The Prophet Speaks:

8 (Aleph)3 1:12 Alas! The city once full of people4


2 The LXX and Vulgate (dependent on the LXX) include a preface that is lacking in the MT: "And it came to pass after Israel had been taken captive and Jerusalem had been laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented this lament over Jerusalem, and said...." Scholars generally view the preface in the LXX and Vulgate as a later addition, though the style is Hebrew rather than Greek.

3 The adverb רַבָּתִי (rabbati, "great of people") is used as an exclamation of lament or desperation: "How!" (BDB 32 s.v., or "Alas") (HALOT 40 s.v. 1.e). It is often the first word in laments (Isa 1:21; Jer 48:17; Lam 1:1; 2:1; 4:1, 2). Like the less emphatic exclamation זו היא (zohah, "Alas!") (2 Sam 1:19; Isa 14:4, 12; Ezek 26:17), it is used in contexts of lament and mourning.

4 The term בָּדָד (badad) "lady among the nations," is an Aramaic loanword which refers to an administrative or political governor under the Babylonian and, later, the Persian empires. "Badad" denotes a title of authority, often of a feudal nature. It is used in a variety of contexts, such as in the Bible (Isa 11:11; Jer 48:17; Ezek 26:17; Lam 1:1; 2:1; 4:1, 2). It is also used in a metaphorical sense to denote a ruler's power or authority. The term is often used in a political context, referring to a person who holds authority or power.

5 sn Hezekiah was the king of Judah who ruled during the Babylonian Exile. Hezekiah's reign was marked by political and religious turbulence. In 2 Kings 18:21,23,26; 19:13-19; 2 Chronicles 32:1-23,25-33; 33:1-25; Isaiah 36:1-36; 37:1-38; 2 Kings 18-20, Hezekiah's reign is described as one filled with both prosperity and adversity. Hezekiah is depicted as a wise and pious leader who is instrumental in the salvation of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army. Hezekiah's reign was marked by his faithfulness and devotion to Yahweh, as well as his political maneuvering and military strategies. Hezekiah's reign is also notable for his contributions to the rebuilding and restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as his efforts to restore the worship of Yahweh in Judah.

6 sn Lamentations 1:1-2 speaks of Jerusalem, which, in the time of the Babylonian Exile, was a city that had been deserted. The city which was once filled with people was now all alone. The phrase "The city once full of people" is a reference to the time when Jerusalem was a thriving and bustling city, filled with people and activity. The phrase "now sits all alone!" is a reference to the time when Jerusalem was a city of isolation and desolation, with no people or activity. The phrase "forced laborer!" is a reference to the time when Jerusalem was a city of forced labor and conscripted workers, with no people or activity.

7 sn Two thirds of Lamentations is comprised of enjambed parallel phrasing. This serves a rhetorical effect not necessarily apparent if translated in the word order of English prose. Together with the alphabetic acrostic form, these pull the reader/hearer along through the various juxtaposed pictures of horror and grief. For further study on the import of these stylistic features to the function of Lamentations see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, Lamentations (IBC), 12-20; idem, "The Enjambing Line in Lamentations: A Taxonomy (Part 1)," ZAW 113/2 (2001): 219-39; idem, "The Effects of Enjambment in Lamentations," ZAW 113/5 (2001): 1-16. However, for the sake of English style and clarity, the translation does not necessarily reflect the Hebrew style and word order.

8 sn The adverb לְכֻשָּׂרָתִי (lекушарити, "princess among the provinces") is in construct with the noun רַב (rav, "great") and expresses identity ("has become a widow") rather than comparison ("has become like a widow") (see HALOT 453 s.v. 1; BDB 454 s.v. 2; Deut 20:11; 2 Chr 14:10; 2 Kings 18:30, 32, 34). The construction emphasizes the class or order of the noun. The noun רַב (rav, "great") is a remnant of the old genitive-construction case (GKC 253 §90). This construction is the adjective worded at the beginning of the verse in the phrase "full of people." These may also be construed as epithets.

9 sn "Princes" or "princes” (sarim) is the plural form of the noun "prince” (sar) which means "great people of the provinces under the rule of provincial governors (sarim), provinces belonging to the provinces (sarim), or princes.” The noun "princes” (sarim) is a wordplay alluding to this political background; personified Jerusalem had ruled over the Judean provinces.

10 tn Following the verb הָיָה (hayah, "to be"), the preposition לְ (le), the preposition תָּמַל (tamal, "to be") designates a transition into a new state or condition: "to become" (BDB 512 s.v. 4.a; e.g., Gen 2:7; 1 Sam 9:16; 15:1).

11 tn The noun נֶזֶק (nezek) means "forced labor, corveé slave, conscripted worker.” It refers to a subjugated population, subject to forced labor and/or heavy taxes (Gen 49:15; Exod 1:11; Deut 20:11; Josh 16:10; 17:13; Judg 1:28, 30, 33, 35; 1 Kgs 5:28 HT [5:14 ET]; 9:15, 21; 12:18; 2 Chr 10:18; Isa 31:8; Lam 1:1).
1:2 She weeps bitterly at night; tears stream down her cheeks. She has no one to comfort her among all her lovers. All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

1:3 Judah has departed into exile under affliction and harsh oppression. She lives among the nations; she has found no resting place. All who pursued her overtook her in narrow straits.

2:1 The roads to Zion 
9 Hebrew "roads of Zion." The noun שֵׁיַר (šeyr, Zion) is a genitive of direction (termination) following the construct noun, meaning "branch to Zion." The noun סֶהָר (sēr, "roads") is normally masculine in gender, but here it is feminine (e.g., Exod 18:20) as indicated by the following feminine adjective וה蟋 (avdot, "mourning"). This rare feminine usage is probably due to the personification of Jerusalem as a bereaved woman throughout chap. 1.

2:2 "her tears are on her cheek." Following the interpretation of this line at Qumran, it describes a futile attempt to flee from the enemies in narrow straits which thwarted a successful escape.
when she became a poor homeless person, all her treasures that she owned in days of old. When her people fell into an enemy’s grip, none of her allies came to her rescue. Her enemies gloated over her;

1 Hebrew “the days of her poverty and her homelessness,” or “the days of her affliction and wandering.” The plural construction (v’yayel ’lkhu) functions as a subjective genitive: “she became impoverished and homeless.”

12 The BHS editors suggest that the second bicolon in 1:7 is a late addition and should be deleted. Apart from the four sets of bicola here in 1:7 and again in 2:19, every stanza in chapters 1-4 consists of three sets of bicola. Commentators usually suggest dropping line b or line c. Depending on the meaning of “days” in line a (see note on “when” earlier in the verse) either line makes sense. The four lines would make sense as two bicola if “days of” in line 7a is understood adverbially and 7b as the direct object completing the sentence. Lines 7c-d would begin with a temporal modifier and the rest of the couplet describe conditions that were true at that time.

13 Hebrew “into the hand of.” In such phrases “hand” represents power or authority.

14 Hebrew “and there was no helper for her.” This phrase is used idiomatically in OT to describe the plight of a city whose allies refuse to help ward off a powerful attacker. The nominal participle יָקֹע (‘yiqqû) refers elsewhere to military warriors (1 Chr 12:1, 18, 22; 2 Chr 20:23; 26:7; 28:23; 26:15; Ps 28:7; 46:6; Ezek 12:14; 30:8; 32:21; Dan 11:34) and the related noun refers to military allies upon whom an attacked city calls for help (Lachish Letters 19:1).

15 Hebrew “the pursuer” (ra’ah, “to look”) has a broad range of meanings, including “to feast the eyes upon” and “to look down on” or “to gloat over” fallen enemies with exultation and triumph (e.g., Judg 16:27; Pss 22:18; 112:8; 118:7; Ezek 28:17; Mic 7:10; Obad 1:13). This nuance is clarified by the synonymous parallelism between יָקֹע (‘yiqqû, “they gloated over her”) in the A-line and יָקֹע (‘yiqqû, “they mocked at her downfall”) in the B-line.

1 Hebrew became [her] head (emshekkah Pa’sha or shabakha Pa’sha, hayy u’vetsareh Pa’sha or hayy u’tsareh Pa’sha) or more idiomatically “have come out on top.” This is a Semitic idiom for domination or subjugation, with “head” as a metaphor for leader.

2 The nuance expressed in the LXX is that her enemies proscribed (cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV, NJLT).

3 Hebrew “because of her many rebellions.” The plural הָשָׂחֲקוּ (h’shakhu, “her rebellions”) is an example of the plural of repeated action or characteristic behavior (see IBHS §1.3.3c). The 3rd person feminine singular suffix (“her”) probably functions as a subjective genitive: “her rebellions” = “she has rebelled.”

4 The singular noun הח (Ha’ah) is a collective singular, meaning “captives, prisoners.” It functions as an adverbal accusative of state: “[they] went away as captives.”

5 Hebrew “the daughter of Zion.” This phrase is used as an epithet for the city. “Daughter” may seem extraneous in English but consciously joins the various epithets and metaphors of Jerusalem as a woman, a device used to evoke sympathy and simultaneously suggests to the writer the departure of the glory of Israel.

6 Hebrew “all her splendor.” The 3rd person feminine singular pronominal suffix (“her”) functions as a subjective genitive: “everything in which she gloried.” The noun חָג (Ha’shag) is used idiomatically in OT to describe the plight of a city whose allies refuse to help ward off a powerful attacker. The nominal participle יָקֹע (‘yiqqû) refers elsewhere to military warriors (1 Chr 12:1, 18, 22; 2 Chr 20:23; 26:7; 28:23; 26:15; Ps 28:7; 46:6; Ezek 12:14; 30:8; 32:21; Dan 11:34) and the related noun refers to military allies upon whom an attacked city calls for help (Lachish Letters 19:1).

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9 Hebrew “became like deer; they found no pasture, so they were too exhausted to escape from the hunter.”

10 Hebrew “the days of her affliction and wandering”) form a nominal hendiadys in English (i.e., “her impoverished homelessness”) is an example of the plural of intensity. The two nouns הַעֲנִיִּים מְרוּדִים (ha’uniyim merudim, lit., “her impoverished homelessness”) is used in Isa 58:7 (see GKC 226 §§83.c), suggesting this was a Hebrew idiom. Jerusalem is personified as one of its inhabitants who became impoverished and homeless when the city was destroyed.

11 Hebrew “the days of her poverty and her homelessness,” or “the days of her affliction and wandering”) function as subjective genitives: “she became impoverished and homeless.” The plural noun מְרוּדִים (merudim, lit., “her homelessness”) is an example of the plural of intensity. The two nouns מְרוּדִים (merudim, lit., “her poverty and her homelessness”) form a nominal hendiadys in English (i.e., “her impoverished homelessness”) is an example of the plural of intensity. The two nouns מְרוּדִים (merudim, lit., “her homelessness”) is used in Isa 58:7 (see GKC 226 §§83.c), suggesting this was a Hebrew idiom. Jerusalem is personified as one of its inhabitants who became impoverished and homeless when the city was destroyed.

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they sneered at her downfall.

1:8 Jerusalem committed terrible sin; therefore she became an object of scorn. All who admired her have despised her because they have seen her nakedness. She groans aloud and turns away in shame.

The LXX translates "uncleanness" (κακία) as "something abominable" (σομαθίαν ἁλοιφέας) from the noun ἁλοίφη (halophē). The noun is related to ἁλοίφω (halophē), meaning "to waste, to lose, to be ruined." The diminutive form ἁλοίφεας (halophē) is used here to describe Jerusalem's condition.

"Her menstrual flow has soiled her clothing." She did not consider the consequences of her sin. Her demise was astonishing, and there was no one to comfort her.

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1 Heb “laughed” or “sneered.” The verb יֶרַד (yarad, “to laugh”) is often used in reference to contempt and derision (e.g., Job 30:1; Ps 37:13; 52:8; 59:9; Lam 1:7).

2 The MT reads יָרַד כַּלָּה (mishbah, “her annihilation”) from the noun בַּלָּה (balalah, “cessation, annihilation”), which is derived from the root בָּל (bala), “to cease.” The LXX mistakenly connected this with the root בַּל (bala, “to dwell”), reading μετοικεσία αὐτῆς (metoikesia auths), “her dwelling.” The MT is favored on the basis of internal evidence: (1) The MT is the more difficult reading, being a hapax legomenon, (2) the LXX is guilty of simply misunderstanding the root and wrongly vocalizing the consonantal text, and (3) the LXX does not make good sense contextually, while the MT does.

3 The MT reads כָּבֵד (khet, “sin”), but the BHS editors suggest the vocalization כָּבֵד (khato), “sin.” Qal absolute in.

