



To preserve the inheritance of each head of family and the piece of land he owned in the midst of his tribe was considered in Israel as the way to protect the dignity and the freedom of everyone. This practice of redeeming the land together with the name of the one who died without children is highlighted in the case of Ruth.

An old tradition held that among David's ancestors, there was a foreign woman named Ruth. She protagonizes this beautiful story. These pages preserve for us scenes from the lives of the Palestinian farmers, Christ's ancestors, as they lived for centuries. In the simple life of these peasants we find true culture, an exquisite human quality, and unconscious nobility.

A spirit of supranational openness inspires this story written around the fourth century B.C. Shortly before this, Ezra had forced the Jews to get rid of their foreign wives who might have enticed them to follow pagan religions. By contrast, here the protagonist of the story is a foreign woman. Ruth accepts the true God of Israel and she is welcomed into the community of the people of God.

Your God will be my God

Jdg
2:16

1 There was a famine in the land during the time of the Judges, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah departed with his wife and two sons to sojourn in the country of Moab. ²The man was Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. A little later, after they had settled in Moab, ³Naomi's husband Elimelech died. She was left with her two sons, ⁴who married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth.

Dt
23:4
Ezra
9:1

After living in Moab for about ten years, ⁵Mahlon and Chilion also died and Naomi was left bereft of husband and two sons. ⁶Having heard that Yahweh had come to help his people by giving them food, Naomi prepared to

return home. ⁷With her two daughters-in-law, she took the road back to Judah.

⁸It was then that Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's house. And may Yahweh be kind to you, as you have been to your dead and to me. ⁹May he also grant each of you rest in the home of another husband." She kissed them goodbye. But they wept aloud ¹⁰and said to her, "No, we will go back with you to your people."

¹¹Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why should you come with me, when I have no more sons to become your husbands? ¹²Return home, my daughters. I am now too old to marry again. Even if I hope to have a husband tonight and give birth to sons, ¹³would you remain unmarried waiting

Dt
25:5
Mt
22:23

for them to grow up? No, my daughters. I won't share my lot with you for it is too bitter. Yahweh's hand has been raised against me!"

¹⁴Again they sobbed and wept. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law returns to her people and her gods. You too must return. Go after her."

¹⁶Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you. For I will go where you go and stay where you stay. Your people will be my people and your god, my God. ¹⁷Where you die, there will I die and be buried. May Yahweh deal with me severely if anything except death separates us." ¹⁸Realizing that Ruth was determined to go with her, Naomi stopped urging her.

¹⁹So the two went on till they reached Bethlehem. Their arrival set the town astir. Women asked, "Can this be Naomi?" ²⁰She said to them, "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara for Yahweh has made life bitter for me. ²¹I came away full but go back empty. Why call me Naomi, when Yahweh has afflicted me?"

²²Thus it was that Naomi returned from Moab with her Moabite daughter-in-law and arrived in Bethlehem as the barley harvest began.

Ruth gleans in the field of Boaz

2 ¹Naomi had a well-to-do kinsman, Boaz, from the clan of her husband Elimelech. ²And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to pick up the left-over grain in the field whose owner will allow me that favor." Naomi said, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³So she went to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. It happened that the field she entered belonged to Boaz of the clan of Elimelech.

⁴When Boaz came from Bethlehem, he greeted the harvesters, "Yahweh be with you." They returned the greeting, "Yahweh bless you."

⁵Noticing Ruth, Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, "To whom does that young woman belong?"

⁶The foreman replied, "She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. ⁷She came this morning and asked leave to glean behind the harvesters. Since then she has been working without a moment's rest."

⁸Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go away from here to glean in anyone else's field. Stay here with my women servants. ⁹See where the harvesters are and follow behind. I have ordered the men not to molest you. They have filled some jars with water. Go there and drink when you are thirsty." ¹⁰Bowing down with her face to the ground, she exclaimed, "Why have I, a foreigner, found such favor in your eyes?"

¹¹Boaz answered, "I have been told all about you – what you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death, how you have gone with her, leaving your own father and mother and homeland, to live with a people you knew nothing about before you came here. ¹²May Yahweh reward you for this! May you receive full recompense from Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!"

