

Tuesday, October 29

**All passages taken from Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996.
Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189.
All rights reserved.**

Lamentations 1:1 - 2:22

1 **1** Jerusalem, once so full of people, is now deserted. She who was once great among the nations now sits alone like a widow. Once the queen of all the earth, she is now a slave. **2** She sobs through the night; tears stream down her cheeks. Among all her lovers, there is no one left to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her and become her enemies. **3** Judah has been led away into captivity, oppressed with cruel slavery. She lives among foreign nations and has no place of rest. Her enemies have chased her down, and she has nowhere to turn. **4** The roads to Jerusalem are in mourning, for crowds no longer come to celebrate the festivals. The city gates are silent, her priests groan, her young women are crying— how bitter is her fate! **5** Her oppressors have become her masters, and her enemies prosper, for the LORD has punished Jerusalem for her many sins. Her children have been captured and taken away to distant lands. **6** All the majesty of beautiful Jerusalem has been stripped away. Her princes are like starving deer searching for pasture. They are too weak to run from the pursuing enemy. **7** In the midst of her sadness and wandering, Jerusalem remembers her ancient splendor. But now she has fallen to her enemy, and there is no one to help her. Her enemy struck her down and laughed as she fell. **8** Jerusalem has sinned greatly, so she has been tossed away like a filthy rag. All who once honored her now despise her, for they have seen her stripped naked and humiliated. All she can do is groan and hide her face. **9** She defiled herself with immorality and gave no thought to her future. Now she lies in the gutter with no one to lift her out. “LORD, see my misery,” she cries. “The enemy has triumphed.” **10** The enemy has plundered her completely, taking every precious thing she owns. She has seen foreigners violate her sacred Temple, the place the LORD had forbidden them to enter. **11** Her people groan as they search for bread. They have sold their treasures for food to stay alive. “O LORD, look,” she mourns, “and see how I am despised. **12** “Does it mean nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see if there is any suffering like mine, which the LORD brought on me when he erupted in fierce anger. **13** “He has sent fire from heaven that burns in my bones. He has placed a trap in my path and turned me back. He has left me devastated, racked with sickness all day long. **14** “He wove my sins into ropes to hitch me to a yoke of captivity. The Lord sapped my strength and turned me over to my enemies; I am helpless in their hands. **15** “The Lord has treated my mighty men with contempt. At his command a great army has come to crush my young warriors. The Lord has trampled his beloved city like grapes are trampled in a

winepress. **16** “For all these things I weep; tears flow down my cheeks. No one is here to comfort me; any who might encourage me are far away. My children have no future, for the enemy has conquered us.” **17** Jerusalem reaches out for help, but no one comforts her. Regarding his people Israel, the LORD has said, “Let their neighbors be their enemies! Let them be thrown away like a filthy rag!” **18** “The LORD is right,” Jerusalem says, “for I rebelled against him. Listen, people everywhere; look upon my anguish and despair, for my sons and daughters have been taken captive to distant lands. **19** “I begged my allies for help, but they betrayed me. My priests and leaders starved to death in the city, even as they searched for food to save their lives. **20** “LORD, see my anguish! My heart is broken and my soul despairs, for I have rebelled against you. In the streets the sword kills, and at home there is only death. **21** “Others heard my groans, but no one turned to comfort me. When my enemies heard about my troubles, they were happy to see what you had done. Oh, bring the day you promised, when they will suffer as I have suffered. **22** “Look at all their evil deeds, LORD. Punish them, as you have punished me for all my sins. My groans are many, and I am sick at heart.”

