

Jehoiachin out of prison in that year. This was the same year that Evil Merodach became king of Babylon. He set Jehoiachin free from prison on the 25th day of the 12th month. ³²Evil Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a place of honor higher than

the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³So Jehoiachin took his prison clothes off. For the rest of his life, he ate regularly at the king's table. ³⁴Every day the king of Babylon paid Jehoiachin enough to take care of his needs until the day Jehoiachin died.

Lamentations

Jerusalem Cries Over Her Destruction

- 1** Jerusalem once was a city full of people,
but now the city is so empty.
Jerusalem was one of the greatest cities in
the world,
but now she^a has become like a widow.
She was once a princess among cities,
but now she has been made a slave.
- 2** She cries bitterly in the night.
Her tears are on her cheeks.
She has no one to comfort her.
Many nations were friendly to her,
but not one of them comforts her now.
All her friends have turned their backs on
her
and have become her enemies.
- 3** Judah suffered very much,
and then she was taken into captivity.
She lives among other nations
but has found no rest.
The people who chased her caught her
where there was no way out.^b
- 4** The roads to Zion* are very sad,
because no one comes to Zion for the
festivals anymore.
All of Zion's gates have been destroyed;
all her priests groan in sorrow.
Zion's young women have been taken
away,^c
and all this made Zion sad.
- 5** Jerusalem's enemies have won.
Her enemies have been successful.
This happened because the LORD
punished her.
He punished Jerusalem for her many
sins.
Her children have gone away.
Their enemies captured them and took
them away.
- 6** The beauty of Daughter Zion^d

^a**1:1 she** Throughout this poem, the city of Jerusalem is represented as a woman.

^b**1:3 where ... way out** Or "in the narrow valleys."

^c**1:4 have been taken away** This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has "are upset."

^d**1:6 Daughter Zion** Another name for Jerusalem. Also in 2:1, 8, 13, 18.

- has gone away.
Her princes were like deer
that cannot find a meadow to feed in.
They walk away without strength
from those who chased them.
- 7** Jerusalem thinks back.
She remembers the time when she was
hurt
and when she lost her home.
She remembers all the nice things
that she had in the past.
She remembers those nice things
that she had in the old days.
She remembers when her people
were captured by the enemy.
She remembers when there was no one
to help her.
When her enemies saw her, they laughed,
because she was destroyed.
- 8** Jerusalem sinned very badly.
Because Jerusalem sinned,
she became a ruined city that people
shake their heads about.
In the past people respected her.
But now they hate her,
because they abused her.
Jerusalem groaned and turned away.
- 9** Jerusalem's skirts were dirty.
She gave no thought to what would
become of her.
Her fall was amazing.
She had no one to comfort her.
She says, "LORD, see how I am hurt!
See how my enemy thinks he is so
great!"
- 10** The enemy stretched out his hand.
He took all her nice things.
In fact, she saw the foreign nations go
inside her Temple.*
And, LORD, you said those people could
not join in our assembly!
- 11** All the people of Jerusalem are groaning.
All of her people are looking for food.
They are giving away all their nice
things for food to stay alive.
Jerusalem says, "Look, LORD. Look at me!
See how people hate me."

- 12 All you who pass by on the road,
you don't seem to care.
But look at me and see.
Is there any pain like my pain?
Is there any pain like the pain that has
come to me?
Is there any pain like the pain that the
LORD has punished me with?
He has punished me on the day
of his great anger.
- 13 The Lord sent fire from above
that went down into my bones.
He stretched out a net for my feet.
He turned me all the way around.
He made me into a wasteland.
I am sick all day.
- 14^aMy sins were tied up like a yoke.*
My sins were tied up in the Lord's
hands.
His yoke is on my neck.
He has made me weak.
He has given me to those
who I cannot stand up against.
- 15^aThe Lord rejected all my powerful men
who were inside the city.
Then he brought a group of people against
me.
He brought them to kill my young
soldiers.
The Lord has trampled his dearest city^a
like grapes in a winepress.
- 16^aI cry about all these things.
Tears are flowing down my cheeks.
There is no one near to comfort me.
There is no one who can make me feel
better.
My children are like a wasteland,
because the enemy won."
- 17 Zion spread out her hands.
There was no one to comfort her.
The LORD had given orders to Jacob's*
enemies.
He ordered them to surround the city.
Jerusalem has become a dirty rag
that her enemies threw away.
- 18 Now Jerusalem says, "I refused to listen
to the LORD,
so he is right for doing these things.
So listen, all you people!
Look at my pain!
My young women and men
have gone into captivity.
- 19 I called out to my lovers,
but they tricked me.
My priests and my elders
have died in the city.
They were looking for food for themselves.
They wanted to keep themselves alive.

