


LAMENTATIONS

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Chapters one to four of Lamentations are alphabetically styled. Jeremiah adopts the alphabetical device to annotate the comprehensive grief and anguish into which siege and slaughter have pitched him and his people. These chapters are suited to be sung as lament with guttural and vowel concentrations that render a solemn mood.

*In this chapter we have the key to “Lamentations”. This bible book is not just a personal lament. It is a prophetic lament. It takes us to a kindred sorrow. In fact Jeremiah is weeping because of where his sins took both his nation and his God. The sorrow for his transgressions can only be understood in relation to the terrible deeds done in the siege of Jerusalem-when friends betrayed friends, priests and elders died searching for food. They ate the animals-no doubt-and women even ate their children. This horrible nightmarish fate is harbinger of the NT fall of the city and **the associated passion of Christ is spelt out in the veriest detail of prophecy**. So Jeremiah’s lament for sin centres on what it cost God in Christ.*

THE DIRE STATE OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM 1-11

How is it that the city dwells alone or sits by herself? *The Hebrew “word of anguish” is hkyā –with the meaning “Alas!” This city was heaving with people. How is she that was great among the gentile nations become like a widow? How has she who was a princess among the provinces come under tribute? These three questions lead us back from the broken forsaken city of Jerusalem after the departure of the captivity to the days of David and Solomon and Hezekiah. Jeremiah is expressing the prevalent mood of stunned trauma. The questions posed can be answered in theory- “by steps of disobedience” but the shock of Jerusalem’s sudden humiliation –loss of ties and loss of prestige was devastating.*

Weeping she weeps in the night. Her tears are upon her cheeks and there is no comforter that owns her from all her loving friends. All her companions have been perfidious fraudulent toward her-they are become enemies to her. **Anguish** finds the channel of tears. *The Hebrew word “tear” [md] is used for the “juice of wine” or “olive oil” which flow under pressure and as in the story of the Good Samaritan “oil and wine” have a curative effect.*

Judah is a naked captive by a wave of affliction and a huge wave of slaves. She is living among the nations. She finds no rest. All her persecutors removed landmarks between the limits or borders. *The Hiphil of gcn is better translated “remove landmarks” than “overtaken.” The roads or ways of Zion mourn... [lba] The symbol of anguish speaks of “being wet with the moisture of grass”. Jeremiah sees the thoroughfares growing wild with grasses and untrodden...because none come to the feasts. All her gates are destroyed. [mmv] Her priests groan and sigh. [jna] Her young women are pained or removed. [hgy] She is bitter for herself. [rm] **Four terms of anguish** continue the syndrome of sorrows. The gates were broken, the priests are moaning not singing as Levites did; the girls were probably largely taken captive or left physically marred. The city like Naomi is bitterness itself. Her adversaries are cock o’ hoops; her enemy is doing well and at peace for the LORD has caused her pain of mind for her numerous transgressions. Her little ones have marched as naked captives before the face of the adversary. All the splendour of clothing and holy*

ornament has gone from Zion. Her princes have become like deer that find no grazing and they have gone off on foot devoid of power before the faces of the pursuer. *The vivid picture has the hallmark of an eye-witness who saw the gloating enemy-the naked children and hungry princes marched off. Jeremiah may even have seen the holy instruments of the house of God carried away. The glory of the city was gone.* **Jerusalem** remembered the days of her affliction and her wandering about as nomads do –she recalled all her precious things and precious vessels and delicate food [dmj] which were hers earlier at the time her people fell into the hand of the enemy and there was no-one to help her. The adversaries saw her and laughed and made sport of her Sabbaths. Jerusalem sinned and sinned and for this reason she has come to be a wandering nomad. All who honoured her debase her as a prodigal [l/z] because they have seen her naked. ***This is anguish indeed.*** Even she herself sighs and turns her head back *in shame*. Here pollution is in the train or hem of her garments and she does not remember her ***afterwards*** for she will come down or must come down most terribly or extraordinarily [alp] *Jeremiah witnessed the atrocities committed against Jews in his time but spoke as a prophet of worse to come in the latter day. This is suggestive of another assault on Jerusalem yet future whilst it is doubtless inclusive of the holocaust.* She has no comforter. LORD, behold my affliction of soul for the enemy has magnified himself. *Jeremiah utters a short prayer as a prophet. He seeks the comfort of “divine awareness”.* The adversary has spread out his hands or power over all her pleasant things for she has seen the GOYIM or nations come into her sanctuary-whom You commanded not to enter your congregation. *Jews watched in anguish whilst the precious articles of the Holy Place were plundered. Jeremiah is aghast that the LORD did not act.* All her people groan in search of bread. They are giving their precious things to bring back their life. ***This is the bitter anguish of famine.*** Look O LORD and contemplate for I am failing-put aside-poured out gold but like rubbish-made light of [l/w]

JEREMIAH-IS IT NOTHING TO YOU? 12-16

The anguish of Jeremiah and of Jesus

Is it nothing to you passers by on the way? Consider and look through prophetic eyes.

- (1) Is there any pain or marring or destruction [bwak] like my sorrow unto death?
- (2) Pain is repeatedly practiced against me with which the LORD has afflicted me in His hot anger
- (3) From high up He has sent fire into my bones and He treads the winepress.
- (4) He spreads a net for my feet. He has caused me to turn backwards.
- (5) He has made me an object of astonishment [mmv] –sick and faint all day long.
- (6) The yoke [l/] of the transgressors is bound through my hands. I am not able to rise up. *If Isaiah 53 is a prophecy of the crucified Saviour Lamentations 1 is no less a powerful portrayal of the Lamb of God-the ram caught in a thicket-the LORD bound to the tree for our transgressions.*
- (7) The LORD has carried away all my stout hearted ones who were joined or united to me.
- (8) He proclaimed a set time or festival day on account of me to vex or bring sorrow to ***my young men***. The LORD has trodden the winepress belonging to the virgin daughter of Judah. *In the time of Jeremiah his sorrows may have been visited upon him during a festival-but this prophecy finds its later fulfilment in Christ whose death occurred on Passover-the festival that the LORD proclaimed when he redeemed the slaves from Egypt. The death of Christ in a larger way accomplished a grand redemption. The concept of “the winepress of the virgin” finds literal reality at the*

cross where the virgin mother of Christ stood by the cross whilst the blood of Jesus poured at her feet.

Rembrandt has a picture of Jeremiah languishing in his grotto beneath the place of the skull-a portrait that links the suffering of the prophet and the Son of God.

