

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 52 - LAMENTATIONS 2

At heart of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem there is a wall. It's the last remaining vestige of their ancient Temple. Actually, it's the western side of a retaining wall that surrounded the Temple mount.

Jews were required to come to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship God. Since, this wall is all that remains, it stands as the most sacred sight in Judaism.

Even today, Jews, *as well as some Gentiles*, journey to this wall to pray. People will write their prayers on little slips of paper and place them in the cracks and crevasses of the ancient stone wall. There's even an internet service where you can text in your prayers and a Jewish Torah student will place it in the wall for you.

Many Jews weep and wail at the wall. They mourn over their sins and the plight of their people. Thus, it's nickname, "[The Wailing Wall](#)." The book, Lamentations, also has a nickname... "[The Bible's Wailing Wall](#)."

The book was written as a funeral dirge, a eulogy, a bitter song of mourning. Tradition says it was penned by Jeremiah after the Babylonian horde had conquered Jerusalem a third time, and burned it to the ground.

As Jeremiah watched his shackled comrades hauled off to Babylon, it broke his heart. He weeped and cried and mourned over the fall of the nation of Judah.

Every year on fast day of Tisha b-Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, Jeremiah's lament is still read in Jewish synagogues all around the world.

Outside the northern wall of the Old City of Jerusalem there is a cave called "[Jeremiah's grotto.](#)"

According to tradition this is where he composed his Lamentation. The cave is north of the city, alongside the road that led to Babylon. When the invaders took the Jews hostage, they transported them into exile.

They were forcibly paraded just below Jeremiah's overlook, *as the weeping prophet wept and wrote.*

Lamentations consists of five poems. Four of the five, chapters 1-4, are in an acrostic format. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and in chapters 1, 2, and 4 there are 22 verses in each chapter. Each verse begins with the succeeding letter of the alphabet.

Chapter 3 is the fullest confession. It contains 66 verses. It too is an acrostic. Every three verses begin with the succeeding letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Lamentations 5 also has 22 verses, but it was not written in acrostic format, *and we don't know why...*

There is a Psalm that appears as an acrostic, *do you remember which one?* In Psalm 119 every 8 verses begin with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

It's interesting, Psalm 119 broadcasts the blessings of obeying God's Word, whereas Jeremiah's lament describes the destruction caused by disobedience.

It's also interesting that Jeremiah's Grotto belongs to a hill called "The Skull" - "Skull Hill" or as the Greeks put it, "Calvary." It's no accident the prophet wept where the Savior died. In the same spot, Jeremiah *suffered with his people*, whereas Jesus *suffered for His people*. Both Jeremiah and Jesus revealed God's broken heart over the sins of His people, Judah.

Ironside once wrote, "The God of Israel, was no cold, indifferent spectator of the anguish, humiliation, and pains of the people of His choice. His holiness demanded He chasten them for their iniquities... But His heart was grieved for them still, as a loving father is sorely pained in his own correction of a wayward son."

Before he spanked me my dad would always say, "Son, this going to hurt me a lot more than it hurts you." I never believed him until I had kids of my own. But it hurts a Father's heart to have to discipline His children.

We've saved the last chapter in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 52, because it serves as an introduction to the book of Lamentations. It describes the fall Jerusalem from a *historical perspective...*

Whereas, the five chapters of Lamentations views the same events from *an emotional perspective...*

Let's start in Jeremiah 52, "Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah." Not to be confused with the Prophet

Jeremiah. It was a common name. It was also the name of Zedekiah's grandpa.

Sadly Zedekiah "also did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done." Jehoiakim had set the benchmark for wickedness. He was one of Zedekiah's predecessors, and tragically a role model.

"For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, till He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land." For eighteen months the city of Jerusalem was under siege. This created desperate conditions.

Siege-warfare was common in ancient times. An army would surround a city, cut off its supply lines, and play the waiting game. A city under siege knew it was only a matter of time before conditions became so desperate the city was forced to fight or to surrender.

Imagine, severe famine, garbage and excrement piled high in the streets, homes were rat infested, disease had reached epidemic levels, there was low morale - this is all what you'd find in a city under siege.

The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began on the 10th day of the 10th month. It was the same day the Prophet Ezekiel's wife (who was in Babylon) died as a symbol of the nation's death. Ezekiel 24 tells the story.

The Prophet Ezekiel knew that this siege marked the beginning of the end for Jerusalem and the Jews.

Verse 7, "Then the city wall was broken through..." This was the date, July 18, 586 BC, a day that will live in infamy. The walls were breeched. Invasion began.

