**The Book of Lamentations**

**Lamentations Chapter 1**

ALEPH

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| 1 | How lonely sits the city  that was full of people!  She has become like a widow,  she who was great among the nations!  She who was a princess among the provinces  has been put to forced labor! |

BET

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| 2 | She weeps, yes, weeps in the night;  her tears are on her cheeks.  Among all her lovers  she has no one to comfort her.  All her friends have betrayed her;  they have become her enemies. |

GIMEL

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| 3 | Judah has gone into captivity  under affliction and under great servitude;  she lives among the nations;  she finds no rest;  all her persecutors caught up with her  in the middle of the narrow places. |

DALETH

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| 4 | The roads of Zion mourn  because no one comes to the appointed feasts.  All her gates are desolate.  Her priests are groaning,  her virgins are grieving,  and she herself is bitter. |

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| 5 | Her adversaries have become her masters.[[1]](#footnote-12421)  Her enemies are at ease,  for Yahweh has caused her to grieve  because of the multitude of her transgressions.  Her young children  have gone away as captives, *driven* before the enemy. |

VAV

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| 6 | All her splendor has departed from Daughter Zion;  her leaders have become like deer  that can find no pasture,  so they have fled without strength  before the hunter.[[2]](#footnote-14654) |

ZAYIN

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| 7 | In the days of her affliction and her homelessness,  Jerusalem remembers all her precious things  that were hers in the days of old.  When her people fell into the hand of the adversary  and no one helped her,  her adversaries saw her;  they laughed at her downfall. |

KHET

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| 8 | Jerusalem has greatly sinned,  therefore she has become an unclean thing.  All who honored her hold her in contempt  because they have seen her nakedness.  Also, she herself groans and turns away *in shame*. |

TET

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| 9 | Her uncleanness is on her skirts.  She did not consider her future;  she has fallen in an astonishing *way*;  she has no comforter.  O Yahweh, see my affliction  for the enemy is triumphant! |

YOD

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| 10 | The enemy has stretched out his hands  upon all her pleasant things;  she has seen that the nations  have entered into her sanctuary—  those whom you commanded  that they were not to enter into your congregation. |

KAF

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| 11 | All her people groan  while they search for bread;  they have traded their pleasant things for food  in order to stay alive.[[3]](#footnote-21806)  Look, Yahweh, and consider  how despicable I have become. |

LAMED

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| 12 | Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?  Look and see  if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,  which has been brought upon me,  which Yahweh has inflicted upon me  in the day of his fierce anger. |

MEM

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| 13 | From on high he has sent fire into my bones  and it overcame them.  He has spread a net for my feet;  he has turned me back;  he has made me desolate,  faint all day long. |

NUN

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| 14 | My transgressions have been formed into a yoke—  they have been woven together by his hand.  They have come upon my neck  *and* it has made my strength fail.  The Lord has given me into the hands  of those whom I am not able to stand against. |

SAMEK

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| 15 | The Lord, *who is* in my midst,  has tossed aside all my mighty men,  he has called an assembly against me  to crush my young men.  The Lord has trampled Virgin Daughter Judah  like *grapes* in a wine press. |

AYIN

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| 16 | I weep because of these things;  my eye, my eye runs down with water,  because the comforter who keeps me alive  is far from me.  My children are destitute  because the enemy has prevailed. |

PE

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| 17 | Zion spreads out her hands;  there is none to comfort her.  Yahweh has commanded concerning Jacob  that those who are around him are to be his adversaries.  Jerusalem is like a menstruous woman among them. |

TSADE

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| 18 | Yahweh is righteous,  for I have rebelled against his commandment.  Listen, please, all you peoples,  and see my sorrow.  My virgins and my young men  have gone into captivity. |

QOF

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| 19 | I called for my lovers,  but they deceived me.  My priests and my elders  slowly died in the city  while they were searching for food for themselves  in order to stay alive. |

RESH

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| 20 | See, Yahweh, how I am in distress!  My bowels are troubled,  my heart is pounding within me,  for I have rebelled, yes, rebelled.  Outside, the sword makes women childless,  *and* in the house, it is like is death. |