Over these things I am weeping as a woman. [*Hebrew $\text{הָיָה$ Jeremiah uses the feminine participle-he is weeping like the mother of our precious LORD.*] My eyes-O my eyes run down with water. *The idiom cites the term "Jordan" for emphasis.* I am weeping because the comforter that could have restored my soul or life is far from me. I am weeping because my children are desolate. I am weeping because the enemy is valiant heroic or has shown him strong.

HIEROSOLYMA DESERTA 17

Zion spreads her hands out but she has no comforter. The LORD has given command concerning Jacob that his adversary should surround him. **Jerusalem** is as an unclean woman or a fleeing woman—one cast out among them. *Jeremiah pictures the holy city in her worst state as a city excommunicated-unwanted-in utter desolation & anguish.*

FRIENDS FAIL JEREMIAH 18

The LORD is righteous—*what happened to me is* because of my rebellion to his very mouth. Please listen all nations and look at my sorrow unto death. My virgins and young men have walked away captive. I called for my friends or those who loved me but they deceived me and my priests and my elders in the city expired when they sought for something to eat to bring back life into their souls. *A further triple anguish is registered in these words.*

JEREMIAH SPEAKS FREELY OF HIS FEELINGS AND PROPHECIES THE UTTER FALL OF JERUSALEM 19-22

Behold LORD for I am in **anguish**. [*rx*] (1) My stomach is continually agitated, (2) My heart tumbles over or is ruined within me [*Jph*] for resisting I have resisted and rebelled. (3) Without the sword bereaves of children, (4) **In the house it is like death**. (5) They have heard that I am sighing and sorrowful and without comfort. (6) All my enemies have heard of **my calamity**. (7) They rejoice because of what You have done. You will bring the day You have proclaimed and they will be like me. *This prophecy tells of the nemesis that will fall upon those who remain in Jerusalem but it also projects to the New Testament sorrow of Christ and its sequel-the sorrow of Jerusalem. Our Lord said as he walked the Calvary road "Weep not for me-but weep for your children-if they did this in the green stick what will be done in the dry."* Let all their evil come before Your face and repeatedly visit on them as You have repeatedly done to me for my transgressions for my sighs are many and my heart is faint. *Jeremiah records multiple anguished sighs*

CHAPTER 2

The third chapter is one of unadulterated pathos. A cloud of vultures is descended upon the city of Zion. The walls and buildings are in ruin. The army is defeated. King and priest are gone. The Torah and prophecy lie silent. Children and the aged lie un-housed in the streets. Little ones have no food. People are crying to God-Jeremiah too is urging that prayer be unceasing. He is broken through the death of little ones that he nursed and clothed. His personal anguish has brought him to the edge of break-down.

a How has the LORD obscured or covered the daughter of Zion with a **breath or an unclean eagle**? [*pna* The idea of cloud comes from “breathing vapour” but the word renders equally well as “eagle”. Both usages are admissible. The anger of the LORD is represented by a cloud of eagles. This word of the prophet is also appropriate to the time of the end of the temple of Herod when Roman eagles surrounded Jerusalem.]

He has shot down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel and not remembered his own supporting comforting footstool in the day of His anger. We read in Isa 66.1 and Acts 7.49 that “heaven is my throne and earth my footstool.” Isaiah had declared his oracles between 791 and 686 and Jeremiah prophesied between 638 and 589 so Jeremiah remembered the statement that God made to the earlier prophet about 100 years before. The “footstool” proper is Jerusalem and this is the meaning that Stephen drew from Isaiah in Acts 7 when he spoke of the temple.

b The LORD has consumed not pitied all the **beautiful dwellings** [*hmm*-primitively in patriarchal times the word would have been employed to describe “green pastures”] of Jacob. He has pulled down in His passing over the inaccessible forts of the daughter of Judah. He has caused them to touch the ground-the apt praise of her kingdom and princes. **The A.V “He has polluted” is inadmissible and the NIV reads little better with its “brought down in dishonour.”** What I think is being said is that Jerusalem was the boast of the realm and rulers for its temple and glory. God would never be described as a “polluter” by the prophet.

g **He has broken down in His hot anger the entire horn or power of Israel.** He has caused His right hand to return back from the face of the enemy and He burned against Jacob as a fire of flame or iron spear devouring around. *Israel is named after her “prince with God” but seen as bereft of God’s help in her disobedience.*

d He has trodden His bow as an enemy would. He stood firmly garrisoned-His right hand as that of an adversary and slew every object of delight to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion. He poured out his wrath like a fire. *There is a reference in Ezekiel 41.1 to the “tabernacle which is there compared to the temple but I would suggest that Jeremiah is speaking of the daughter of Zion and comparing her to Achan and his tell-tale tent of disobedience. Achan stole a Babylonish garment. Zedekiah stole away the fealty of his kingdom which he promised to Nebuchadnezzar.*

h The LORD was as an enemy. He has kept devouring Israel. He has continued to consume all her fortresses. He has consistently destroyed his impregnable defences. He has made the repentance of mourning and mourning itself great. *Jeremiah repeats the word “mourning” with a “Tau” which might mean the “last word in mourning” or the “sign” or as I prefer “the penitence of” mourning. The sorrow becomes what Paul describes as “godly sorrow”(2 Corinthians 7.10)-an expression that might be built on this curious expression of Jeremiah.*

¶ And He has destroyed his hedge like a garden. He has marred over and over his assembly. The LORD has neglected or forgotten again and again feast and Sabbath in Zion and in the continual insolence of his anger **He has rejected king and priest.** *Jeremiah portrays the LORD as tearing out the hedge of his garden and opening it up to ruin. He sees the LORD as turning cold on worship and feasts. He sees the LORD as despising the anointed officers of Israel’s theocracy. This sentence is as sweeping a statement of divine setting aside as we shall read in scripture until NT time.*

z The LORD has rejected as abominable His altar. He continually abhors [*raa*-a unique usage] His holy place. He has caused to be shut up or confined to the power of the enemy the walls of her palaces. They have shouted in the house of the LORD as in the day of the feast.

h The LORD has designed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion. He has stretched out a rule. He has not caused His hand to turn back from consuming. Fortifications or hosts and wall lament-they waste away languishing together. *The anguish of defender and defences is one single matter of pathos.*

f Her gates are sunk or settled in the ground *This ninth part begins with a “little teth” which renders the verb “sunk”-deprived of the “teth” it would mean “searched for” or “prayed about.” In some cases the gates would appear to be gone and would need to be sought though the “little teth” serves to lessen the sense of devastation or even better suggests that this whole matter demands prayer.* He has destroyed and smashed her bars. Her king and princes are among the Gentiles *Zedekiah was pursued and the royals were captured and at the Orontes his sons were killed and his eyes were put out. The Prophet wrote amid the scene subsequent to the removal of the enemy and as yet was unaware of the fate of the king and his family.* **There is no Torah –also her prophets find or obtain no vision from the LORD.** *Jeremiah himself is a prophet and whilst Habakkuk and Obadiah are silent at this time Jeremiah turned to dirge and lament.*

y The elders of the daughter of Zion are sitting on the earth-they are silent. They have cast dust on their heads. They are clothed in sack-cloth. The virgins of Jerusalem hang their heads to the ground *in shame. Such is the state of the broken nation that the leaders are deeply rueful and the girls who were molested and raped are full of terrible shame.*