^a1:15 *dearest city* Literally, "virgin daughter Judah," a name for the city of Jerusalem.

- 20^aLook at me, LORD. I am in distress!
I am upset, as if my heart turned upside
down inside of me.
I feel this way because
I have been so stubborn.
Out in the streets,
I lost my children to the swords.
Inside, it is like death.
- 21^aListen to me, I am groaning.
I have no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble.
They are happy that you did this to me.
You said there would be a time of
punishment.
You said you would punish my enemies.
Now do what you said.
Let my enemies be like I am now.
- 22^aLook how evil my enemies are!
Then you can treat them
the same way you treated me because of
all my sins.
Do this because I am groaning again and
again.
Do this because my heart is sick."

The Lord Destroyed Jerusalem

- 2¹Look how the Lord has covered
daughter Zion^b with the cloud of his
anger.
He has thrown her, the glory of Israel,*
from the sky to the ground.
In his anger he showed no care even for
the Temple where he rests his feet.^c
- 2 The Lord destroyed the houses of Jacob.*
He destroyed them without mercy.
In his anger he destroyed
the fortresses of Daughter Judah.
He threw the kingdom of Judah
and its rulers to the ground.
He ruined the kingdom of Judah.
- 3 He was angry, and he destroyed
all the strength of Israel.
He took away his right hand from Israel.
He did this when the enemy came.
He burned like a flaming fire in Jacob.
He was like a fire that burns all around.
- 4 He bent his bow like an enemy.
He held his sword in his right hand.
He killed all the good-looking men of
Judah.
He killed them as if they were the
enemy.
He poured out his anger
like a fire on the tents of Zion.
- 5 The Lord has become like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel.

^b2:1 *daughter Zion* The city of Jerusalem pictured as a young woman. Similar language is used in verses 8, 13, 15, and 18. See "Zion" in the Word List.
^c2:1 *Temple ... feet* Literally, "the footstool of his feet," meaning the place God lived among his people.

