

# Lamentations 2:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches  
pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift  
up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children,  
that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

## Analysis

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Urgent nighttime prayer: "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord" (kumi ronni va-laylah le-rosh ashmurot shiphkhi kha-mayim libeikh nokach penei Adonai). "Arise" (kumi) demands action—don't remain passive. "Cry out in the night" (ronni va-laylah)—nighttime prayer demonstrates urgency and desperation (Psalm 119:62, Acts 16:25). "In the beginning of the watches" (le-rosh ashmurot) refers to ancient night watches (three 4-hour periods, Judges 7:19, or four 3-hour periods in Roman times). Beginning prayers at watch-changes means continual intercession through the night. "Pour out thine heart like water" (shiphkhi...libeikh) describes complete emotional honesty—hiding nothing, expressing all anguish. "Lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street" (se'i elav kapayim al-nefesh olalayikh ha'atufim be-ra'av be-rosh kol-khutsot). The fainting children motivate desperate prayer.

## Historical Context

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Nighttime prayer was practiced by faithful Israelites. Psalm 119:62 states: 'At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee.' Psalm 63:6: 'When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.' Daniel prayed three times daily, facing Jerusalem (Daniel 6:10). The crisis of siege would intensify

prayer frequency and fervency. When children are dying, sleep becomes impossible; prayer becomes constant. The image of children fainting from hunger at street corners was literal reality during sieges. Lamentations 4:4 describes similar scenes. The call to 'pour out your heart like water' echoes Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 1:15) and anticipates New Testament teaching on bringing all concerns to God (Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7). The phrase 'like water' suggests abundance—don't measure or ration prayers, but pour them out lavishly.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does nighttime prayer 'at the beginning of the watches' teach about urgency, persistence, and making time for God despite exhaustion?
2. How does 'pouring out your heart like water' model the kind of honest, unguarded prayer God desires rather than formal, controlled petitions?
3. When should the suffering of others (like starving children) motivate our intercession, and how does James 5:16 encourage effectual, fervent prayer?

## Interlinear Text

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|                   |                       |                              |                                |                         |                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| שָׁפַךְ י         | אֲשָׁמֶר וְ           | בְּרֹאשׁ                     | בַּלַּיִל                      | רִנִּי                  | קוֹמִי            |
| <b>pour out</b>   | <b>of the watches</b> | <b>in the beginning</b>      | <b>in the night</b>            | <b>cry out</b>          | <b>Arise</b>      |
| H8210             | H821                  | H7218                        | H3915                          | H7442                   | H6965             |
| כַּף יָדָי        | אֶל יְיָ              | שָׂא י                       | אֲדָנִי                        | פְּנֵי                  | נֶחֱמָה           |
| <b>thy hands</b>  | <b>lift up</b>        | <b>of the Lord</b>           | <b>the face</b>                | <b>before</b>           | <b>like water</b> |
| H3709             | H5375                 | H136                         | H6440                          | H5227                   | H4325             |
| בְּרָעָב          | הַעֲטוּף              | יְלָדָי                      | נֶפֶשׁ                         | עַל                     |                   |
| <b>for hunger</b> | <b>that faint</b>     | <b>of thy young children</b> | <b>toward him for the life</b> |                         |                   |
| H7458             | H5848                 | H5768                        | H5315                          | H5921                   |                   |
|                   |                       |                              | כָּל                           | בְּרֹאשׁ                |                   |
|                   |                       |                              | <b>of every street</b>         | <b>in the beginning</b> |                   |
|                   |                       |                              | H2351                          | H7218                   |                   |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 62:8** (Parallel theme): Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

**Isaiah 26:9** (Parallel theme): With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

**Psalms 142:2** (Parallel theme): I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

**Mark 1:35** (Parallel theme): And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

**1 Samuel 1:15** (References Lord): And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

**Psalms 141:2** (Parallel theme): Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

**Psalms 42:8** (References Lord): Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

**Luke 6:12** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

**Judges 7:19** (Parallel theme): So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.

**Psalms 119:55** (References Lord): I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.