¶ My eyes are full of tears. My bowels are poured out on the earth. My mind and heart [dbk] is nearly demented for the daughter of my people because in weakness and scanty wrappings children that would be nursed and suckled are in the streets of the city. *Jeremiah spares the deepest grief for the plight of little children lying dying or dead in the streets. The Hebrew lines are clearly sung in a plaintive sobbing style.*

l They are talking to their mothers! Where is the corn and wine? In their fainting like the wounded or prostitutes in the streets of the city they were pouring out their soul on the bosom of their mothers.

m What shall I testify of you? To what shall I compare you O daughter of Jerusalem? What resemblance shall I choose for you to comfort you virgin daughter of Zion for your brokenness is great as the ocean? Who can heal you? *The nation has drifted like continents from one another far apart from God.*

n Your prophets have envisioned empty and foolish insipid things and have not laid bare your iniquity but have seen false burdens and expulsions or cleansings.

s All that pass by on the road clap their hands on your account. They whistle [qrv] and nod their head “Is this the city which they say is the apex of loveliness –the joy of the whole earth?

p All your enemies open their mouth and gape at you. They whistle and grind their teeth. They say “We have swallowed!” This is definitely the day we have been waiting for!” We have found it! We have lived to see it!

[The LORD has done that which He purposed. He has gradually completed the word he commanded from ancient days. He has destroyed and not shown clemency [/mj] He has made your enemy rejoice over you and raised up the horn of your adversary.

q The cry of their heart to the LORD was “O wall of the daughter of Zion let tears flow down as a river in spate. Do not give rest to yourself! Let there be no intermission for the daughter of your eye!” *In a curious twist of history and*

fulfilment of prophecy the containing wall of the temple area is today a place of round the clock prayer.

r Arise shout for help in the night. At the start of the night watches pour out your heart in prayer before the LORD'S face. Lift up your hands to Him for the life of your children that faint in hunger at the end of every street.

v See O LORD and cause Yourself to consider to whom You have done this repeatedly. Is it thus that women should eat their own produce-children of a few handbreadths? Or should the priest and prophet be slaughtered in the holy place of the LORD?

t The young and the aged lie on the earth in the streets. My virgins and youth are fallen by the sword. You slew them in the day of Your anger. You slew them [jbf] and showed no clemency. You have proclaimed as in the feast my surrounding fears and there was none that escaped in the day of the LORD'S anger. *As when the angel of death passed over there was fear of the death of the firstborn so in Jerusalem there was fear for the children when Nebuchadnezzar's forces attacked a second time. And those I dressed in coloured clothes [drv] whom I nursed and stroked with the palm of my hand or caressed and brought up the enemy has finished. It is only in the final verse of this complete alphabetical section that we get the deepest source of Jeremiah's Jeremiad. The lonely prophet is hurting for the little ones whom he dressed and nursed. We do not know if he was married but he must have been personally involved with lovely children and their little garments and witnessed their death by famine or even the sword. This is the sorest hurt that the prophet takes to God in dirge. He hoped like the Passover people for mercy but instead was dealt with as Pharaoh was-the horrors of war did not spare those near and dear to Jeremiah.*

CHAPTER 3

This chapter accentuates the anguish of the previous chapters as Jeremiah improvises a "triple alphabetical style" of dirge to bring home to the reader the depth of anguish in his heart. The reader will observe that the chapter consists of 66 verses-even in the Hebrew text this is the case although verses 1-23 with us are 1-23 in the Torah text. This chapter is dedicated to the matter of "Prayer in crisis". In the first section Jeremiah records his own understanding of his situation and speaks of the LORD "shutting out his prayer"(v.8) In the second section he commends "seeking the LORD daily"(v.25)and this attitude he commends to all the people (v.41) In the third section he records that God has not granted the prayer of the people for protection and safety (v.44)but despite that the LORD heard him personally when he was in the pit(v.55)and even spoke to him. Jeremiah seems to turn very testy against his fellow Jews. (vv 64-66)What he is seeing and requesting are one-his enemies are being rewarded by God who alone has the prerogative of vengeance. Like David Jeremiah knows well that God is the final judge and like Moses he knows that God hardens the ore of the heart that has nothing but incipient hatred in it.

I am the warrior or victor that has seen my Passover by thy rod. *There is enough in the text of Jeremiah to enable any reader of the original text to understand that Jeremiah sees the ultimate fall of Jerusalem as a "Passover experience". We do know that the Passover feast occurred at the self-same time as the first siege and that the second siege drew to a successful finish less than 3 months after Passover in 589BC.*

(A) PRAYER DEFEATS DEPRESSION-AND CITES THE MERCY OF A COVENANT GOD: SECTION ONE 1-23

a I am the victorious warrior who prophecies seeing the rod of his Passover. *This chapter begins with a Moses like statement of Jeremiah. He is indeed “a man”-no prizes for guessing that-but the word used speaks about one that has been in battle and one who has come out victorious. Although the obvious victor in the siege of Jerusalem was Nebuchadnezzar the prophetic truth of Jeremiah was vindicated. It would have to be acknowledged that this is a Pyrrhic victory since the city is in ruins and the people are slain or dead in the streets through famine. Nevertheless Jeremiah had warned-and the word of the LORD through Jeremiah was truth. The first siege in 597 ended at Passover time with ruthless killing and mass destruction. The siege in 589 ended in July-with its worst effects felt from Passover in that year. Children died much as happened on the first Passover in Egypt. For Jeremiah it was Passover in reverse. The Israelite children were falling victim to the avenger.*

a In company with me He brought or drove me by chariot haste and His journeyed with me in dark not light. *During the “thick darkness” in Egypt the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. For Jeremiah this swift journey of the siege was a very dark episode –but the LORD was still in charge in the darkness.*

a Definitely He has turned against me! He was changing or reversing His hand all the day. *Jeremiah felt that like Isaac God was choosing to withdraw from him His blessing.*

B My flesh and my bare skin He has caused to waste away -He has continually afflicted or broken down my bones. *Jeremiah refers later to his teeth. The experience of persecution and siege had aged the veteran prophet who was the doyen of men like Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah with his eye on Edom, Ezekiel (in Babylon), Daniel during his later ministry in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and Nahum with his concern for Nineveh. (Of Nineveh fame)*

