

## No One Came to Help: Lamentations 1:15-22

### Scriptures for Today:

**Lamentations 1:15-22** *The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress. 16 For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed. 17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. 18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. 19 I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls. 20 Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. 21 They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. 22 Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.*

### Introduction

Have you ever gone through something difficult and looked around for the people you expected to be there, only to realize that no one was coming?

Suffering is difficult enough when you have people beside you. Their presence doesn't remove the pain, but it helps you carry it. It helps to know that someone cares, someone is praying, and someone is willing to sit beside you during the darkest moments.

But what happens when you reach out your hands and no one reaches back? What happens when the people who promised to be there are nowhere to be found? What happens when the people you trusted deceive you? When the people who should be comforting you are far away—and the people who hate you are rejoicing over your suffering?

It is one thing to suffer with others beside you; it is another thing entirely to suffer with no one there to offer comfort.

That is the picture we find at the end of Lamentations chapter 1.

A lamentation is an expression of deep sorrow or mourning. The book of Lamentations records Jeremiah's grief over the destruction of Jerusalem after years of rebellion against God. It does not merely tell us what happened to Jerusalem; it allows us to see and feel the sorrow that followed.

This passage continues the picture we have already seen in verses 1–14.

Jerusalem has been conquered and left desolate. The city that was once full of people is now pictured as a woman sitting alone among the ruins, weeping over everything she has lost. Her people have been killed or carried away into captivity. Her leaders are dying from hunger. It's complete desolation and destruction.

How did the city that was once so great and mighty end up suffering alone? How did God's own people come to a place where they reached out for help and no one reached back?

The Bible does not leave us to wonder. Jerusalem was not suffering because God had failed His people. Jerusalem was suffering because the people had repeatedly rebelled against God.

The LORD had not treated Jerusalem unfairly. The people had rejected His commandments, ignored His warnings, and placed their confidence in other sources of security. When judgment finally came, everything they had trusted failed them.

As we examine these verses, we are going to see what happened when Jerusalem looked in every direction for someone to relieve her suffering—and **No One Came to Help**.

## 1. The Mighty Were Crushed (v. 15)

**Lamentations 1:15** The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty *men* in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, *as* in a winepress.

As this passage continues, Jerusalem is describing what happened to the people she would have expected to defend her.

The “mighty men” were her strongest and most capable soldiers. These were the men who were supposed to stand at the gates, defend the walls, and protect the city from the enemy. If anyone in Jerusalem could have helped, it should have been the mighty men.

But Jerusalem says: “The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men...”

Notice that Jerusalem does not merely say that Babylon defeated them. She says that **the Lord** had trodden them underfoot.

Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army carried out the destruction, but Jerusalem understood that the LORD had allowed and appointed it as judgment against their rebellion.

This was not an accident. It was not bad luck. It was not simply that Babylon happened to possess a stronger army. God had warned Israel that continued rebellion would eventually bring defeat.

**Deuteronomy 28:25** The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

For years, the people ignored those warnings. They continued rebelling against God because they thought they were safe. They had walls around their city. They had soldiers to defend them. They had young men ready to fight...We have all of those things in this country. "We're safe. Nothing can bring us down..."

But no wall is high enough, no army is large enough, and no man is strong enough to protect a nation from the judgment of God.

**Psalms 33:16-17** There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. **17** An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

It's not wrong to have strength, soldiers, or walls. The problem begins when people place their confidence in those things instead of placing their confidence in God.

People still have their "mighty men" today.

Think about all the things we place our confidence in. Military, money and wealth, personal connections, education and status. Those things can be helpful for your flesh, but they can't save your soul. They cannot protect anyone from the judgement of God.

Some people think they are placing their confidence in God, but they are actually placing it in other men. People will put their trust in their pastor and they think God is on their side because they do everything that the pastor says to do.

Notice God is the one who assembled the enemy against Jerusalem...

...he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, *as* in a winepress.

No matter what you do in life, no matter how much power you think you have, when you rebel against the living God, it's impossible to stand against Him. He will humble you and bring you very low.

## 2. The Comforter Was Far Away (vv. 16–17)

**Lamentations 1:16-17** For these *things* I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed. 17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, *and there is none* to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, *that his adversaries should be* round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.

Jerusalem's mighty men could not protect her. Now verse 16 describes the emotional sorrow that followed that defeat.

For these *things* I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water...

"For these things" refers to everything Jerusalem had experienced. Her city had been conquered. Her people had been killed. Her children had been carried away. Her leaders were dying, and her strongest defenders had been crushed.

This is not the kind of event where you shed a single tear and it's over. This is continual weeping. And it's not just weeping over what has happened. She was also weeping because no one was there to help her through it.

