

# *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

## *Lamentations Chapter 1*

*7/22/15*

### *Bible Study Notes*

#### **The Sorrows of Jerusalem - Verses 1-11**

1 How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. 2 Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are upon her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is none to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies. 3 After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place. All who pursue her have overtaken her in the midst of her distress. 4 The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed feasts. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her maidens grieve, and she is in bitter anguish. 5 Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease. The LORD has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe. 6 All the splendor has departed from the Daughter of Zion. Her princes are like deer that find no pasture; in weakness they have fled before the pursuer. 7 In the days of her affliction and wandering Jerusalem remembers all the treasures that were hers in days of old. When her people fell into enemy hands, there was no one to help her. Her enemies looked at her and laughed at her destruction. 8 Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean. All who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans and turns away. 9 Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future. Her fall was astounding; there was none to comfort her. "Look, O LORD, on my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed." 10 The enemy laid hands on all her treasures; she saw pagan nations enter her sanctuary-- those you had forbidden to enter your assembly. 11 All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. "Look, O LORD, and consider, for I am despised."

**1:1** This is the prophet Jeremiah's song of sorrow for Jerusalem's destruction. The nation of Judah had been utterly defeated, the temple destroyed, and captives taken away to Babylon. Jeremiah's tears were for the suffering and humiliation of the people, but those tears penetrated even deeper into his heart. He wept because God had rejected the people for their rebellious ways. Each year this book was read aloud to remind all the Jews that their great city fell because of their stubborn sinfulness.

**1:2** The term "lovers" refers to nations such as Egypt, to whom Judah kept turning for help. As the Babylonians closed in on Jerusalem, the nation of Judah turned away from God and sought help and protection from other nations instead.

**1:9** The warning was loud and clear: If Judah played with fire, its people would get burned. Jerusalem foolishly took a chance and lost, refusing to believe that immoral living brings God's punishment. The ultimate consequence of sin is punishment (Romans 6:23). We can choose to ignore God's warnings, but as surely as judgment came upon Jerusalem, so will it come upon those who defy God. Are you listening to God's Word? Are you obeying it? Obedience is a sure sign of your love for God.

## The Sorrows of Jerusalem - Verses 12-22

12 "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the LORD brought on me in the day of his fierce anger? 13 "From on high he sent fire, sent it down into my bones. He spread a net for my feet and turned me back. He made me desolate, faint all the day long. 14 "My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together. They have come upon my neck and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has handed me over to those I cannot withstand. 15 "The Lord has rejected all the warriors in my midst; he has summoned an army against me to crush my young men. In his winepress the Lord has trampled the Virgin Daughter of Judah. 16 "This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed." 17 Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her. The LORD has decreed for Jacob that his neighbors become his foes; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them. 18 "The LORD is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command. Listen, all you peoples; look upon my suffering. My young men and maidens have gone into exile. 19 "I called to my allies but they betrayed me. My priests and my elders perished in the city while they searched for food to keep themselves alive. 20 "See, O LORD, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart I am disturbed, for I have been most rebellious. Outside, the sword bereaves; inside, there is only death. 21 "People have heard my groaning, but there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my distress; they rejoice at what you have done. May you bring the day you have announced so they may become like me. 22"Let all their wickedness come before you; deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my sins. My groans are many and my heart is faint."

**1:14** At first, sin seems to offer freedom. But the liberty to do anything we want gradually becomes a desire to do everything. Then we become captive to sin, bound by its "yoke." Freedom from sin's captivity comes only from God. He gives us freedom, not to do anything we want, but to do what he knows is best for us. Strange as it may seem, true freedom comes in obeying God—following his guidance so that we can receive his best.

**1:16** Jeremiah's sorrow expresses the sorrow of the nation. God is the comforter, but because of the people's sins, he had to turn away from them and become their judge. When we suffer the consequences of sin, repentance from the sin that caused the problem is the first and most important way to find relief.

**1:19** Jerusalem's allies could not come to help because, like Jerusalem, they failed to seek God. Though these allies appeared strong, they were actually weak because God was not with them. Dependable assistance can come only from an ally whose power is from God. When you seek wise counsel, go to Christians who get their wisdom from the all-knowing God.

**1:22** Babylon, although sinful, was God's instrument for punishing Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem were pleading for God to punish sinful Babylon as he had punished them ("deal with them as you have dealt with me"). God would do this, for he had already passed judgment on Babylon (see Jeremiah 50:1-27).