B He has built against me [*It seemed that God like Nebuchadnezzar was throwing up a siege against his life*] and caused my head or the sum of all I am or my first state [*var*] to shake [*pqr-as when the olive tree is shaken to harvest fruit-this very chapter shows the urgency of prayer that came with crisis and the understanding of the heart of God that the prophet conveys to us in his lament*] and “I am vexed” or “I don’t like it.” [*hal*] *I do not find reason for using “hemlock” in translation!*

B He has caused me to live in dark tombs like those long dead. *Jeremiah is reputed to have lived in a cavernous grotto just north of the encompassing wall during this time of siege. His home would have been just a stone’s throw from the garden tomb where later our LORD’S body may well have lain. Perhaps the higher ground just above the quarried area where he lived was used for burial as it has been of more recent time. Jeremiah was also in the cistern for a time-which was another of his dark places. Perhaps since he is most likely to have had family in the city he lived in their company as the children succumbed to famine.*

¶ He has fenced me in round about and I cannot go out or escape. He has made my brass chain heavy. *Like Paul it would appear Jeremiah was restricted at the point of writing-so he seems to have used his time of house arrest to pen this section of his dirge.*

¶ **Also when I have to cry and keep crying for salvation He obstructs [*mtc*] my prayer.** *The obstruction of prayer is only possible on the part of God when “I regard iniquity in my heart” (Psalm 66.18) so when Jeremiah asserted that God was his enemy he was beyond his brief and preventing his access.*

¶ He has blocked me in with hewn quarried stones and constantly overturned my way of life or beaten path [*btn*] *Jeremiah had been twice restricted-once whilst in the*

cistern-and again while under house arrest. He had been used to encouraging disciples but his house arrest and detention had altogether upset all of that.

D He was a bear lying in wait for me and a lion in concealed hides. *Jeremiah had begun to think of the LORD as stealthily stalking and pinning him down.*

D He has constantly been angry in my path and torn me to pieces. He has appointed me to destruction

D He has trodden His bow to flex it ready for shooting and caused me to be set in his sights as a mark or target of the arrow. *Jeremiah felt he was in God's sights and that he would die.*

H He has caused the sons of His quiver to enter my viscera-my deepest organs of sense. *Jeremiah may not have died physically but his reins and heart-his deepest emotions were disturbed by what was happening around him.*

H I was a laugh to all my people and their song all day long. *We now know that others were singing about Jeremiah in some sort of popular ditties which included his name. These songs have not survived but his dirge stands testimony to divine defence and watch-care.*

H He has caused me to be satiated with bitterness. He has made me drunk [hmr] with wormwood or distress. [hn[l] *The heart of Jeremiah was not feeling grace but deep hurt and resulting bitterness. His distress was like foul poison to his system. Anger and hurt vented poison the spirit of a man.*

W And He broke my teeth with small stones and covered me over with ashes. *The position of humiliation when ashes are thrust on the head is one of prostrate kneeling. The term vpk speaks of heaping ashes up upon ones head and back. We do not exactly know when this experience took place. Lowering into the cistern could possibly have caused such damage or even eating that which contained inedible matter in the famine accompanying the siege when fires raged and ash was everywhere.*

W You have thrust my soul away from peace; I forget [hvn] happiness or wellbeing.

¶ And I said **“My confidence or faithfulness or eternity [hxm] and my hope [ljy] or expectation is passed from the LORD.** *Jeremiah felt his very eternal relationship with the LORD was prejudiced by his radical prayer and accusatory mood.*

l You must remember my affliction and my revolt [drm] belongs to vexation and gall. *Jeremiah's one defence is that he had come through a very gruesome and bitter experience.*

l My soul will remember and will be caused to sink or be depressed over myself. *Jeremiah will never forget the experience or the awful knee-jerk reaction against the LORD.*

l This I bring back to my mind and heart and for this reason I have cause to hope. *Jeremiah recalls the humility and penitence that accompanied his outburst.*

J **It is through the covenant love or mercy of the LORD that we are not finished off-because his tender mercies or compassions fail not.**

J **They are new [vdj] every morning.** *As the notorious “new cart” of 1 Samuel 6.7 is described as “new” and the “new year” and “new moon” also. The moon shows the continued radiance of the sun so the new day shows the continued goodness of the LORD. Great is your faithfulness. By comparing verse 18 with verse 22 we have revealed to us the truth that Paul and the early church inherited as a first century hymn –in part directly borrowed from the dirge of Jeremiah-“Even if we are faithless He remains faithful”[2 Timothy 2.13]. Here lies the greatness of this old teacher of the prophetic school of the 6th century B.C.*

(B) PATIENCE IN PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL-SECTION 2 24-44

J The LORD (alone) is my lot therefore I will put my expectation or hope in Him. *The prophet has been bereaved and his temple and his city lies in ruins. The city's youth are gone captive, slain or ravaged. What is there to live for? The answer is "my maker and redeemer"*

F The LORD is **good** to those who wait in expectation for Him. **The LORD is good to the soul that will seek for Him.** *Anticipation of the LORD'S coming is good but prayerful waiting adjoined to the same is better.*

F It is **good** that a man should wait expectant and be quiet for the salvation of the LORD. *"Saying nothing" can be the best default position-so long as it is accompanied by expectation of soul. The use of "good" in these settings carries the idea of "cheer" and "preciousness." There is happiness in what God is and the future He has planned!*

F It is good for a brave young man that he bears the yoke in his youth. *That is to say that the young serve and have gainful occupation and engage in the responsibilities of family life and marriage.*

Y He will sit down alone and be silent or rest because it is imposed or expanded [hfi] on him. *This is a type of illustration of the prophet. He presents the young man with a burden too heavy to carry for long and so he rests. This may even apply to marriage and to the frenzied pace of life and the need for what we call "space"-time to let our souls catch up with our bodies.*

Y He bites the dust peradventure there shall be hope for the future. *This statement probably relates to young Jewish soldiers who bowed in surrender to the cruel Babylonian in the faint chance that their lives might be spared. This reinforces the theme of this chapter- "Prayer". Jeremiah is illustrating that prayer is vital in extreme circumstances.*

Y He gives his cheek to the one who strikes him. He is filled with apology and self reproach. *The young soldier speaks fulsomely of his sorrow at rebelling against the great king Nebuchadnezzar. His confessions are extracted but they are those of a young man in utter extremity making a gallant effort to save his own life. **Jeremiah is modelling repentance** from the sudden change from rebellious militancy of spirit in the attitude of the young captive soldier*