For these *things* I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me

That is what makes suffering alone so difficult. You are already carrying the weight of what happened, and then you are also carrying the sorrow of realizing that the people you expected to be there are nowhere to be found.

Jerusalem looked for someone who cared, but no one came.

**Psalms 69:20** Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none.

You don't want to get to that point in your life where you keep rejecting truth. You keep rejecting the ones who really care about you. And once everything catches up with you and you find yourself in turmoil and distress because of your choices. Then you want to seek help and comfort, but at that point it's too late.

Once you get to that low point, once you hit rock bottom it's going to hurt. And it's not just going to hurt you. It's going to hurt others around you.

Notice how it says “my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.”

It would have been painful enough for Jerusalem to suffer personally, but she was also watching her children suffer. The younger generation had been killed, scattered, or carried away into captivity.

If you’re a parent that loves your children you understand that it’s more painful to watch your children suffer than to suffer yourself.

Jerusalem could see what her rebellion had brought upon the next generation, but she could do nothing to stop it.

Verse 17 gives us a vivid picture of that helplessness:

“Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her...”

Imagine a woman sitting alone in dust and ashes and debris, wailing and crying out. Stretching out her hands in every direction. Hoping that someone will take hold of them. Reaching out, but no one is reaching back. No one is there to comfort her.

The absence of comfort is repeated multiple times throughout this chapter.

“She hath none to comfort her.” v. 2

“She had no comforter.” v. 9

“The comforter...is far from me.” v. 16

“There is none to comfort her.” v. 17

“There is none to comfort me.” v. 21

It is repeated so many times because that was one of the deepest parts of Jerusalem’s sorrow.

Look at the rest of the verse 17...

the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, *that his adversaries should be round about him:*  
Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.

Under the Old Testament law, a menstruous woman was considered ceremonially unclean and was separated from others for a period of time. This expression pictures how Jerusalem was now being treated by the surrounding nations.

She was rejected, avoided, and regarded as unclean. The city that had once been honored among the nations had become an object of shame. No one wanted to come near her.

There are a lot of homeless people in our society that refuse help. They refuse to listen to wisdom and council. They will not help themselves. They do not take care of themselves. They get to a point where they become repulsive and rejected by others. It’s very sad.

Jerusalem, because of her choices, was at the same place of rejection...

### 3. Their Lovers Deceived Them (vv. 18–19)

**Lamentations 1:18-19** The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. **19** I called for my lovers, *but* they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.

Throughout this chapter, Jerusalem has repeatedly acknowledged that her suffering was connected to her sin. Verse 5 speaks of “the multitude of her transgressions.” Verse 8 says that “Jerusalem hath grievously sinned.” In verse 14, Jerusalem describes “the yoke of my transgressions.”

But here in verse 18, her confession becomes even more direct. She not only acknowledges what she has done; she also acknowledges that God has dealt righteously with her.

She says: “The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment...”

There is an understanding that God has not treated her unfairly. She had been warned repeatedly, but she continued to reject His commandments. Now, as she looks at the destruction around her, she admits that the LORD was right and that she had rebelled.

This was the right attitude for Jerusalem to have. Every person should be willing to say, “The LORD is righteous, and I was wrong.”

But although this confession was right, it came too late to prevent the judgment and the consequences of their actions.

Jerusalem should have said, “The LORD is righteous,” when the prophets were warning her. She should have humbled herself while the walls were still standing. While they still had their children. While there was still time to turn away from the path of rebellion. Instead, they chose to be brought low by the judgement of God.

There is a difference between humbling yourself and being brought low. When you humble yourself, you willingly recognize that God is right and submit yourself to Him. But when you refuse to humble yourself, God is able to bring you into circumstances that reveal just how weak and dependent you really are.

Please don’t get to that point in your life. Don’t ignore God. Listen to His Word. Listen to His wisdom and council. Don’t make Him take everything from you before you give Him your attention.

Don’t wait until you have to say “hear, I pray you, all people, and **behold my sorrow**”  
“my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.” I’ve lost everything!

Don't wait for that moment to acknowledge God. Look at verse 19...

**19** I called for my lovers, *but* they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.

The “lovers” being spoken of here are referring to the foreign nations and political allies that the Kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem had become involved with over the years. They built relationships and placed their trust in these foreign nations for help and protection instead of placing their trust in God.

**Isaiah 31:1** Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

They looked at outward appearances and thought, “Look at Egypt’s horses, look at their chariots. Look at how strong they are. Surely they can help us if we are ever in trouble!”  
But what happened? They were deceived...

**Jeremiah 37:7–8** Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh’s army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. 8 And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

Egypt appeared to be coming to Jerusalem’s rescue, but it didn’t last. The Egyptian army returned home, the Babylonians came back, and Jerusalem was destroyed.

