



become!”

1:12 ? hA lament by Zion personified. “May it never befall you,iMay it never befall you Meaning of Heb. uncertain. All who pass along the road—Look about and see:Is there any agony like mine,Which was dealt out to meWhen GOD afflicted meOn this day of wrath?

1:13 ? From above [God] sent a fireDown into my bones,Then spread a net for my feetAnd hurled me backward—Leaving me forlorn,In constant misery.

1:14 ? jMeaning of parts of vv. 14 and 15 uncertain. The yoke of my offenses is bound fast,Lashed tight by God’s hand;Imposed upon my neck,It saps my strength;The Sovereign has delivered me into the handsOf those I cannot withstand.

1:15 ? The Sovereign in my midst has rejectedAll my heroes,And proclaimed a set time against meTo crush my young men.As in a press the Sovereign has troddenFair Maiden Judah.

1:16 ? For these things do I weep,My eyes flow with tears:Far from me is any comforterWho might revive my spirit;My children are forlorn,For the foe has prevailed.”

1:17 ? Zion spreads out her hands,She has no one to comfort her; GOD has summoned against JacobHis enemies all about him;Jerusalem has become an outcastkan outcast Or “a menstruous woman”; cf. Ezek. 36.17. among them.

1:18 ? lAnother lament by Zion personified. “GOD is in the right,For I have been disobedient.Hear, all you peoples,And behold my agony:My maidens and my youthsHave gone into captivity!

1:19 ? I cried out to my friends,mfriends See note at v. 2. But they played me false.My priests and my eldersHave perished in the cityAs they searched for foodTo keep themselves alive.

1:20 ? See, O ETERNAL One, the distress I am in!My heart is in anguish,I know how wrong I wasI know how wrong I was Lit. “My heart has turned over within me”; cf. Exod. 14.5; Hos. 11.8. To disobey.Outside the sword deals death;Indoors, the plague.

1:21 ? When they heard how I was sighing,There was none to comfort me;All my foes heard of my plight and exulted.For it is Your doing:You have brought on the day that You threatened.Oh, let them become like me!oYou have brought on the day that You threatened. / Oh, let them become like me! Emendation yields “Oh, bring on them what befell me, / And let them become like me!”

1:22 ? Let all their wrongdoing come before You,And deal with themAs You have dealt with meFor all my transgressions.For my sighs are many,And my heart is sick.”

2:1 ? Alas!The Sovereign out of wrathHas shamedashamed Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Fair Zion,Has cast down from heaven to earthThe majesty of Israel.God’s FootstoolbGod’s Footstool I.e., the temple. was not rememberedOn this day of wrath.

2:2 ? The Sovereign has laid waste without pityAll the habitations of Jacob—Has razed in angerFair Judah’s strongholds,Bringing low in dishonorThe kingdom and its leaders.

2:3 ? In blazing anger [God] has cut downAll the might of Israel—Withdrawing vital supportc vital support Lit. “His right hand.” In the presence of the

foe,And ravaging Jacob like flaming fire,Consuming on all sides.

2:4 ? [God] bent the bow like an enemy,Poised the right hand like a foe,And slew all who delighted the eye.God's wrath was poured out like fireIn the Tent of Fair Zion.

2:5 ? The Sovereign has acted like a foe—Laying waste Israel,Laying waste all her citadels,Destroying her strongholds,Increasing within Fair JudahMourning and moaning.

2:6 ? God's BoothdGod's Booth I.e., the temple. has been stripped like a garden,And the Tabernacle, destroyed;eTabernacle Lit. "(Tent of) Meeting." GOD has ended in ZionFestival and sabbath;And in raging anger has spurnedKing and priest.

2:7 ? The Sovereign has rejected the altar,Disdained the Sanctuary,Handing over to the foeThe walls of its citadels;They raised a shout in the House of GOD As on a festival day.

2:8 ? GOD resolved to destroyThe wall of Fair Zion—Measuring it with a line,fMeasuring it with a line I.e., making plans. refraining notFrom bringing destruction.Wall and rampart have been made to mourn,Together they languish.

2:9 ? Her gates have sunk into the ground,Her bars have been smashed to bits;Her king and her leaders are in exile,gin exile Lit. "among the nations." InstructionhInstruction Heb. torah, here priestly instruction; cf. Jer. 18.18; Hag. 2.11; Mal. 2.6. is no more;Her prophets, too, receiveNo vision from GOD.