K For the LORD will not reject or thrust **us** away for ever. *The prophet makes his point. The LORD is compassionate and will similarly overlook past rebellion and preserve us in his service and kingdom.*

K For if He cause affliction He also shows mercy according to the greatness of His covenant love. *Jeremiah further extrapolates the way in which he sees this terrible event in the larger framework of God's covenant with Israel. He will yet have compassion on Zion. The coming of Messiah is ahead-God is the hope-God in Messiah-God in Christ. He will come to His people.*

K For He does not **continually afflict** [Piel of hii] from His heart and **continually grieve** [Piel of [gy]] the children of men. *It is not God's design to sustain **affliction and terrible anguish**. It is rather His design to shorten it. Even the latter day tribulation days are to be shortened. The life of Job bears this out as an absolute principle. When Job "prayed in intercession" his disease was healed.*

L To crush [akd "break the spirit" "to oppress in administering justice"] under foot all the prisoners of the earth. *This confirms the context is "submission to the invader". The LORD when He invades our hostile lives does not crush us nor treat us as bound*

*captives but yields us liberty. **The grace of God is described if not named by Jeremiah.***

L To wrest or decline a man's right of justice before the face of Elyon. *The LORD treats every such penitent man howsoever militant against Him formerly with justice.*

L To make a man bow in oppression in his strife or contest in law Adonai does not see as the way ahead. *The LORD has no plans in future ever to be as Nebuchadnezzar-God's future dealings will be in grace-this is the prophet's vision.*

M Who is this that speaks and it happens though the LORD did not mandate it? *Jeremiah is asking the question about the source of wickedness. He does not give an answer-but the answer is blowing in the wind and evident to the reader.*

M From the mouth of the most high does not come both calamity or wicked command and happiness. *The LORD does not create evil by mandating it. Jeremiah is separating the declarations and decrees and pronouncements of the LORD from ours in urging that the LORD never had a wicked thought or expressed such. This defence of the holiness of God seems in conflict with Jeremiah's bold statements from v.3 onwards. However the prophet uses the term "surely" which springs from the notion of "anger in the face." Jeremiah is conscious of that which the LORD allowed in His anger yet did He not prejudice His righteousness in speech. Thus the able mentor of prophets shows a way to understand the PROBLEM OF EVIL. God is often angry and it shows-but His anger endures but a moment. God never speaks evil! This distinction we do well to keep in mind. **Out of the deep suffering of the overthrow of Jerusalem comes this considerable and important insight.***

M Why should a living man have had any reason to murmur [ma] –a man at war with his maker murmur over treatment of his sin? *Jeremiah sustains the imagery and insists that the LORD is most gracious in maintaining our physical life and giving us His life.*

M Let us search out or search through the purpose [vpj] of our ways or walk and let us deliberate on the secret things [rqj] and let us turn back to the LORD. **Jeremiah counsels self-introspection.** *"Let us look at ourselves not at God for the faults!" Let us examine our motives and the secret things of our hearts!*

M Let us lift up our hands in close affinity with our hearts to the God of heaven. *The advice is to speak honest to God and not just to cry "calamity" but to confess "iniquity"*

M We have transgressed. We have rebelled. You have pardoned or lifted up our burden. *The problem is with us. Israel was deeply in the wrong. God has no duty to the unrepentant.*

S You have concealed Yourself or confined Yourself in the house of anger and persecuted us. You have slain. *This action is considered by Jeremiah the "strange Passover" which the nation has been through. Clearly the reason back of that is a hardness which had lasted from the days of David until 597BC-400 years-and akin to Pharaoh's long resistance to God was dud for visitation. You have not been mild and sparing.[mj] **This principle of longsuffering applied to nations which have experienced gospel grace for 400 years since Reformation is a stark reminder that we should not be surprised by the emergence of a new economy in the very near future. The day of unrivalled blessing on Gentiles will give way to judgment in the self-same manner.***

S You have covered or hidden Yourself in a cloud which belongs to you against the passage of prayer. *The word "cloud" [m] intimates a "mystery" as well as a passing "morning cloud". The mystery of unanswered prayer was known to Jeremiah and*

strangely it is linked to the sudden passage of such “stay on petition”-for again God’s anger does not endure. The answer when prayer is not heard is to keep on praying-not to cease praying.

(c) PRAYER IN EXTREMITY IS RIGHT-SECTION 3 45-66

S You have caused us to be placed or positioned among the nations as “off-scouring” [hʃs] and as “a moral blemish” [sam] among the nations. Paul in 1Cor 4.13 applies this to the Christians who were considered “scum” in his time.

P All our enemies have opened their mouths against us or gaped at us.

P Terror and a trap is what happened to us-confused tumult of falling in the press and being broken and shattered.

P My eye flows down like Jordan with streams of water for the brokenness of my people

[My eye runs out like a wound [rɔn] and does not rest for there is no such thing as intermission.

[Until the LORD shall be constrained to look and see from the window of heaven. *The Hiphil (causative) future of pqv suggests God retains interest and will act to help.*

[My eye constantly does something to my soul because of the daughters of my city. *Jeremiah is describing his tendency to weep at an urge when he recalls what happened to the women-the traditional guardians of propriety.*

X My enemy went hunting me as a sparrow-they hunted without mercy [mj]

X They have cut my life off in a cistern and they have cast a stone over me *Jeremiah felt like Joseph-only his well was not an empty pit.*

The cistern had been sealed by a stone cover which prevented disciples stealing Jeremiah from the pit.[ddy –the term is used in Joel 4.3, Nahum 3.10 and Obadiah 11 for “throwing lots” and the prophet may also be telling us that his life was made subject to the casting of lots.]

THE DRAMATIC STORY OF PRAYER IN THE CISTERN 54-66

X Waters lay over my head. [hpx-the water like “a wood or metal **overlay**” narrowly covered Jeremiah’s head.] In Jeremiah 38.6 we read the cistern “had no water in it only mud.” Yet Ebed Melech who pleaded for him realised there was a great quantity of mud and it could submerge Jeremiah if he lowered his body. A **film of water** clearly lay on the mud and this was at the level of Jeremiah’s head-the two narratives are not materially in conflict. In both cases Jeremiah is in the cistern rwb] I said “I am cut off and alone.” The idiom is of interest –for Jeremiah uses the term “Nazar-“consecrated one.” This is quite fascinating. It refers to one whose hair is long and unshorn. With the need to drink he would have appreciated the water-film. He tells us this to show us how precisely the LORD watched over him-he was upheld like Jonah.

