

Dr. Leslie Allen, Lamentations, Session 4, Lamentations 1:12-22

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This is Dr. Leslie Allen in his teaching on the book of Lamentations. This is session 4, Lamentations 1:12-22.

We move on now to the second half of chapter one of Lamentations.

Before we enter into its detailed parts, let me just recap and say something of the background of grieving and the grieving process. Grieving is a psychological process in which by repeated and painful remembering, the griever can slowly learn how to bear a loss and work through it. The self gradually acclimates to the reality of the loss.

I find it helpful to recognize in Lamentations a wide range of responses in terms of three pathways or three trajectories. The first one is grief itself. We use grief as a generic term for the whole process but grief can be narrowed down to a recognition of loss, remembering and recognizing loss.

Grief is to accept the reality of the loss, and so the mentor in the first part of Lamentations, chapter one, has been going through aspects of loss to help the community to accept what has happened, to acknowledge and cope with it emotionally and rationally. But then, too, there is an acknowledgment of guilt, an acknowledgment of responsibility. Guilt is a difficult thing to handle in grief, and very often, the grief counselor is warning against the wrong use of guilt.

So often, there's a self-blame, an automatic self-blame. Somebody has been having a meal with you and goes off in the car, has an accident, and is killed, and the person at home might well think, oh, if I'd kept them a bit longer, they wouldn't have died; it was my fault. I should have mentioned so and so, and then they would have stayed longer, and of course, that's a false self-blame. It's a very natural thing, and the counselor often warns against it; in fact, in some cases, it is irrational.

If only I'd done this or that, it wouldn't have happened. But in some cases it is rational. I remember a case in my work as a volunteer hospital chaplain of a woman who was coming in to the hospital for surgery and she was having the surgery next week and having a few tests beforehand but she was not concerned about the surgery and what was wrong with that.

She had grief on her mind, and she was in her early 60s; she'd been a foster mother for many years for the local council, but there was this naughty little boy that she slapped, and he had reported her to the social worker. The social worker said it was a

transgression of the council policy, and from now on, she would no longer be allowed to be a foster mother, so she was grieving, and there was guilt there. There was something wrong there, but there was also a grievance. she felt this sentence was too harsh, and she was so upset that she could not do any fostering anymore. The next week I went into the hospital expecting to talk with her further and to listen to her woes.

No, she died on the operating table, and she wasn't there anymore, and it seems to me that the cause of death was actually a broken heart that she'd lost this opportunity to foster, but there was the mixture, the same sort of mixture in a way that we get in lamentations, grief, guilt, and grievance and we're looking at guilt, and sometimes there is reason for guilt. In this case, there were lamentations that apply the traditions of the law and the prophets and draw some parallels between what they say and what the community has been experiencing. So, guilt is a need to acknowledge responsibility, and it doesn't very often apply in cases of grief.

One useful parallel that we shall see is relevant later in the book is Alcoholics Anonymous and the problems of being an alcoholic and the need to take responsibility. That wonderful organization places great stress on taking responsibility. They never use guilt in case it's misunderstood and misapplied, but taking responsibility is very much a key element and a necessary part of the road back to a sober life. So, grief, guilt, and, yes, grievance.

Others are to blame, too, and there can be a legitimate anger in grief. A child is killed on the crosswalk, and on the television news that night, the parents are saying please turn yourself in, you hit-and-run driver. We want justice for our little girl, and so grievance is a plea for justice and a recognition that there can be wrongdoing in the case of lamentations not only on Judah's side but on the enemy's side as well, and so we shall find that grievance plays a part too and so I go through these trajectories carefully for you now so that it will help us to recognize what's going on in the book of Lamentations and this grieving process is necessary.

It's only after grieving that it's possible to think new thoughts and envision new things for oneself. It takes time to cut emotional ties with the past and to adjust to a different situation. So, we come now to the second half of chapter one of Lamentations and I hope you've read it carefully and if so you may have noticed it falls into three parts.

The first five verses are then a separate verse, and then the second five verses are stanzas, and so verses 12 to 16 are then 17 and then 18 to 22. What's happening here? Zion, who was interrupted by the main narrator, our mentor at the end of the first half of the chapter in the end of verses 9 and 11, Zion is now allowed to speak at length, but she in turn, is interrupted in verse 17, and the mentor takes over just for

that one stanza, and then she goes back to speaking again. Zion speaks again in verses 18 to 22.

So that's the overall structure of the portion we'll be studying today. If we ask what the genre, what type of speaking and writing 12 to 16 is, it's a funeral lament. And Zion needs prayer.

Zion is just broken into prayer at the end of verse 9 and verse 11, but Zion also needs that funeral lament, that secular lament that goes through the human side of grief and thinks about it and feels about it in very deep ways. And so, we, I think I mentioned last time, that Zion functions as a role model for the congregation, and as she speaks, the congregation is meant to realize this is how we are to feel and think in turn. We have to get over that numb shock and that denial that it's ever happened and start to enter into the terror of it all, this terrible disaster of 586.

And it's so terrible that it's regarded as unique. Zion speaks of it as unique. But let's pause.

This is a new character. I said that Lamentations is basically the script of a liturgy, a service of commemoration. And it would have been spoken aloud, I think, in the temple grounds, in the grounds of the ruined temple.

The mentor has been speaking, but now, a woman speaks. And who is this woman? Well, I suspect, I mentioned last time, that there were professional women mourners, and I suspect that she's taken from that circle to play this particular role in this liturgical drama. And so she speaks, and the congregation is meant to listen and take it in and to realize this is all for us, and we have to listen very carefully and think it through and feel it for ourselves.