21 The Lord in his anger has cast a dark shadow over beautiful Jerusalem. The fairest of Israel's cities lies in the dust, thrown down from the heights of heaven. In his day of great anger, the Lord has shown no mercy even to his Temple. **2** Without mercy the Lord has destroyed every home in Israel. In his anger he has broken down the fortress walls of beautiful Jerusalem. He has brought them to the ground, dishonoring the kingdom and its rulers. **3** All the strength of Israel vanishes beneath his fierce anger. The Lord has withdrawn his protection as the enemy attacks. He consumes the whole land of Israel like a raging fire. **4** He bends his bow against his people, as though he were their enemy. His strength is used against them to kill their finest youth. His fury is poured out like fire on beautiful Jerusalem. **5** Yes, the Lord has vanquished Israel like an enemy. He has destroyed her palaces and demolished her fortresses. He has brought unending sorrow and tears upon beautiful Jerusalem. **6** He has broken down his Temple as though it were merely a garden shelter. The LORD has blotted out all memory of the holy festivals and Sabbath days. Kings and priests fall together before his fierce anger. **7** The Lord has rejected his own altar; he despises his own sanctuary. He has given Jerusalem's palaces to her enemies. They shout in the LORD's Temple as though it were a day of celebration. **8** The LORD was determined to destroy the walls of beautiful Jerusalem. He made careful plans for their destruction, then did what he had planned. Therefore, the ramparts and walls have fallen down before him. **9** Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the ground. He has smashed their locks and bars. Her kings and princes have been exiled to distant lands; her law has ceased to exist. Her prophets receive no more visions from the LORD. **10** The leaders of beautiful Jerusalem sit on the ground in silence. They are clothed in burlap and throw dust on

their heads. The young women of Jerusalem hang their heads in shame. **11** I have cried until the tears no longer come; my heart is broken. My spirit is poured out in agony as I see the desperate plight of my people. Little children and tiny babies are fainting and dying in the streets. **12** They cry out to their mothers, “We need food and drink!” Their lives ebb away in the streets like the life of a warrior wounded in battle. They gasp for life as they collapse in their mothers’ arms. **13** What can I say about you? Who has ever seen such sorrow? O daughter of Jerusalem, to what can I compare your anguish? O virgin daughter of Zion, how can I comfort you? For your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you? **14** Your prophets have said so many foolish things, false to the core. They did not save you from exile by pointing out your sins. Instead, they painted false pictures, filling you with false hope. **15** All who pass by jeer at you. They scoff and insult beautiful Jerusalem, saying, “Is this the city called ‘Most Beautiful in All the World’ and ‘Joy of All the Earth’?” **16** All your enemies mock you. They scoff and snarl and say, “We have destroyed her at last! We have long waited for this day, and it is finally here!” **17** But it is the LORD who did just as he planned. He has fulfilled the promises of disaster he made long ago. He has destroyed Jerusalem without mercy. He has caused her enemies to gloat over her and has given them power over her. **18** Cry aloud before the Lord, O walls of beautiful Jerusalem! Let your tears flow like a river day and night. Give yourselves no rest; give your eyes no relief. **19** Rise during the night and cry out. Pour out your hearts like water to the Lord. Lift up your hands to him in prayer, pleading for your children, for in every street they are faint with hunger. **20** “O LORD, think about this! Should you treat your own people this way? Should mothers eat their own children, those they once bounced on their knees? Should priests and prophets be killed within the Lord’s Temple? **21** “See them lying in the streets— young and old, boys and girls, killed by the swords of the enemy. You have killed them in your anger, slaughtering them without mercy. **22** “You have invited terrors from all around, as though you were calling them to a day of feasting. In the day of the LORD ’s anger, no one has escaped or survived. The enemy has killed all the children whom I carried and raised.”

Philemon 1:1 - 25

1 **1** This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, **2** and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house. **3** May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. **4** I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, **5** because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God’s people. **6** And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity

that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. **7** Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people. **8** That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. **9** But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus. **10** I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. **11** Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. **12** I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart. **13** I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. **14** But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced. **15** It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. **16** He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. **17** So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19** I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT. AND I WON'T MENTION THAT YOU OWE ME YOUR VERY SOUL ! **20** Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. **21** I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more! **22** One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon. **23** Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. **24** So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers. **25** May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Psalm 101:1 - 8

101 1 I will sing of your love and justice, LORD . I will praise you with songs. **2** I will be careful to live a blameless life— when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home. **3** I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar. I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them. **4** I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil. **5** I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors. I will not endure conceit and pride. **6** I will search for faithful people to be my companions. Only those who are above reproach will be allowed to serve me. **7** I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my

presence. **8** My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the LORD from their grip.

Proverbs 26:20

26 20 Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.