4 Heb “she has become an object of head-nodding.” The expression כָּבֵד (khato) is a Qal participle of כְּבֵד (khav, “to go down”). External evidence favors the MT (supp. 44:15 [HT 14]), hence the translation “object of scorn.” There is debate whether כָּבֵד (khato) means (1) “object of head-shaking” from הָאָנַח (yanaḥ, “to shake,” BDB 626-27 s.v. I mishbat, “to wander”); (2) the MT reads כָּבֵד (khato), “to consider, think about” the future outcome of conduct (e.g., Isa 47:7) (BDB 270 s.v. I mishbatteha, “cessation, annihilation”). The same term is used in 7a. This reflects the ancient Near East notion that the sequences of the sin of Jerusalem: uncleanness = her sin, and soiling her own clothes = consequences of sin. The poet also seems to be mixing metaphors allowing various images (of being guilty, the Lord should be motivated to aid Jerusalem and therefore her people) because her obscene reality is so revolting.

5 Heb “her uncleanness is in her skirts.” This term is a synecdoche of specific (skirts) for general (clothing).

6 The basic meaning of כָּבֵד (khato) is “to remember, to call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. I khato). Although it is often used in reference to recollection of past events or consideration of present situations, it also may mean “to consider, think about” the future outcome of conduct (e.g., Isa 47:7) (BDB 270 s.v. I). The same term is used in 7a.

7 Heb “she did not consider her end.” The noun מַרְאָה (mara, “end”) here refers to an outcome or the consequences of an action; in light of 1:8 here it is the consequence of sin or immoral behavior (Num 23:10; 24:20; Deut 32:20, 29; Job 8:7; Pss 37:37; 73:17; Prov 14:12; 23:32; 25:8; Eccl 7:8; Isa 46:10; 47:7; Jer 5:31; 17:11; Dan 12:8).

8 The MT reads כָּבֵד (khato) as “she has come down marvelously” (pēla’im, “something unusual, astonishing”) (HALOT 928 s.v.). The plural כָּבֵד (khato’im, lit., “astonishments”) is an example of the plural of intensity: “very astonishing.” The noun functions as an adverbial accusative of manner; the nature of her descent shocks and astounds. Rendering כָּבֵד (khato’im) as “she has come down marvelously” (cf. BDB 810 s.v. I and KJV, ASV) is hardly appropriate; it is better to nuance it “in an astonishing way” (HALOT 928 s.v. 3) or simply “was astonishing.”
She cried, “Look, 2 O LORD, on my 2 affliction because my 2 enemy boasts!”

1:10 An enemy grabbed 4 all her valuables. 5

Indeed she watched in horror as Jerusalem invaded her holy temple 7 – those whom you 11 had commanded: “They must not enter 4 your assembly place.” 11

Jerusalem Speaks:

“Look, O LORD! Consider 27 that I have become worthless!”

1555 LAMENTATIONS 1:11

2 (Kaf)

1:11 All her people groaned as they searched for a morsel of bread. 12 They exchanged 13 their valuables 14 for 15 just enough food to stay alive. 16

sn This is a quotation from Deut 23:3, “No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.” Jeremiah applies this prohibition against Ammonites and Moabites to the Babylonians who ransacked and destroyed the temple in 587/586 B.C.E. This hermeneutical move may be explained on the basis of synecdoche of species (Ammonites and Moabites) for general (unconverted Gentiles as a whole). On a different note, the prohibition forbidding Ammonites and Moabites from entering the assembly (qahal, Deut 23:2-8) did not disallow Gentile proselytes from converting to Yahweh. The Kethib (masculine singular) and the Targums (masculine plural) allow converts of the Babylonian captives, as well as those of the Edomites and the Moabites. This is reflected in the days of the Second Temple when Gentile proselytes were allowed to enter the “court of the Gentiles” in Herod’s temple, but were forbidden further access into the inner temple precincts.

10 sn The noun qahal (‘assembly’) does not refer here to the collective group of people assembled to worship the LORD, but to the place of their assembly: the temple. This is an example of a synecdoche of the people contained (= assembled) for the container (= temple). The intent is to make the violation feel more personal than someone walking into a building.

11 sn This is a quotation from Deut 23:3, “No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.” Jeremiah applies this prohibition against Ammonites and Moabites to the Babylonians who ransacked and destroyed the temple in 587/586 B.C.E. This hermeneutical move may be explained on the basis of synecdoche of species (Ammonites and Moabites) for general (unconverted Gentiles as a whole). On a different note, the prohibition forbidding Ammonites and Moabites from entering the “assembly” (qahal, Deut 23:2-8) did not disallow Gentile proselytes from converting to Yahweh. The Kethib (masculine singular) and the Targums (masculine plural) allow converts of the Babylonian captives, as well as those of the Edomites and the Moabites. This is reflected in the days of the Second Temple when Gentile proselytes were allowed to enter the “court of the Gentiles” in Herod’s temple, but were forbidden further access into the inner temple precincts.

15 sn The noun nefesh (‘soul’) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 4:22; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:11; 15:27; Deut 21:14; 1 Kgs 9:16; Josh 1:10; 2 Sam 24:24).

16 sn The noun hashiv (‘return’) functions as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 44:23; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; 1 Jon 1:14). When used with גש (‘return’), the Hiphil יבש (hashiv) of ש (shuv, “to turn, return”) may mean “to restore a person’s vitality,” that is, to keep a person alive (Gen 1:26).

17 sn The dagesh kaf in ס (kaf) following the vowel ending the verb הבהב (‘habbahab, “consider”) indicates a dramatic pause between the calling for the LORD’s attention and stating the allegation to be seen and considered.
He spread out a trapper's net
for my neck; 13
He sent fire down into my bones, and it overcame them.

He burned with anger.

He spread down fire 8
into my bones, and it overcame 9 them.

He spread out a trapper’s net 10 for my neck; they are fastened together by his hand.

He spread his yoke 13 on my neck;
he has sapped my strength.\(^1\)

The Lord\(^2\) has handed me over to those whom I cannot resist.

\(\textbf{D} \text{ (Samek)}\)

1:15 He rounded up\(^3\) all my mighty ones;\(^4\)

The Lord\(^5\) did this\(^6\) in my midst.

He summoned an assembly\(^7\) against me to shatter my young men. The Lord has stomped like grapes\(^8\) the virgin daughter, Judah.\(^9\)

\(\textbf{D} \text{ (Pe)}\)

1:17 Zion spread out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her. The Lord has issued a decree against Jacob; his neighbors\(^10\) have become his enemies. Jerusalem has become like filthy garbage\(^11\) in their midst.\(^12\)

\(\text{The Prophet Speaks:}\)

\(\textbf{D} \text{ (Pe)}\)

1:16 I weep because of these things; my eyes\(^13\) flow with tears.\(^14\) For there is no one in sight who can comfort me\(^15\) or encourage me.\(^16\) My children\(^17\) are desolated because an enemy has prevailed.

\(\text{The Prophet Speaks:}\)

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1 tn Heb “he has caused my strength to stumble.” The phrase (hikhshil kokhi, “He has made my strength stumble”) is an idiom that means “to weaken, make feeble.”

2 tc Here the MT reads רָידָי (’raday, “the Lord”), the perpetual Qere reading for רָי (YHWH, “Yahweh”), but a multitude of Hebrew manuscripts read consonantal רָי (YHWH, traditionally translated “the Lord”).

3 tn Heb “The Lord has given me into the hands of.”

4 tn The verb סָלָה (salah) occurs only twice in OT: once in Qal (Ps 119:118) and once here in Piel. It is possibly a by-form of סל (sal, “to heap up”). It may also be related to Arabic اصل (’asl) meaning “to throw away” and Assyrian salu/sala meaning “to hurl (away)” (AHw 1552) or “to kick up dust, shoot (arrows), reject, throw away?” (CAD 17:272). With people as its object salu is used of people casting away their children, specifically meaning selling them on the market. The LXX translates סל (salah) as ἔφερεν (exeren, “to remove, lead away”). Thus God is either (1) heaping them up (dead) in the city square, (2) putting them up for sale in the city square, or (3) leading them out of the city (into exile or to deprive it of defense). The English “round up” could accommodate any of these and is also a cattle term, which fits well with the use of the word “bulls” (see following note).

5 tn Heb “bulls.” Metaphorically, bulls may refer to mighty ones, leaders or warriors. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp (Lamentations [IBC], 69) insightfully suggests that the Samek stanzas present an overarching dissonance by using terms associated with a celebratory feast (bulls, assembly, and a winepress) in sentences where God is abusing the normally expected celebrants, i.e. the “leaders” are the sacrifice.

6 tc The MT reads רָידָי (’raday, “the Lord”) here rather than רָי (YHWH, “the Lord”); this occurs again a second time later in this verse. See the tc note at 1:14.

7 tn The verb is elided and understood from the preceding context. [Hebrew “my sons.” The term “my sons” (בַּנַי, bni) as the subject of the verb late, as it were, emphasizes the irony of the action taken by a person in this position.

8 tc The MT reads the preposition ב (bet, “in”) prefixed to יִרְדֵּי (“my midst”): יִרְדֵּי (yirdei, “in my midst”); however, the LXX reads εἰς μεσοὺς εἰς (eis mesous eis) which may reflect a Vorlage of the preposition μίαν (min, “from”), יִרְדֵּי (yirdei, “from my midst”). The LXX may have chosen εἰς: to accommodate understandings of יִרְדֵּי (yirdei, “to remove, lead away”). The textual deviation may have been caused by an unusual orthographic confusion.

9 tn Or “out of my midst.” See the preceding tc note.

10 tn Heb “an assembly.” The noun יִרְדֵּי (yirdei, “assembly”) is normally used in reference to the annual religious festive assemblies of Israel ( Ezek 45:17; Hos 9:5; Zep 3:18; Zech 8:19). Though a number of English versions take this term “assembly” to refer to the invading army which attacks the city (e.g., NAB, NW, TEV, NLT).

11 tn Heb “a winepress he has stomped.” The noun גָּרֶה (gar, “winepress”) functions as an adverbial accusative of location: “in a winepress.” The translation reflects the synechoche that is involved – one stompets the grapes that are in the winepress, not the winepress itself.

12 tc The MT and several medieval Hebrew mss read רָי (r, “my sons,” “my eye, my eye”). However, the second יִרְדֵּי (yirdei) does not appear in several other medieval Hebrew mss, or in Old Greek, Syriac Peshitta or Latin Vulgate.

13 tn Heb “My eye, my eye.” The Hebrew text repeats the term for literary emphasis to stress the emotional distress of personified Jerusalem.

14 tn Heb “For a comforter is far from me.”

15 tc The phrase רָי (r, “my sons,” “my soul to return”) is a Hebrew idiom that means “one who could cause me to return.”

16 tc The Lord, Hebrew רָי (r, “some”). The term רָי (r, “water”) is a figurative description (hypocatastasis) of the former inhabitants of Jerusalem/Judah personified as the Lady Jerusalem’s children. Jerusalem mourns (and views) their devastation like a mother would her children.

17 tc The verb רָי (r, “some”) means “to be desolated.” The verb is used in reference to land destroyed in battle and left “deserted” (lsa 49:8; Ezek 33:28; 35:12; 15:36). When used in reference to persons, it describes the aftermath of a physical attack, such as rape (2 Sam 13:20) or military overthrow of a city (lsa 54:1; Lam 1:13; 16; 3:11).

18 tc Heb “his neighbors,” which refers to the surrounding nations.

19 tc The noun יִרְדֵּי (yirdei, “unclean thing”) has three basic categories of meaning: (1) biological uncleanness: menstrual struation of a woman (Lev 12:2, 5; 15:19-33 [9x]; Num 19:9, 13, 20; 31:23; Ezek 18:6; 22:10; 36:17); (2) ceremonial uncleanness: moral impurity and idolatry (Lev 20:21; 2 Chr 29:5; Ezra 9:11; Zech 13:1); and (3) physical uncleanness: filthy garbage (Lam 1:17; Ezek 7:19, 20).

20 tc The MT reads רָי (r, “some”). The BHS editors suggest that this is a textual corruption for רָי (r, “in my midst”). The noun יִרְדֵּי (yirdei) might have dropped out due to orthographic confusion.

21 tn Or “in their eyes.” See the preceding tc note.
LAMENTATIONS 1:18

Jerusalem Speaks:

My heart is pounding inside me.
Yes, I was terribly rebellious!
Out in the street the sword bereaves a mother of her children.
Inside the house death is present.

They have heard that I groan,
that You have done it.

They have heard of my name,
Inside the house it is like death.
Out in the street the sword bereaves a mother of her children.

They have heard of my name.

They are glad that you have brought it about.

They have heard that You have done it.

They have heard of my name.

They have heard that You have done it.

They have heard of my name.

They have heard that You have done it.

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They have heard that You have done it.

They have heard of my name.

They have heard that You have done it.
Bring about the day of judgment that you promised so that they may end up like me!

1:22 Let all their wickedness come before you; afflict them just as you have afflicted me because of all my acts of rebellion. For my groans are many, and my heart is sick with sorrow.

The Prophet Speaks:

N (Aleph)

2:1 Alas! The Lord has covered Daughter Zion with his anger. He has thrown down the splendor of Israel from heaven to earth; he did not protect his temple when he displayed his anger.

