

Lamentations 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together.

Analysis

God's determined judgment: "The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion" (chashav YHWH lehashkhit chomat bat-Tsiyon). The verb chashav (חָשַׁב, "purposed, planned, devised") shows deliberate divine intention, not impulsive anger. "He hath stretched out a line" (natah kav)—builders used measuring lines for construction; here God uses one for demolition, ironically reversing creation. Isaiah 34:11 and 2 Kings 21:13 use similar imagery. "He hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying" (lo-heshiv yado mi-bale)—God's hand, once stretched out to build (Psalm 127:1), now to destroy (Isaiah 5:25). "Therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they are languished together" (vaye'evel chel vechomah yachdav umlalu). Walls personified as lamenting demonstrates creation itself mourning when God's purposes are thwarted. Romans 8:22 shows creation groaning under sin's curse. The phrase "languished together" (yachdav umlalu) indicates comprehensive ruin—both outer rampart and inner wall collapse simultaneously.

Historical Context

Jerusalem's fortifications were extensive. Archaeological excavations reveal massive walls from various periods—Solomon's, Hezekiah's, and others. The Broad Wall (Nehemiah 3:8, 12:38) was over 20 feet thick in places. But 2 Kings 25:10

records: 'all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.' Jeremiah 52:14 confirms this. The deliberate, systematic destruction fulfilled God's stated purpose. He wasn't reacting emotionally but executing predetermined judgment (Jeremiah 25:8-11). The measuring line imagery appears in Zechariah 2:1-2 in reverse—measuring to rebuild Jerusalem. Just as God deliberately destroyed, He would deliberately restore. The theological point: nothing happens randomly. God's sovereignty extends to both judgment and restoration. Even destruction serves His ultimate purposes.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God 'purposing' and 'stretching out a line' for destruction demonstrate that judgment isn't impulsive anger but deliberate justice?
2. What does it mean that even walls and ramparts 'lament,' and how does this relate to creation groaning under sin's effects (Romans 8:22)?
3. How does God's deliberate destruction in judgment give confidence that He will equally deliberate in fulfilling promises of restoration?

Interlinear Text

חָשַׁב	יְהוָה ה'	לְהַשְׁחִית	וְחוֹמָה ה'	בֵּת	צִיּוֹן
hath purposed	The LORD	to destroy	and the wall	of the daughter	of Zion
H2803	H3068	H7843	H2346	H1323	H6726
נָטָה	קוֹ	לֹא	יָשָׁב	יָדוֹ	מִבִּלְעַד
he hath stretched out	a line	he hath not withdrawn	his hand	from destroying	
H5186	H6957	H3808	H7725	H3027	H1104
וַאֲבָל	לֵךְ	וְחוֹמָה ה'	יַחַד	אֶמְלָלוּ:	
to lament	therefore he made the rampart	and the wall	together	they languished	
H56	H2426	H2346	H3162	H535	

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 21:13 (Parallel theme): And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

Isaiah 34:11 (Parallel theme): But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

Isaiah 3:26 (Parallel theme): And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

Jeremiah 14:2 (Parallel theme): Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

Jeremiah 5:10 (References Lord): Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD'S.