

# Lamentations 4

Note: *Lam. 4* is an alphabetic acrostic like *chapters 1-2*, except each stanza has 2 lines instead of 3

- It is a chapter comparing the former glory of Jerusalem to the sight of the demolished city
- The moral cause for the fall of Jerusalem is uppermost in the mind of Jeremiah in this chapter

## Lamentations 4.1-12

**V1** – **The city used to look like gold, but what does it look like now?** Tarnished gold, precious stones poured out on the street

**V2** – **What had happened to the sons of Israel?** They were worth more than gold, but now they are like clay pots (dead bodies in the streets)

**V3** – **How do mothers in the animal kingdom treat their young?** Most treat them great (not ostriches)  
**-But how do the mothers of Israel treat their young?** Ignore them (disease, lack of food)

**V4** – **What is the condition of the babies?** Dying of thirst, no bread for the children

**V5** – They used to eat delicacies (like snails in France today)  
**-What kind of clothing was a sign of wealth?** Purple (remember Lydia in the book of *Acts*)  
**-What had happened to the people who used to wear purple?** Now wearing ashes; they go to the dump for clothing ("dumpster diving" today)

**V6** – **How bad was the punishment of Jerusalem?** Worse than that of Sodom  
**-How symbolically was it worse than Sodom's?** Only God's hand destroyed Sodom, but it was the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem (a greater insult)

**V7** – Notice the past tense of the verb!  
**-What were the children of Israel like before the destruction?** Purer than snow, whiter than milk, healthy skin  
**-Like lapis lazuli** – See *World Book Encyclopedia*, article on "lapis lazuli" (a picture of this stone)

**V8** – Notice the present tense now  
**-This is like a picture of the survivors**  
**-What did the children look now?** Blacker than soot, no-one knows their names, shriveled skin, withered

**V9** – **What was better than looking like that?** Getting killed in the attack (a few survivors left)

**V10** – Notice the past tense – **How bad had conditions gotten before the fall?** Mothers

cooked their children for food (See *2 Kings 6.29*)

**V 11** – This all came about because of the wrath of God

**V 12** – **What amazed the nations around Israel?** That it could fall – **Read James 1.15** – Sin brings forth death ultimately

## **Lamentations 4.13-16**

**V 13** – **Whom did Jeremiah blame?** The prophets and priests – See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Lamentations, p. 522a for a list of the sins of the false prophets)  
-Jeremiah said that the prophets and priests had shed the blood of the people  
-**In what sense?** They were responsible for leading the people astray

**V 14** – **What was the condition of the prophets and priests now?** They were wandering in the streets in a dazed condition  
-They were ceremonially unclean (from touching dead bodies, blood, etc.)

**V 15** – As unclean, they had to cry: "Unclean, unclean" before them as they walked in the streets

**V 16** – These corrupt religious leaders were being scattered  
-Even though they were priests and elders, they had no respect anymore because of what they had done

## **Lamentations 4.17-20**

**V 17** – **What country did Israel think it would get help from?** Egypt – but Egypt did not rescue Israel from the Babylonians

**V 18** – There was no escape from the Babylonians

**V 19** – They chased and ambushed Israel – no escape

**V 20** – **How had they considered themselves in the past?** The Lord's anointed  
-But now they had been caught in the pit of the Babylonians  
-**What had they bragged about in the past?** "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations"

## **Lamentations 4.21-22**

**V 21** – **Who rejoiced over the fall of Israel?** The Edomites  
-**What was going to happen to them?** The vengeance of God would come against them  
-**In what Old Testament book do we read about this?** The book of *Obadiah*  
-**Read Obadiah 18**

**V 22** – Jerusalem's punishment was over, but the punishment of Edom was just beginning

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