2:2 The Lord destroyed mercilessly all the homes of Jacob’s descendants.

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1 tn The verb הדָּוָה (davah) Hiphil perfect 2nd person masculine singular from זָו (bo), “to bring” in the Hiphil probably functions, not as a simple past-time perfect, but as a predictive perfect, an unusual volitional nuance similar to the imperfective of request. The predictive is used in reference to situations the speaker prays for and expects to be realized; it is a prayer or request of confidence (e.g., 2 Sam 7:29; Job 21:16; 22:18; Pss 3:8; 4:2; 7:7; 22:22; 31:5-6; 71:3; Lam 1:21). See IBHS 22:18; Pss 3:8; 4:2; 7:7; 22:22; 31:5-6; 71:3; Lam 1:21). See IBHS 494-95 §30.5.4c, d. This volitional perfective nuance is reflected in the Syriac Peshitta which translates this verb using an imperative. Most English versions adopt the perfective nuance: “Bring on the day you have announced” (NRSV); “Oh, that Thou wouldst bring the day which Thou hast proclaimed” (NASB), “May you bring the day you have announced” (NIV); “Bring the day you promised” (TEV), “Oh, bring on them what befell me!” (NJPS), “Hurry and punish them, as you have promised” (CEV). A few English versions adopt a prophetic perfect future-time nuance: “thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called” (KJV, NKJV, ASV).

2 tn The term יומ (yom, “day”) is often used as a metonymy of association, standing for the event associated with that particular time period: judgment (e.g., Isa 2:12; 13:6; 9; Jer 46:10; Lam 2:22; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Amos 5:18; 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7; 14; Zech 14:1; Mal 3:23 HT [4:5 ET]) (BDB 399 s.v. 3).

3 tn Heb “proclaimed.”

4 tn Heb “and.” Following a volitive use of the perfect, the נָתְנָה (tn) prefixed to לְהַעֲבֹר (lāhaḇ, “and let it be!”) introduces a purpose/result clause in a dependent volitive construction: “so that they may be like me!”

5 tn Heb “that they be like me.”

6 tn For the nuance “afflict” see the note at 1:12.

7 tn For the nuance “afflict” see the note at 1:12.

8 tn The parallel statements “afflict them” and “just as you have afflicted me” in the translation make the Hebrew word-play between יָעִיב (olahd) “May you deal with them”) and נָתָן (ollel lamo, “you dealt with me”).

9 tn Heb “all my rebellions,” that is, “all my rebellious acts.”

10 tn Heb “is sorrowful” or “is faint.” The adjective דָּוָה (davah, “faint”) is used in reference to emotional sorrow (e.g., Isa 1:5; Lam 1:22; Jer 8:18). The cognate Aramaic term means “sorrow,” and the cognate Syriac term refers to “misery” (HALOT 216 s.v. ʾavah). The related Hebrew adjective דָּוָה (davah) means “physically” sick and “emotionally sad,” while the related Hebrew verb davah (davah) means “to be sad” due to menstruation. The more literal English versions fail to bring out explicitly the nuance of emotional sorrow and create possible confusion whether the problem is simply loss of courage: “my heart is faint” (KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, ASV, NASB, NIV). The more paraphrastic English versions explicate the emotional sorrow that this idiom connotes: “my heart is sick” (NRSV), “I am sick at heart” (TEV), and “I’ve lost all hope!” (CEV).

11 tn See the note at 1:1.

12 tc The MT reads נָשָׁה (nashah, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the Lord”). See the tc note at 1:14.

13 sn Chapter 2 continues the use of feminine epithets (e.g., “Daughter Zion”), although initially portraying Jerusalem as an object destroyed by the angered enemy, God.

14 tn The verb בְּעֵש (bev) is a hapax legomenon (a term that appears only once in Hebrew OT). Most lexicons take it as a denominative verb from the noun בָּע (av, “cloud,” “day,” “cloud of Jerusalem”). The related Syriac term 뜣 (lāhaḇ) means “sorcery” (LAMOT 1:22; BDB 728 s.v. ʾav). The cognate Arabic verb “to blame, revile” (Ehrlich, Rudolph, Hillers): “the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud of his anger.” This approach is followed by many English versions (KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV). However, a few scholars relate it to a cognate Arabic verb “to blame, revile” (Ehrlich, Rudolph, Hillers): “the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud of his anger.” Several English versions adopt this (NRSV, NJPS, CEV). The picture of cloud and wrath concurs with the stanzas’ connection to “day of the Lord” imagery.

15 tn The common gloss for יָעִיב (olahd) “is remember.” יָעִיב (olahd) entails “bearing something in mind” in a broader sense than the English gloss “remember.” When God “bears someone in mind,” the consequences are beneficial for them. The implication of not regarding his footstool is to not esteem it and so not care for or protect it.

16 tn Heb “the footstool of His feet.” The noun יומ (hadam, “footstool”), always joined with בָּע (lāhaḇ, “cloud,” “feet”) is always used figuratively in reference to the dwelling place of God (BDB 213 s.v. ʾav). It usually refers to the Lord’s temple in Jerusalem ( Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1) or to the ark as the place above which the Lord is enthroned (Pss 99:5; 132:7; 1 Chr 28:2).

17 tn Heb “in the day of His anger.” As a temporal reference this phrase means “when he displayed his anger.” The Hebrew term “day,” associated with the “day of the Lord” or “day of his wrath” also functions as a title in a technical sense.

18 tc The MT reads נָשָׁה (nashah, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the Lord”). See the tc note at 1:14.

19 tn Heb “has swallowed up.”

20 tc The Kethib is written דָּוָה (davah, “without mercy”), while the Qere reads יָעִיב (olahd, “and he has shown no mercy”). The Kethib is followed by the LXX, while the Qere is reflected in many Hebrew mss and the ancient versions (Syriac Peshitta, Aramaic Targum, Latin Vulgate). The English versions render the sentence as a quote between the Kethib and Qere: “The Lord swallowed all the dwellings of Jacob without mercy” (cf. RSV, NRSV, NIV, TEV, NJPS) and the Qere: “The Lord swallowed all the dwellings of Jacob, and has shown no mercy” (cf. KJV, NASB, CEV). As these words occur between a verb and its object (סָרִים [khalma] is not otherwise followed by וְקֵר [vr, direct object marker]), an adverbial reading is the most natural, although interrupting the sentence with an insertion is possible. Compare 2:17, 21: 3:43. In contexts of harming, to show mercy often means to spare from harm.

21 tn Heb “all the dwellings of Jacob.”
In his anger he tore down the fortified cities of Daughter Judah. He knocked to the ground and humiliated the kingdom and its rulers.  

2:3 In fierce anger he destroyed the whole army of Israel. He withdrew his right hand as the enemy attacked. He was like a raging fire in the land of Jacob; it consumed everything around it.

2:4 He prepared his bow like an enemy; his right hand was ready to shoot. Like a foe he killed everyone, even our strong young men; he has poured out his anger like fire on the tent of Daughter Zion.

The singular noun שָׁכַח (shakkakh, “booth,” BDB 697 s.v.) is a metonymy for a container (= tent) for contents (= inhabitants of Zion). The MT reads אֲדֹנָי (’adonay, “the Lord”) here rather than יהוה (YHWH, “the Lord”). See the tc note at 1:14.

2:5 The Lord, like an enemy, destroyed Israel. He destroyed all her palaces; he ruined her fortified cities. He made everyone in Daughter Judah mourn and lament.

2:6 He destroyed his temple as if it were a vineyard; he destroyed his appointed meeting place. The Lord has made those in Zion forget both the festivals and the Sabbaths.

1 tn Heb “the strongholds.”
2 tn Heb “He brought down to the ground in disgrace the kingdom and its princes.” The verbs שָׁכַח (shakkakh, “he has brought down...he has profaned”) function as a verbal hendiadys, as the absence of the conjunction ו (vav) suggests. The first verb retains its full verbal force, while the second functions adverbially: “he has brought down [direct object] in disgrace.”
3 tc The MT reads בָּא (’ba, “anger”), while the ancient versions (LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate) reflect ברו (brw, “his anger”). The MT is the more difficult reading syntactically, while the ancient versions are probably smoothing out the text.
4 tn Heb “cut off, scattered.”
5 tn Heb “every horn of Israel.” The term “horn” (קֶשֶׁת qeshet) normally refers to the horn of a bull, one of the most powerful animals in ancient Israel. This term is often used figuratively as a symbol of strength, usually in reference to the military might of an army (Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:1, 10; 2 Sam 22:2-3; Psa 18:18, 25; 32:11; 1 Chr 25:5; Jer 48:25; Lam 2:3, 17; Ezek 29:21; BDB 901 s.v. 2), just as warriors are sometimes figuratively described as “bulls.” Cutting off the horn is a figurative expression for destroying warriors (Jer 48:25; Ps 75:10 [He 11]).
6 tn Heb “he causes his right hand to turn back.” The implication in such contexts is that the Lord’s right hand protects his city. This image of the right hand is consciously reversed in 2:4.
7 tn Heb “from the presence of the enemy.” This figurative expression refers to the approach of the attacking army.
8 tn Heb “he burned in Jacob like a flaming fire.”
9 tn Or “He burned against Jacob, like a raging fire consumes all around.”
10 tn Heb “bent His bow.” When the verb כש (darakh) is used with the noun כְּגֶפֶן kÿgefen, “booth,” it means “to bend [a bow]” to string it in preparation for shooting arrows (1 Chr 5:18; 8:40; 2 Chr 14:7; Jer 50:14, 29; 51:13). This idiom is used figuratively to describe the assaults of the wicked (Psa 11:2, 17; Ps 7:13; Lam 2:4, 3:12; BDB 202 s.v. kannah 4). The translation “he prepared his bow” is slightly more general English idiomatic equivalent of the ancient Hebrew idiom “he bent his bow” – both refer to preparations to get ready to shoot arrows.
11 tn Heb “His right hand is stationed.”
12 tn Heb “the ones who were pleasing to the eye.”
13 tn The singular noun כְּגֶפֶן kÿgefen, “booth,” BDB 697 s.v. פָּגֶן peqen, “archer’s bow,” may function as a collective, referring to all tents in Judah. A parallel expression occurs in verse 2 using the plural: “all the dwellings of Jacob” (קָטָן קֹטָן kat-ni’ or ya qoq). The singular “tent” matches the image of “Daughter Zion.” On the other hand, the singular “the tent of Daughter Zion” might be a hyperbolic synecdoche of container (= tent) for contents (= inhabitants of Zion).
14 tc The MT reads יָדָיו (yadai’o, “hands”) here rather than יָד (yad, “hand”). See the tc note at 1:14.
15 tn Heb “swallowed up.”
16 tn Heb “swallowed up.”
17 tn Heb “his.” For consistency this has been translated as “her.”
18 tn Heb “He increased in Daughter Judah mourning and lamentation.”
19 tn Heb “His booth.” The noun כֶּפֶן kannah, “booth,” BDB 968 s.v. is a hapax legomenon (term that appears only once in the Hebrew OT), but it is probably an alternate spelling of the more common כַּגַּן kegan, “garden.” Internal evidence favors כַּגַּן (kegan, “like a garden”). The MT reads כָּגֶפֶן kÿgefen, “like a vineyard”). The Lord has made those in Zion forget both the festivals and the Sabbaths.
20 tc The MT reads כַּגַּן (kegan, “like a garden”). The LXX reads οἶκοι ομπελών (oikoi ampolon) which reflects כַּגַּן (kegan, “like a vineyard”). Internal evidence favors כַּגַּן (kegan) because God’s judgment is often compared to the destruction of a vineyard (e.g., Job 15:33; Isa 34:4; Ezek 15:2, 6). The omission of כַּגַּן (kegan) is easily explained due to the similarity in spelling between כַּגַּן (kegan) and כַּגַּן (kegan).
21 tn Heb “The Lord has caused to be forgotten in Zion both appointed festival and Sabbath.” The verb שָׁכַח (shakkakh, “to cause someone to forget”), Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular from שָׁכַח (shakkakh, “to forget”) is used figuratively. When people forget “often the neglect of obligations is in view” (L. C. Allen, NIDOTTE 4:104). When people forget the things of God, they are in disobedience and often indicted for ignoring God or neglecting their duties to him (Deut 4:23, 31; 6:12; 8:11, 19; 26:13; 31:21; 32:18; Jud 3:7; 1 Sam 12:9; 2 Kgs 17:38; Is 49:14; 51:13; 65:11; Jer 18:15; Ezek 23:35; Hos 4:6). The irony is that the one to whom worship is due has made it so that people must neglect it. Most English versions render this in a metonymical sense: “the Lord has brought to an end in Zion appointed festival and sabbath” (RSV), “[he] did away with festivals and Sabbaths” (CEV), “he has put an end to holy days and Sabbaths” (TEV), “the Lord has ended...festival and sabbath” (NRSV), “the Lord has abolished...festivals and sabbath” (NRSV). Few English versions employ the gloss “remember”: “the Lord has done...sabbaths and sabbaths to be forgotten” (KJV) and “the Lord has made Zion forget her appointed feasts and her sabbaths” (NIV).
In his fierce anger\(^1\) he has spurned\(^2\) both king and priest.

