we need.
5 Our enemies chase us and never let up;
we are exhausted, but they do not let us rest.
6 We surrendered to Egypt and Assyria
so that we could get enough food to survive.
7 Our ancestors sinned and then they died,
but we are the ones suffering for what they did wrong.

8 People who used to be slaves now rule over us,
and no one can rescue us from their power.
9 We risk our lives when we go out to get food,
because violent people in the wilderness will kill us.
10 Our skin burns with fever
because we are starving so badly.
11 Our enemies raped women in Zion
and young women in the towns of Judah.
12 Our enemies hung our leaders by their hands;
they did not respect our elders.
13 They forced our young men to grind flour with millstones,
and boys staggered under heavy loads of firewood.
14 Our elders no longer gather to make decisions,
and our young men no longer play music.
15 We no longer feel happy;
instead of dancing, we grieve.
16 We have lost the honor that we once had.
How terrible it is for us, because we have sinned!
17 Because of all this, we feel sick inside;
because of these things, we cannot stop crying.
18 We are sad because Mount Zion lies empty with no one living there;
foxes roam through it.
19 But you, Yahweh, rule forever!
You have authority over every generation.
20 It feels as though you have forgotten us completely
and abandoned us for such a long time.
21 Yahweh, please bring us back to yourself so that we may return;
make our lives as good as they were before.
22 Please do not completely reject us
or stay extremely angry with us forever!