2:10 ? Silent sit on the groundThe elders of Fair Zion;They have strewn dust on their headsAnd girded themselves with sackcloth;The maidens of Jerusalem have bowedTheir heads to the ground.

2:11 ? My eyes are spent with tears,My heart is in tumult,My being melts awayiMy being melts away Lit. "My liver spills on the ground." Over the ruin of my poor people,jmy poor people Lit. "the daughter of my people"; so elsewhere in poetry. As babes and sucklings languishIn the squares of the city.

2:12 ? They keep asking their mothers,"Where is bread and wine?"As they languish like battle-woundedIn the squares of the town,As their life runs outIn their mothers' bosoms.

2:13 ? What can I take as witnessktake as witness Emendation yields "compare." or likenTo you, O Fair Jerusalem?What can I match with you to console you,O Fair Maiden Zion?For your ruin is vast as the sea:Who can heal you?

2:14 ? Your seers prophesied to youDelusion and folly.They did not expose your iniquitySo as to restore your fortunes,But prophesied to you oraclesOf delusion and deception.

2:15 ? All who pass your wayClap their hands at you;They hiss and wag their headlhiss and wag their head Gestures intended to ward off the calamity from the viewer; cf., e.g., Jer. 18.16 and note; Job 27.23. At Fair Jerusalem:"Is this the city that was calledPerfect in Beauty,Joy of All the Earth?"

2:16 ? All your enemiesJeer at you;They hiss and gnash their teeth,And cry: "We've ruined her!Ah, this is the day we hoped for;We have lived to see it!"mWe have lived to see it Lit. "We have attained, we have seen."

2:17 ? GOD has done what was purposed,Carrying out the decreeThat had been

ordained long ago, And tearing down without pity. [God] has let the foe rejoice over you, Has exalted the might of your enemies.

2:18 ? Their heart cried out Their heart cried out Emendation yields “Cry aloud.” to the Sovereign. O wall of Fair Zion, Shed tears like a torrent Day and night! Give yourself no respite, Your eyes no rest.

2:19 ? Arise, cry out in the night At the beginning of the watches, Pour out your heart like water In the presence of the Sovereign! Lift up your hands to [God] For the life of your infants, Who faint for hunger At every street corner.

2:20 ? oA plea by Zion personified. “See, O ETERNAL One, and behold, To whom You have done this! Alas, women eat their own fruit, Their newborn newborn The root has this meaning in Arabic; in contrast to others “dandled.”

babes! Alas, priest and prophet are slain In the Sanctuary of the Sovereign!

2:21 ? Prostrate in the streets lie Both young and old. My maidens and youths Are fallen by the sword; You slew them on Your day of wrath, You slaughtered without pity.

2:22 ? You summoned, as on a festival, My neighbors from round about. On the day of GOD’s wrath, None survived or escaped; Those whom I bore bore See note at 2.20. and reared My foe has consumed.”

3:1 ? I am the man the man A Job-like figure, a counterpart to the female city who was given voice in 1.12–16, 18–22; 2.20–22. who has known affliction Under who has known affliction / Under Emendation yields “whom the Sovereign has shepherded with.” the rod of God’s wrath;

3:2 It is I who was driven on and on In unrelieved darkness;

3:3 On none but me God’s hand descends Again and again, without cease.

3:4 ? My flesh and skin has been worn away; My bones have been shattered.

3:5 All around me have been built Misery Misery Taking ro’sh as equivalent to resh. and hardship;

3:6 I am made to dwell in darkness, Like those long dead.

3:7 ? I have been walled in and I cannot break out; And am weighed down with chains.

3:8 And when I cry and plead, [God] shuts out my prayer—

3:9 Walling in my ways with hewn blocks, And making my paths a maze.

3:10 ? A lurking bear [God] is to me, A lion in hiding—

3:11 Forcing me off my way Forcing me off my way Meaning of Heb. uncertain. and mangling me, Leaving me numb.

3:12 [God] has bent the bow and made me The target of divine arrows—

3:13 ? Shooting into my vitals A quiver’s shafts.

3:14 I have become a laughingstock to all people, The butt of their gibes all day long.

3:15 I have been filled with bitterness, And sated with wormwood.

3:16 ? [God] has broken my teeth on gravel, Has ground me into the dust.

3:17 My life was bereft of peace, I forgot what happiness was.

3:18 I thought my strength and hope Had perished before GOD.

3:19 ? To recall my distress and my misery Was wormwood and poison;

3:20 Whenever I thought of them, I was bowed low.