- He has swallowed up all her palaces
and all her fortresses.
He has made much sadness and crying
for the dead in Daughter Judah.
- 6 He pulled up his own tent^a
as if it were a garden.
He has ruined the place where the people
came together to worship him.
The LORD has made people forget
the special assemblies and special days
of rest^b in Zion.
He rejected the king and the priests.
He was angry and rejected them.
- 7 He rejected his altar,
and he left his holy place of worship.
He let the enemy pull down the walls
of the palaces of Jerusalem.
The enemy shouted with joy in the LORD's
Temple.*
They made noise as though it were a
festival.
- 8 The LORD planned to destroy
the wall of Daughter Zion.
He marked the wall with a measuring
line.
He didn't stop himself from destroying
it.
He made all the walls cry out in sadness.
Together they wasted away.
- 9 Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the
ground.
The bars on her gates are completely
destroyed.
Her king and princes have been taken to
other nations.
The teaching of the law has stopped.
And her prophets no longer receive
visions* from the LORD.
- 10 The elders of Zion* sit on the ground.
They sit on the ground and are quiet.
They pour dust on their heads.
They put on sackcloth.*
The young women of Jerusalem
bow their heads to the ground in
sorrow.
- 11 My eyes are worn out with tears,
and my insides are upset.
My heart feels like it has been poured on
the ground;
I feel this way because of the destruction
of my people.
Children and babies are fainting
in the public squares of the city.
- 12 They ask their mothers,
"Where is the bread and wine?"
- as they pour out their life in their
mother's laps.
- 13 My dear Jerusalem, what can I say about
you?
What can I compare you to?
What can I say you are like?
How can I comfort you, city of Zion?
You have been hurt much too badly for
anyone to heal.
- 14 Your prophets saw visions for you,
but their visions were only worthless
lies.
They didn't speak against your sins.
They didn't try to make things better.
They spoke messages for you,
but they were false messages that fooled
you.
- 15 Those who pass by on the road
clap their hands and laugh at you.
They make fun of Jerusalem,
shaking their heads at the sight of her.
They ask, "Is this the city that people
called
'The Most Beautiful City'
and 'The Joy of all the Earth'?"
- 16 All your enemies laugh at you.
They whistle and grind their teeth at
you.
They say, "We have swallowed them up!
This is the day we were hoping for.
We have finally seen this happen!"
- 17 The LORD did what he planned to do.
He did what he said he would do.
He did what he commanded a long time
ago.
He destroyed, and he had no pity.
He made your enemies happy because
of what happened to you.
He made your enemies strong.
- 18 Cry out with all your heart^c to the Lord!
Jerusalem, let tears roll down your walls.
Let your tears flow like a stream day and
night.
Don't stop crying
or let your eyes dry.
- 19 Get up and cry throughout the night.
Pour out your heart as if it were water.
Pour out your heart before the Lord.
Lift up your hands in prayer to the Lord.
Ask him to let your starving children
live.
They are fainting with hunger in all the
streets of the city.
- 20 Look at us, LORD!
Have you ever treated anyone else so
badly?

^a2:6 *his own tent* This is a reference to the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem.

^b2:6 *special days of rest* Or "Sabbaths." This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

^c2:18 *Cry out ... heart* Or "Their hearts cried out."

- Is it right for women to eat their own babies, the children they have cared for?
Should priests and prophets be killed in the Temple of the Lord?
- 21 Young men and old men lie on the ground in the streets of the city.
My young women and young men have been killed by the sword.
You killed them on the day of your anger.
You killed them without mercy!
- 22 You invited terror to come to me from all around.
You invited terror as though you were inviting it to a festival.
No one escaped on the day of the LORD's anger.
My enemy killed the people who I raised and brought up.
- The Meaning of Suffering**
- 3** I am a man who has seen much trouble.
The LORD beat us with a stick, and I saw it happen.
- 2 He led and brought me into darkness, not light.
- 3 He turned his hand against me.
He did this again and again, all day.
- 4 He wore out my flesh and skin.
He broke my bones.
- 5 He built up bitterness and trouble against me.
He surrounded me with bitterness and trouble.
- 6 He put me in the dark, like someone who died long ago.
- 7 He shut me in, so I could not get out.
He put heavy chains on me.
- 8 Even when I cry out and ask for help, he does not listen to my prayer.
- 9 He has blocked up my path with stones.
He has made my path crooked.
- 10 He is like a bear about to attack me, like a lion that is in a hiding place.
- 11 He led me off my path.
He tore me to pieces and ruined me.
- 12 He made his bow ready.
He made me the target for his arrows.
- 13 He shot me in the stomach with his arrows.
- 14 I have become a joke to all my people.
All day long they sing songs about me and make fun of me.
- 15 The LORD gave me this poison to drink.
He filled me with this bitter drink.
- 16 He pushed my teeth into rocky ground.
He pushed me into the dirt.
- 17 I thought I would never have peace again.
I forgot about good things.
- 18 I said to myself,
"I no longer have any hope that the LORD will help me."
- 19 LORD, remember, I am very sad, and I have no home.
Remember the bitter poison that you gave me.
- 20 I remember well all my troubles, and I am very sad.
- 21 But then I think about this, and I have hope:
- 22 We are still alive because the LORD's faithful love never ends.
- 23 Every morning he shows it in new ways!
LORD, you are so very true and loyal!
- 24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my God, and I trust him."^a
- 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him.
He is good to those who look for him.
- 26 It is good to wait quietly for the LORD to save them.
- 27 It is good for a man to wear his yoke* from the time he is young.
- 28 He should sit alone and be quiet when the LORD puts his yoke on him.
- 29 He should bow down to the LORD.
Maybe there is still hope.
- 30 He should turn his cheek to the one who hits him
and let people insult him.
- 31 He should remember that the Lord does not reject people forever.
- 32 When he punishes, he also has mercy.
He has mercy because of his great love and kindness.
- 33 He does not enjoy causing people pain.
He does not like to make anyone unhappy.
- 34 He does not like any prisoner on earth to be trampled down.
- 35 He does not like anyone to be unfair to another person.
Some people will do such things right in front of God Most High.
- 36 He does not like anyone to cheat another person.
He does not like any of these things.
- 37 No one can say something and make it happen, unless the Lord orders it.
- 38 God Most High commands both good and bad things to happen.
- 39 No one alive can complain when he punishes them for their sins.
- 40 Let us check and see what we have done.
Then let us turn back to the LORD.
- 41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to the God of heaven.

