***Lamentations 2:13-22 How shall I consoleyou? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; Who can heal you? 14Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions; They have not uncovered your iniquity, To bring back your captives, But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions. 15All who pass by clap their hands at you; They hiss and shake their heads At the daughter of Jerusalem:
“Is this the city that is called ‘The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth’?” 16All your enemies have opened their mouth against you; They hiss and gnash their teeth. They say, “We have swallowed her up! Surely this is the day we have waited for; We have found it, we have seen it!” 17The Lord has done what He purposed; He has fulfilled His word Which He commanded in days of old. He has thrown down and has not pitied, And He has caused an enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the horn of your adversaries. 18Their heart cried out to the Lord, “O wall of the daughter of Zion, Let tears run down like a river day and night;
Give yourself no relief; Give your eyes no rest. 19“Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street.” 20“See, O Lord, and consider! To whom have You done this? Should the women eat their offspring, The children they have cuddled? Should the priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord? 21“Young and old lie On the ground in the streets; My virgins and my young men Have fallen by the sword; You have slain them in the day of Your anger, You have slaughtered and not pitied. 22“You have invited as to a feast day The terrors that surround me.
In the day of the Lord’s anger There was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up My enemies have destroyed.”***

 We continue tonight in Lamentations 2. Remember that this takes place during the Babylonian invasion. The Chaldeans, a southern province of Babylon and the province from which Nebuchadnezzar comes, have invaded the city and are carrying away the Jews captive. Jeremiah is lamenting over the destruction he’s seeing. During this time, Ezekiel is led away, Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego are led away captive. The temple is desecrated and destroyed. The walls and the gates that Nehemiah will later rebuild are being torn down. It is a time of great sadness and Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, weeps over what he sees.

Verse 13 *How shall I consoleyou? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; Who can heal you?* ***How*** *shall I consoleyou? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion?* What comparison is there in all of history to what is happening? This is an unparalleled calamity. Often, when calamity strikes, we as humans draw parallels with others that have suffered and recovered. In this case, there is no comparison. No comfort can be taken in comparison to others. *For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; Who can heal you? –* The ruin is as boundless as the ocean. Like the seemingly limitless ocean pouring through a protective sea wall during a storm, there appears no end to the calamity and suffering being brought to bear by God on the disobedient Jews.

Verse 14*Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions; They have not uncovered your iniquity, To bring back your captives, But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.* ***Your****prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions –* I like the KJV translation – Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things – God sent His prophets, but Jerusalem wouldn’t listen to these. They instead chose prophets to listen to, false prophets. Prophets that said what their itching ears wanted to hear. Much like today. Go to a wealth and prosperity church and see the people, the cars! Come to a Bible teaching, repentance and salvation church and there’s plenty of room on Sunday morning. The false prophets never said the hard Truth. The people paid the price. True then, true now. *They have not uncovered your iniquity, To bring back your captives –* The prophets have not preached on sin. They’ve not cried out against wickedness and evil. Much like America today. In order to humble the nation before God, the people must first be convicted of their sin. Much like Nineveh, until Jonah cried out, no one saw the err of their ways. When Jonah spoke, the people humbled themselves and sought God. It was through this humble recognition of sin that God saw their heart and relented. Without true awareness of our sin, true repentance can’t take place. By the prophets unwillingness to speak the truth in love, Judah came to ruin. Many cry out Truth today. Few open their ear. *But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions. –* The Hebrew words suggest that the failure of these prophets to tell the truth, but only to seek to flatter with false words, that failure in great part the caused of this downfall. Jeremiah 23:30-32 - *“Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor. 31 Behold, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord, “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ 32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the Lord, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,” says the Lord.* God is against the pastor, priest, prophet, SS teacher, or anyone that hides the Truth of His Word.

Verse 15*All who pass by clap their hands at you; They hiss and shake their heads At the daughter of Jerusalem: “Is this the city that is called ‘The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth’* ***All*** *who pass by clap their hands at you; They hiss and shake their heads At the daughter of Jerusalem*: - All these gestures would have been understood by the listeners. Derision, hatred, satisfaction at the calamity, celebration at what has befallen Jerusalem. When Jesus was on the Cross, the onlookers mocked, wagged their heads, jutted out their lips, all signs of derision of that day. Much as today, we may see sticking out tongues, spitting at someones feet. *“Is this the city that is called ‘The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth’* The Jews took great delight in their great city and the great temple. Some may say this bordered on pride. Likewise, they believed that strangers and neighbors were delighted as well. The truth is there was jealousy and resentment. The resentful took pleasure in seeing the downfall of the Jews, their Temple, and their City. Likewise, there are many nations today that celebrate the fall of America they are witnessing. China celebrates the weakness in our youth. Truly, we must cry to God for the preservation of our nation. Perhaps He will give reprieve as He did Judah for 136 years between the Assyrians conquering the Northern Kingdom and Babylon conquering the Southern Kingdom.

