

Lamentations 1:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

Analysis

The chapter concludes with a sobering request: "Let all their wickedness come before thee" (tavo kol-ra'atam lefaneikha). This prayer appeals for divine justice on those who mocked and harmed Jerusalem. "And do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions" (ve'olel lamo ka'asher olalta li al kol-pesha'ai) requests equitable judgment—not excessive revenge but appropriate consequences. The verse acknowledges that what Jerusalem experienced ("as thou hast done unto me") was deserved ("for all my transgressions"). If God justly judged His own people, He must also judge their enemies. The final cry: "for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint" (ki-rabot anchoti ve-libi davai). Multiple sighs (rabot anchoti) and faint heart (libi davai) describe exhaustion and overwhelm. The chapter that began with desolation (verse 1) ends with personal collapse. Yet even this is presented to God—maintaining dialogue demonstrates faith. Total despair would be silence; continued petition shows hope remains.

Historical Context

The prayer for God to judge Israel's enemies was eventually answered. Babylon, which destroyed Jerusalem, was itself conquered by Persia in 539 BC (Daniel 5, Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51). Edom, which celebrated Judah's fall, was later destroyed (Obadiah 1:1-16, Jeremiah 49:7-22). The principle appears throughout Scripture: nations that harm God's people eventually face judgment (Genesis 12:3, Zechariah 2:8-9). However, timing differs from human expectations. Babylon ruled

for decades before falling; Edom's destruction came gradually. Habakkuk 1-2 wrestles with this timing question. God's response: judgment will come at appointed time (Habakkuk 2:3). The New Testament shows that ultimate justice occurs at final judgment (Revelation 6:10, 18:6-8, 20). Meanwhile, believers are called to love enemies, pray for persecutors, and trust God for vindication (Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:17-21). The tension between imprecatory psalms and Jesus's love command resolves in understanding that personal forgiveness doesn't negate divine justice.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we balance praying for God's justice on evildoers with Jesus's command to love enemies and pray for persecutors?
2. What does it mean to pray 'do unto them as You have done to me'—seeking proportionate justice rather than excessive revenge?
3. How does bringing exhaustion and faintness of heart to God in prayer demonstrate faith even when we feel spiritually and emotionally depleted?

Interlinear Text

בָּאֵשׁ רָ לְ מוֹ	עוֹל לְתָ	לִפְנֵי יְיָ	רָעָתָם	כָּל תֵּבֹא
come	thee and do	before	Let all their wickedness	
H935	H5953	H6440	H7451	H3605
רַב וְתִפְּ	פְּשָׁעַי	כָּל עַל לִי	עוֹל לְתָ	
are many	unto me for all my transgressions	thee and do		
H7227	H6588	H5953		
			וְלִבִּי	אֲנַחֲתִי
			and my heart	for my sighs
			H3820	H585
			יָדִי	
			is faint	
			H1742	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 8:18 (Parallel theme): When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

Revelation 6:10 (Parallel theme): And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?