

Lamentations 1:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Failed reliances exposed: "I called for my lovers, but they deceived me" (karati le-me'ahavai hemah rimmuni). The "lovers" (allies) mentioned in verse 2 are now explicitly identified as deceivers. The verb rimah (רִמָּה, "deceived, betrayed") indicates deliberate treachery. Human alliances prove worthless. "My priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city" (kohanai uzkenai ba-ir gave'u). The phrase "gave up the ghost" (gave'u, נִיעַד) means they died, expired. These religious and civic leaders died seeking food: "while they sought their meat to relieve their souls" (ki-vikshu okhel lamo veyashivu et-nafsham). The phrase "relieve their souls" (hashiv nafesh, חַשֵּׁב נֶפֶשׁ) means restore life or vitality—they sought food just to survive, but died in the attempt. This illustrates judgment's totality—even spiritual leaders perish. No class escapes; all suffer. This humbles human pretension and exposes our universal dependence on God's provision.

Historical Context

Historical accounts confirm leadership deaths during Jerusalem's fall. 2 Kings 25:18-21 records that Nebuzaradan, Babylon's captain, took the chief priest Seraiah, second priest Zephaniah, three gatekeepers, various officials, and sixty men and executed them at Riblah. These represented Judah's religious and civil leadership. The starvation of priests and elders fulfills the siege's horror. Jeremiah 38:9 mentions that bread ran out in the city. Lamentations 4:4-10 provides graphic details of famine's effects, including children begging for bread and mothers

cannibalizing their children (fulfilling Deuteronomy 28:53-57). The failure of "lovers" (political allies) to help was also fulfilled. Egypt, whom Judah trusted, provided no effective assistance when Babylon laid siege (Jeremiah 37:5-10). Ezekiel 17:15-18 condemns Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon in pursuit of Egyptian alliance, predicting it would fail—which it did.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'lovers' (false securities, human alliances, worldly supports) do we trust instead of relying fully on God?
2. How does the death of priests and elders while seeking food illustrate that no human mediator or religious status exempts us from judgment?
3. In what ways does Christ succeed where all human 'lovers' and alliances fail, proving Himself the only faithful and true helper?

Interlinear Text

כִּי בְּנֵי רֶמֶם וְנִי הַ פָּה לְמַאֲכָל בְּנֵי אֶתְּנִי
I called for my lovers H1992 but they deceived me my priests H3548
H7121 H157 H7411
אַל בְּלֹשׁ וְלִזְלֹבְנִי בְּעֵיר עַל עַל פִּי
and mine elders in the city gave up the ghost H3588 while they sought their meat H400
H2205 H5892 H1478 H1245 H400
לְמַשְׁמָמָה אֶת יְמֵינֵי יְבֹן לְמַזְמָנִים
to relieve their souls H5315
H0 H853 H7725

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 1:2 (Love): 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.

Lamentations 2:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

Lamentations 1:11 (Parallel theme): All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile.

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