"And all the men of war fled and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were near the city all around. And they went by way of the plain." The Hebrew word "plain" is "Arabah" which referred to the Jordan Valley, eastward.

"But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him." Zedekiah's escape attempt failed. He was forsaken and captured.

"So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he pronounced judgment on him." Riblah was in Syria and had served as Nebuchadnezzar's field headquarters. It now was the staging area for the Jewish deportation.

Verse 10, "Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. And he killed all the princes of Judah in Riblah. He also put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in bronze fetters, took him to

Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.” What a cruel punishment...

They kill Zedekiah’s sons, then burn out his eyes with a hot poker, so the last lingering vision in his mind, for the rest of his life, is the slaughter of his own sons.

Verse 12, “Now in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord and the king’s house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire.

And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls of Jerusalem all around. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive some of the poor people, the rest of the people who remained in the city, the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen.” The idea of deporting the craftsmen was to keep the Jews from rebuilding.

But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

The bronze pillars that were in the house of the Lord, and the carts and the bronze Sea that were in the house of the Lord, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all their bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the bowls, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. The basins,

the firepans, the bowls, the pots, the lampstands, the spoons, and the cups, whatever was solid gold and whatever was solid silver, the captain of the guard took away.” This was “loot” to the Babylonians. The furniture and utensils that were holy to the Lord, they treated as the spoils of victory.

“The two pillars, one Sea (that is the basin where the priests washed their hands), the twelve bronze bulls which were under it, and the carts, which King Solomon had made for the house of the Lord - the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure.

Now concerning the pillars: the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, a measuring line of twelve cubits could measure its circumference, and its thickness was four fingers; it was hollow.” A cubit was a Hebrew measurement - 18 inches. Eighteen cubits was 27 feet, which was the height of the bronze columns in front of the Temple. The columns were twelve cubits or 18 feet in circumference - and four fingers, or 3 inches, thick.

Needless to say, these were large and heavy pillars.

Verse 22, “A capital of bronze was on it; and the height of one capital was five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capital, all of bronze. The second pillar, with pomegranates was the same.

Capitals were ornaments that sat on top of a pillar.

“There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates, all around on the network, were one hundred. The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. He

also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, seven men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city.

And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons.

All the persons were four thousand six hundred."

The Babylonians invaded Judah three times - in 605, 597, and 586 BC. There could've been more but here he lists three deportations - in 597, 586, and in 581 BC.

Verse 31, "Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison." King Jehoiachin had been Zedekiah's immediate predecessor. He had been deposed to Babylon in 597 BC by Nebuchadnezzar.

Apparently, while in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's successor became his friend. Evil-Merodach "spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon."

So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life." Jewish tradition says that when God struck the proud Nebuchadnezzar with madness (it's spoken of in Daniel 4), Evil-Merodach usurped his father's authority. When Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses he punished his son. He had Evil-Merodach thrown in prison where he met Jehoiachin. They became friends.

When Evil-Merodach succeeded his father, and took the throne, the new king remembered his Jewish pal.

"And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life."

In 1939 an archeologist named Weidner was sifting through rubble at the site of the ancient hanging gardens in Babylon. He found a cuneiform tablet listing the yearly allotments of oil and grain to different kings.

One was to "Jehoiachin king of the land of Judah." It was confirmation of what Jeremiah tells us here.

Today, this tablet is on exhibit in a Berlin museum, and it's another example of how the archaeologist's shovel always proves the Bible's historical reliability.

Which brings us to Jeremiah's Lamentations.

Remember Chapter 1 is in acrostic form. Verse 1 begins with the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet, “aleph.” Verse 2, begins with the second letter, “beth.”

Which is where we get our English word “alphabet.” The word “alphabet” is Hebrew - its first two letters.

By employing an acrostic to his lament Jeremiah is in essence saying every letter in the Hebrew language is needed to express the depths of God's sorrow...

The title “Lamentations” comes from the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible. In the Hebrew Bible the title was the first word of the book. Thus, the title of “Lamentations” should be the word “how” or “ah, alas.”

In Hebrew the book is known as “The Sigh.”

The book of Lamentations is an excellent example of Hebrew poetry. But unlike English poetry, the Hebrew style was based not on rhyme, but on parallelism.

One thought gets contrasted with another thought.

Hebrew poetry does utilize meter or cadence. And Lamentations was written in a clipped meter, or what's known as a “limping beat.” The first thought is written in four beats - the second thought is one beat slower, it's written in three beats. The result was a melancholy sound. It was common for mourning and funeral dirges.

In the days of Jesus there were professional grieverers in Israel who specialized in writing tunes using this beat. Remember, the professional mourners who mocked and laughed at Jesus when He went to raise Jairus' daughter. They were singing a mournful tune, but Jesus got the last

laugh. When the day was done the little girl and her family were singing a new song.