¹³Ruth said, "May I prove worthy of your favor, my lord. You have consoled your servant with your kind words, though I am not the equal of your maid-servants."

¹⁴Boaz called her at mealtime, "Come over, have some bread and dip it in the wine." As she sat among the reapers, he handed her some roasted grain. She ate her fill and had some left over.

¹⁵When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his men, "Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not scold her. ¹⁶And pull some stalks from the bundles; leave them scattered for her to

18
25:23

Lev
19:9-
10
23:22

Ps
129:8

Lev
19:10

glean.”¹⁷ She worked until evening and when she threshed what she had gleaned it amounted to about an ephah.¹⁸ Ruth carried back to town the threshed barley, which she showed to her mother-in-law. She also gave her what she had left over from lunch.

¹⁹Naomi asked her daughter-in-law, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? May the man who took notice of you be blessed.” Ruth told her mother-in-law about the owner of the field where she had worked. “His name is Boaz,” she said.²⁰ Naomi exclaimed, “May Yahweh bless him! God indeed is merciful both to the living and the dead. This man is a close relative, one with a right of redemption over us.”

²¹Ruth continued, “He even told me to stay with his servants until they finish harvesting the grain.”²² Naomi said, “It will be better for you, my daughter, to go out with his maidservants than to go working in some other field where harm might come to you.”

²³Ruth, therefore, stayed close to the maidservants of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the wheat and barley harvests. And she continued living with her mother-in-law.

She went and lay down at his feet

3 • ¹Later Naomi talked to Ruth: “My daughter, is it not my duty to see you settled in a home where you will be well provided for? ²And is not Boaz, who has treated you kindly with his maidservants, a close relative of ours? Tonight at the threshing floor, he will be winnowing barley. ³So bathe and perfume yourself, then put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing

Es
2:12
Jdt
10:3

floor. But don’t make yourself known to him till he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴Take note of the place where he lies down to sleep. Then go, uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do.”

⁵Ruth answered, “I will do as you say.” ⁶She went down to the threshing floor and did as her mother-in-law told her.

⁷Feeling happy after eating and drinking, Boaz went to lie down at the end of the pile of grain. Ruth then approached quietly, turned back the covering of his feet and lay there. ⁸At midnight the man awoke when he turned over and felt someone lying at his feet. He got up and was startled to find a woman there. ⁹“Who are you?” he asked.

The answer came, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread the corner of your cloak over me for you are a kinsman who has right of redemption over me.”

¹⁰Boaz said, “May Yahweh bless you, my daughter! This kindness of yours now is even greater than that which you have shown earlier, for you have not gone after young men, rich or poor. ¹¹Have no fear, my daughter; I will do for you all that you ask, since all my townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹²It is true that I am a close relative, but there is another still closer. ¹³Stay here for the night. In the morning, if he wants to claim you – good! But if not – as surely as Yahweh lives – I will claim you myself. Lie here till morning.”

¹⁴She lay at his feet till morning and got up before anyone could be recognized. For Boaz said, “It must not be

Dt
25:5
Mt
22:24

• **3.1** Why does Ruth want to have Boaz for her husband? In order to follow the so-called “Levirate” law, mentioned in chapter 38 of Genesis.

When a man dies without leaving children, the sacred duty of his widow is to marry the nearest relative of her deceased husband. The first son she would bear him would take the name of the dead man and be considered his son.

This explains Ruth’s sacrifice. She gives up marrying a young man and accepts being the wife of an older and foreign man, because this can give her a son “for” her dead husband. Thus Ruth fulfills the mysterious plan of God who predestined her to be among Christ’s ancestors (see Mt 1:5).

known that a woman came to the threshing floor.”¹⁵ Then turning to Ruth, Boaz said, “Hold out the mantle you are wearing.” She did so and he poured into it six measures of barley. He helped her lift the bundle, then went back to town.

¹⁶Ruth returned home to her mother-in-law, who asked, “How did you fare, my daughter?” She told her everything¹⁷ and added, “He gave me these six measures of barley because, as he said, he did not want me to go back to my mother-in-law empty-handed.”

¹⁸Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, till you learn what happens, for he will not rest until it is settled today.”