^a3:24 The LORD ... him Or "The LORD is my portion and I trust him.

- 42 Let us say to him, "We have sinned and have been stubborn.
Because of this, you have not forgiven us.
- 43 You wrapped yourself with anger.
You chased us.
You killed us without mercy!
- 44 You wrapped yourself in a cloud
so that no prayer could get through.
- 45 You made us like garbage and dirt
to the other nations.
- 46 All of our enemies
speak angrily against us.
We have been frightened.
We have fallen into a pit.
We have been badly hurt.
We have been broken."
- 47 My eyes flow with streams of tears.
I cry because of the destruction of my people.
- 48 My eyes will flow without stopping.
I will keep on crying.
- 49 I will continue to cry
until you look down and see us, LORD!
I will continue to cry
until you see us from heaven.
- 50 My eyes make me sad, when I see
what happened to the young women in my city.
- 51 For no reason, my enemies hunted me
like a bird.
- 52 They threw me alive into a pit
and then threw stones at me.
- 53 Water came up over my head.
I said to myself, "I am finished."
- 54 LORD, I called your name
from the bottom of the pit.
- 55 You heard my voice.
You didn't close your ears.
You didn't refuse to rescue me.
- 56 You came to me on the day that I called
out to you.
You said to me, "Don't be afraid."
- 57 You defended me
and bought me back to life.
- 58 LORD, you have seen my trouble.
Now judge my case for me.
- 59 You have seen how my enemies
have hurt me.
You have seen all the evil plans
that they made against me.
- 60 You heard them insult me, LORD.
You have heard all the evil plans that
they made against me.
- 61 The words and the thoughts of my
enemies
are against me all the time—
when they sit down and when they
stand up.
Look how they make fun of me!
- 62 Give them back what they deserve, LORD.
Pay them back for what they have
done.
- 63 Make them stubborn
and then curse them.

- 66 Chase them in anger and destroy them.
Wipe them off the face of the earth,
LORD!

The Horrors of the Attack on Jerusalem

- 4** ¹See how the gold has grown dark,
how the pure gold has changed.
There are jewels^a scattered all around
at every street corner.
- ² The people of Zion* were worth a lot.
They were worth their weight in gold.
But now the enemy treats them
like old clay jars.
The enemy treats them
like clay jars made by a potter.
- ³ Even a wild dog feeds her babies.
Even the jackal lets her pups suck at her
breast.
But the daughter of my people^b is cruel.
She is like the ostrich* in the desert that
forgets its eggs in the sand.
- ⁴ Babies are so thirsty
their tongues stick to the roof of their
mouths.
Young children ask for bread,
but no one gives them any.
- ⁵ Those who ate rich food
are now dying in the streets.
Those who grew up wearing nice red
clothes
now pick through garbage piles.
- ⁶ The sin of the daughter of my people
was very great.
Their sin was greater than the sins
of Sodom* and Gomorrah.*
Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed
suddenly.
No human hand caused their
destruction.^c
- ⁷ Some of the men of Judah
were dedicated* to God in a special
way.
They were very pure.
They were whiter than snow,
and whiter than milk.
Their bodies were red like coral
and their beards like sapphire stones.
- ⁸ But now their faces are blacker than soot.
No one even recognizes them in the
streets.
Their skin is wrinkled over their bones.
Their skin is like wood.
- ⁹ It was better for those who were killed by
the sword
than for those who died of hunger.
Those starving people were sad and hurt.
They died because they got no food
from the field.