In English, we miss most of this cadence, but in the Hebrew it's there. *This book is for all those who mourn.*

Particularly, for those who've been chastened and disciplined by the Lord - who are *currently suffering* for *previous sins*. Lamentations is the manual on real repentance - learning to see your sin as God sees it.

Lamentations 1:1, “How lonely sits the city that was full of people!” Jeremiah contrasts Jerusalem with her former glory. She was once a bustling city, a glorious city, that has now been reduced to ash and rubble.

During the reigns of David and Solomon the Israeli theocracy became a world power. Her citizens were hailed as the most privileged and blessed on the planet. But now she sits lonely and forsaken.

“How like a widow is she, who was great among the nations! The princess among the provinces has become a slave!” Feet that once wore the golden slipper, are now fitted with a ball and chain.

“She weeps bitterly in the night, her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.” *Her lovers* were the false gods she'd worshipped and served. *Her friends* were the foreign nations she trusted in, instead of God.

Verse 3, “Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude; she dwells among the nations, she finds no rest; all her persecutors overtake her in dire straits.” Or in *severe distress*.

“The roads to Zion mourn because no one comes to the set feasts. All her gates are desolate; her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.”

There was a time when the roads leading to Jerusalem were filled with happy pilgrims coming up to the Temple to worship God, but no longer... Imagine, driving through downtown Atlanta on Friday, and all the lanes are empty. *Where is the traffic? Where are the people? You'd conclude something is terribly wrong!*

“Her adversaries have become the master, her enemies prosper; for the Lord has afflicted her because of the multitude of her transgressions. Her children have gone into captivity before the enemy.

And from the daughter of Zion all her splendor has departed. Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture, that flee without strength before the pursuer.” Think of the skittish deer you sometimes encounter in the suburbs. You see him cross the road in the evening. But as soon as *he sees you*, he bolts.

The leaders of Zion had become scared and skittish.

Verse 7, “In the days of her affliction and roaming, Jerusalem remembers all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old. When her people fell into the hand of the

enemy, with no one to help her, the adversaries saw her and mocked at her downfall.”

And she has no one to blame but herself, “Jerusalem has sinned gravely, therefore she has become vile.

All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness; yes, she sighs and turns away.”

In other words, Jerusalem can no longer pretend. She can no longer hide behind her former glory. Her sin has been uncovered, she has been exposed.

“Her uncleanness is in her skirts; she did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome; she had no comforter. “O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy is exalted!” One of the effects of sin is a short-sightedness. All I can see is what’s immediately in front of me. I lose my long-term outlook.

Life is all about instant gratification. There’s little concern for the long-term consequences of my actions.

Like the guy who was so in love with the thrill of sky diving - *the rush of the free fall* - he jumped out the airplane without checking to make sure his chute was packed properly... It reminds me of the ad that read, “For Sale Parachute. Once used. Never opened.”

Satan wants us to live for today with no regard for the future. We’re sent the message, **Grab for all the gusto - You only go around once in life - Just Do It.**

We’re called “**The Impulse Society.**”

It’s like the following public service ad, “**I won’t wear a helmet. It makes me look stupid.**” And now the accident victim

has a head injury and he's being spoon fed. Again, consider the consequences of your actions.

This is what Judah failed to do. *“She did not consider her destiny... therefore her collapse was awesome...”*

Verse 10, *“The adversary has spread his hand over all her pleasant things; for she has seen the nations enter her sanctuary, those whom You commanded not to enter Your assembly.”* Pagans had desecrated the Temple. The Holy Places were reserved for God's people and priests, yet marauding armies had invaded the sacred precincts. And it had grieved God's heart.

Spiritually speaking, this also occurs when worldly techniques and attitudes take root in the church. The Temple of God is *desecrated* rather than *dedicated*.

Verse 11, *“All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their valuables for food to restore life.*

“See, O Lord, and consider, for I am scorned.” “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has been brought on me, which the Lord has inflicted in the day of His fierce anger.” It's hard to fathom Jeremiah's pain.

He cries out, *“is any sorrow like my sorrow...”*

“From above He has sent fire into my bones, and it overpowered them; He has spread a net for my feet and turned me back; He has made me desolate and faint all the day. “The yoke of my transgressions was bound; they were woven together by His hands, and thrust upon my neck.”

Jeremiah sees that His trouble, the demise of the nation, comes from the hand of God.

Realize, our God is not squeamish. He's not afraid to discipline His people. His punishment is swift and it can be stern. He knows what it takes to get our attention.