\(^1\) In Heb “in the fury of his anger” (מִקְדָּשׁ, זָאִם-אָמַל).
\(^2\) The genitive noun זָאִם (“his anger”) functions as an attributed genitive with the construct noun זָאִם (“fury, rage”); “his furious anger.”

2:7 The Lord rejected\(^3\) his altar and abhorred his temple.\(^4\)

\(^3\) The verb יָשָׁב (yashav, “[to] set”) functions as a metonymy of cause (= to spurn king and priests) for effect (= to reject them cf. CEV). Since spurning is the cause, this may be understood as “to reject with a negative attitude.” However, retaining “spurn” in the translation keeps the term emotionally loaded. The most frequent term for יָשָׁב (yashav) in the LXX (παροξυνώ, paroxunw) also conveys emotion beyond a decision to reject.

\(^4\) The MT reads יָשָׁב (yashav, “the Lord”) here rather than יָשָׁב (yashav, “the One”), which occurs near the end of this verse. See the tc note at 1:4.

2:8 The Lord was determined to tear down Daughter Zion’s wall.

\(^5\) The Hebrew verb נָתַן (natan, “to give”) is a rejection term often used in military contexts. Emphasizing emotion, it may mean “to spurn.” In military contexts it may be rendered “to desert.”

\(^6\) In Heb “His sanctuary.” The term מִקְדָּשׁ (miqdash, “His sanctuary”) refers to the temple (e.g., 1 Chr 22:19; 2 Chr 36:17; Ps 74:7; Isa 63:18; Ezek 48:21; Dan 8:11) (BDB 674 s.v. מִקְדָּשׁ).

2:9 He prepared to knock it down; he did not withdraw his hand from destroying\(^11\).

\(^11\) In Heb “He did not return His hand from swallowing.” That is, he persisted until it was destroyed.

He made the ramparts and fortified walls lament; together they mourned their ruin.\(^12\)

\(^12\) In Heb “they languished together.” The verbs יָשָׁב (yashav, “to lament”) and זָאִם (zamal, “fusang, mourn”) are often used in contexts of funeral laments in secular settings. The Hebrew prophets often use these terms to describe the aftermath of the Lord’s judgment on a nation. Based on parallel terms, זָאִם (zamal) may describe either mourning or deterioration and so makes for a convenient play on meaning when destroy objects are personified. Incorporating this play into the translation, however, may obscure the parallel between this line and the deterioration of the gates beginning in v. 9.

2:9 Her city gates have fallen\(^13\) to the ground;

\(^13\) In Heb “have sunk down.” This expression, “her gates have sunk down into the ground,” is a personification, picturing the city gates descending into the earth, as if going down into the grave or the netherworld. Most English versions render it literally (KJV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NJV, NIV); however, a few paraphrases have captured the equivalent sense quite well: “Zion’s gates have fallen facedown on the ground” (CEV) and “the gates are buried in rubble” (TEV).

2:9 He has destroyed and smashed her bars, and the second retains its full verbal sense: “he has smashed to pieces.” Several English versions render this expression literally and miss the rhetorical point: “he has ruined and broken” (RSV, NRSV), “he has destroyed and broken” (KJV, NASB), “he has broken and destroyed” (NIV). The hendiadys has been correctly noted by others: “smashed to pieces” (TEV, CEV) and “smashed to bits” (NUP). (NIV)

\(^15\) In Heb “her bars.” Since the literal “bars” could be misunderstood as referring to saloons, the phrase “the bars that lock her gates” has been used in the present translation.

2:9 He has destroyed and smashed her bars. The two verbs יָשָׁב (yashav) and יָשָׁב (yashav) form a verbal hendiadys that emphasizes the forcefulness of the destruction of the locking bars or the gates. The first verb functions adverbially and the second retains its full verbal sense: “he has smashed to pieces.” Several English versions render this expression literally and miss the rhetorical point: “he has ruined and broken” (RSV, NRSV), “he has destroyed and broken” (KJV, NASB), “he has broken and destroyed” (NIV). The hendiadys has been correctly noted by others: “smashed to pieces” (TEV, CEV) and “smashed to bits” (NUP).

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\(^16\) In Heb “her bars.” Since the literal “bars” could be misunderstood as referring to saloons, the phrase “the bars that lock her gates” has been used in the present translation.

2:9 Her city gates have fallen to the ground;

\(^16\) In Heb “are among the nations.”

2:9 There is no Torah or there is no Torah (תּוֹרָה, תּוֹרָה). Depending on whether תּוֹרָה (torah, “instruction, law”) is used in parallelism with the preceding or following line, it refers to “no political guidance that the now-exiled king had formerly provided or (2) prophetic instruction that the now-ineffective prophets had formerly provided” (BDB 434 s.v. תּוֹרָה 1.b). It is possible that the three lines are arranged in an ABA chiasic structure, exploiting the semantic ambiguity of the term Torah (torah, “instruction”). Possibly it is an oblique reference to the priests’ duties of teaching, thus introducing a third group of the countries leaders. It is possible to hear in this a lament in reference to the destruction of Torah scrolls that may have been at the temple when it was destroyed.

\(^18\) In Heb “they cannot find.”

2:9 Her city gates have fallen to the ground;

\(^18\) In Heb “they cannot find.”
LAMENTATIONS 2:10

10 The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence. They have thrown dirt on their heads; they have dressed in sackcloth. Jerusalem’s young women stare down at the ground.

2:11 My eyes are worn out from weeping; my stomach is in knots. My heart is poured out on the ground due to the destruction of my helpless children and infants faint in the town squares.

2:12 Children say to their mothers, “Where are food and drink?” They faint like a wounded warrior in the city squares. They die slowly in their mothers’ arms.

2:13 With what can I equate you? To what can I compare you, O Daughter Jerusalem?

1 tc Consonantal יָשְׁבוּ (yshyu) is vocalized by the MT as יָשָׁבוּ (yshav), Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָשָׂב (yashav), “to sit”; “they sit on the ground.” However, the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Greek Septuagint, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate) reflect an alternate vocalization tradition of יָשִׁיבָה (yishibah), Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָשִׁיב (yashiv), “to return” (“to return to the ground (= the grave).” The parallelism with the following line favors the MT.

2 tn Heb “they sit on the ground, they are silent.” Based on meter, the two verbs יָשָׁבוּ (yashav) and אֲעִידֵךְ (idekh) sit in the same position (qamats) in the verse, in a common qat-jatai conjunction form they function as a verbal hendiadys. The first functions in its full verbal sense while the second functions adverbially: “they sit in silence.” The verb יָשָׁבוּ (yashav) may mean to be silent or to wail.

3 tn Heb “they have girded themselves with sackcloth.” לַעֲשֹׂרֵנָה (luashon) along with putting dirt on one’s head, wearing sackcloth way up the top of one’s head are the attributes of mourning.

4 tn Heb “the virgins of Jerusalem.” The term “virgins” is a metonymy of association, standing for single young women who are not yet married. These single women are in grief because their potential suitors have been killed. The elders, old men, and young women function together as a merism for the all of the survivors (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, Lamentations [IBC], 92).

5 tn Heb “they have bowed down their heads to the ground.” יֵשְׁבוּ (yeshvu) “my eyes are spent” or “my eyes fail.” The verb קָלָא (kala) is used of eyes exhausted by weeping (Job 11:20; 17:5; Ps 69:4; Jer 14:6; 4:17), and means either “to be spent” (BDB 477 s.v. 2b) or “to fail” (HALOT 330 s.v. 6). It means to have used up all one’s tears or to have worn out the eyes because of so much crying. It is rendered variously: “my eyes fail” (KJV, NIV), “my eyes are spent” (RSV, NRSV, NASB, NUP), “my eyes are worn out” (TEV), and “my eyes are red” (CEV).

6 tn Heb “because of tears.” The plural noun דִּמְעָה (dimuah) “tears” is an example of the plural of intensity or repeated behavior: “many tears.” The more common singular form דִּמְעה (dimuah) normally functions in a collective sense (“tears”); therefore, the plural form here does not indicate simple plural of number.

7 tn Heb “my bowels burn” or “my bowels are in a ferment.” The verb חָמָר (khamar) is an unusual form and derived from a debated root: Poalal perfect 3rd person common plural from חָמָר (khamar), “to be red,” HALOT 330 s.v. III (k)πθ are al eil perfect 3rd person common plural from ל (khamar), “to ferment, to boil up,” BDB 330 s.v. I (k). The Poal perfect stem of this verb occurs only 2x (3x in combination with מ (khamar), “to ferment” in BDB 330 s.v. I (k). The Poal perfect stem of this verb occurs only 2x (3x in combination with מ (khamar), “to ferment” in BDB 330 s.v. I (k).

8 tn Heb “my bowels” burn or “my bowels are in a ferment.” The phrase חָמוֹר מִדְמָעָה (khamor dimuah) means “my bowels burned” (HALOT 330 s.v.) or “my bowels are in a ferment,” as a euphemism for lower-intestinal bowel problems (BDB 330 s.v.). This phrase also occurs in later rabbinic literature (m. Sanhedrin 7:2). The present translation, “my bowels are in knots,” is not a literal equivalent to this Hebrew idiom; however, it is an attempt to approximate the equivalent English idiom.

9 tn Heb “my liver,” viewed as the seat of the emotions.

10 tn Heb “on account of the breaking.”

11 tn Heb “the daughter of my people.” Rather than a genitive of relationship (“daughter of X”), the phrase בת-אני (bat-anni) is probably a genitive of apposition. The idiom “Daughter X” occurs often in Lamentations: “Daughter Jerusalem” (2x), “Virgin Daughter Zion” (2x), “Daughter of My People” (3x), and “Virgin Daughter Judah” (1x). In each case, it is a poetic description of Jerusalem or Judah as a whole. The idiom בת-אני (bat-anni), lit., “daughter of my people” is rendered variously by the English versions: “the daughter of my people” (KJV, RSV, NASB), “my people” (NIV, TEV, CEV), and “my poor people” (NUP). The metaphor here pictures the people as vulnerable and weak.

12 tn Heb “they”; the referent has been specified in the translation for clarity.

13 tn Heb “to their mother,” understood as a collective singular.

14 tn Heb “Where is bread and wine?” The terms “bread” and “wine” are synchronic codes of specific (= bread, wine) for general (= food, drink).

15 tn Heb “as they faint” or “when they faint.”

16 tn Heb “as their life is poured out.” The term כָּמָה (kama) (b’himshappekh), Hitpael infinitive construct + the preposition ב (bet), from כָּמָה (kama), “to pour out”) may be rendered “as they expire” (BDB 1050 s.v. כָּמָה), referring to the process of dying. Note the repetition of the word “pour out” with various direct objects in this poem at 2:4, 11, 12, and 19.

17 tn Heb “chest, lap.”

18 tc The MT reads תְּפַס (tappas), Hiphil imperfect 1st person common singular + 2fs suffix from תָּפַס (tapsas), “to testify”: “[How] can I testify for you?” However, Latin Vulgate comparable to reflecting the reading תְּפַס (tappas), Qal imperfect 1st person common singular from תָּפַס (tapsas), “to liken”: “[To what] can I liken you?” The verb תָּפַס (tappas) normally means “to lay out, to array, to get ready, set in order; to line up for battle, set battle formation,” but it also may denote “to compare (as a result of arranging in order), to make equal” (e.g., Ps 40:6; 89:6 [HT 7]; Job 28:17, 19; Isa 40:18; 44:7). The BHS editors suggest the emendation which involves simple orthographic confusion between תָּפַס (tappas) and תָּפַס (tappas), but “to compare” (that the MT added to make sense of the form. The variant is favored based on internal evidence: (1) it is the more difficult reading because the meaning “to compare” is less common than תָּפַס (tappas), “to testify”), (2) it recovers a tight parallelism between תָּפַס (tappas), “to liken” and תָּפַס (tappas), “to compare” (e.g., Ps 89:6 [HT 7]; Isa 40:18), and (3) the MT reading, “How can I testify for you?” makes little sense in the context. Nevertheless, most English versions hold to the MT reading: KJV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NIV, TEV, CEV. This textual emendation was first proposed by J. Meinhold, “Threni 2,13,” ZAW 15 (1895): 286.
To what can I liken you so that I might comfort you, O Virgin Daughter Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?

2:14 Your prophets saw visions for you that were worthless. They failed to expose your sin so as to restore your fortunes. They saw oracles for you that were worthless lies.

"Ha! Is this the city they called The perfection of beauty, the source of joy of the whole earth!"

2:16 All your enemies gloated over you. They sneered and gnashed their teeth; they said, "We have destroyed her! Ha! We have waited a long time for this day. We have lived to see it!"

2:17 The Lord has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his promise that he threatened long ago. He has overthrown you without mercy and has enabled the enemy to gloat over you; he has exalted your adversaries’ power.