Q I called Your name O LORD from the marks [hwt] of the cistern. *Jeremiah like any incarcerated individual would write on the cistern wall-marking the water level and just being able to say “Yahweh” at first. But that was good enough. He struggled from a position of being dangerously submerged in the mud and called out “Yahweh.” Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire-and what a discovery he made in the cistern. Perhaps we should say that the story of the cistern deserves to be told widely in establishing and illustrating the nature of prayer.*

Q You must listen to my call. Do not make your ear disappear –listen to my breathing [jw] –to my cry for help [[w] *Jeremiah gives us the content of his praying. He wanted*

to know God could hear him straining for breathe-and his plaintive cry for help in these desperate circumstances.

Q You drew near in the day that I called you. You said “Fear not”. *Jeremiah testifies to hearing the audible voice of God in the deep cistern and it is so typically our LORD’S comfort that we cannot but be profoundly moved. He spoke so to the disciples on the sea. He spoke to Mary to Peter, to Jairus, to Paul after the same vein. We shall derive deep comfort from the presence of the LORD in places where we would think He could not possibly see our condition.*

R O LORD You defended the suit of my soul. You redeemed my life. *This prayer at the time of writing or after the gruelling episode displays heartfelt thanks.*

R O LORD my oppression has been seen [*The subversion of others*] judge righteous judgment for me

R It has been seen-all their vengeance and vindictiveness –all their scheming against me.

V You have heard all their scorn-O LORD-all the schemes they devised above me. *Jeremiah was content that while he was down in the well the LORD was gathering admissible evidence of the cruelty of his oppressors.*

V You heard the lips of those who rose against me and their muttering [*hgh “growling like lions over prey”*] against me all day long.

V Their Sabbath and their rising up-I must have caused their song. *Clearly Jeremiah was in the cistern on the Sabbath and instead of his adversaries praising God they were singing about his life being snuffed out.*

T Return them a weight of reward O LORD according to what their hands have wrought.

T Give them a veiling or shielding of the heart-You cause them to swear on oath. *Jeremiah asks the LORD to allow them to talk-and to hide their action and motive-but to pursue it by putting them under oath to confess. They are not to escape.*

T Persecute them in anger and cut them off from under heaven O LORD. *This prayer in the mouth of the prophet seems vindictive-but it is perfectly in concert with the will of God for those who have fallen under his curse for their long iniquitous disobedience and incurable hard-heartedness. There was no special magnanimity in the response of the prophet-and whilst Christians are averse to such sentiments we need to learn that Jews who called on God to avenge them were true believers that they should not take law into their own hands but recognise that “vengeance belongs to God”*

CHAPTER 4

In the fourth chapter Jeremiah speaks kindly of the Nazarites who may well have been influenced by his prophetic ministry. He declares on the one hand his critique of the failure of the priests and on the other his admiration of the bravery of the rump of the priests. He reports his chagrin at the cannibalism of some women whilst recognising their unbearable hunger.

a How will the gold have become dull or collected and concealed? How is the best concealed gold changed? *Money was being spent profusely for bread and very life. It was otherwise valueless.* How will the stones of the holy place have been poured out at the head of all the streets? *These questions had they been asked at the time when Herod’s temple was ransacked might have been answered “The gold was concealed between the blocks of the temple and the soldiers pulled the stones apart to recover the gold.” But the subsequent verse shows us that Jeremiah is speaking of the gold of precious young lives.*

b **The precious sons of Zion-** parables or lessons in purified gold-how are they valued or reckoned as pitchers of earth art or design objects of the potter? *Jeremiah is thinking of the youth and well he knows that these slain soldiers are now but bodies to be counted—though like pitchers where gold was stored they should be reckoned as those who loved and served Yahweh. His question is answerable. The price of life was cheap in the vortex of war and struggle and the spiritual content of life was wanting—there was no gold in the pitchers in many cases. The question has a second level of difficulty. Some of the fine young men whom he knew and taught had been broken and shred like pottery—and he was asking why they had to die. Sometimes there are questions to which there is no simple answer and this is one such question.*

g Even the great serpent or jackal [*mynt*] prepares the breast. The fierce ravenous creature gives suck to her whelps: the daughter of my people is fierce and cruel [*rzk*] as if they were female ostriches in the wilderness. *Jeremiah is acquainted with the wildlife of wilderness and the nurturing habit of the jackal. Jeremiah is also aware that the female ostrich leaves her male partner to hatch the eggs and even he absconds on the first hint of danger.*

d The tongue of the child on the breast is damasked to its palate [*Jnj*] through thirst: infants cry for bread but no-one breaks its small for them. *Again Jeremiah shows appreciation of the requisites of a small child as one that was intimate with their care.*

h They that dined on dainties are desolate in the streets; they that were assured of fine scarlet clothing are constantly folding their arms [*qbj*] –“to act as the sluggard” at cattle-stalls. *The sudden reversal of fortune suffered by the rich is well drawn.*

¶ For the punishment of the iniquity of my people is greater than the punishment of Sodom’s sin. Sodom was overthrown [*Jph*] as quick as a wink and no hand smoothed or appeased [*hlh*] it.

z **Her Nazarites were crystal clean** [*Jkz*] beyond snow white; [*gl v*] they were clean and serene beyond milk; they were more ruddy of body than **red coral** [*Gesenius parts company with Bochart and the received text to opt for Michaelis’ view that *myynp* means “red coral”. I consent to the better image of coral. Coral is also apt since it is often largely unseen and unappreciated and develops offshore divided from the land just as Nazarites lived separate from the community*] and their figure was as sapphire. *Jeremiah was no doubt very conversant with this group of young men with a vow to the LORD. It is in the light, doubtless, of his association and mentoring of such fine persons that the questions of this chapter surface and are acutely difficult to field or answer.*

j Their handsome form is darker than the muddy **Shihor**; [*the muddy area about the “River of Egypt”*] they are unrecognisable in the streets; their skin is damasked to their bones and it has withered to be like wood. *Jeremiah is not speaking as one observing from a distance. He had doubtless drawn nigh to these men under vow and would have been one of their comforters. Perhaps his teaching on prayer was set out for them in the form we have it in Chapter 3.*

F Better to be slain by the sword than to be slain of famine—those that were expiring bleeding vomiting [*bmz*] from being stabbed [*rqd- unrelenting stabbing hunger*] without the fruit and produce [*bmm*] of the field. *Jeremiah survived outside the city through having farm food available.*

y The hands of the tender compassionate [*mj r- “compassionate” has the companion meaning “vulture” so the word is used advisedly*] wives have boiled their infants. They were their wells [*rwb “source of life”*] at the time of the breaking pain or shattering of the daughter of my people. *Jeremiah chooses a word to describe the*

unfortunate hungry women-it declares their usual compassion but it also displays the hideous carrion instinct that developed during the final desperate days of siege. He describes the "breach" in the city defences as a terrible painful delivery doubling the pain of the time.

