

Lamentations 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.

Analysis

The verse begins with a troubling image: "Her filthiness is in her skirts." The Hebrew tum'atah be-shuleha (טומאתה בְשׁוּלֶה) continues the feminine personification, with "skirts" (shul) referring to the hem or train of a garment. In biblical symbolism, garment hems touching unclean things made the wearer ceremonially defiled (Haggai 2:12-13). Jerusalem's defilement is visible, public, and pervasive—contaminating everything she touches. The indictment intensifies: "she remembereth not her last end" (lo zachrah acharitah, לֹא זָכַרְתָּ אַחֲרִיתָה). Despite prophetic warnings from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, Jerusalem failed to consider consequences. The term acharit means "end, latter days, future outcome." Proverbs repeatedly warns to consider life's end (Proverbs 5:4, 14:12), but Jerusalem pursued immediate pleasures and political expediency, ignoring covenant curses. "Therefore she came down wonderfully" uses vaterad pla'im (וַתָּרַד פְּلִיאִים)—literally "came down wonders" or "descended amazingly." The term pele usually describes God's miraculous works (Exodus 15:11, Psalm 77:14); here it describes judgment's magnitude. The fall is so complete, so shocking, that even in tragedy it manifests God's awesome power. The cry "behold my affliction" echoes verse 1:12, appealing to any who might show compassion.

Historical Context

Prophets had warned Judah for over a century before Jerusalem fell. Isaiah (740-680 BC) warned of Assyrian and Babylonian threats. Jeremiah (627-586 BC) spent four decades calling for repentance, even specifying the 70-year exile duration (Jeremiah 25:11-12). Ezekiel, exiled with the first wave in 597 BC, continued warning those in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4-24). Despite these clear warnings, political and religious leaders pursued disastrous policies. Kings like Jehoiakim and Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon contrary to prophetic counsel (Jeremiah 27:12-15, 38:17-23). False prophets promised peace when destruction was coming (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11, 23:16-17). The people preferred comforting lies to uncomfortable truth. The "came down wonderfully" describes the shocking speed of Jerusalem's collapse. After withstanding an 18-month siege, the city fell rapidly once walls were breached. 2 Kings 25:3-4 notes that on the ninth day of the fourth month (mid-July 586 BC), famine overwhelmed the city, walls were breached, and within days the temple burned (seventh day of the fifth month). The sudden catastrophic end fulfilled warnings they had ignored.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'filthiness in our skirts' might we be ignoring—public sins we've grown comfortable with despite their defiling nature?
2. How does failure to 'remember our last end' lead to spiritually disastrous decisions in the pursuit of immediate comfort or gain?
3. In what ways does Christ cleanse the filthiness that we cannot remove ourselves (1 John 1:7, Ephesians 5:25-27)?
4. What should the 'wonderful' magnitude of Jerusalem's fall teach us about taking God's warnings seriously rather than presuming on His patience?

Interlinear Text

אַחֲרִית הַסְּמָמָת הַשְׁוֹלֵךְ יְהִי לֹא תִּכְרֹת הַסְּמָמָת הַשְׁוֹלֵךְ יְהִי לֹא תִּכְרֹת

Her filthiness is in her skirts H2932 H7757 H3808 she remembereth H2142 not her last end H319

רָא הַלְּכָה מִנְחָה אֵין פָּלָא יָמִים תִּתְּכַדֵּשׁ

therefore she came down H3381 wonderfully H6382 she had no comforter H5162 behold H7200

אָזְבֵּן הַגָּדֵל כִּי עָבֵד אַתָּה יְהֹוָה

O LORD H853 my affliction H3588 hath magnified H1431 for the enemy H341

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:29 (Parallel theme): O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

Isaiah 47:7 (Parallel theme): And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

Psalms 25:18 (Parallel theme): Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 (Parallel theme): So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.

Lamentations 1:17 (References Lord): Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.

Isaiah 3:8 (References Lord): For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

Psalms 119:153 (Parallel theme): Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

Jeremiah 2:34 (Parallel theme): Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

Jeremiah 48:26 (References Lord): Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.

Zephaniah 2:10 (References Lord): This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts.

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