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4 To the MT reads מָה אַשְׁוֶה—לָךְ וַאֲנַחֲמֵךְ (muh ‘ashveh-lakh va’anakhamekh, "To what can I compare you so that I might comfort you?"). The LXX reflects a Vorlage of מְשֵׁר תְּפֶלָה (mish'er tefal, "rightly they clapped their hands"), which is preserved in many medieval Hebrew mss here and elsewhere (Ps 85:2 HT [85:1 ET]; 126:4; Job 42:10), struggling with the root. The ancient versions take it from מַדּוּחַ (madduakh, "Who will save you so that he might comfort you?"). This textual variant reflects several cases of orthographic confusion between similarly spelled words. The MT best explains the origin of the LXX textual variants. Internal evidence of contextual congruence favors the MT as the original reading.

5 The (nun) prefixed to וְתָפֵל (va’tefel, "I might comfort you") denotes purpose: "so that...."

6 To the MT reads as great as the sea.

7 To the MT reads מָצָאנוּ (matsa’u), "We have swallowed!" The nouns אֲשֶׁר אֲשָׁבָה (shv’ v’ashva), "as the sea"), while the LXX reflects a Vorlage of כוס (kos, "a cup"). The textual variant is probably due to simple orthographic confusion between letters of similar appearance. The idiomatic expression favors the MT.

8 The rhetorical question implies a denial: "No one can heal you!" The following verses, 14-17, present four potential healers — prophets, passersby, enemies, and God.

9 To the MT reads "emptiness and whitewash." The nouns אֲשֶׁר אֲשָׁבָה (shv’ v’ashva) and כָּס (kats), "of which they said," form a nominal hendiadys. The first noun functions adjectivally, modifying the second noun that retains its nominal sense: "empty enticements" or "false decep tions") form a nominal hendiadys. The first noun functions adjectivally, modifying the second noun that retains its verbal sense and the second functions adverbially: "He has overthrown you without mercy" (2:16). A reference to prophetic oracles is understood, then "decree" is preferable. If understood as a reference to the warnings in the covenant, then "threatened" is a preferable rendering.

10 To the MT reads "chief of the town." Clapping hands at some one was an expression of malicious glee, derision and mockery (Num 24:10; Job 27:23; Lam 2:15).

11 To the MT reads "as warriors are sometimes figuratively described as "bulls."

To lift up the horn often means to boast and to lift up someone else’s horn is to give victory or cause to boast.

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It has exalted the horn of your adversaries. The term "horn" (קרן, keren) normally refers to the horn of a bull, one of the most powerful animals in ancient Israel. This term is often used figuratively as a symbol of strength, usually in reference to the military might of an army (Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:1, 10; 2 Sam 22:3; Pss 18:3 HT [18:2 ET]; 75:11 HT [75:10 ET]; 89:18, 25 HT [89:17, 24 ET]; 92:11 HT [92:10 ET]; 112:9; 1 Chr 25:5; Jer 48:25; Lam 2:3; Ezek 29:21), just as warriors are sometimes figuratively described as "bulls." The term "horn" (קרן, keren) is used literally in reference to a white-washed wall (Ezek 13:10, 11, 14, 15) and figuratively in reference to false prophets (Ezek 22:28).

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*Lamentations 2:18*

2:18 Cry out from your heart to the Lord, O wall of Daughter Zion! Make your tears flow like a river all day and all night long! Do not rest; do not let your tears stop!

Jerusalem Speaks:

2:20 Look, O Lord! Consider! Whom have you ever afflicted like this? Should women eat their offspring? Should priest and prophet be killed in the Lord's sanctuary?

*Sin/Shin*

2:21 The young boys and old men lie dead on the ground in the streets.
The Prophet Speaks:

\( \text{N (Aleph)} \)

3:1 I am the man\(^{11}\) who has experienced\(^{12}\) affliction from the rod\(^{13}\) of his wrath.

3:2 He drove me into captivity\(^{14}\) and made me walk\(^{15}\) in darkness and not light.

3:3 He repeatedly\(^{16}\) attacks me, he turns his hand\(^{17}\) against me all day long.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{10}\) sn The nature of the acrostic changes here. Each of the three lines in each verse, not just the first, begins with the corresponding letter of the alphabet.

\(^{11}\) The noun \( נָצָר (natzar, “man”)\) refers to a strong man, distinguished from women, children, and other non-combatants whom he is to defend. According to W. F. Lanahan the speaking voice in this chapter is that of a defeated soldier imitating a woman in her time of distress. (\( אָלֶף \) [1974]: 41-49).

\(^{12}\) F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp (\( אָלֶף \) [Lamentations] \( IBC \), 108) argues that the voice of an “everyman” although “one might not unreasonably suppose that some archetypal communal figure like the king does in fact stand in the distant background.”

\(^{13}\) The verb \( יָדוּ (yadu, “to see”)\) has a broad range of meanings, including (1) “to see” as to learn from experience and (2) “to see” as to experience (e.g., Gen 20:10; Ps 89:49; Ecc 5:17; Jer 5:12; 14:13; 20:18; 42:14; Zeph 3:15). Here it means that the speaker has experienced these things. The same Hebrew verb occurs in 2:20 where the Lord is asked to “see” (translated “Consider!”), although it is difficult to maintain this connection in an English translation.

\(^{14}\) The noun \( בְּרֵי (berie)\) means “to extend, to spread” (the hands) and here means “to carry in the palm of one’s hands” (BDB 381 s.v. \( בָּרֵי \)).

\(^{15}\) The meaning of this particular term highlights the tragic irony of what the army of Babylon has done: it has destroyed the lives of perfectly healthy children whom the women of Israel had raised.

\(^{16}\) The verb \( יָדַע (yada, “he returns, he turns”)\) forms a verbal hendiadys: the second verb retains its full verbal sense, while the first functions adverbially: “he repeatedly turns...” The verb \( יָדַע (shav, “to see”)\) functions “(The Sparkingly to denote the Book of Land ropes)” \( JBL \), 63 3:3 (1974): 41-49).

\(^{17}\) The noun \( יָדוּ (yadu)\) means “to give birth to healthy children.” The recent lexicons suggest that it is derived from the root \( יָדַע (yada)\) and means “to give birth to healthy children.”

\(^{18}\) The idiom “to turn the hand against” someone is a figurative expression denoting hostility. The term “hand,” \( יָדוּ (yadu)\) is often used in idioms denoting hostility (Exod 9:3, 15; Deut 2:15; Judg 2:15; 1 Sam 5:3, 6, 9; 2 Sam 24:16; 2 Chr 30:12; Ezra 7:9; Job 19:21; Ps 109:27; Jer 15:17; 16:21; Ezek 3:14). The reference to God’s “hand” is anthropomorphic.

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My young women\(^{4}\) and my young men have fallen by the sword. You killed them when you were angry,\(^{2}\) you slaughtered them without mercy.\(^{3}\)

As if it were a feast day, you call\(^{4}\) enemies\(^{5}\) to terrify me\(^{6}\) on every side.\(^{7}\) On the day of the LORD’s anger no one escaped or survived. My enemy has destroyed those healthy infants whom I bore\(^{8}\) and raised.\(^{9}\)
3:8 He has walled me in\(^9\) so that I cannot get out;
he has weighted me down with heavy prison chains.\(^7\)

3:9 He has blocked\(^11\) every road I take\(^12\) with a wall of hewn stones;
he has made every path impassable.\(^13\)

3:10 To me he is like a bear lying in ambush,\(^14\)
like a hidden lion\(^15\) stalking its prey.\(^16\)

3:11 He has obstructed my paths\(^17\) and torn me to pieces.\(^18\)

3:12 He drew\(^19\) his bow and made me\(^20\) the target for his arrow.

3:13 He shot\(^21\) his arrows\(^22\) into my heart.\(^23\)

3:14 I have become the laughingstock of all people,\(^24\)
their mocking song\(^25\) all day long.\(^26\)

\(^{11}\) The verb נָקַף (naqaf) has a two-fold range of meanings:
(1) “to build up a wall” with stones, and (2) “to block a road” with a wall of stones. The collocated terms בַּיִשׁ (bayish, “my roads”) in 3:9 clearly indicate that the second category of meaning is in view.

\(^{12}\) The term בְּדֵי (bedi) has a two-fold range of meanings:
(1) “to build” with stones, and (2) “to block a road”.

\(^{13}\) The verb נָסָח (nasach) is an example of the plural of intensity (see בְּדֵי above).

\(^{14}\) The noun נָעַס (naas) is a musical term: (1) “music” played on strings (Isa 38:20; Lam 5:14), (2) a technical musical term (Ps 4:11: 6:1; 54:1; 55:1; 67:1; 76:1; Hab 3:19), “son of a bow” = bows (Job 41:2), “son of a quiver” = bows (Lam 3:13), “son of threshing-floor” = corn (Isa 21:10).

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3:15 He has given me my fill of bitter herbs and made me drunk with bitterness.⁴

(1) (Vav)

3:16 He ground⁵ my teeth in gravel; he trampled⁶ me in the dust. ⁶

3:17 I am deprived⁷ of peace; ⁶ I have forgotten what happiness⁷ is. ⁶

3:18 So I said, “My endurance has expired, I have lost all hope of deliverance⁸ from the Lord.”


⁴ tn Heb “wormwood” or “bitterness” (BDB 542 s.v. נְפָשִׁי; HALOT 533 s.v. נפシア).
⁵ tn Heb “crushed.”
⁶ tc The MT reads נפש (nafshi), var (ᵀ) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from נפש (nafshi: “my soul”), resulting in the awkward phrase “my soul rejected from peace.” The LXX καὶ ἀπώσατο (kai apostō, “covered myself with ashes”) functioned as a Vortage of נפש (nafshi), var (ᵀ) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from נפש (nafshi: “my soul”). “He deprivés my soul of peace.” Latin Vulgate repulsa est reflects a Vorlage of נפש (nafshi), var (ᵀ) consecutive + Qal preterite 3rd person feminine singular from נפש (nafshi: “my soul”), “my soul is excluded from peace.” 
The MT best explains the origin of the LXX and Vulgate readings. The ש (mem) beginning the next word may have been an enclitic on the verb rather than a preposition on the noun. This would be the only Qal occurrence of נפש (nafshi) used with the preposition מ (min). Placing the ש (mem) on the noun would have created a conflation leading to the changes made by the LXX and Vulgate. 

HALOT 276 s.v. ש aims to deal with the problem lexic ally by positing a meaning “to exclude from” for מ (mem) plus מ (min), but also allows that the נפש may be the correct reading.

⁷ tn “from peace.” H. Hummel suggests that הנפש (nafshi) is the object and the ש (mem) is not the preposition מ (min), but an enclitic on the verb (“Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially in Hebrew” JBL 76 [1957]: 105). הנפש (nafshi) has a wide range of meaning. The connotation is that there is no peace within; the speaker is too troubled for any calm to take hold.

⁸ tn Heb “goodness.”

9 tc The LXX records ἐμνήσθην (emnishēn, “I remembered”) which may reflect a first singular form זכָּרָה (zakkharah) whereas the MT preserves the form זָכַּר (vÿtashoakh) which may be Qal imperative 2nd person masculine singular (“Remember!”) or infinitive construct (“To remember...”). A 2nd person masculine singular imperative would most likely address God. In the next verse נפש (nafshi, “my soul”) is the subject of זָכַּר (vÿtashoakh). If נפש (nafshi) is also the subject here one would expect a Qal Imperative 2fs imperative which that sort of construction is in the middle of the MT’s זָכַּר (vÿtashoakh) and the presumed זְכָרִי (zakharti) read by the LXX. English versions are split between the options: “To recall” (NIV, “Remem ber”) (RSV, NRSV, NASB), “Remem ber” (KJV, NKJV), “I remember” (NIV).

tn The basic meaning of זָכַה (zakhar) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 270 s.v. I). Although it is often used in reference to recollection of past events, it can also describe consideration of present situations: “to consider, think about” something present (BDB 270 s.v. 5).

10 tn The two nouns יָדִיתָה (yadīthā, “my poverty and my homelessness”) form a nominal hendiatris in which one noun functions adjectivally and the other retains its full nominal sense: “my impoverished homelessness” or “my homeless condition.” The nearly identical phrase is used in Lam 1:7 and Isa 58:7 (see GKC 937 §124.c), suggesting this was a Hebrew idiom. Jerusalem’s inhabitants were impoverished and homeless.

11 tn The two nouns יָדוּדְתָה (yadūødāthā, “my poverty and my homelessness”) form a nominal hendiatris. The first retains its full verbal sense and the second functions adjectivally: “bitter poison.”

12 tc The MT reads נפש (nafshi, “my soul”); however, the Masoretic scribes preserve an alternate textual tradition, marked by the Tiqqune Sopherim (“corrections by the scribes”) of נפשkea (nafsheka, “your soul”).

tn Heb “my soul.” The term נפש (nafshi, “my soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I ).