^a4:1 *jewels* The meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.

^b4:3 *daughter of my people* Another name for Jerusalem. Also in verse 6.

^c4:6 *No human hand ... destruction* The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

- 10 Then even nice women
cooked their own children.
The children were food
for their mothers.
This happened when my people
were destroyed.
- 11 The LORD used all of his anger.
He poured out all his anger.
He made a fire in Zion
that burned it down to the foundations.
The kings of the earth could not believe
what had happened.
The people of the world could not believe
what had happened.
They could not believe
that enemies would be able to come
through the city gates of Jerusalem.
- 13 This happened because the prophets
of Jerusalem sinned.
This happened because the priests
of Jerusalem did evil things.
They were shedding the blood of good
people
in the city of Jerusalem.
- 14 The prophets and priests walked around
like blind men in the streets.
They had become dirty with blood.
No one could even touch their clothes
because they were dirty.
- 15 People shouted, "Go away!
Go away! Don't touch us."
They wandered around and had no home.
People in other nations said,
"We don't want them to live with us."
- 16 The LORD himself destroyed them.
He didn't look after them anymore.
He didn't respect the priests.
He was not friendly to the elders* of
Judah.
- 17 We have worn out our eyes looking for
help,
but no help comes.
We kept on looking for a nation to save
us.
We kept watch from our watchtower,
but no nation came to us.
- 18 Our enemies hunted us all the time.
We could not even go out into the
streets.
Our end came near. Our time was up.
Our end came!
- 19 The men who chased us
were faster than eagles in the sky.
They chased us into the mountains.
They hid in the desert to catch us.
- 20 The king was very important to us.
He was like the breath we breathe,
but he was trapped by them.
The LORD himself chose the king, and we
said this about the king,
"We will live in his shadow.
He protects us from the nations."
- 21 Be happy, people of Edom.
Be happy, you who live in the land of
Uz.

- But remember, the cup of the Lord's anger
will come around to you too.
When you drink from that cup,
you will get drunk and strip off all your
clothes.
- 22 Your punishment is complete, Zion.
You will not go into captivity again.
But the LORD will punish your sins,
people of Edom.
He will uncover your sins.

A Prayer to the Lord

- 5¹ Remember, LORD, what happened to us.
Look and see our shame.
- 2 Our land has been turned over to
strangers.
Our houses have been given to
foreigners.
- 3 We have become orphans.
We have no father.
Our mothers have become like widows.
- 4 We have to buy the water that we drink.
We have to pay for the wood that we
use.
- 5 We are forced to wear a yoke* on our
necks.
We get tired, and we have no rest.
- 6 We made an agreement with Egypt.
We also made an agreement with
Assyria* to get enough bread.
- 7 Our ancestors sinned against you, and
now they are dead.
And we are suffering because of their
sins.
- 8 Slaves have become our rulers.
No one can save us from them.
- 9 We risk our lives to get food.
There are men in the desert with
swords.
- 10 Our skin is hot like an oven.
We have a high fever because of our
hunger.
- 11 The enemy raped the women of Zion.*
They raped the women in the cities of
Judah.
- 12 The enemy hanged our princes.
They didn't honor our elders.
- 13 The enemy made our young men
grind grain at the mill.
Our young men stumbled
under loads of wood.
- 14 The elders no longer sit at the gates of the
city.
The young men no longer make music.
- 15 We have no more joy in our hearts.
Our dancing has changed to crying for
the dead.
- 16 The crown has fallen from our head.
Things have gone bad for us because we
sinned.
- 17 For this reason our hearts have become
sick,
and our eyes cannot see clearly.
- 18 Mount Zion is a wasteland.
Foxes run around on Mount Zion.