SHIN

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| 21 | They have heard my groaning,  but there is none to comfort me.  All my enemies have heard of my trouble;  they are glad that you have done it.  May you bring the day that you have proclaimed,  so that they will be like me. |

TAV

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| 22 | Let all their wickedness come before you.  Do to them as you have done to me  because of all my transgressions.  For my groans are many  and my heart is faint. |

**Lamentations Chapter 2**

ALEF

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| 1 | How the Lord has darkened Daughter Zion  with a cloud in his anger!  He has cast down the glory of Israel  from heaven to the earth  and has not remembered his footstool  in the day of his anger. |

BET

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| 2 | The Lord has swallowed up  all the habitations of Jacob,  and has not had mercy.  In his wrath he has destroyed  the strongholds of Daughter Judah;  he has brought them down to the ground.  He has defiled the kingdom and its leaders. |

GIMEL

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| 3 | In fierce anger he cut off  every horn of Israel;  he has drawn back his right hand  from before the enemy.  He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire  devouring all around. |

DALETH

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| 4 | He has bent his bow like an enemy,  he is standing, his right hand *is set* as an adversary,  he has killed all that were pleasant to the eye.  In the tent of Daughter Zion  he has poured out his wrath like fire. |

HE

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| 5 | The Lord has become like an enemy,  he has swallowed up Israel;  he has swallowed up all its palaces,  he has destroyed its strongholds;  he has multiplied mourning and lamentation  in Daughter Judah. |

VAV

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| 6 | He has wrecked his booth,  as if it were *a booth* *in* a garden;  he has destroyed his place of assembly.  Yahweh has caused *the* appointed feasts and Sabbaths  to be forgotten in Zion.  In the indignation of his anger  he has spurned the king and the priest. |

ZAYIN

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| 7 | The Lord has rejected his altar,  he has abandoned his sanctuary.  He has given up into the hand of the enemy  the walls of her palaces.  They have made a noise in the house of Yahweh  as in the day of an appointed feast. |

KHET

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| 8 | Yahweh determined to destroy  the wall of Daughter Zion;  he has stretched out the line,  he has not withdrawn his hand from destroying;  he has made the rampart and wall to mourn;  they languish together. |

TET

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| 9 | Her gates have sunk into the ground;  he has ruined and broken her bars;  her king and her officials are among the nations.  The Law is no more  and her prophets receive  no vision from Yahweh. |

YOD

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| 10 | The elders of Daughter Zion  sit on the ground, they keep silent;  they have thrown dust on their heads;  they have clothed themselves with sackcloth.  The virgins of Jerusalem  hang their heads down to the ground. |

KAF

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| 11 | My eyes are worn out from tears,  my bowels are troubled.  My guts[[4]](#footnote-13407) are poured on the earth  because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,  because the young children and the infants are fainting away  in the streets of the city. |

LAMED

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| 12 | They ask their mothers,  “Where is grain and wine?”  as they faint like a wounded man  in the streets of the city,  as their life is poured out  on their mothers’ bosom. |

MEM

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| 13 | What can I testify on your behalf?  To what can I compare you, Daughter Jerusalem?  To what can I liken you,  so that I can comfort you, virgin Daughter Zion?  For your ruin is as vast as the sea;  who can heal you? |

NUN

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| 14 | Your prophets have seen  false and whitewashed visions for you.  They have not exposed your iniquity  so that you could be restored from captivity,  but have seen oracles for you that are false and misleading. |

SAMEK

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| 15 | All that pass by  clap their hands at you.  They hiss and shake their heads  at Daughter Jerusalem,  saying, “Is this the city that people called the perfection of beauty,  the joy of the whole earth?” |

PE

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| 16 | All your enemies  have opened their mouth wide against you;  they hiss and gnash their teeth.  They say, “We have swallowed her up;  certainly this is the day that we hoped for;  we have found it, we have seen it.” |

AYIN

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| 17 | Yahweh has done what he purposed;  he has fulfilled his word  that he commanded in the days of old.  He has thrown down and had no mercy.  He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you;  he has exalted the horn of your adversaries. |

TSADE

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| 18 | Their heart cried out to the Lord.  O wall of the Daughter Zion,  let tears run down like a river  day and night!  Give yourself no rest;  do not let the tear[[5]](#footnote-24362) of your eye cease. |