Verse 16 & 17*All your enemies have opened their mouth against you; They hiss and gnash their teeth. They say, “We have swallowed her up! Surely this is the day we have waited for; We have found it, we have seen it!” 17The Lord has done what He purposed; He has fulfilled His word Which He commanded in days of old. He has thrown down and has not pitied, And He has caused an enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the horn of your adversaries.*

***All*** *your enemies have opened their mouth against you -*Scoffs, derision, insults, laughter. *They hiss and gnash their teeth –* Another form of scorn that the people of that day understood. *They say, “We have swallowed her up! –* They celebrate what they believe to be their triumph over Jerusalem. *Surely this is the day we have waited for; We have found it, we have seen it! –* This is the moment the enemies have hoped and longed for. There are many waiting for this in America and waiting in particular for Christ’s Church to fail. But we know that Satan will never prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ. *The Lord has done what He purposed –* God gave the enemy the power. He used the wicked as a tool to bring judgement on His people. He is Providential. He causes or allows. There was much warning then. There has been and continues to be much warning now. We cannot claim we were not warned. *He has fulfilled His word Which He commanded in days of old. He has thrown down and has not pitied, And He has caused an enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the horn of your adversaries.* God gave His Word. A Promise is a Promise, even when it is a promise of punishment. He empowered and advanced the enemies to bring about His plan for Salvation in Jesus, giving Hope to Jew and Gentile alike.

Verses 18-19 *Their heart cried out to the Lord, “O wall of the daughter of Zion, Let tears run down like a river day and night; Give yourself no relief; Give your eyes no rest. 19“Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street.”* ***Their*** *heart cried out to the Lord, “O wall of the daughter of Zion, Let tears run down like a river day and night; Give yourself no relief; Give your eyes no rest.* The Prophet, because his heart is breaking for what he sees, urges the Jews to cry out and mourn and weep over the desolation, begging for forgiveness, mercy, and compassion. “*Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street.”* Cry night and day. Pray. Submit. Fast. Do this at all times, morning, noon, and night as we’d say. Pray earnestly, beseeching God. The Hebrew has the idea of sending up your very soul in prayer! Imagine if we prayed for our nation in that way! Cry out for the young! Cry out for God’s mercy on them.

Verses 20-22 *“See, O Lord, and consider! To whom have You done this? Should the women eat their offspring, The children they have cuddled? Should the priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord? 21“Young and old lie On the ground in the streets; My virgins and my young men Have fallen by the sword; You have slain them in the day of Your anger, You have slaughtered and not pitied. 22“You have invited as to a feast day The terrors that surround me. In the day of the Lord’s anger There was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up My enemies have destroyed.”* ***See,*** *O Lord, and consider! To whom have You done this?* God, look what You have done to the Your people. *Should the women eat their offspring, The children they have cuddled* We know this happened. Deuteronomy 28 Moses names this as one of the curses for disobedience, hundreds of years before it happened! It happened in Samaria when the Assyrians came. 2 Kings 6 tells us so. It happened when the Chaldeans and Babylonians came, Ezekiel 5:10 tells us so. *Should the priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord? “Young and old lie On the ground in the streets; My virgins and my young men Have fallen by the sword;* All will be slain and carried away regardless of age, social standing, education, wealth. *You have slain them in the day of Your anger, You have slaughtered and not pitied.* God took no pity. He judged them in the fullness of their sin. *“You have invited as to a feast day The terrors that surround me. In the day of the Lord’s anger There was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up My enemies have destroyed”* God has opened the door to the terrors that surround the prophet. None escaped the judgement God brought.

Lamentations continues to give us an urgency to pray. God spared Jerusalem from Assyria because of prayers and repentance. We never know. In 722 BC, Assyria was knocking on the gates. God spared. In 586 BC, Judah had finally reached the fullness of sin. God judged. May we pray for our children, cry out to God for guidance, submit to His discipline. America will eventually be judged, but might our prayers give us reprieve and give our loved ones a window to repent. Ecclesiastes 11:6 *In the morning sow your seed, And in the evening do not withhold your hand; For you do not know which will prosper, Either this or that, Or whether both alike will be good.* Let’s not withhold our hand, morning and evening. Let us pray without ceasing. God will work His perfect plan. May we be found in submission and acceptance of His will.