“He made my strength fail; the Lord delivered me into the hands of those whom I am not able to withstand.” Recall the yoke Jeremiah wore in Chapter 27, it was a symbol of the bondage that would one day come upon the nation. Now that prophecy is realized.

“The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord trampled as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah.

“For these things I weep; My eye, my eye overflows with water...” This is why we call Jeremiah “the weeping prophet.” Here his eyes overflow with tears.

“Because the comforter, who should restore my life, is far from me. My children are desolate because the enemy prevailed.” Zion spreads out her hands, but no one comforts her; the Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that those around him become his adversaries; Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.” No other nation came to her rescue.

They'd tried to befriend Babylon. They'd tried to buy help from Egypt. But in the end no one was their ally.

Verse 18, “The Lord is righteous, for I rebelled against His commandment. Hear now, all peoples, and behold my sorrow;

My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity.” And Jeremiah doesn’t blame God.

“*The Lord is righteous,*” he says. Here’s the heart of a truly repentant person. He knows what comes upon him is his own fault. He’s not throwing God under the bus for his sin. “Oh, why hasn’t God delivered us?”

The problem wasn’t God’s ability to deliver, but the people’s unwillingness to live lives surrendered to Him.

Verse 19, “I called for my lovers, but they deceived me; My priests and my elders breathed their last in the city, while they sought food to restore their life.

“See, O Lord, that I am in distress; My soul is troubled; my heart is overturned within me, for I have been very rebellious. Outside the sword bereaves, at home it is like death. “They have heard that I sigh, but no one comforts me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that You have done it.

Bring on the day You have announced, that they may become like me. “Let all their wickedness come before You, and do to them as You have done to me for all my transgressions; for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.” Jeremiah is asking God to judge his enemies with the same measure by which He has judged him.

Lamentations 2, “How...” It’s the same word that began chapter 1 - it’s the title of the book - it’s **a sigh**.

“How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He cast down from heaven to the earth the beauty of Israel, and did not remember His footstool in the

day of His anger.” In the OT God referred to Israel as His **“footstool...”** God is bigger than the heavens. The universe can't contain Him.

Yet He rests His feet in Israel. He kicks off His shoes and calls Jerusalem home. It was His footstool.

Today, God's footstool is His Church. Where two or three gather in His name He is in the midst of them.

Verse 2, **“The Lord has swallowed up and has not pitied all the dwelling places of Jacob. He has thrown down in His wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes. He has cut off in fierce anger every horn of Israel...”** An animal's strength is in its horns. Thus, God cut off her strength.

“He has drawn back His right hand from before the enemy. He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire devouring all around. Standing like an enemy, He has bent His bow; with His right hand, like an adversary, He has slain all who were pleasing to His eye; on the tent of the daughter of Zion, He has poured out His fury like fire. The Lord was like an enemy.” God wasn't Israel's enemy, He was their father - but for a time they felt as if God was their enemy - that He was acting like one.

And if you're a father you know how this works...

A dad loves his kids. He wants what's best for them, but when he doesn't buckle under to their demands, and refuses to be manipulate or intimidated... when a father puts his foot down, sometimes his kids call him ***“the meanest man in the***

world.” One author defines a dad, “as the provider of all and the enemy of all.”

This is how I sometimes feel as a pastor. I take a stand for the truth, and people think I’m their enemy.

Or I don’t do exactly what they want and they assume I’m against them. Neither is true. It’s my job to give people what they *need*, not necessarily what they *want*. And this is God’s attitude toward us...

This is why He disciplines us at times. Hebrews 12 reads, “Whom the Lord loves He chastens...” Be glad when God spans you. It’s an indication He loves you and that you’re truly His child. Hebrews 12:11 adds, “No chastening seems to be joyful for the present.” It’s no fun to get spanked, but it’s a necessary correction.

A big key to a happy life is learning to recognize your true friends. There may be times when God seems to be your enemy, but in reality He is your best friend!

Verse 5 continues, “He has swallowed up Israel, He has swallowed up all her palaces; He has destroyed her strongholds, and has increased mourning and lamentation in the daughter of Judah. He has done violence to His tabernacle, as if it were a garden; He has destroyed His place of assembly; the Lord has caused the appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion. In His burning indignation He has spurned the king and the priest. The Lord has spurned His altar, He has abandoned His sanctuary; He has given up the walls of her palaces into the hand of the enemy. They have made a noise in the house of the Lord as on the

day of a set feast. The Lord has purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion.

He has stretched out a line; He has not withdrawn His hand from destroying; therefore He has caused the rampart and wall to lament; they languished together.