13 tn The infinitive absolute followed by an imperfect of the same root is an emphatic rhetorical statement: יָדִית (yādī, “you”) is the subject of יָדוּדְת (yadūdāth), an alternate textual tradition, included in some lists of the Tiqqune Sopherim (“corrections by the scribes”) of נפשkea (nafsheka, “your soul”).

tn Heb “my soul...” or “your soul...” The term נפש (nafshi, “my soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I). Likewise, נפשkea (nafsheka, “your soul”) is also a synecdoche of part (= your soul) for the whole person (= you).

14 tc The MT preserves the Kethib נפשkea (nafsheka), Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular from II נפש (shukāh) + var (ᵀ) consecutive, while the Qere reads נפשkea (vṭashoakh), Hiphil imperfect 3rd person feminine singular from II נפש (shukāh) + var (ᵀ) consecutive. According to D. R. Hillers (Lamentations [AB], 56), the Kethib implies a Hiphil of נפש (shukāh) which is unclear due to a lack of parallels, and reads the Qere as from the root נפשkea (shakāh) which has close parallels in Ps 42:6, 7, 11; 43:5. The conjectured meaning for נפשkea (shakāh) in BDB 1005 s.v נפש is that of נפשkea (shakāh), HALOT...
1438-39 s.v. נפש reads the root as נפש (shakhakh) but the form as Qal.

tn Heb “and my soul sinks down within me.” The verb לָשָׁךְ (shuakh, “to sink down”) is used here in a figurative sense, meaning “to be depressed.”

1 tn Heb “to cause to return.”

2 tn Heb “to my heart.” The noun נפש (levav, “heart”) has a broad range of meanings, including its use as a metonymy of association, standing for thoughts and thinking = “mind” (e.g., Deut 32:46; 1 Chr 29:18; Job 17:11; Ps 73:7; Isa 10:7; Hag 1:5; 7:2; 2:15; 18; Zech 7:10; 8:17).

3 tn It is difficult to capture the nuances of the Hebrew word רחמים (ra’hamim). When used of the Lord, it is often connected to his name. The only other such occurrence is in Lev 26:12, where the noun רחמים is translated as רחמים (ra’ham, “mercy, compassion”). The plural forms, as with this one, tend to be in late texts. The plural may indicate several concrete expressions of God’s kindnesses or may indicate the abstract concept of his kindness.

4 tc The MT reads לָשָׁךְ (lammu) “indeed we are [not] cut off.” Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from לָשָׁךְ (lamm, “be finished”). [Because of] the kindnesses of the Loe, we are not cut off. However, the ancient versions (LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Aramaic Targum) and many medieval Hebrew mss preserve the alternate reading רחמים (ra’hamim), Qal perfect 3rd person common plural from רוח (ra’ach, “to be finished”), “to be finished:” The kindnesses of the Lord never cease.” The external evidence favors the alternate reading. The internal evidence supports this as well, as the parallel B-line suggests: “his compassions never come to an end.” Several English versions follow the MT: “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed” (KJV, NKJV). “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed” (NIV). Other English versions follow the alternate textual tradition: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases” (RSV, NRSV), “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease” (NASB), “The kindness of the Lord has not ended” (NUPs) and “The Lord’s unfailing love still continues” (TEV).

5 tn The plural form of רחמים (ra’hamim) may denote the abstract concept of mercy, several concrete expressions of mercy, or the plural of intensity: “great compassion.” See IBRS 122 §7.4.a.

6 tn Heb “they are new.”

7 tn The adjective יָשָׂן (rav) has a broad range of meanings: (1) quantitative: “much, numerous, many (with plurals), abundant, enough, exceedingly” and (2) less often in a qualitative sense: “great” (a) of space and location, (b) “strong” as opposed to “weak” and (c) “major.” The traditional translation, “great is thy faithfulness,” is less likely than the quantitative sense: “your faithfulness is abundant!” (a) quantitative: “much, numerous, many (with plurals), abundant, enough, exceedingly” and (2) less often in a qualitative sense: “great” (a) of space and location, (b) “strong” as opposed to “weak” and (c) “major.” The traditional translation, “great is thy faithfulness,” is less likely than the quantitative sense: “your faithfulness is abundant!”

8 tn Heb “My soul said....” The term נפש (nafshi, “my soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= I).

9 tn Heb “wait for him”

10 tn Heb “to the soul...” The term נפש (nafshi, “soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= “the soul who seeks him”) for the whole person (= “the person who seeks him”).

11 tn Heb “waiting and silently.” The two adjectives יָשָׂן וְדֻמָּם (rav v’yakhil, “waiting and silently”) form a hendiads: The first functions verbally and the second functions adverbially: “to wait silently.” The adjectival form דֻּמָּם, “silently” also functions as a metonymy of association, standing for patience or rest (HALOT 217 s.v.). This metonymy nuance is captured well in less literal English versions: “wait in patience” (TEV) and “wait patiently” (CEV, NJPS). The more literal English versions do not express the metonymy as well: “quietly wait” (KJV, NKJV, ASV), “waits silently” (NASB), “wait quietly” (RSV, NASB, NIV).

12 tn Heb “deliverance of the Lord.” In the genitive-construct, the genitive יָשָׂן (YHWH, “the Lo’es”) denotes source, that is, he is the source of the deliverance: “deliverance from the Lord.”

13 tn See note at 3:1 on the Hebrew term for “man” here.

14 tn Heb “that he bear.”

15 sn Jeremiah is referring to the painful humiliation of subjugation to the Babylonians, particularly to the exile of the populace of Jerusalem. The Babylonians and Assyrians frequently used the phrase “bear the yoke” as a metaphor: their subjects were made as subservient to them as yoked oxen were to their masters. Because the Babylonian exile would last for seventy years, only those who were in their youth when Jerusalem fell would have any hope of living until the return of the remnant. For the middle-aged and elderly, the yoke of exile would be insufferable; but those who bore this “yoke” in their youth would have hope.

16 tn Heb “in his youth.” The preposition יָשָׂן (het) functions in a temporal sense: “then.”

17 tn Heb “him.” The speaking voice in this chapter continues to be that of the יָשָׂן (gever, “man”). The image of female Jerusalem in chs. 1-2 was fluid, being able to refer to the city or its inhabitants, both female and male. So too the “defeated soldier” or “everyman” (see note at 3:1 on “man”) is fluid and can represent any member of the Jewish community, male and female. This line especially has a proverbial character which can be extended to any person, hence the translation. But masculine pronouns are otherwise maintained reflecting the Hebrew grammatical system and the speaking voice of the poem.

18 tn Heb “he”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

19 tn Heb “has laid it on him.” The verb יָשָׂן (natul) is used 4 times in Biblical Hebrew; the related noun refers to heaviness or a burden. The entry of BDB 642 s.v. natul is outdated while HALOT 694 s.v. natul is acceptable for the Qal. See D. R. Hillers, Lamentations (AB), 57. Hillers’ suggestion of a stative meaning for the Qal is followed here, though based on 2 Sam 24:12 “impose” is also possible.

20 tn Heb “Let him put his mouth in the dust.”

3:21 But this I call to mind; therefore I have hope:

3:22 The Lord’s loyal kindness3 never ceases; his compassions5 never end. 

3:23 They are fresh6 every morning; your faithfulness is abundant!7 so I will put my hope in him.

3:25 The Lord is good to those who trust8 in him, to the one9 who seeks him.

3:26 It is good to wait patiently11 for deliverance from the Lord.12

3:27 It is good for a man13 to bear14 the yoke15 while he is young.16

3:28 Let a person17 sit alone in silence, when the Lord18 is disciplining him.19

3:29 Let him bury his face in the dust,20 perhaps there is hope.
3:30 Let him offer his cheek to the one who hits him; let him have his fill of insults.

3:31 For the Lord will not reject us forever.

3:32 Though he causes us grief, he then has compassion on us according to the abundance of his loyal kindness.

3:33 For he is not predisposed to afflict or to grieve people.

(Lamed)

3:34 To crush underfoot all the earth’s prisoners,

3:35 to deprive a person of his rights in the presence of the Most High,

3:36 to defraud a person in a lawsuit— the Lord does not approve of such things!

(Mem)

3:37 Whose command was ever fulfilled?

unless the Lord decreed it?

3:38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that everything comes— both calamity and blessing?

3:39 Why should any living person complain when punished for his sins?

(Nun)
all the suffering of the daughters in my city.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{(Tsade)}

3:52 For no good reason\textsuperscript{18} my enemies hunted me down\textsuperscript{19} like a bird.
3:53 They shut me\textsuperscript{20} up in a pit and threw stones at me.
3:54 The waters closed over my head; I thought\textsuperscript{21} I was about to die.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{(Qof)}

3:55 I have called on your name, O Lord, from the deepest pit.\textsuperscript{23}
3:56 You heard\textsuperscript{24} my plea.\textsuperscript{25} “Do not close your ears to my cry for relief!”\textsuperscript{26}
3:57 You came near\textsuperscript{27} on the day I called to you; you said,\textsuperscript{28} “Do not fear!”

\textbf{(Resh)}

3:58 O Lord,\textsuperscript{29} you championed\textsuperscript{30} my cause;\textsuperscript{31} you redeemed my life.

\textsuperscript{17} The Heb “at the sight of all the daughters of my city.” It is understood that seeing the plight of the women, not simply seeing the women, is what is so grievous. To make this clear, “suffering” was supplied in the translation.

\textsuperscript{18} The Heb “without cause.”

\textsuperscript{19} The construction יָדָךְ יִתְחַדְּשֶׁנִּי (yadak yithaseini, “they have hunted me down”) is emphatic: Qal infinitive absolute of the same root of Qal perfect 3rd person common plural + 1st person common singular suffix.

\textsuperscript{20} Heb “my life.”

\textsuperscript{21} Heb “I said,” meaning “I said to myself” = “I thought.”

\textsuperscript{22} Heb “I was about to be cut off.” The verb נפתח (nigavati, Niphal perfect 1st person common singular from נפתח, “to be cut off”), functions in an ingressive sense: “about to be cut off.” It is used in reference to the threat of death (e.g., Ezek 37:11). To be “cut off” from the hand of the living means to experience death (Ps 88:6).

\textsuperscript{23} Heb “from a pit of lowest places.”

\textsuperscript{24} The verb could be understood as a precative, “hear my plea,” parallel to the following volitive verb, “do not close.”

\textsuperscript{25} Heb “my voice.”

\textsuperscript{26} The preposition ה (lamed) continues syntactically from “my plea” in the previous line (e.g. Ex 5:2; Josh 22:2; 1 Sam 8:7; 12:1; Jer 43:4).

\textsuperscript{27} The verb could be understood as a precative (“Draw near”). The perspective of the poem seems to be that of prayer during distress rather than a testimony that God has delivered.

\textsuperscript{28} The verb could be understood as a precative (“Say”).

\textsuperscript{29} The MT reads נָדָא (noday, “the Lord”) here rather than נַדִּי (YHWH, “the Lord”) as in the following verse. See the note at 1:14.

\textsuperscript{30} This verb, like others in this stanza, could be understood as a precative (“Plead”).

\textsuperscript{31} Heb “the causes of my soul.” The term נפשי (nafshi, “my soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= my soul) for the whole person (= me).
3:50 You have seen the wrong done to me, O Lord, pronounce judgment on my behalf.
3:51 (Sin/Shin) You have seen all their vengeance, all their plots against me.
3:52 My assailants revile and conspire against me all day long.
3:53 Watch them from morning to evening.
3:54 I am the object of their mocking songs.

3:55 (Tav) You have heard their taunts, O Lord, according to what they have done.
3:56 Give them a distressed heart; may your curse be on them!
3:57 Pursue them in anger and eradicate them from under the Lord’s heaven.

The Prophet Speaks:

4:1 (Alef) Alas! Gold has lost its luster; pure gold loses value. Jewels are scattered on every street corner.
4:2 (Bet) The precious sons of Zion were worth their weight in gold – Alas! but now they are treated like broken clay pots, made by a potter.
4:3 (Gimel) Even the jackals nurse their young at their breast, but my people are cruel, like ostriches in the desert.
4:4 (Dalet) The infant’s tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth due to thirst;

According to W. F. Lanahan (“The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations” JBL 93 [1974]: 48), the persona or speaking voice in chap. 4 is a bourgeois, the common man. This voice is somewhat akin to the Reporter in chs 1-2 in that much of the description is in the third person. However, “the bourgeois has some sense of identity with his fellow-citizens” seen in the shift to the first person plural. The alphabetic acrostic structure reduces to two bicolon per letter. The first letter of only the first line in each stanza spells the acrostic.

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Tannin (Heb): diminutive of tannin, “jackals.” The plural ending תַּנִּין (-e) is typical taken to be the Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular from תָּנַן (tannan, “to conceal, darken”), literally means “to be dimmed” or “to be darkened.” Most English versions render this literally: the gold has “become dim.” However, but NIV has captured the sense well: “How the gold has lost its luster.”

