

## A PLEA FOR RESTORATION

Bible Background – LAMENTATIONS 5

Printed Text – LAMENTATIONS 5

### Prayer for Restoration

**5** LORD, remember what has happened to us.

See how we have been disgraced!

**2** Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners.

**3** We are orphaned and fatherless.  
Our mothers are widowed.

**4** We have to pay for water to drink,  
and even firewood is expensive.

**5** Those who pursue us are at our heels;  
we are exhausted but are given no rest.

**6** We submitted to Egypt and Assyria  
to get enough food to survive.

**7** Our ancestors sinned, but they have died—  
and we are suffering the punishment they  
deserved!

**8** Slaves have now become our masters;  
there is no one left to rescue us.

**9** We hunt for food at the risk of our lives,  
for violence rules the countryside.

**10** The famine has blackened our skin  
as though baked in an oven.

**11** Our enemies rape the women in Jerusalem  
and the young girls in all the towns of  
Judah.

**12** Our princes are being hanged by their

thumbs,

and our elders are treated with contempt.

**13** Young men are led away to work at  
millstones,

and boys stagger under heavy loads of  
wood.

**14** The elders no longer sit in the city gates;  
the young men no longer dance and sing.

**15** Joy has left our hearts;  
our dancing has turned to mourning.

**16** The garlands have fallen from our heads.  
Weep for us because we have sinned.

**17** Our hearts are sick and weary,  
and our eyes grow dim with tears.

**18** For Jerusalem is empty and desolate,  
a place haunted by jackals.

**19** But LORD, you remain the same forever!  
Your throne continues from generation to  
generation.

**20** Why do you continue to forget us?  
Why have you abandoned us for so long?

**21** Restore us, O LORD, and bring us back to  
you again! Give us back the joys we once  
had!

**22** Or have you utterly rejected us?  
Are you angry with us still?

-----New Living Translation

### Lesson Introduction

For those with a deep love for their family and community, their people and their nation, there are few things more painful than witnessing their oppression, suffering and anguish over the situation in which they find themselves. The writer of Lamentations clearly felt this way about the destruction of Judah and Israel. Although he knew that relentless disobedience to God brought the nation to this place, God is the only One to restore the people and their broken relationship with Him.

**Background:** While some scholars question the authorship of Lamentations, it is traditionally attributed to the prophet Jeremiah as an appendix to his book of prophesy. Jeremiah was known as the “weeping prophet” who spent over forty years calling out Israel’s displeasing ways and pleading with them to repent and avert the promised doom

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for disobedience. After years of predicted warnings of destruction to their homeland, the worst had come to pass. Jerusalem and Judah had been destroyed, and the Israelites were overtaken by enemies on every side until they were dispossessed from their land and taken into captivity. The major theme of Lamentations 1-4 expresses personal and community cries to God for their affliction. However, right in the middle of those cries, Jeremiah digs deep and pivots to place his hope in the God of his salvation (Jeremiah 3:21-26). Jeremiah provides a voice to their overwhelming grief: repentance and hope in God's love and mercy because of His covenant. The entire book is read publicly as a part of an annual solemn observance to remember the Temple's destruction in 587 BC (Jeremiah 52:12-13).

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 401

### A Plea for Consideration

**Lamentations 5:1-6:** God had warned the nation through Moses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68) of the consequences of disobedience to the Law, idolatry and apostasy. Yet, He was merciful and long suffering, giving them opportunity after opportunity to repent and return to Him. Through the prophets, He warned them, to no avail. But now, the consequences of their sin have caught up with them. They are disgraced before their enemies. They can no longer protect themselves or even provide for themselves. They have lost their land, their inheritance. The disgrace and the devastation is described with such sorrow by the author in these verses.

◆*How can we look at troubling times through the lens of God's Word and realize what went wrong?*

### A Plea for Sins

**Lamentations 5:7-16:** The author seems to state in verse 7 that the punishment visited upon Israel is because of the sin of the ancestors. There is a view that the sins of the forefathers are come upon subsequent generations (Exodus 20:5). Yes, the ancestors did sin and deserved the judgment that has come upon Israel, but neither did their offspring turn from the wickedness of the forefathers. In Ezekiel 18, God makes it clear that each generation will bear the consequences of their own sin. And for Judah, God's wrath has come. Even the lowest on the Babylonian social order are lording it over the Jews. They hunt for food in the countryside risking death. Their women are being sexually assaulted, young noblemen are being executed in tortuous ways. They labor for mere survival. All joy is gone. But they know that the cause of their predicament is sin.

◆*How can we accept responsibility before God and others for our sins and turn around to do what pleases Him?*

### A Plea for Mercy

**Lamentations 5:17-22:** The author recognizes that in spite of all the devastation in Jerusalem—the consecrated city of Zion, where the Temple once stood—and the destruction of the land, God has not changed. He is still sovereign, and His character has not and will never change. The author pleads for mercy for the nation and for God to return the hearts of the people to Him. The people are weary, but he knows that God and only God can restore them. His prayer is for God to bring the hearts of the

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people back to Him and they will once again have joy in a renewed relationship with God. We cannot always understand God's ways and methods, but He has assured us that in His own time, God's faithfulness is continually renewed (Lamentations 3:22).

**Conclusion**

Many times, and in numerous ways, life can become very discouraging. With so many news sources at our fingertips, we can become eyewitnesses to the tragic suffering of people both near and far. When we see, and experience, so much pain, it is natural to lament the troubles of our world. But after we acknowledge the pain, let us commit to turning the sorrow into action. With God's guidance and our determination, we can work toward social justice to positively impact our community. And while we work to improve society, we must continue to share the Gospel and the love of Christ to those who are in pain.

**Sources:**

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Spring Quarter), 397-408. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.  
*Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation, Carol Stream, Illinois.

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Lesson for Next Week – May 2, 2021 – Study Guide 9

## MICAIAH: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Bible Background ♦ 1 KINGS 22:1-40

Printed Text ♦ 1 KINGS 22:15-23, 26-28

Devotional Reading ♦ 1 JOHN 3:23-4:3, DEUTERONOMY 18:19-22

### Daily Bible Readings

#### MONDAY

Elijah Prophesies Truth to King Jehoshaphat  
(2 Kings 3:9-17)

#### TUESDAY

Kings Propose Battle Against Aram  
(1 Kings 22:1-6)

#### WEDNESDAY

Micaiah Resists Pressure to Prophesy Falsely  
(1 Kings 22:7-14)

#### THURSDAY

A Lying Spirit Brings Disaster  
(2 Chronicles 18:18-22)

#### FRIDAY

King Ahab Suffers Fatal Injury  
(1 Kings 22:29-40)

#### SATURDAY

Jehoshaphat Promotes Peace with Israel  
(1 Kings 22:41-46)

#### SUNDAY

Prophet Micaiah Speaks the Truth  
(1 Kings 22:15-23, 26-28)