The Levirate law

4¹ Meanwhile Boaz went to the town gate and sat there waiting for the closer relative about whom he had spoken to Ruth. When he saw him coming, he called him by name and said, “Come here and sit down.” And so he did.

²Boaz picked out ten from the city elders and asked them to sit with them, which they did.³ Then he said to the other man who also had right of redemption, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech.⁴ I thought of bringing this matter to you before our elders here, because as the closer kin you have more right to lay claim to it. But if you have no wish to redeem it, let me know because I am next to you in line.”

The man replied, “I am willing to put in my claim. I will redeem it.”⁵ Boaz continued, “If you buy the land from Naomi, you will also have to take the Moabite Ruth, widow of the late heir, and her sons will inherit the name and the land of the dead.”

⁶The man said, “Then I cannot redeem it, because I might endanger my own estate. Redeem it yourself.”

⁷It used to be the custom in Israel that for a contract of redemption or exchange to become binding, one party had to take off his sandal and give it to the other. This act legalized transactions.

⁸So the man took off his sandal and said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.”

⁹Boaz turned to the elders and all those present. “This day you are witnesses that I buy from Naomi all the holdings of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon.¹⁰ I also take Mahlon’s widow, Ruth the Moabite, as my wife to raise up a family for her late husband, so that the name of the dead will be restored to his inheritance and be present among his brothers when they gather at the gate of his town. Do you witness this today?”

¹¹The elders and all those at the gate answered, “We witness. May Yahweh make the woman coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrathah and be of good standing in Bethlehem.¹² And through the offspring Yahweh will give you by this woman, may your house become like that of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

Obed was the father of Jesse, who was David’s father

¹³So Ruth was taken by Boaz and became his wife. Yahweh made her conceive and give birth to a son.¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be Yahweh who has provided you today with an heir. May he become famous in Israel!¹⁵ He will be your comfort and stay in your old age, for he is born of a daughter-in-law who loves you and is worth more than seven sons.”

¹⁶Naomi took the child as her own and became his nurse.¹⁷ And the women of the neighborhood gave him his name, saying, “A son has been born for Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, who was David’s father.

¹⁸This, then, is Perez’s family line: Perez was the father of Hezron,¹⁹ Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab,

²⁰Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon,

²¹Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed,

²²Obed of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

1S
1:19

Lk
1:58

1S
17:12

Mt
1:3
Lk
3:31
1S
17:12

LAMENTATIONS



Following the fall of Jerusalem and the horrendous things that took place there, believers try to understand. They are not complaining; they see the ruins as deserved punishment for their many excesses and constant rejection of God's warnings. Yet, they know that the Lord loves his people: they believe this, feel it and proclaim it.

When the exiles returned to Jerusalem, they may have gathered to pray together on the ruins of what had been the Temple, and taken turns with these laments. Later they continued yearly to pray them on the date of the catastrophe, and much later the Church adopted the custom of using them in the days she remembers the death of Jesus.

In the Lord's Passion, the believer sees the sum total of the suffering and anxiety of humankind. These poems help us to look with the same compassion on the suffering of Christ and the suffering of the destitute. They will help us to unite the vision of universal pain with the sense of human sinfulness and responsibility.

A Jewish tradition attributes these poems to Jeremiah. They do seem to manifest a spirit very similar to his.

First lamentation

1 ¹How forlorn the city lies,
once teeming with people!
How like a widow is she,
once mistress of the nations!
A princess among the cities,
she has now become a slave.
²She spends her nights weeping,
drenching her cheeks with tears.
Who is there to comfort her
among all her lovers?
All her friends have betrayed her
and have become her enemies.
³Humiliated, exhausted,
Judah has gone into exile
but she finds no rest among the nations
where she sojourns;
her pursuers have overtaken her
where there is no way of escape.

⁴All roads to Zion are in mourning;
no one comes to her feasts.
Her gates are deserted,
her priests groan,
her virgins grieve.
What bitter anguish she suffers!

⁵She is at the mercy of her foes
who enjoy prosperity and power.
Yahweh himself has made her suffer
for all her iniquity.
Her children, driven into captivity,
take the lonely road to exile.

⁶Gone from the daughter of Zion
is all her majestic splendor.
Her rulers, like harts
that find no pasture,
have fled helplessly
before the oppressors.