3:21 But this do I call to mind, Therefore I have hope:

3:22 ? The kindness of GOD has not ended, And God’s mercies are not spent.

3:23 They are renewed every morning—Ample is Your grace!

3:24 “GOD is my portion,” I say with full heart; This is the One in whom I have hope.

3:25 ? Good comes to those who trust in GOD, To the one who seeks God’s presence;

3:26 It is good to wait patiently Till rescue comes from GOD.

3:27 It is good for a man, when young, To bear a yoke;

3:28 ? Let him sit alone and be patient, When it is laid upon him.

3:29 Let him put his mouth to the dust—There may yet be hope.

3:30 Let him offer his cheek to the aggressor; Let him be surfeited with mockery.

3:31 ? For the Sovereign does not Reject forever,

3:32 But first afflicts, then pardons In abundant kindness.

3:33 For [God] does not willfully bring grief Or affliction to those involved, those involved In misdeeds—and who thus deserve punishment.

3:34 ? Crushing underfoot All the prisoners of the earth.

3:35 To deny a man his rights In the presence of the Most High,

3:36 To wrong a man in his cause—This the Sovereign does not choose.

3:37 ? Whose decree was ever fulfilled, Unless the Sovereign willed it?

3:38 Is it not at the word of the Most High, That weal and woe befall?

3:39 Of what shall a living man complain? Each one of his own sins!

3:40 ? Let us search and examine our ways, And turn back to GOD;

3:41 Let us lift up our hearts with with Lit. “to”; emendation yields “rather than”; cf. Joel 2.13. our hands To God in heaven:

3:42 We have transgressed and rebelled, And You have not forgiven.

3:43 ? You have clothed Yourself in anger and pursued us, You have slain without pity.

3:44 You have screened Yourself off with a cloud, That no prayer may pass through.

3:45 You have made us filth and refuse In the midst of the peoples.

3:46 ? All our enemies loudly Rail against us.

3:47 Panic and pitfall are our lot, Death and destruction.

3:48 My eyes shed streams of water Over the ruin of my poor my poor Lit. “the daughter of my”; so frequently in poetry. people.

3:49 ? My eyes shall flow without cease, Without respite,

3:50 Until GOD looks down And beholds from heaven.

3:51 My eyes have brought me grief Until ... grief Emendation yields: 50 “Until GOD looks down from heaven / And beholds 51 my affliction. / GOD has brought me grief.” Over all the maidens of my city.

3:52 ? My foes have snared me like a bird, Without any cause.

3:53 They have ended my life in a pit And cast stones at me.

3:54 Waters flowed over my head; I said: I am lost!

3:55 ? I have called on Your name, O ETERNAL One, From the depths of the Pit.

3:56 Hear my plea; Do not shut Your ear To my groan, to my cry!

3:57 You have ever drawn nigh when I called You; You have said, “Do not fear!”

3:58 ? You championed my cause, O my Sovereign, You have redeemed my life.

3:59 You have seen, O ETERNAL One, the wrong done me; Oh, vindicate my right!

3:60 You have seen all their malice, All their designs against me;

3:61 ? You have heard, O ETERNAL One, their taunts, All their designs against me,

3:62 The mouthings and chattering of my adversaries Against me all day long.

3:63 See how, at their ease or at work, I am the butt of their gibes.

3:64 ? Give them, O ETERNAL One, their deserts According to their deeds.

3:65 Give them anguish anguish Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of heart; Your curse be upon them!

3:66 Oh, pursue them in wrath and destroy them From under GOD's heavens!

4:1 ? Alas! The gold is dulled, adulled Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Debased the finest gold! The sacredbsacred Emendation yields "precious." gems are spilled At every street corner.

4:2 ? The precious children of Zion; Once valued as gold—Alas, they are accounted as earthen pots, Work of a potter's hands!

4:3 ? Even jackals offer the breast And suckle their young; But my poor people has turned cruel, Like ostriches of the desert.

4:4 ? The tongue of the suckling cleaves To its palate for thirst. Little children beg for bread; None gives them a morsel.

4:5 ? Those who feasted on dainties Lie famished in the streets; Those who were reared in purple Have embraced refuse heaps.

4:6 ? The guilt guilt I.e., punishment. of my poor my poor See note at 3.48. people Exceeded the iniquity iniquity I.e., punishment. of Sodom, Which was overthrown in a moment, Without a hand striking it.