- 19 But you rule forever, LORD.
Your kingly chair lasts forever and ever.
20 You seem to have forgotten us forever.
You seem to have left us alone for such
a long time.

- 21 Bring us back to you, LORD.
We will gladly come back to you.
Make our lives as they were before.
22 You were very angry with us.
Have you completely rejected us?

Ezekiel

Introduction

1¹⁻³I am the priest, Ezekiel son of Buzzi. I was in exile* by the Kebar Canal in Babylonia when the skies opened up, and I saw visions* of God. This was on the fifth day of the fourth month of the thirtieth year.^a (This was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile. The word of the LORD came to Ezekiel. The power of the LORD came over him at that place.)

The Chariot of the Lord—God's Throne

⁴I was watching a big storm come in from the north. It was a big cloud with a strong wind, and there was fire flashing from it. Light was shining out all around it. It looked like hot metal^b glowing in a fire. ⁵Inside the cloud, there were four living beings that looked like people. ⁶But each one of them had four faces and four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like calves' feet, and they sparkled like polished brass. ⁸Under their wings were human arms. There were four living beings. Each living being had four faces and four wings. ⁹The wings touched each other. The living beings did not turn when they moved. They went in the direction they were looking.

¹⁰Each living being had four faces. In the front they each had a man's face. There was a lion's face on the right side and a bull's face on the left side. There was an eagle's face on the back. ¹¹Their wings were spread out over them. With two of the wings each living being reached out to touch the one near it, and with the other two wings it covered its body. ¹²Each living being went in the direction it was looking. They went wherever the spirit^c caused them to go, but they did not turn when they moved. ¹³That is what the living beings looked like.

Inside the area between the living beings,

there was something that looked like burning coals of fire. This fire was like small torches that kept moving around among the living beings. The fire glowed brightly and lightning flashed from it. ¹⁴The living beings ran back and forth—as fast as lightning.^d

¹⁵⁻¹⁶I was looking at the living beings when I noticed four wheels that touched the ground. There was one wheel by each living being. All the wheels looked the same. The wheels looked as if they were made from a clear, yellow jewel. They looked like there was a wheel inside a wheel. ¹⁷They could turn to move in any direction. [But the living beings,] did not turn when they moved.^e

¹⁸The rims of the wheels were tall and frightening. There were eyes all over the rims of all four wheels.

¹⁹The wheels always moved with the living beings. If the living beings went up into the air, the wheels went with them. ²⁰They went wherever the spirit wanted them to go, and the wheels went with them, because the power that moved the living being was in the wheels. ²¹So if the living beings moved, the wheels moved. If the living beings stopped, the wheels stopped. If the wheels went into the air, the living beings went with them, because the spirit was in the wheels.

²²There was an amazing thing over the heads of the living beings. It was like a bowl^f turned upside down, and the bowl was clear like crystal. ²³Under this bowl, each living being had wings reaching out to the one next to it. Two wings spread out one way and two wings spread out the other way, covering its body.

²⁴Then I heard the wings. Every time the living beings moved, their wings made a very loud noise like a lot of water rushing by. They were loud like [the Lord,] All-Powerful. They were as loud as an army or a crowd of people.

^a**1:1-3 fifth day ... year** If the year refers to Ezekiel's age, this is the same as the fifth year of exile, that is, July 31, 593 B.C.

^b**1:4 hot metal** The Hebrew word might mean "melted copper," "an alloy of gold and silver," or "amber." Also in verse 27.

^c**1:12 spirit** Or "wind." Also in verse 20.

^d**1:14** Or "And there was something like lightning shooting back and forth among the living beings."

^e**1:17 The wheels ... moved** Or "The wheels could move in any four directions, but they did not turn when they moved."

^f**1:22 bowl** This Hebrew word is the same word used in Gen. 1:6-7 to describe the dome of the sky.

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Last Updated: September 21, 2006

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