⁷Jerusalem recalls her days

of wandering and affliction,
her people fell into the hands of her foes
and there was no help.
Haters gloated over her downfall
and laughed at her destruction.

⁸ Greatly has Jerusalem sinned;
she has become as a thing unclean.
Honored before,
but now despised by those who have
seen her naked,
she herself groans in dismay
and turns her face away.

⁹ Her filth clings to her skirt.
^{Is} She gave no thought to her doom,
^{47:7} and so her fall came suddenly,
with no one to offer comfort.
“Look, O Yahweh, upon my misery,
for my enemy has overcome me.”

¹⁰ She has seen how the enemy
has laid hands on her treasures.
She has seen how the nations
have defiled her sanctuary –
those peoples you have not allowed
to come into your assembly.

¹¹ All her people groan
as they search for bread;
just to keep themselves alive,
they give their jewels for food.
Look, Yahweh, and mark
how I have been despised.

¹² All you who pass by,
look and see.
Is there any calamity
like this, inflicted on me
by Yahweh on the day
of his burning anger.

¹³ From above he sent a fire
down into my very bones,
he ensnared my feet
and threw me down,
and left me in pain
the whole day long.

¹⁴ He bound my sins into a yoke
and fastened them together,
then set them upon my neck
and caused my strength to fail.
Yahweh gave me into the hands
of those I cannot withstand.

¹⁵ Yahweh has spurned
the bravest of my fighters;
he has summoned an army
to crush my young warriors.
Yahweh has trodden in his winepress
Judah’s virgin daughter.

^{Is}
63:2

¹⁶ This is what I weep about,
what makes my tears well up.
No one is near to restore my spirit,
no one at hand to console me.
My children are desolate,
for the enemy has triumphed.

^{Jer}
13:17
14:17

¹⁷ Zion stretches out her hands,
but there is no one to give comfort.
Yahweh has decreed for Jacob
that his neighbors become his foes.
As an unclean thing among them
has Jerusalem become.

¹⁸ Yahweh acts justly,
for I have defied his order.
Listen, all you peoples,
and see how I suffer.
My young men and maidens
have all gone into exile.

¹⁹ I cried for help to my lovers,
but they betrayed me.
My priests and my elders
perished in the city
they sought anything to eat,
but finally they had to die.

^{Jer}
30:14

²⁰ Look, Yahweh, upon my distress:
all within me is in anguish.
My heart recoils within me:
I know that I have been rebellious.
See, outside the sword that kills,
and within, death that stalks.

^{Dt}
32:35

²¹ People have heard my moaning
but no one comes to comfort me.
My foes have known of my suffering,
they rejoice at what you have done.
Hasten the day you have proclaimed,
that they may be even as I am.

^{Am}
5:18

²² Let their evil come
before you, and deal with them
as you have dealt with me
on account of my sins.

Great indeed is my groaning.
How sick at heart I am!

Second lamentation

2 ¹Oh, how Yahweh in his anger
has despised the daughter of Zion!
Israel's glory he has flung
from heaven down to earth;
unmindful of his footstool
on the day of his wrath.

²Without pity Yahweh has shattered
in Jacob every dwelling.
He has torn down in his anger
the ramparts of Judah's daughter.
He has thrown her rulers and her king
to the ground, dishonored.

³He has cut down in his anger
the horn of Israel's might.
He has withdrawn his right hand
at the approach of the enemy.
In Jacob, he has blazed like a fire,
he has devoured all around.

⁴Like an enemy he has bent his bow,
his right hand steadying the arrow.
All our pride of manhood he slew
as he took his stand as a foe,
pouring out fury like fire
upon the tent of Zion's daughter.

⁵The Lord has become an enemy
who has laid Israel in ruins.
He has destroyed all her palaces
and laid waste her fortresses.
He has multiplied the tears
of the daughter of Judah.

⁶Yahweh has wrecked her dwelling,
laid waste her place of meeting.
He has made Zion forget
her appointed feasts and sabbaths;
he has spurned in his fierce wrath
king and prophet and priest.

⁷The Lord has rejected his altar,
has forsaken his sanctuary.
He has handed over the walls of her tower
to the enemy,
whose triumphant shouts are heard
in the temple of Yahweh.