k The LORD has brought to a finish his hot anger. He has poured out the zeal of his anger. He has set a fire throughout Zion and it has swallowed her foundations. *The ultimate ruin of any civilised city is accomplished by fire. There were no materials left for re-construction and it was not until a century and a half later in the time of Ezra that the temple was rebuilt and 13 years later the walls and gates were reconstructed by Nehemiah.*

l The monarchs of the earth and those who inhabit the world would not believe that adversary and enemy should enter the gates of Jerusalem. *Jerusalem was understood to be the most defensible city outside of Babylon itself.*

m *The LORD'S hot anger was retribution for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests that shed in her midst the blood of her righteous ones.*

n They have staggered blinded in the streets; they have polluted themselves with blood at a time when they were unable they touched blood with their garments. *Jeremiah presents the last actions of the priests as polluted. They were blinded by smoke-they were staggering about and their garments were flowing over dead bodies in the streets. This was an ironic nemesis of outward purity. For a long time Jeremiah had been calling for a deeper purity of heart and this situation allowed by God was the best illustration of the superiority of that purity presented in Jeremiah 31.*

s **Depart You unclean they cried to them; [the Babylonians]depart, depart, do not touch us; they fled or shone bright; [xiii]they also stumbled about in the smoke-they spoke adamantly among the heathen-do not add or continue to stay as strangers.** *Jeremiah saw the priests at once as a contradiction to true holiness and as a bright testimony even though they were staggering around themselves-they told the Babylonians to get going. They were certainly brave to the point of recklessness. The action of the priests is ineffectual-the sword of judgment is not able to be "shooed" away.*

p The face of the LORD has continued to divide them. *Jeremiah is saying that the Chaldeans would become a divided force in the world-they became like the priests in their courses-divided. For 27 years after the fall of Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar towered as a political colossus over the ancient near east-though for seven years after capturing Jerusalem he was mentally disturbed. (1)Evil Merodach his heir lasted just 2 years for he was murdered by his brother in law (2)Neriglissar who may have been commander in chief at the fall of Jerusalem. (3)His infant son Labossoracus succeeded after three and a half years and reigned only 9months when a courtier called (4)Nabonidus took over and left the government of Babylon to his son Belsharusar.556-539BC (Belshazzar) He will not add to look toward them expectantly. They did not pay respect to the faces of the priests-they did not show grace to the old or elders.*

[To testify or witness about ourselves our eyes failed to see the vain help we sought; in our watching from the towers we watched and waited for a nation that could not save. *Jeremiah pinpoints the vain hope of Israel that Egyptian forces would turn up in the nick of time and lift the siege, They were unwilling and unable to take on the might of Babylon.*

x They lie in wait constantly to prevent us taking to our streets. Our end is close. Our days are full for our limit is coming. *This is Jeremiah's written record of the events. It is cast in a current report format.*

q Our pursuers are sharper than the eagles of heaven. Upon the mountains they pursued us with the ardour of lovers. [q/d] In the wilderness they ambushed us.
 r The Spirit of our life-the anointed of the LORD was captured in their traps-the one of whom we said "In his shadow of protection we shall live or continue to exist among the Gentiles." *The fall of Jerusalem on the 16th of March 597BC and the captivity of Jehoiachin was swiftly followed by the renewed assault of December 589BC which ended in the carnage and fall of the city in July 587BC and the capture of King Zedekiah near Jericho. The king was subsequently blinded and his sons were slain before him ere his eyesight was taken away. Zedekiah suffered for breach of oath to Nebuchadnezzar –an oath taken in the name of Yahweh (See Ezekiel 17)*

v Be overjoyed and radiant O daughter of Edom that dwells in **the land of Uz**. *[This reference throws some light on the residence of Job-Ausitis-the area south and east of Edom where his posterity spread toward the emirates of today. (1)A well-known Uz was a nephew of Abraham like Lot-his brother Nahor's son. One of the brothers of Uz was the father of Aram or the Syrians. (Genesis 22.21) (2)There was also another Uz who was the son of the seventh chief from the Horite line that lived adjacent to the Edomites.(Genesis 36.28) (3)A third Uz was the **firstborn of the fifth son of Shem**.(Genesis 10.23) It may be that the antiquity of Job links with the last of these ancients most suitably. **The cup** will pass through to you; you will be hilariously drunk and you will have been disgraced or made naked. [hr[]This prophecy was fulfilled thirty years later when Nabonidus the hermit ruler unaccountably went warring into the deserts of the south in 555BC-living as an autocrat over the desert tribes in Tema for 10 years till 544 whilst Belshazzar acted as co-regent in Babylon. This residency and the earlier skirmish suggest that the people of Uz had long since acquired goods and a way of life that attracted the Babylonian king. In 599/8BC the Babylonians had previously raided the Arab tribes.*

† **The penalty for the iniquity of the daughter of Zion is paid in full**; it will not cause an additional shameful captivity for you. He will visit on you O daughter of Edom the penalty of your iniquity. He will make you naked on account of your sin. *Already there had been two captivities-two kings had succumbed. Jeremiah was saying that this episode with Babylon was over and finished with. The fall of Jerusalem under the Romans does no prejudice to this prophecy. The future also was set to bring further severe judgments for Israel from other quarters. Within the purview of prophecy the war of Ezekiel 38-9 which sparks the tribulation era is still pending. In this war Israel will suffer in conflict with Rosh and Rosh or Russia will be worsted before Israel. Isaiah uses a somewhat similar phrase of consolation in Isaiah 40 when he says "Her hard service has been completed; her sin has been paid for. She has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." This prophetic oracle is placed before the words which herald John the Baptist for one part and the coming of the Glory of God in the latter day for the other part. Isaiah clearly is not speaking about the Babylonian captivities alone but about Israel's polymath struggle.*

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 is not alphabetical. Jeremiah records 28 terrible results of the siege and its aftermath. He accounts of the crucifixion of princes and in his grand finale in v.22 and presents a classic theological set piece where the glory of God and his righteousness are seen to strive for the highest stakes. Like Paul in Romans he is driving at the issue of how God brings about the forgiveness of the sinner as judge

of mankind without forever prejudicing His righteousness and breaching His eternal decrees and covenants. The way God finds is love that breaks the very heart of God Himself but for ever answers the cavils of Satan and secures the redemption of men who trust that loving creator and redeemer in His work.