4:7 ? Her elect were purer than snow, Whiter than milk; Their limbs were ruddier than coral, Their bodies bodies Meaning of Heb. uncertain. were like sapphire.

4:8 ? Now their faces are blacker than soot, They are not recognized in the streets; Their skin has shriveled on their bones, It has become dry as wood.

4:9 ? Better off were the slain of the sword Than those slain by famine, Who pined away, [as though] wounded, For lack of g Who pined away, [as though] wounded, / For lack of Meaning of Heb. uncertain. the fruits of the field.

4:10 ? With their own hands, tenderhearted women Have cooked their children; Such became their fare, In the disaster of my poor my poor See note at 3.48. people.

4:11 ? GOD gave full vent to fury, And poured out blazing wrath—Kindling a fire in Zion That consumed its foundations.

4:12 ? The kings of the earth did not believe, Nor any of the inhabitants of the world, That foe or adversary could enter The gates of Jerusalem.

4:13 ? It was for the sins of her prophets, The iniquities of her priests, Who had shed in her midst The blood of the just.

4:14 ? They wandered blindly through the streets, Defiled with blood, So that no one was able To touch their garments.

4:15 ? "Away! Unclean!" people shouted at them, "Away! Away! Touch not!" So they wandered and wandered again; For the nations had resolved: "They shall stay here no longer."

4:16 ? GOD's countenance has turned away from them, iGOD's countenance has turned away from them Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And will look on them no

more. They showed no regard for priests, No favor to elders.

4:17 ? Even now our eyes pine away  
In vain for deliverance. As we waited, still  
we wait  
For a nation that cannot help.

4:18 ? Our steps were checked,  
We could not walk in our squares,  
in our squares  
Or “With long strides.” Our doom is near, our days are done—Alas, our  
doom has come!

4:19 ? Our pursuers were swifter  
Than the eagles in the sky; They chased us in  
the mountains,  
Lay in wait for us in the wilderness.

4:20 ? The breath of our life, GOD’s anointed,  
GOD’s anointed I.e., the  
last Davidic king on the throne of Judah; cf. 2 Kings 25.4–7. Was captured in  
their traps—He in whose shade we had thought  
To live among the nations.

4:21 ? Rejoice and exult, Fair Edom,  
Who dwell in the land of Uz!  
To you, too,  
the cup shall pass, You shall get drunk and expose your nakedness.

4:22 ? Your iniquity, Fair Zion, is expiated; You will be exiled no longer. Your  
iniquity, Fair Edom, [God] will note, And uncover your sins.

5:1 Remember, O ETERNAL One, what has befallen us; Behold, and see our disgrace!

5:2 Our heritage has passed to aliens, Our homes to strangers.

5:3 We have become orphans, fatherless; Our mothers are like widows.

5:4 We must pay to drink our own water, Obtain our own kindling at a price.

5:5 We are hotly  
hotly Lit. “on our neck”; meaning of Heb. uncertain.  
pursued; Exhausted, we are given no rest.

5:6 We hold out a hand to Egypt; To Assyria, for our fill of bread.

5:7 Our ancestors sinned and are no more; And we must bear their guilt.

5:8 Slaves are ruling over us, With none to rescue us from them.

5:9 We get our bread at the peril of our lives, Because of the sword of the  
wilderness. sword of the wilderness Or “heat (cf. Deut. 28.22) of the  
wilderness”; meaning of Heb. uncertain.

5:10 Our skin glows like an oven, With the fever of famine.

5:11 Those slaves  
Those slaves Heb. “They.” have abused women in  
Zion, Maidens in the towns of Judah.

5:12 Princes have been hanged by them; No respect has been shown to elders.

5:13 Young men must carry millstones, And youths stagger under loads of wood.

5:14 The elders are gone from the gate, The youngsters from their music.

5:15 Gone is the joy of our hearts; Our dancing is turned into mourning.

5:16 The crown has fallen from our head; Woe to us that we have sinned!

5:17 Because of this our hearts are sick, Because of these our eyes are dimmed:

5:18 Because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate; Jackals prowl over it.

5:19 But You, O ETERNAL One, are enthroned forever, Your throne endures through  
the ages.

5:20 Why have You forgotten us utterly, Forsaken us for all time?

5:21 Take us back, O ETERNAL One, to Yourself, And let us come back; Renew our  
days as of old!

5:22 For truly, You have rejected us, Bitterly raged against us. Take us back, O  
ETERNAL One, to Yourself, And let us come back; Renew our days as of old!