QOF

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| 19 | Arise, cry out in the night,  at the beginning of the watches.  Pour out your heart like water  before the face of the Lord.  Lift up your hands toward him  for the life of your young children  that faint away because of hunger  at the head of every street. |

RESH

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| 20 | Look, Yahweh, and consider  to whom you have done this!  Should the women eat their fruit,  the children that were tenderly cared for?  Should the priest and the prophet  be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord? |

SHIN

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| 21 | The young and old  lie on the ground in the streets;  my virgins and my young men  have fallen by the sword.  You have killed them in the day of your anger;  you have slaughtered and not had mercy. |

TAV

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| 22 | You have called together my terrors from every side  like on a day of an appointed feast.  There were none who escaped or remained  in the day of Yahweh’s anger.  My enemy has consumed  those whom I have tenderly cared for and brought up. |

**Lamentations Chapter 3**

ALEF

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| 1 | I am the man that has seen affliction  because of the rod of God’s[[6]](#footnote-32463) wrath. |
| 2 | He has driven me and made me walk  in darkness and not in light. |
| 3 | Surely he turns his hand against me  again and again all day long. |

BET

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| 4 | He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away;  he has broken my bones. |
| 5 | He has built against me and surrounded me  with gall and tribulation. |
| 6 | He has made me to live in dark places  like those that have been long dead. |

GIMEL

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| 7 | He has walled me in so that I cannot go out;  he has made my *prison* chain heavy. |
| 8 | Even when I cry out and call for help,  he shuts out my prayer. |
| 9 | He has walled up my ways[[7]](#footnote-19643) with cut stone;  he has made my paths twisted. |

DALETH

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| 10 | To me, he is a bear lying in wait,  a lion in secret places. |
| 11 | He has turned aside my ways and pulled me in pieces;  he has made me desolate. |
| 12 | He has bent his bow  and set me as a target for the arrows. |

HE

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| 13 | He has shot the shafts of his quiver  into my kidneys. |
| 14 | I have become a laughingstock to all my people,  and their song *of ridicule* all day long. |
| 15 | He has filled me with bitterness,  he has satiated me with wormwood. |

VAV

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| 16 | He has made my teeth grind on gravel,  he has made me cower in ashes. |
| 17 | My soul has been deprived of peace;  I have forgotten what good is. |
| 18 | I said, “My future has perished,  and *also* what I hoped for from Yahweh.” |

ZAYIN

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| 19 | Remember my affliction and my homelessness,  the wormwood and gall. |
| 20 | My soul remembers, yes, remembers *them*  and is bent over within me. |
| 21 | This I recall to my mind,  therefore I have hope: |

KHET

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| 22 | because of Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness  we have not ceased *to be*,  because his mercies never come to an end. |
| 23 | They are new every morning;  great is your faithfulness. |
| 24 | “Yahweh is my portion,” says my soul,  “therefore I will hope in him.” |

TET

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| 25 | Yahweh is good to those who wait for him,  to the soul who seeks him. |
| 26 | It is good to hope and quietly wait  for the salvation of Yahweh. |
| 27 | It is good for a man  that he carry the yoke in his youth. |

YOD

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| 28 | Let him sit alone and be silent  because he has laid it on him. |
| 29 | Let him put his mouth in the dust,  perhaps there is *still* hope. |
| 30 | Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes *him*;  let him be filled with shame. |

KAF

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| 31 | For the Lord  will not abandon forever. |
| 32 | For though he cause grief,  yet he will have mercy  according to the vastness of his covenant faithfulness. |
| 33 | For it is not God’s[[8]](#footnote-15087) heart to afflict *people*,  or grieve the children of men. |

LAMED

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| 34 | To crush underfoot  all the prisoners of the land, |
| 35 | to deny a man justice  before the face of the Most High, |
| 36 | to subvert a man in his lawsuit,  does not the Lord see it? |

MEM

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| 37 | Who can speak and have it come to pass  if the Lord has not commanded it? |
| 38 | Does not bad and good  come out of the mouth of the Most High? |
| 39 | Why should a living man complain—  any man—because of *the consequences* of his sins? |

