

Lamentations 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.

Analysis

Memory intensifies present pain: "Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old" (zachrah Yerushalayim yemei anyah um rudi kol machmudeha). The term machmad (מְמֻדָּה, "pleasant things, precious things") refers to material prosperity, yes, but more fundamentally to covenant blessings—God's presence, peace, fruitfulness—now lost. The contrast between past glory ("days of old," yemei kedem) and present suffering creates unbearable tension. This retrospective shows both the magnitude of loss and the reality of what covenant obedience once provided. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 promised exactly these blessings for faithfulness; verses 15-68 threatened their removal for disobedience. Jerusalem's fall vindicated God's warnings. The verse continues with public humiliation: "when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths" (tsareha ra'uhā sachaku al mishbateha). The "sabbaths" (mishbat, מִשְׁבָּת) likely refers to all sacred observances that marked Israel's distinctiveness. What was meant to witness to God's holiness became object of mockery—a warning that religious observance without heart obedience provokes scorn rather than admiration.

Historical Context

The "pleasant things" Jerusalem lost were both tangible and intangible. Materially: the magnificent temple, prosperous commerce, beautiful architecture, agricultural abundance, political independence. Spiritually: regular worship, functioning priesthood, prophetic guidance, sense of God's presence and favor, covenantal security. The phrase "in the days of old" (yemei kedem) harks back to David and Solomon's reigns, Israel's golden age. Solomon's temple dedication (1 Kings 8) saw God's glory fill the sanctuary. The Queen of Sheba marveled at Israel's wisdom and prosperity (1 Kings 10:1-9). These memories, while perhaps idealized, represented what covenant faithfulness could produce. The mockery of sabbaths by adversaries echoes other passages. Psalm 80:6 laments being "a reproach to our neighbors." Psalm 44:13-14 describes becoming "a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people." The sabbath, meant to be a sign of God's sanctifying work (Ezekiel 20:12), became evidence (in enemies' eyes) that Israel's God couldn't protect them. Yet even bitter memory served purpose. Ezra 3:12 describes old men who had seen Solomon's temple weeping at the second temple's foundation—memory preserved standards of glory. Nehemiah 1:3-4 shows remembering Jerusalem's ruin motivating action. Right remembering—neither idealizing the past nor forgetting God's former mercies—can fuel repentance and hope.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How can remembering God's past faithfulness and blessings serve either to increase our present pain or to fuel hope, depending on how we remember?

2. What does the mockery of Israel's sabbaths teach about how the watching world evaluates the authenticity of our faith based on our obedience?
3. In what ways might we need to remember our own 'pleasant things'—not to induce nostalgia but to recognize what covenant disobedience cost?
4. How does the Holy Spirit help us remember rightly—neither forgetting God's mercies nor becoming paralyzed by past glory?

Interlinear Text

בָּלְתָּה	מִרְאֵךְ יְהִי	עֲנִיה	מִימִי	יְרוּשָׁלָם	זְכָרָה	כ
remembered	Jerusalem	in the days	of her affliction	and of her miseries		H3605
H2142	H3389	H3117	H6040		H4788	
מִסְמָדָה יְפֵה	רָאשָׁה אֶלְעָזָר	מִימִי	לְזִמְרָה	לְזִמְרָה	לְזִמְרָה	
all her pleasant things	H834	H1961	in the days	of old	fell	
H4262			H3117	H6924	H5307	
עַמְּהָה	בַּיד	אֶרְיָם	אֶרְיָם	אֵין	עוֹזֵר	
when her people	into the hand	her the adversaries	H369		and none did help	
H5971	H3027	H6862			H5826	
בָּהַ	אֶרְיָם	שָׁפָקָה	לְ	מִשְׁבְּתָה:		
הָ	her the adversaries	her and did mock	לְ	at her sabbaths		
saw		H7832			H4868	
H7200	H6862					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 79:4 (Parallel theme): We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

Psalms 42:4 (Parallel theme): When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.