Her gates have sunk into the ground; He has destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes are among the nations; the Law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the Lord.” Often, in the Scriptures a lack of vision is the Lord’s judgment.

Here Jeremiah bemoans all their losses. The beauties and blessings of Jerusalem are gone. The Temple, feasts, the altar, the walls, the gates - even the king and the leaders - finally, the Law and prophets. All these gifts to Israel were squandered and now gone.

“The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground and keep silence; they throw dust on their heads and gird themselves with sackcloth.” Jeremiah wasn’t the only person who grieved. The elders of the city showed signs of their mourning. They sat in sackcloth.

“The virgins of Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground. My eyes fail with tears, my heart is troubled...”

Again, **the weeping prophet** weeps!

“My bile is poured on the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because the children and the infants faint in the streets of the city.”

Jeremiah lost his lunch over Jerusalem’s destruction.

He threw up. He dry heaved over the devastation that he saw. Even children and infants were victims...

Verse 12, “They say to their mothers, “Where is grain and wine?” As they swoon like the wounded in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out in their mothers’ bosom.” In the aftermath of the siege the infants of Jerusalem had gone without food and drink.

“How shall I console you? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; who can heal you?” Remember Deuteronomy 28 had promised Israel either blesses or curses. If they obeyed the Law they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they’d be cursed.

And the blessings and curses were incomparable. No nation would be as blessed - no nation as cursed.

Both were proof that God was the God of Israel.

Verse 14, “Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not uncovered your iniquity, to bring back your captives, but have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.”

Throughout Jeremiah’s life he battled false prophets.

He opposed and confronted those teachers who kept telling the Jews only what they wanted to hear.

These people refused to speak the truth. Rather than expose sin, they watered it down. They gave the people a false hope and sense of security... **Which is exactly what is happening in churches today!**

Verse 15, “All who pass by clap their hands at you; they hiss and shake their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem: “Is this the city that is called ‘The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth’?”

Judah’s enemies were quoting Scripture. Psalm 48 described Jerusalem as “the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth...” Here her enemies mock the city... The city that lived in *bliss*, is now just a *hiss*...

But take note... even God’s enemies read the Bible. They knew Psalm 48. Which reminds us that just having a Bible, even reading your Bible, is not enough.

We need to believe and obey what we read.

“All your enemies have opened their mouth against you; they hiss and gnash their teeth. They say, “We have swallowed her up! Surely this is the day we have waited for; we have found it, we have seen it!”

The Lord has done what He purposed; He has fulfilled His word which He commanded in days of old.

He has thrown down and has not pitied, and He has caused an enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the horn of your adversaries.” All that had happened to Jerusalem was a fulfillment of the OT prophecies.

Verse 18, “Their heart cried out to the Lord, “O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night; give yourself no relief; give your eyes no rest.” Jerusalem should shed tears, not just Jeremiah.

“Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches...” The night watch was divided into three shifts: from 10 to midnight, midnight to 2, and 2 to 6.

“Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him for the life of your young children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street. See, O Lord, and consider! To whom have You done this? Should the women eat their offspring, the children they have cuddled? Should the priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?”

This was the horrible, unthinkable result of the 18 month Babylonian siege against Jerusalem... Food in the city had become so scarce women resorted to cannibalism. They ate their own babies and children in order to survive... We shutter at the prospects of such, *but who knows what you'd do if faced with starvation.*

Verse 21, “Young and old lie on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men have fallen by the sword; you have slain them in the day of Your anger, you have slaughtered and not pitied. You have invited as to a feast day the terrors that surround me.

In the day of the Lord's anger there was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up my enemies have destroyed.” The Babylonians had taken no prisoners and left no survivors. Sadly, even some of Jeremiah's own family and friends - “*whom I have borne and brought up*” - had been slaughtered.

Jeremiah loved people! He cared about the plight of others. The tears that stained his cheeks were proof!

It reminds me of two men who were discussing their respective churches. The first man said, "We just fired our pastor and hired a new one." The other fellow responded, "Why did you fire him?" The first man answered, "Because he spoke too much about hell."

His buddy asked him, "Well, does the new pastor speak on hell?" The man replied, "Yes, all the time."

The man was confused, "Well, what's the difference?" The first man answered "Well, when the new pastor speaks about hell you get the impression he doesn't want you to go there!" That's a big deal.

It was said of the great evangelist DL Moody, "Only Mr. Moody has the right to preach on hell for when he does he preaches it with tears in his voice."

Maybe the reason folks aren't listening to us is because they don't think we care? When was last time you or I shed a tear? As Paul said to the Ephesians, in 4:15, "speaking the truth in love" - this is the key!