

# Lamentations 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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This verse captures profound personal anguish: "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water." The repetition of eini eini (עַיִן עַיִן, "my eye, my eye") emphasizes the intensity of grief. In Hebrew poetry, repetition conveys emotional overwhelm. The continuous flow of tears (yarad mayim, יָרַד מֵים) suggests uncontrollable, ceaseless weeping. The core problem appears next: "because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me" (rachak mimeni menachem meshiv nafshi). The Hebrew menachem (מְנַחֵם) means "comforter, consoler"—the same root as Nahum ("comfort") and related to the Holy Spirit's title "Comforter" (Parakletos, John 14:16, 26). Human comforters prove distant and inadequate. Some Jewish interpreters see this as lamenting God's apparent absence, though ultimately He is the only true comforter. The verse concludes with devastating consequences: "my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed." The Hebrew shomemim (שָׁמְמִים, "desolate") describes utter devastation—abandoned, ruined, hopeless. The enemy's victory (gavar oyev) appears complete. Yet within Lamentations' broader context, this very honesty before God prepares for the hope of chapter 3:22-26. Only by facing the depth of judgment can we appreciate the greatness of mercy.

## Historical Context

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The absence of comforters reflects Judah's complete isolation following Jerusalem's fall. Neighboring nations offered no help; some actively celebrated (Obadiah 1:10-14, Lamentations 1:2). Egyptian allies who encouraged Judah's rebellion against Babylon abandoned them when Nebuchadnezzar's army approached (Jeremiah 37:5-10). Within the theological framework, this absence previews humanity's deeper need. Human comforters ultimately fail because they cannot address sin's root problem. Only God can restore what judgment has broken. The prophets promised that God Himself would comfort His people (Isaiah 40:1-2, 51:3, 12, 66:13), a promise fulfilled in Christ and the Holy Spirit. The reference to "desolate children" reflects the horrific reality of 586 BC. Jeremiah 39:6 records that Nebuchadnezzar slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes. Mothers watched children starve during the siege (Lamentations 2:11-12, 4:4, 10). The exile separated families, with some deported, some killed, some fleeing to Egypt (Jeremiah 43:4-7). The enemy's prevailing meant not just political defeat but the shattering of families and generational hope.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. When have you experienced the inadequacy of human comforters, and how did this drive you toward God as the only true source of comfort?
2. How does the repetition 'mine eye, mine eye' encourage us to be honest about our grief and pain before God rather than suppressing or denying it?

3. In what ways does Christ fulfill the role of the Comforter who seemed far from Jerusalem, and how does the Holy Spirit's title Parakletos connect to this verse?
4. What does it mean that sometimes we must fully experience the absence of human comfort to appreciate the sufficiency of divine comfort?

## Interlinear Text

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רִזְחָה עֵינִי עֵינִי רִזְחָה  
 עַל לְהָן אֵין בָּזְקִי הַ  
 H5921 H428 H589 For these things I weep mine eye mine eye runneth down  
 H1058 H5869 H5869 H3381

מַשְׁ יָב מַנְחָה מַמְמָה בַּקְעָה קָרָא מַעֲמָקָה  
 with water is far because the comforter that should relieve  
 H4325 H3588 H7368 H4480 H5162 H7725

גָּבְרָה יְמִינָה שׂוֹמֵם יָמִינִי נַפְשִׁי  
 my soul from me my children are desolate prevailed  
 H5315 H1961 H1121 H8074 H3588 H1396

אֹיְבָן:  
 because the enemy  
 H341

## Additional Cross-References

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**Lamentations 1:2** (Parallel theme): She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

**Psalms 119:136** (Parallel theme): Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

**Jeremiah 14:17** (Parallel theme): Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

**Jeremiah 13:17** (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

**Lamentations 2:11** (Parallel theme): Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.

**Lamentations 2:18** (Parallel theme): Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.

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