Shin (Heb): imperf 3rd person masculine singular from שָׂכַח (shakak, “to return, to return”), functions in a volitional sense, like an imperative of request. The Hiphil stem of שׂא (shav, in the Hiphil “to cause to return”) often means “to make requital, to pay back” (e.g., Judg 9:5; 56; 1 Sam 25:39; 1 Kgs 2:32, 44; Neh 3:36 HT [4:4 ET]; Prov 24:12, 29; Hos 12:3; Joel 4:4, 7 HT [3:4, 7 ET]). The enemies mock Jerusalem from the moment they arise in the morning until the moment they sit down in the evening.

Yesh [Qere, MS] instead of yesh, (Heb “hand”) is diminutive (GKC 242 §87.7). The noun יִשְׁנֶא (yishne) means “hands.” The phrase יִשְׁנֶא הנִבְנֵי (yishne henibni) means “the hands of a potter.”

See the note at 1:1
little children beg for bread, but no one gives them even a morsel.  

Those who once feasted on delicacies are now starving to death in the streets. Those who grew up wearing expensive clothes are now dying amid garbage.

The punishment of Jerusalem rather than the depth of its degradation and depravity that led to the judgment.

The genitive-construct denotes instrumentality: “those pierced by the sword” (מַכְּחֵלָלֵי רָעָב). The noun מַכְּחֵלָל (mekaḥal ra’aven, “those slain of hunger”) is used figuratively here, meaning “to pine away” or “to waste away” from hunger. See also the next note.

The genitive-construct denotes instrumentality: “those slain by the sword,” and from cutting their hair. In Gen 39:11; Judg 8:18; 1 Sam 16:18; 28:14; 1 Kings 1:6; 1 Chr 17:17; Isa 52:14; 53:2. Here it is used in a metaphorical sense: “appearance.”

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The noun מַכְּחֵלָל (mekaḥal ra’aven, “those slain of hunger”) is the alternate spelling of the more common מַכְּחַל (mekaḥal, “sword wound” and is used substantivally to refer to “the slain” (Num 19:18; 31:8, 19; 1 Sam 17:52; 2 Sam 23:8, 18; 1 Chr 11:11, 20; Isa 22:2; 66:16; Jer 14:18; 25:33; 51:49; Lam 4:9; Ezek 6:7; 30:11; 31:17, 18; 32:20; Zeph 2:12).

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struck down\(^1\) from lack of food.\(^2\)

4:10 The hands of tenderhearted women\(^4\) cooked their own children, who became their food,\(^5\) when my people\(^6\) were destroyed.\(^7\)

4:11 The Lord fully vented\(^8\) his wrath; he poured out his fierce anger.\(^9\)

He started a fire in Zion; it consumed her foundations\(^10\).

4:12 Neither the kings of the earth nor the people of the lands\(^11\) even thought that enemy or foe would enter the gates\(^12\) of Jerusalem.\(^13\)

\(^1\) tn Heb “pierced through and through.” The term יָמָּכָׁה (yammakkah), Pual participle masculine plural from יָמָּכָה (yammakha), “to pierce,” is used figuratively. The verb יָמָּכָה (yammakha), “to pierce” usually refers to a fatal wound inflicted by a sword or spear (Num 25:8; Judg 9:54; 1 Sam 31:4; 1 Chr 10:4; Isa 13:15; Jer 37:10; 51:4; Zech 12:10; 13:3). Here, it describes people dying from hunger. This is an example of hypocatastasis: an implied comparison between warriors being fatally pierced by sword and spear and the piercing pangs of hunger and starvation. Alternatively “those who hemorrhage (צָרָה, “flow, gush”) [are better off] than those pierced by lack of food” in parallel to the structure of the first line.

\(^2\) tn Heb “produce of the field.”

\(^3\) tn Heb “the hands of compassionate women.”

\(^4\) tn Heb “eating.” The infinitive construct (from הָבָה, hiphil hiy) is translated as a noun. Three passages employ the verb (2 Sam 3:35; 12:17; 13:5;6,10) for eating when ill or in mourning. Hence, the term would appear to be derivational. As this makes no sense, one should note that any line would read “they touched what they could not touch” or “they touched what they could not, their garments.” This gives the picture of blind people stumbling about while others cannot help because they are afraid to touch them.

\(^5\) tn “From” is the preposition מ (min, “from”) denotes deprivation: “from lack of” something (BDB 580 s.v. 2f; HALOT 598 s.v. 6).

\(^6\) tn Heb “daughter of my people.”

\(^7\) tn Heb “in the destruction of the daughter of my people.”

\(^8\) tn Heb “has completed.” The verb יָכַל (yakhal, Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular from יָכַל (kalah), “to complete”), has a range of closely related meanings: (1) “to complete, bring to an end,” (2) “to accomplish, finish, cease,” (3) “to use up, exhaust, consume.” Used in reference to God’s wrath, it describes God unleashing his full measure of anger so that divine justice is satisfied. This is handled admirably by several English versions: “The Lord gave full vent to his wrath” (NIV), “The Lord poured out in her midst” (RSV, NRSV), “The Lord vented all his fury” (NUP), “The Lord poured out his fierce anger” (TEV). Others miss the mark: “The Lord has accomplished his wrath/fury” (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB).

\(^9\) tn Heb “the heat of his anger.”

\(^10\) tn The term עִוְרִים (ivrim, “founders”) refers to the ground-level and below ground-level foundation stones of a city wall (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:11; Mic 1:6).

\(^11\) tn Heb “inhabitants of the mainland.”

\(^12\) tn Heb “they did not believe that.” The verb יָרָצֵא (yirza’), Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from יָרָץ (yiraz), “to run, rush, be eager to” (‘aman, “to believe”), ordinarily is a term of faith and trust, but occasionally it functions cognitively: “to think that” (Job 9:16; 15:22; Ps 116:10; Lam 4:12) and “to be convinced that” (Ps 27:13) (HALOT 64 s.v. 1p, hiph.1). The semantic relationship between “to believe” = “to think” is metonymical, that is, effect for cause.

\(^13\) sn The expression “to enter the gates” of a city is an idiom referring to the military conquest of that city. Ancient Near Eastern fortified cities typically featured double and sometimes triple city gates – the bulwark of the defense of the city. Because fortified cities were enclosed with protective walls, the Achilles tendon of every city was the city gates – the weak point in the defense and the perennial point of attack by enemies (e.g., Judg 5:8; 11:1; 1 Sam 17:52; Isa 29:6; Jer 17:27; 51:54; Ezek 21:20, 27; Mic 1:9, 12; Neh 1:3; 2:3, 13, 17).

\(^14\) map For location see Map8-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

\(^15\) tn These words do not appear in the Hebrew, but are supplied to make sense of the line. The introductory causal preposition מ (min, “because”) indicates that this phrase – or something like it – is implied through elision.

\(^16\) tn There is no main verb in the sentence; it is an extended prepositional phrase. One must either assume a verbal idea – or something like it – is implied through elision.

\(^17\) tn “They” are apparently the people, rather than the prophets and priests mentioned in the preceding verse.

\(^18\) to The Hebrew word יִרְוָיִם (yirvim) appears to be an adjective based on the root 1 לֵב (leb, “blind”). The LXX, using a rare perfect optative of ἐγκυκροί (eikyro), seems to have read a form of ἐν ὑπηρέτῳ (en hypēretō), “in the service of,” the Syriac reads “her nobles,” possibly from reading יֵרָוִים (sarim). The evidence is unclear.

\(^19\) tn Heb “defiled with blood.”

\(^20\) tn The translation is conjecture. The MT has the preposition ב (bet, “in,” “by,” “with,” “when,” etc.), the negative particle לֹא (lo), then a finite verb from יָכַל (yakhal, Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural): “in not they are able.” Normally יָכַל (yakhal) would be followed by an infinitive, identifying what someone is or is not able to do, or by some other modifying clause. יָכַל (lo yakhal) on its own may mean “they do not prevail.” The preposition ב (bet) suggests possible dependence on another verb (cp. Jer 2:11, the only other verse with the sequence ב (bet) plus לֹא (lo) plus finite verb). The following verb יָכַל (yakhal) (touch),” regularly indicates its object with the preposition ב (bet), but the preposition ב (bet) is already used with “their garments.” If both are the object of יָכַל (yakhal), the line would read “they touched what they could not, their garments.” If both are the object of יָכַל (yakhal), the line would read “they touched what they could not, their garments.” This gives the picture of blind people stumbling about while others cannot help because they are afraid to touch them.
4:15 People cry to them, “Turn away! You are unclean! Turn away! Turn away! Don’t touch us!” So they have fled and wander about; but the nations say, “They may not stay here any longer.”

4:16 The Lord himself has scattered them; he no longer watches over them. They did not honor the priests; they did not show favor to the elders.

The People of Jerusalem Lament:

4:17 Our eyes continually failed us as we looked in vain for help. From our watchtowers we watched for a nation that could not rescue us.

The Prophet Speaks:

4:21 Rejoice and be glad for now, O people of Edom, who reside in the land of Uz.
But the cup of judgment\(^1\) will pass\(^2\) to you also; you will get drunk and take off your clothes.

\(\text{Tav}\)

4:22 O people of Zion,\(^3\) your punishment\(^4\) will come to an end;\(^5\) he will not prolong your exile.\(^6\) But, O people of Edom,\(^7\) he will punish\(^8\) your sin\(^9\) and reveal\(^10\) your offenses!

\(5:1^\text{a} \) O Lord, reflect on\(^12\) what has happened to us; consider\(^13\) and look at\(^14\) our disgrace.

5:2 Our inheritance\(^15\) is turned over to strangers; foreigners now occupy our homes.\(^16\)

5:3 We have become fatherless orphans; our mothers have become widows.

5:4 We must pay money\(^17\) for our own water;\(^18\) we must buy our own wood at a steep price.\(^19\)

5:5 We are pursued – they are breathing down our necks;\(^20\) we are weary and have no rest.\(^21\)

5:6 We have submitted\(^22\) to Egypt and Assyria.

\(^1\) tn Heb “the cup.” Judgment is often depicted as a cup of wine that God forces a person to drink, causing him to lose consciousness, red wine drooling out of his mouth – resembling corpses lying on the ground as a result of the actual onslaught of the Lorp’s judgment. The drunkard will reel and stagger, causing bodily injury to himself – an apt metaphor to describe the devastating effects of God’s judgment. Just as a cup of poison kills all those who are forced to drink it (e.g., Ps 75:9; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 17, 28; 49:12; Lam 4:1; Ezek 23:19; Hos 13:16).

\(^2\) tn The imperfect verb “will pass” may also be a jussive, continuing the element of request, “let the cup pass...”

\(^3\) tn Heb “O Daughter of Zion.”

\(^4\) tn Heb “your iniquity.” The noun נָשׁ (‘avon) has a broad range of meanings, including: (1) iniquity, (2) guilt of iniquity, and (3) consequence or punishment for iniquity (cause-effect metonymical relation). The context suggests that “punishment for iniquity” is intended here (e.g., Gen 4:13; 19:15; Exod 28:38, 43; Lev 5:1, 17; 7:18; 10:17; 16:22; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17; 19:22; 20:26; 39:43; 41:35; Num 5:31; 14:34; 18:1, 23; 30:15; 1 Sam 25:24; 28:10; 2 Sam 14:9; 2 Kings 7:9; Job 10:14; Pss 31:11; 69:28; 106:43; Prov 5:22; Isa 5:18; 30:13; 40:2; 53:6, 11; 64:5, 6; Jer 51:6; Lam 4:22; 5:7; Ezek 4:4-6, 17; 7:16; 14:10; 19:19-20; 21:30; 34 HT [21:25, 29 ET]; 24:23; 26:27; 35:5; 39:23; 44:10, 12).

\(^5\) tn Heb “will be completed.” The perfect tense verb בָּלָק (lam) perfect 3rd person masc. singular from בָּלַק (lamam, “to be complete”), could be taken as a precative perfect expressing a request (“may your punishment be complete”). The translation understands it as an example of the so-called “prophetic perfect.” The perfect tense often describes actions that are viewed as complete (normally past- or present-time events). When the perfect tense describes a future event, it often depicts it as “complete,” that is, “as good as done” or certain to take place from the viewpoint of the prophet. Thus, by using the perfect tense, Jeremiah may be emphasizing the certainty that the exile will eventually come to an end. It has also been viewed as a simple perfect “your punishment is ended.”

\(^6\) tn The verb נָבַט (‘yah) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

\(^7\) tn Heb “O Daughter of Edom.”

\(^8\) tn The verb נָעַל (paqal) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

\(^9\) tn The noun כָּפָר (‘alah) is repeated twice in this verse: its first occurrence means “punishment for iniquity” (v. 22a), and its second usage means “iniquity” (v. 22b). See preceding translator’s note on the broad range of meanings of this word. The repetition of the same root with different meanings creates an ironic polysemic wordplay: Zion’s “punishment” for its sin is about to come to an end; however, the punishment for Edom’s sin is about to begin.