That should be a reminder for us. There are going to be people in your life who will try to influence you to take the wrong path. Friends will say, “I’ll always be there... I got your back.” They will make promises to you and when trouble finally comes...where did they go?

Jerusalem had spent years turning away from the LORD and turning toward her lovers. But when judgment came, she discovered that the people she trusted in couldn’t take the place of God.

That is how sin works. Sin promises that you will not need God. It tells you that the world will accept you, satisfy you, and take care of you. But when the consequences arrive, the world cannot rescue you from what it encouraged you to do.

The people who help you rebel against God will not be there to help you deal with the consequences.

That is why you place all your trust and confidence in God. He will not deceive you.

#### 4. Their Enemies Rejoiced (vv. 20–21)

**Lamentations 1:20-21** Behold, O LORD; for I *am* in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home *there is* as death. **21** They have heard that I sigh: *there is* none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done *it*: thou wilt bring the day *that* thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.

We see Jerusalem directs her cry to God. She is forced to turn to the one and only true God. The Creator. “Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress...” There is no one else left to turn to.

Her suffering was both physical and emotional. Her bowels were troubled, and her heart was turned within her. She was completely overwhelmed by everything happening around her.

There are times when you’re in so much turmoil and distress, you can’t eat. You can’t sleep. Your stomach turns. You feel it throughout your entire body. That is the kind of distress that Jerusalem was in.

“...for I have grievously rebelled...” So there was no minimizing what had been done. The rebellion was serious, repeated, and deliberate. And they were finally acknowledging that they brought this judgement upon themselves.

If you know you’re doing wrong. Just go ahead and acknowledge it to God. Don’t deny it. Don’t avoid the truth. Humble yourself so God can work in you. Sometimes that means accepting the consequences. And moving forward seeking to do the right thing.

Look at the next part... “...abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.”

Outside the city of Jerusalem the Babylonians were killing everyone by sword. But inside the people were dying from famine and disease. There was literally nowhere to run. Death surrounded them completely.

**Ezekiel 7:15** The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

A lot of times when it comes to sin you think you’ve gotten away with it. But eventually you end up surrounded by pain and death.

In verse 21 it gets worse...

They have heard that I sigh: *there is* none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done *it*:

The outside world knew that Jerusalem was suffering. They heard her sighing. But no one cared.

In fact they were glad that they had been destroyed. Their enemies took pleasure in their demise. That's not the attitude that we want to have as believers in Jesus Christ. We can acknowledge that a person was wrong without taking pleasure in watching their life fall apart.

**Proverbs 17:5** Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: *and* he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

The fact that God used Jerusalem's enemies to carry out His judgment did not make those enemies righteous. God was righteous in judging Jerusalem, but her enemies were still responsible for their pride, cruelty, and rejoicing.

That is why Jerusalem says:

"...thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me."

## 5. Their Final Appeal Was to the LORD (v. 22)

**Lamentations 1:22** Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs *are* many, and my heart *is* faint.

Jerusalem is making an appeal to God at the end of this chapter. They are saying, "God look at all the wickedness that our enemies have done. And do the same thing to them that you did to us because of our sins."

At least they are acknowledging that they rebelled against the Lord. And now they are leaving revenge in the hands of God. That's all they could do because they couldn't get revenge even if they wanted to at this point. There were no more mighty men, the leaders were being destroyed. They had no more strength.

When it comes to revenge in our lives. We need to bring the matter before God and leave it with Him. Don't become consumed with getting even. It will not bring you peace.

**Romans 12:19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Lamentations chapter 1 ends the same way it started, with Jerusalem still sighing and her heart still faint. There was a long road ahead, and the consequences of her rebellion would not disappear overnight.

Jerusalem learned that human strength, worldly relationships, and earthly sources of comfort will eventually fail. That is why we should not wait until everything else is gone before we turn to God.

Jerusalem's mighty men could not help because their strength had failed. Their so called "lovers" and "allies" deceived them and left them for dead. No one came to help.

In the same way, sinful humanity is without strength. Our strength has failed us. The world has deceived us and left us for dead. But look at the difference...

**Romans 5:6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

We could not save ourselves from sin. Our good works could not save us. Religion could not save us. No other person could pay the price for us.

But Jesus Christ came. He took our sins upon Himself, died on the cross, and rose again so that everyone who believes on Him can receive everlasting life.

Jerusalem looked around in her distress and could say, "No one came to help." But when sinful man was without strength and unable to save himself, Jesus Christ showed up and brought everlasting comfort.

**John 14:16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

As you leave here today, ask yourself, "Am I listening to God right now or am I ignoring Him?" Are you trusting in everything around you that will eventually fail, or are you trusting in the One who will never leave you nor forsake you? Let's Pray.