⁸Yahweh resolved to tear down
the ramparts of Zion's daughter.
He stretched out the measuring line,
and did not relent from bringing ruin.
He made both wall and rampart mourn,
till together they crumbled down.

⁹Her gates have sunk into the ground;
broken and removed are their bars.
Her king and rulers
live in exile among the nations.
No more message for their prophets,
no more visions from Yahweh.

¹⁰The elders of the daughter of Zion

sit in silence upon the ground,
their heads sprinkled with dust,
their bodies wrapped in sackcloth,
while Jerusalem's young women
bow their heads to the ground.

Jer
6:26

¹¹With weeping my eyes are spent;
my soul is in torment
because of the downfall
of the daughter of my people,
because children and infants faint
in the open spaces of the town.

¹²To their mothers they say,
"Where is the bread and wine?"
as they faint like wounded men
in the streets and public squares,
as their lives ebb away
in their mothers' arms.

¹³To what can I compare you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
Who can save or comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
Deep as the sea is your affliction,
and who can possibly heal you?

¹⁴Your prophets' visions
were worthless and false.
Had they warned of your sins,
your fate might have been averted.
But what they gave you instead
were false, misleading signs.

Ezk
13:10

¹⁵Passersby shudder;
some clap their hands at the sight;
others wag their heads at the fate
of the daughter of Jerusalem.
"Is this the city that was called
the loveliest, the joy of the world?"

¹⁶All your enemies open wide
their mouths against you;
they gnash their teeth, they hiss,
they crow: "We have destroyed her!
This is the day we have waited for;
we have lived to see it happen."

Mt
27:39
Ezk
16:37

¹⁷Yahweh has accomplished his pur-
pose;
he has fulfilled his word
which he decreed in the days of old;
he overthrew you merciless.
He made your enemies joyful
and gave them power to crush you.

¹⁸Cry out to the Lord, O wall
of the daughter of Zion!
Oh, let your tears flow
day and night, like a river.
Give yourself no relief;
grant your eyes no respite.

¹⁹Get up, cry out in the night,
as the evening watches start;
pour out your heart like water
in the presence of the Lord.
Lift up your hands to him
for the lives of your children,

who faint with hunger
at the corner of every street.

²⁰ Look, Yahweh, and answer:
Why have you treated us like this?
Why must women eat their little ones,
whom they have nursed in their arms?
Why must priest and prophet be slaugh-
tered

in the sanctuary of the Lord?

²¹ In the dust of the streets
lie the young and the old,
both virgins and young men –
all fallen by the sword.
You have killed on the day of your fury;
you have slaughtered without mercy.

²² As for a feast day, you bade
terrors to come from every side.
There was, on the day of your anger,
neither fugitive nor survivor.
My enemy has murdered
all whom I bore and reared.

Third lamentation

3 ¹ I am a man who has known calam-
ity from the rod of his wrath;

^{Am} ^{5:18} ² he has driven and brought me
into darkness, not into the light.

³ He turns his hand against me alone,
all the day long, again and again.

^{Job} ^{30:30} ⁴ He has worn away my flesh and skin;
he has broken all my bones.

⁵ He assails me and surrounds me
with tribulation and bitterness.

⁶ He leaves me to dwell in darkness,
like those who have long been dead.

^{Job} ^{3:23} ⁷ He has walled me in without escape;
he has weighed me down with chains.

⁸ I could not even cry for help,
for he has stopped my prayer.

⁹ He bars my way with stones
and left me helplessly alone.

^{Hos} ^{13:7-} ⁸ ¹⁰ Like a bear lying in ambush,
like a lion waiting for its prey,

¹¹ he lunged at me, tore me to pieces,
and left me alone and helpless.

¹² Then he drew his bow
and aimed his arrow at me.

¹³ He pierced my sides
with arrows from his quiver.

^{Ps} ^{69:12-} ¹³ ¹⁴ I have become a laughingstock,
a topic of songs for all the peoples.

¹⁵ He has sated me with bitter food;

he has made me drunk with worm-
wood.

¹⁶ He has broken my teeth with gravel
and thrown me down in the ashes.

¹⁷ He has deprived my soul of peace,
till I have forgotten happiness.