SIN OF THE FATHERS ACKNOWLEDGED 1-11

1. Remember O LORD what has happened to us. Make Yourself have regard and see our reproach [*prj has to do with the very nakedness of captives being marched away*] *The final chapter of the dirge opens with an invitation to the LORD to see the abject shame of the nobles in chains and nakedness being herded like cattle north towards Babylon.*
2. Our heritage is turned over or converted to strangers –our houses to foreigners.
3. Our mothers without a Father are as widows. *Widows have no fathers to rely upon.*
4. We drink our own water for silver and our wood comes at a charge.
5. We are persecuted *with burdens* on our necks. We toil wearily and there is no rest for us.
6. We have exchanged the Egyptians for Assyria to satisfy *the need for bread. Long since Jeremiah had advised that Zedekiah do not revolt against Assyria. At length the nation had to depend on the good will of Assyria for its food. Babylon took control of production.*
7. **Our fathers sinned and are no more.** But we have carried the heavy load [*lbs*] of their iniquities.
8. Servants are ruling over us. There is none to tear us from their hand. *Jeremiah could see no Moses in the offing. The days that God spoke to Jeremiah about were 70 years down the road of continuing Jewish history. What would then prevail under God to release the people time would tell.*
9. We bring in our food at the peril of our souls from the face of the sword in the wilderness.
10. Our skin is black as a smoking furnace from the face of the violent heat or poisonous Samoom wind of famine. *A hot wind that promoted disease is introduced to the mix of calamities. Whether this wind actually was prevalent after the disastrous fall of the city we are not given to know. The language of Jeremiah is poetic but his reference may be quite concrete.*
11. They raped the wives in Zion and the young women in the cities of Judah. *In the capitol the wives were defenceless with their husbands slain. In the provinces husbands could protect their wives but young girls fell prey to the Babylonian soldiery.*

SIN IS PATENT IN OUR OWN GENERATION-WE ARE SICK 12-18

12. **Princes were hanged [*hl t*] or suspended by their hands.** *This is an example of crucifixion by the Babylonians. It was not invented by the Romans. The person of the elders was not respected. The sons of Zedekiah were slain but thereafter they may have been crucified as a reproach to Israel.*
13. They burdened the young men with grinding the hand-mill and youths stumbled under the burden of wood carrying. *The population that remained were set to work to construct buildings and to feed their overlords.*
14. The elders have a **Sabbath** rest from the gate and young men have a **Sabbath** from playing their stringed instruments. *The government of Jews by Jews had ceased and folk music had disappeared. Familiar order in society had broken down and joy was hard to find.*

15. There is a **Sabbath** from joy for our heart. Our dance is turned into mourning. *The LORD told a memorable children's' story about two play groups who could not agree whether to play funerals or marriages. In Jerusalem and Judah after the siege the heart of the people was sad and there was no dancing. The traditionally buoyant Jewish people were uncharacteristically sombre.*

16. The diadem is fallen from our head. **Woe now to us for we have sinned.** *The onomatopoeic expression sounds like our "Oh no." The Hebrew term "Woe" is simply the most terrible word in the language. It occurs in Revelation and there paints for us the three heaviest judgments that could fall on humanity.*

17. On account of this ours is a sad sick heart. On account of these things our eyes are dark.

18. Because the mountain of Zion is desolate the foxes continually wander about in it. In Jeremiah 51.50 the prophet Jeremiah advises the Jews at the fall of Babylon under Cyrus not to *wander about aimlessly like foxes* in Babylon. That statement respects a time 50 years further down the line of Jewish history-which was prophesied precisely by Jeremiah. *The prophet issues a call to a future generation to return to Israel.*

SIN ENTERS INTO THE HEART OF GOD 19-22

19. You O LORD belong to the age or aeon. Your throne abides for generation after generation. *Jeremiah looks to the golden and unceasing age. He declares that the theocracy may shiver to a halt-but the throne of God is secure through every generation.*

20. Why do you neglect us for perpetuity or altogether? [*j xɪ*-in Isaiah 34.10 the doubling of this word is used in the context of Edom and Petra of which it is said "**No one will pass to go beyond it**" into perpetuity proper *myj zɪ j zɪ*. While I myself and many other travellers have visited Petra the Red Rose City half as old as time that silent valley of carved stone is the end of the road and every traveller today turns back from that point.] Why do you forsake us to long distant days?

21. O Yahweh cause us to return to You and we shall return. Keep refreshing restoring and repairing [*vdj*] us as in days as of old.

22. For if You have finally rejected us You are **provoked** or broken in very great anger against or over us. [*pxq* being equivalent to the Greek *πηγνυμι* suggests brokenness within the Godhead-as if the covenants are gone and the faithfulness of God is perished. Jeremiah in his last verse plumbs the depth of the most profound theological concept of all-the concept of God and His judgment and wrath. He sees in the casting away of Israel the ruin of the sovereign of the universe. He is really urging the impossibility of that possibility. He is bold enough to think the thought that the very Godhead could be cleft in two over the matter of human iniquity and how to grapple with it. His thought is not misplaced-it leads directly to Gethsemane. It leads to the interposition of an angel at Gethsemane to stress solidarity in trepidation. It leads to the cross and the cry of dereliction. It points to the fact that neither Israel nor mankind can be brought back to union with God or given eternal life without the death of the Son of God. **This act introduced a "torn veil" and a "torn heart" into the eternal joy of the Godhead and a "rupture" of fellowship experienced within the life of YAHWEH ELOHIM.** Heavenly covenant love was willing to go that far to bring about redemption and to maintain the utter integrity of the name and being of the Godhead. Only a triune being could accomplish such a miracle for the redemption of man made in His image. Behind this brokenness there is also provocation. The utter rebellion of Satan from the era of man's beginnings in the garden has provoked the Almighty and increased that provocation by temptation so that human sin joined

demonic accusation but found the covenant love of God too strong and constant to relinquish His design to bring many sons to glory. The Father heart of God prevailed to find a way through the deepest anguish of mankind and a way to deal righteously with man despite the entire accumulation of sin over centuries and millennia. That way was Calvary where from the heart of Christ flowed blood and serum. We broke God's heart but God bound us to Him by a love that will not let us go.] Jeremiah finished his dirge by gloriously squaring the circle of judgment. He plumbs the love of God who through His own brokenness on the cross can alone maintain the glory of his righteous throne and bring many sons to glory from Adam's fallen race.

THE END

ORIGINAL TEXT-ADDENDUM

- (1) We must return O LORD to You and we will return. Continue to renew and refresh us as in days of old
- (2) They must consider their stiff necked obstinacy
- (3) Rise early - here is my 154 year desire. *The ancient comment fits with the second year of Nehemiah (443BC) since the first captivity of 597BC.*
- (4) Lay to heart- He will pluck out the vain people mydq in the presence of the heavens.
- (5) They divided it to trample it under their feet.

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