NUN

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| 40 | Let us search out and examine our ways,  and return to Yahweh. |
| 41 | Let us lift up our hearts in addition to *our* hands  to God in the heavens. |
| 42 | We have transgressed and have rebelled;  you have not forgiven. |

SAMEK

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| 43 | You have covered *yourself* with anger and pursued us;  you have killed without mercy. |
| 44 | You have covered yourself with a cloud  so that no prayer can pass through. |
| 45 | You have made us offscouring  and garbage in the midst of the peoples. |

PE

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| 46 | All our enemies  have opened their mouths wide against us. |
| 47 | Panic and the pit have come on us,  devastation and destruction. |
| 48 | My eye runs down with streams of water  because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. |

AYIN

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| 49 | My eyes flow down unceasingly,  without stopping, |
| 50 | until Yahweh looks down  and sees from heaven. |
| 51 | *What* my eyes see hurts my soul—  all *that has come upon* the daughters of my city. |

TSADE

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| 52 | For no reason, my enemies have hunted,  yes, hunted me like a bird. |
| 53 | They have confined me alive in the cistern  and have thrown a stone over me. |
| 54 | Water flowed upon my head;  I said, “I am cut off.” |

QOF

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| 55 | I called on your name, O Yahweh,  out of the depths of the cistern. |
| 56 | You heard my voice.  Do not hide your ear from my cry for relief. |
| 57 | You drew near on the day that I called to you;  you said, “Do not be afraid.” |

RESH

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| 58 | Lord, you have taken up my cause;  you have redeemed my life. |
| 59 | Yahweh, you have seen the wrong done to me.  Judge my case. |
| 60 | You have seen all their vengeance,  all their plans against me. |

SHIN

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| 61 | You have heard their reproach, Yahweh;  all their plans against me, |
| 62 | the lips of those that rose up against me  and their plotting against me all day long. |
| 63 | You see their sitting down and their rising up;  I am *the object of* their *mocking* song. |

TAV

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| 64 | Give them back what they deserve, Yahweh,  according to the work of their hands. |
| 65 | Give them a tortured mind,  as your curse to them. |
| 66 | Pursue them in anger and destroy them  from under Yahweh’s heaven. |

**Lamentations Chapter 4**

ALEF

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| 1 | How the gold has become dim!  The most pure gold has changed!  The stones of the sanctuary are poured out  at the head of every street. |

BET

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| 2 | The precious sons of Zion,  once valued as fine gold,  how are they regarded as clay pots,  the work of the hands of the potter! |

GIMEL

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| 3 | Even the jackals offer their breasts  to nurse their young,  *but* the daughter of my people has become cruel  like the ostriches in the wilderness. |

DALETH

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| 4 | The tongue of the nursing child  clings to the roof of his mouth because of thirst;  the young children ask for bread,  but no one gives to them. |

HE

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| 5 | Those who ate delicacies  are destitute in the streets;  those who were brought up in purple  cling to dunghills. |

VAV

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| 6 | For the iniquity of the daughter of my people  is greater than the sin of Sodom,  which was overthrown in a moment  even though no *human* hands were laid against her. |

ZAYIN

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| 7 | Her nobles[[9]](#footnote-18379) were purer than snow,  they were brighter than milk;  they were more ruddy in body than coral,  their form was like lapis lazuli. |

KHET

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| 8 | *But now* their appearance is darker than soot;  they are not known in the streets.  Their skin has shriveled on their bones;  it has become like dry wood. |

TET

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| 9 | Those killed by the sword are better off  than those killed by famine,  whose lives drain away, being stabbed  by the *lack of the* fruit of the field. |

YOD

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| 10 | The hands of the compassionate women  have boiled their own children.  They became their food  during the destruction of the daughter of my people. |

KAF

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| 11 | Yahweh has accomplished his wrath,  he has poured out his fierce anger.  He has kindled a fire in Zion  that has devoured its foundations. |

LAMED

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| 12 | The kings of the earth did not believe,  nor *did* any of the inhabitants of the world,  that the adversary and the enemy  would enter into the gates of Jerusalem. |

MEM

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| 13 | *It was* because of the sins of her prophets  and the iniquities of her priests.  They have poured out the blood of the righteous  in her midst. |

NUN

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| 14 | They wander like blind men in the streets,  polluted with blood  such that people  will not *even* touch their clothing. |