¹⁸ Now I say, “Gone are my hopes
and all my confidence in the Lord.”

¹⁹ Recalling my affliction and home-
lessness is wormwood and gall.

²⁰ Thinking it over and over
makes my soul downcast.

²¹ But this, when I ponder,
is what gives me hope:

²² Yahweh’s love abides unceasingly.
His compassion is never consumed;

²³ every morning it is renewed.

And his love remains ever faithful.

²⁴ “My portion is Yahweh,” says my soul.
“On him shall I rely.”

^{Mic} ^{7:7}
^{Ps} ^{73:26}

²⁵ Yahweh is good to those who hope in
him,

to souls who search for him.

²⁶ It is rewarding to wait in silence
for the Lord’s salvation.

²⁷ It is good for man to bear the yoke
from his youth.

²⁸ Let him sit alone in silence
when Yahweh fastens the yoke on him.

^{Jer} ^{15:17}

²⁹ Let him put his lips to the dust
there may still be hope.

³⁰ Let him offer his cheek to be struck;
let him be overwhelmed with insult.

^{Is} ^{50:6}
^{Mt} ^{5:39}

³¹ For it is not forever
that the Lord rejects man.

³² In the abundance of his love
he punishes, but has compassion.

^{Is} ^{63:7}

³³ For he does not willingly abase
or afflict the human race.

³⁴ To trample underfoot
the prisoners of the land,

^{Am} ^{1:6}

³⁵ to deny a man his rights
in the presence of the Most High,

^{Am} ^{5:7}

³⁶ to deprive people of justice –
the Lord does not approve of this.

³⁷ Who can command and execute

what the Lord has not willed?

³⁸ From the mouth of the Most High
come all things, good or bad.

³⁹ Why should then mortals complain
when punished for their sin?

^{Hos} ^{6:1} ^{Jl} ^{2:12} ^{Is} ^{55:7} ⁴⁰ Let us search and examine our ways
and return to the Lord.

⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts and hands
to God in heaven, and say:

⁴² "We have sinned and rebelled,
and you have not forgiven us.

⁴³ Clothed in anger you have pursued
us without mercy.

⁴⁴ You have wrapped yourself in clouds
so that no prayer can reach you.

⁴⁵ You have reduced us to dust
and refuse among the nations.

⁴⁶ Our foes have opened wide
their mouths against us.

⁴⁷ Terror is our lot:
pitfall, ruin and desolation.

⁴⁸ Great is my grief over the downfall
of the daughter of my people.

⁴⁹ No respite, no relief,
as my tears flow ceaselessly,

⁵⁰ till the Lord looks down
from heaven and sees.

⁵¹ My soul will grieve in torment
for the women of my city.

⁵² Like a bird I have been hunted
by my foes without cause.

⁵³ They flung me alive into a pit
and cast stones at me.

⁵⁴ As the waters closed over my head,
I thought I would never again live.

⁵⁵ Out of the depths I called
on your name, O Yahweh.

⁵⁶ You heard; you have not been deaf
to my cry for relief.

^{Jer} ^{1:8} ⁵⁷ When I called, you even came near
and told me not to fear.

⁵⁸ O Lord, you took up my case
and redeemed my life.

⁵⁹ You have seen the wrong they did me,
uphold my cause!

⁶⁰ You have seen how resentfully
they plotted to destroy my life.

⁶¹ O Yahweh, you have heard the insults
hurled at me, their insidious plots;

⁶² You have been aware of their thoughts,
their muttering against me all day long.

⁶³ Look at them – sitting or standing –
mocking me in their song!

⁶⁴ Repay them as they deserve,
according to their deeds, O Yahweh.

⁶⁵ Harden their hearts;
hold them under your curse.

⁶⁶ Pursue and destroy them in fury
from under the heavens, O Yahweh.

Fourth lamentation

4 ¹ How tarnished the gold has become.
The fine gold has lost its luster.
Why, the sacred stones lie strewn
at every street corner!

² Oh, the precious sons of Zion,
once worth their weight in gold –
but now reckoned no more
than earthen jars from a potter's mold!

³ Even jackals bare their breasts
to suckle their young,
but my people have become heartless,
like ostriches in the desert land.