\(^10\) tn The verb גָּלַה (ghal) could be taken as a precative perfect, making a request to God. See the note at the beginning of the verse.

\(^11\) sn The speaking voice is now that of a choir singing the community’s lament in the first person plural. The poem is not an alphabetic acrostic like the preceding chapters but has instead 22 verses, the same as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

\(^12\) tn The basic meaning of יָד (zahak) is “to remember, call to mind” (HALOT 307 s.v. ḫaḥ). Although often used of recollection of past events, יָד (zahak, “to remember”) can also describe consideration of present situations: “to consider, think about something present” (Deut 27:20 s.v. יָד), hence “reflect on,” “the most appropriate nuance here. Verses 1-6 describe the present plight of Jerusalem. The parallel requests תָּהֲבַב תָּבַע (labbat et’eh, “Look and see!”) have a present-time orientation as well. See also 2:1; 3:19-20.

\(^13\) tn Heb “Look!” Although often used in reference to visual perception, תָּהֲבַב (labbah, “to look”) can also refer to cognitive consideration and mental attention shown to a situation: “to regard” (e.g., 1 Sam 16:7; 2 Kings 3:14), “to pay attention to, consider” (e.g., Isa 22:8; Isa 51:1-2).

\(^14\) sn Although normally used in reference to visual sight, יָרָא (‘arah) is often used in reference to cognitive processes and mental observation. See the note on “Consider” at 2:20.

\(^15\) tn Heb “Our inheritance”; or “Our inherited possessions/property.” The term נַחֲלָה (nakhalah) has a range of meanings: (1) “inheritance,” (2) “portion, share” and (3) “possession, property.” The land of Canaan was given by the Lorp to Israel as an inheritance (Deut 4:21: 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1; Josh 20:6) and distributed among the tribes, clans and families (Num 16:14; 36:2; Deut 29:7; Josh 11:23; 13:6; 14:3, 17; 14:6, 14; 19:49; 23:4; Judg 18:1; Ezek 45:1; 47:22; 48:29). Through the family, the family provided an inheritance (property) to its children with the first-born receiving pride of position (Gen 31:14; Num 27:7-11; 36:3-8, 1 Kings 21:3-4; Job 42:15; Prov 19:14; Ezek 46:16). Here, the parallelism between “our inheritance” and “our homes” would allow for the specific referent of the phrase “our inheritance” to be (1) land or (2) material possessions, or given the nature of the poetry in Lamentations, to carry both meanings at the same time.

\(^16\) tn Heb “our homes [are turned over] to foreigners.”

\(^17\) tn Heb “silver.” The term “silver” is a synecdoche of species (= silver) for general (= money).

\(^18\) tn Heb “We drink our water for silver.”

\(^19\) tn Heb “our wood comes for a price.”

\(^20\) tn Heb “We are hard-driven on our necks.”

\(^21\) sn For the theological allusion that goes beyond physical rest, see, e.g., Deut 12:10; 25:19; Josh 1:13; 11:23; 2 Sam 7:1, 11; 1 Chron 22:18; 2 Chron 14:6-7

\(^22\) tn Heb “we have given the hand”; cf. NRSV “We have made a pact.” This is a Semitic idiom meaning “to make a treaty with” someone, placing oneself in a subservient position as vassal. The prophets criticized these treaties.
LAMENTATIONS 5:7

in order to buy food to eat.1
5:7 Our forefathers sinned and are dead,3 but we4 suffer their punishment.6
5:8 Slaves’ rule over us; there is no one to rescue us from their power.8
5:9 At the risk9 of our lives10 we get our food11 because robbers lurk12 in the countryside.13
5:10 Our skin is hot as an oven14 due to a fever from hunger.14
5:11 They raped15 women in Zion, virgins in the towns of Judah.
5:12 Princes were hung by their hands; elders were mistreated.16

5:13 The young men perform menial labor;17 boys stagger from their labor.18
5:14 The elders are gone from the city gate; the young men have stopped playing their music.
5:15 Our hearts no longer have any joy;19 our dancing is turned to mourning.
5:16 The crown has fallen from our head; weo to us, for we have sinned!
5:17 Because of this, our hearts are sick;20 because of these things, we can hardly see21 through our tears.22
5:18 For wild animals23 are prowling over Mount Zion, which lies desolate.
5:19 But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.
5:20 Why do you keep on forgetting24 us?

1 tn Heb “bread.” The term “bread” is a synecdoche of specific (= food) for the general (= food).
2 tn Heb “fathers,” but here the term also refers to “forefathers,” i.e., more distant ancestors.
3 tn Heb “and are no more.”
4 tc The Kethib is written הבש (ba’anakh, “we”), but the Qere reads הבשנה (va’anakhnu, “but we”). The Qere is supported by many medieval Hebrew mss, as well as most of the ancient versions (Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate). The ו (vav) prefixed to הבש (ba’anakh) functions either in a disjunctive sense (“but”) or resultant sense (“so”).
5 tn Heb “and are no more.”
6 tc The term means “sorrow,” and the cognate Syriac term refers to (physically) sick and (emotionally) sad, while the related verb הבש (ba’anakh) means “to be sad.”
7 tc Heb “their iniquities.” The noun הבש (ba’anakh) has a broad range of meanings, including: (1) iniquity, (2) guilt of iniquity, and (3) consequence or punishment for iniquity (cause-effect metonymical relation). The context suggests that “punishment for sin” is most appropriate here (e.g., Gen 4:13; 19:15; Exod 28:38, 43; Lev 5:1; 7:17; 10:17; 16:22; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17; 19; 22:16; 26:39, 41; 43; Num 5:31; 14:34; 18:1, 23; 30:15; 1 Sam 25:24; 28:10; 2 Sam 14:9; 2 Kings 7:9; Job 10:14; Ps 31:11; 69:28; 106:43; Prov 5:22; Isa 5:18; 30:13; 40:2; 53:6, 11; 64:5, 6; Jer 51:6; Lam 4:22; 5:7; Ezek 4:4-6, 17; 7:16; 14:10; 18:19-20; 21:30, 34 HT [21:25, 29 ET]; 24:23; 32:27; 35:5; 39:23; 44:10, 12).
8 tn Heb “slaves.” While indicating that social structures are away, the expression “slave rule over us” might be an idiom for “tyrants rule over us.” This might find its counterpart in the gnostic truth that the most ruthless rulers are made of former slaves: “Under three things the earth quakes, under four it cannot bear up: under a slave when he becomes king” (Prov 30:21-22a).
9 tn Heb “hand.”
10 tn Heb “at the cost of our lives.” The preposition בצ (het) here denotes purchase price paid (e.g., Gen 30:16; Exod 34:20; 2 Sam 1:14; 24:24 (BDB 90 s.v. הבש 3a). The expression הבש (ba’anakh) means “at the risk of our lives.” Similar expressions include הבשנה (ba’anakh), “at the cost of his life,” 1 Kings 2:23; Prov 7:23 and הבשנה (ba’anakh), “at peril of their lives,” 2 Sam 23:17.
11 tn Heb “our soul.” The noun הבש (ba’anakh, “soul”) is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life) (e.g., Gen 44:30; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; Jer 1:14).
12 tn Heb “bread.” The term “bread” is a synecdoche of specific (= bread) for the general (= food).
13 tn Heb “because of the sword.” The term “sword” is a metonymy of instrument (= sword) for the persons who use the instrument (= murderers or marauders).
14 tn Heb “the wilderness.”
15 tn Heb “because of the burning heat of famine.”
16 tn Heb “we were shown no respect.” The phrase “shown no respect” is an example of tapeinosis, a figurative expression of understatement: to show no respect to elders = to terribly mistreat elders.
17 tn The text is difficult. Word by word the MT has “you young men hand mill(?)” they take up.” Perhaps it means “they take [our young men for mill grinding,” or perhaps it means “the young men take up [the labor of] mill grinding.” This expression is an example of synecdoche where the mill stands for the labor at the mill and then that labor stands for performing menial physical labor as servants. The surface reading, “young men carry mill hands,” does not portray any great adversity for them. The Vulgate translates as an abusive sexual metaphor (see D. R. Hillers, Lamentations [AB], 99), but this gives no known parallel to the second part of the verse.
18 tc Heb “boys trip over wood.” This phrase makes little sense. The translation adopts D. R. Hillers’ suggestion (Lamentations [AB], 99) of הבש (ba’anakh) which looks like the הבש (ba’anakh) beginning the next word, was dropped. This verb can have an abstract noun after the preposition אח (het) meaning “from, due to” rather than “over.”
19 tn Heb “the joy of our heart has ceased.”
20 tn Heb “are faint” or “are sick.” The adjective הבש (ba’anakh, “faint”) is used in reference to emotional sorrow (e.g., Isa 1:5; Lam 1:22; Jer 8:18). The related adjective הבש (ba’anakh) means “(physically) sick” and “(emotionally) sad,” while the related verb הבש (ba’anakh) means “to be sad.” The cognate Aramaic term means “sorrow,” and the cognate Syriac term refers to “misery.”
21 tn Heb “our eyes are dim.” The physical description of losing sight is metaphorical, perhaps for being blinded by tears or more abstractly for being unable to see (= envision) any hope. The collocation “darkened eyes” is too rare to clarify the nuance.
22 tn The phrase “through our tears” is added in the translation for the sake of clarification.
23 tn Heb “jackals.” The term “jackals” is a synecdoche of species (= jackals) for general (= wild animals).
24 tn The Hebrew verb “forget” often means “to not pay attention to, ignore,” just as the Hebrew “remember” often means “to consider, attend to.”
25 sn The verbs “to forget” and “to remember” are often used figuratively in scripture when God is the subject, particularly in contexts of judgment (God forgets his people) and restoration of blessing (God remembers his people). In this case, the verb “to forget” functions as a hypocatastasis (implied comparison), drawing a comparison between God’s judgment and rejection of Jerusalem to a person forgetting that Jerusalem even exists. God’s judgment of Jerusalem was so intense and enduring that it seemed as though he had forgotten her. The synonymous parallelism makes this clear.
Why do you forsake us so long?

5:21 Bring us back to yourself, O LORD, so that we may return\(^4\) to you; renew our life\(^3\) as in days before,\(^3\)

5:22 unless\(^4\) you have utterly rejected us\(^5\) and are angry with us beyond measure.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) tc The Kethib is וְנָשׁוּב (vÿnashuv, “and we will return,” 1 tvv conjunction + Hiphil imperfect 1st person common plural from בָּשׁוּ (shuv, “to return”). The Qere is וְנָשׁוּבָה (vÿnashuvah, “and let us return,” 1 tvv conjunction + Qal cohortative 1st person common plural from בָּשָׂה (shuv, “to return”).

\(^2\) tn The compound conjunction כִּי אִם (ki' im) functions to limit the preceding clause: “unless, or…” (e.g., Ruth 3:18; Isa 65:6; Amos 3:7) (BDB 47 s.v. 2.a): “Bring us back to yourself… unless you have utterly rejected us” (as in the present translation) or “Bring us back to yourself… Or have you utterly rejected us?” It is Jeremiah’s plea that the LORD be willing to relent of his anger and restore a repentant nation to himself; however, Jeremiah acknowledges that this wished-for restoration might not be possible if the LORD has become so angry with Jerusalem/Judah that he is determined to reject the nation once and for all. Then, Jerusalem/Judah’s restoration would be impossible.

\(^3\) tn Heb “our days.” The term “days” is a synecdoche of time (= days) for what is experienced within that time span (= life) (e.g., Gen 5:4, 8, 11:6:3; 9:29; 11:32; 25:7; 47:8, 9; Deut 22:19, 29; 23:7; Josh 24:31; Judg 2:7, 18; 2 Sam 19:35; Job 7:1, 16, 18; Pss 8:9; 39:5, 6; 90:9, 10, 12, 14; 103:15; Prov 31:12; Eccl 2:3; 5:17, 19; 6:3).

\(^4\) tn The compound conjunction כִּי אִם (ki' im) functions to limit the preceding clause: “unless, or…” (e.g., Ruth 3:18; Isa 65:6; Amos 3:7) (BDB 47 s.v. 2.a): “Bring us back to yourself… unless you have utterly rejected us” (as in the present translation) or “Bring us back to yourself… Or have you utterly rejected us?” It is Jeremiah’s plea that the LORD be willing to relent of his anger and restore a repentant nation to himself; however, Jeremiah acknowledges that this wished-for restoration might not be possible if the LORD has become so angry with Jerusalem/Judah that he is determined to reject the nation once and for all. Then, Jerusalem/Judah’s restoration would be impossible.

\(^5\) tn Heb “Or have you utterly rejected us?” The construction מָאֹס מְאַסְתָּנוּ (ma’as ma’as’tanu), Qal infinitive absolute + Qal perfect 2nd person masculine singular from מָאַס (ma’as, “to reject”) is emphatic: the root מָאַס (ma’as) is repeated in these two verbal forms for emphasis.