SAMEK

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| 15 | “Go away!” they cried out to them, “Unclean!  Go away! Go away! Don’t touch *anything*!”  When they fled away and wandered,  *even* people among the nations said,  “They cannot continue to stay here anymore.” |

PE

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| 16 | The face[[10]](#footnote-32466) of Yahweh has scattered them;  he does not continue to regard them.  They did not respect the persons[[11]](#footnote-17122) of the priests,  they did not favor the elders. |

AYIN

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| 17 | Our eyes still fail  *watching* in vain for our help.  In our watch-tower we watched  for a nation that could not save. |

TSADE

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| 18 | They hunt our steps  so that we cannot go in our *open* squares.  Our end is near, our days are done,  for our end has come. |

QOF

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| 19 | Those who chased us were swifter  than the eagles of the heavens.  They hotly pursued us on the mountains,  they laid wait for us in the wilderness. |

RESH

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| 20 | The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Yahweh,  was captured in their pits  of whom we said,  “Under his shade we will live among the nations.” |

SIN

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| 21 | Rejoice and be glad, O Daughter Edom,  you who live in the land of Uz!  *But* the cup *of judgment* will pass to you also;  you will get drunk and strip yourself naked. |

TAV

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| 22 | O Daughter Zion, *the punishment of* your iniquity is completed,  he will not continue to exile you.  O Daughter Edom, he will punish your iniquity,  he will uncover your sins. |

**Lamentations Chapter 5**

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| 1 | Remember, Yahweh, what has happened to us!  Look, and see our disgrace! |
| 2 | Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,  our houses to foreigners. |
| 3 | We have become orphans, without a father;  our mothers are like widows. |
| 4 | We must pay for the water we drink;  the wood we get comes at a price. |
| 5 | Our pursuers are breathing down our necks;[[12]](#footnote-19443)  we are weary and have no rest. |
| 6 | We have put out a hand to Egypt,  and to Assyria, *making a treaty* in order to get enough bread. |
| 7 | Our fathers sinned and are no more,  but we bear their iniquities.[[13]](#footnote-19846) |
| 8 | Slaves rule over us;  there is no one to tear us out of their hand. |
| 9 | We get our food at the peril of our souls  because of the sword in the wilderness. |
| 10 | Our skin heats up like an oven  because of the burning heat of hunger. |
| 11 | They raped the women in Zion,  the virgins in the cities of Judah. |
| 12 | Officials were hung up by their hands;  the faces of elders were not honored. |
| 13 | Young men labor at millstones;  boys stumble under *loads of* wood. |
| 14 | The elders have ceased from the *city* gate,  the young men from their music. |
| 15 | The joy of our hearts has ceased;  our dancing has been turned into mourning. |
| 16 | The crown has fallen from our head.  Woe to us, because we have sinned! |
| 17 | Because of this our hearts are faint;  because of these things our eyes grow dim; |
| 18 | because of Mount Zion that is desolate;  jackals prowl in it. |
| 19 | You, Yahweh, reign forever;  your throne is from generation to generation. |
| 20 | Why do you continually forget us  and forsake us for so long? |
| 21 | Restore us to yourself, O Yahweh, and we will be restored.  Renew our days as of old, |
| 22 | even though you have rejected, yes, rejected us.  You have been very angry against us. |

1. Lit. “her head” [↑](#footnote-ref-12421)
2. Lit. the “pursuer” [↑](#footnote-ref-14654)
3. Lit. “to refresh soul” [↑](#footnote-ref-21806)
4. Lit. “liver” [↑](#footnote-ref-13407)
5. Lit. “daughter” [↑](#footnote-ref-24362)
6. Lit. “his,” referring to God. [↑](#footnote-ref-32463)
7. Lit. “roads” [↑](#footnote-ref-19643)
8. Lit. “his” referring to God [↑](#footnote-ref-15087)
9. Or “Nazirites” [↑](#footnote-ref-18379)
10. Or “presence” [↑](#footnote-ref-32466)
11. Lit. “lift up the face” [↑](#footnote-ref-17122)
12. Lit. “upon” our necks [↑](#footnote-ref-19443)
13. Or “punishment” [↑](#footnote-ref-19846)