^{Job} ^{39:13-} ¹⁷

⁴ In thirst the infant's tongue
cleaves to the roof of its mouth.
Children are begging for alms,
but there is no one to help them.

⁵ Those accustomed to fine food
now lie dying in the streets.
Those accustomed to wear purple
now lie destitute upon the ash heaps.

⁶ The punishment of my people
is greater than that of Sodom,
which was overthrown in an instant,
without a helping hand.

^{Is} ^{1:9} ^{Ezk} ^{16:46}

⁷ Brighter than snow were their rulers,
even whiter than milk;
their bodies rosier than coral,
their beauty as radiant as sapphires.

⁸ Now they look blacker than soot,
unrecognized in the streets.
Their emaciated form shows lack of food,
their skin shriveled and dry as wood.

⁹ Better to have died by the sword
than to have perished in hunger.
The famine-stricken people perish,
and slowly, wretchedly, pass away.

¹⁰ Once loving mothers, our women
have cooked their own children
and made them their food:
such has been the crash of my people!

¹¹ Yahweh has given full vent to his wrath;
pouring out his fierce anger.
He has kindled a fire in Zion,
which has consumed her foundation.

¹² Never had kings believed
nor the world thought possible
that the enemy could break
through the gates of Jerusalem.

Jer 5:31
Ezk 7:23
13 But this happened because of the priests, who sinned, because of the prophets who transgressed, shedding in her midst the blood of the just.

14 They wandered like blind men, groping through the streets, so defiled with blood that none could touch their garments.

Is 52:11
15 "Go away!" people cried at them. "Do not touch us! You are unclean!" They became fugitives wandering about, but even the nations would drive them out.

16 Yahweh himself has dispersed them; no longer does he watch over them. The priests are shown no honor; the elders are given no favor.

Jer 37:7
17 Our watchmen strained their eyes, looking for help in vain. We anxiously waited for an ally, who failed to save us.

18 Like dogs our enemies hounded us and kept us off the streets. As our end drew near, we knew our days were numbered.

19 Swifter were our pursuers, than the eagles in the sky. Over the hills they chased us, they waylaid us in the wilderness.

20 Our life's breath, Yahweh's anointed, was taken captive in their pit – he of whom we said, "In his protection we shall live among the nations."

Is 51:17
Hb 2:15
21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,

you who dwell in the land of Uz. But you shall be drunk and stripped bare, for to you also the cup will pass.

22 Your ordeal, daughter of Zion, will end; for your exile will not be prolonged. But Edom's daughter will be chastised, and her wickedness will be exposed.

Fifth lamentation

5 ¹Remember, Yahweh, what has befallen us. Look, and see our disgrace,

²our home handed over to strangers, our inheritance to foreigners.

³We are as orphans, fatherless, and early widowed are our mothers.

⁴Our drinking water we must buy; for our own wood we have to pay. Is 55:1

⁵With the yoke stifling our breath, without rest we work to death.

⁶We have bowed down to Egypt, and to Assyria, just to subsist. Jer 2:18

⁷Our ancestors who sinned are no more but we bear their guilt.

⁸Slaves rule us, and there is no one to rescue us from their hands.

⁹We brave the desert heat and the sword just to get our hard-earned food.

¹⁰Our skin is hot like a furnace, dried up and shriveled by hunger.

¹¹Ravished are the wives in Zion, the virgins in the towns of Judah.

¹²Princes are hung up by their hands; elders shown no respect.

¹³Young men toil at the millstones, boys stagger under heavy loads.

¹⁴The old have shunned the city gate, the young, their music.

¹⁵From our hearts joy is gone; we danced then, but now we lament.

¹⁶The garlands have fallen from our heads. Woe upon us, for we have sinned!

¹⁷Over all this our hearts are sick; and our eyes have grown weak:

¹⁸for we see Mount Zion desolate; the jackals prowl within. Mic 3:12

¹⁹You, O Yahweh, forever reign; your throne endures from age to age. Ps 102:13

²⁰Why, then, should you abandon us, why forget us for so long a time?

²¹Lead us to you again, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old.

²²Have you utterly rejected us? Is there no end to your wrath against us? Jer 14:19