In the first half of verse 12, Zion speaks of her suffering as unique. She represents the city of Jerusalem and the congregation there before her. Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by, look and see if there's any sorrow like my sorrow.

This picks up a scene in a scenario that we have a number of times in the Old Testament of a ruined city and reacting to a ruined city. Very often, travelers would pass by a city that they knew before and perhaps would stop at but now they could see it had been destroyed, it had been ruined by enemies, and they would look in horror at this terrible sight, a city now abandoned. A number of times, the Old Testament picks up this scenario and makes use of it.

For instance, in Jeremiah chapter 19 and verse 8, God says about Jerusalem, I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by will be horrified and will hiss because of all the disasters shot by this scene of the ruined

Jerusalem. This is the way that Zion speaks about herself now, and she says that this is unique.

Very often, when we're grieving, we're so overwhelmed by our sorrow that we do think of it as unique. It so happens, is there any parallel to this scenario of the ruined city? Yes, I think there is. On the freeway, there is an accident, a terrible accident, and cars stop and look. They put on their brakes, or they go slowly and look, and they want to see.

And in California, there's a special word invented for them: lookie-loos. They are lookie-loos. They don't stop to help, they just stop out of curiosity and horror and that's all.

Well, that's a sort of counterpart to this situation here and she appeals to these passers-by to help but we sense that they don't actually. But then this sorrow is spoken of at the end of verse 12 as that which the Lord inflicted on the day of his anger. There's a lot happening here in this last section of verse 12.

First of all, it endorses the theological interpretation that the mentor had already applied earlier in the chapter. In fact, there was a verb in verse 5: the Lord made her suffer. And that word, make to suffer, is the same word that is now translated inflicted in the new RSV, and so the same word is being picked up.

There's an endorsement of the actual language that the mentor has used. The NIV is more helpful because it has the same rendering brought in both cases to make the reader think of verse 5. But there's something new here. There's a mention of the day of God's fierce anger.

This is a theological motif that comes in here for the first time but not for the last in Lamentations. The day of the Lord is mentioned very often in the Old Testament by the pre-exilic prophets to speak of a terrible time when God is going to intervene in history and attack the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom. And there's an example, a great example, in Amos chapter 5 verses 18 through 20.

Alas, for you who desire the day of the Lord. Why do you want the day of the Lord? It's darkness, not light. It was as if someone fled from a lion and was met by a bear or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall and was bitten by a snake.

It's not the day of the Lord darkness and not light and gloom with no brightness in it. And he's forecasting the fall of the northern kingdom, Israel, the northern kingdom. Other prophets used it to apply it to the southern kingdom.

And it's interesting in Zephaniah we have the use of the idea of wrath, of anger. Here it's the day of the anger of the Lord. And that pre-exilic prophet applied it to the fall of the southern kingdom, this day of God's anger.

The great day of the Lord is near Zephaniah 2:14 to 16. The great day of the Lord is near, near in hastening fast. It's a day of wrath, a day of distress, anguish, and so on.

And this is forecasting the fall, in fact, of Judah. And so, what Zion is saying is that Zion is doing mentoring on her own behalf. And she is claiming that prophecies is coming true, has come true, with respect to this day of the Lord that's being experienced.

The theological interpretation is expanded in verse 13: From on high he sent fire; it went deep into my bones. We have a series of references to God being responsible for this human disaster, but behind that human disaster was the divine will of God being worked out.

First of all, here it speaks of a fire, and literally, it would mean the fire that burned Jerusalem down, the fire lit by the Babylonians as a punishment for rebelling against their imperial authority. But here, it's given a divine significance. From on high, he sent fire.

What's fire from on high? It's lightning, lightning. It's as if lightning had struck Jerusalem and came to rest on Jerusalem in the force of the fires that historically had been lit by the Babylonians. And then it had such a great effect upon Zion, it went deep into my bones.

Fire in the bones is a Hebrew expression for fever, a high fever, a high temperature. And so, this is the effect, the distress that it causes, this disaster causes. And so underneath the level is a historical level, but there's a theological level, and then there's that psychological response.

It's as if I had this terrible fever. Then, it moves on to a hunting metaphor. He spread a net for my feet, he turned me back, and he left me stunned, faint all day long.

And so here again, this is a disaster caused by God, and it has a distressing effect. Verse 14 speaks of a yoke. This whole experience had been a terrible weight of a yoke upon Zion.

My transgressions were bound into a yoke. By his hand, they were fastened together. They weigh on my neck, sapping my strength.

It uses the word transgressions, which we already saw on the mentor's lips back in verse 5, the multitude of her transgressions. We saw there that it was rebellious ways,

acts of rebellion. There's punishment for this rebellion, and it thinks of this rebellious act as being like branches, pieces of wood woven into a yoke, a heavy yoke, that left Zion weak and exhausted from wearing it.

And this is God's punishment for sin, and the punishment brought out in this metaphor here of a yoke made out of Zion's own transgressions or rebellious acts. And then, it goes on to say that God took the side of those human enemies. The Lord handed me over to those whom I cannot withstand.

And so here we have a combination of the historical circumstances and the theological. There was providence at work there in this whole terrible human situation, and God was taking the side, or rather the Babylonians were playing a providential role when they conquered Zion. It was an outworking of God's negative will for Jerusalem.

And then, in verse 15, the Lord took the side of the enemy army over against the Judean soldiers. The Lord has rejected all my warriors in the midst of me. He proclaimed a time against me to crush my young men.

Time, the Hebrew word has a variety of meanings, and I think the new international version is more fitting in the context of an army. The Lord summoned an army, summoned an army against me to crush my young men. And so God on the side of the enemy, what worse thing could one think of? The Lord has trodden us in a winepress, the virgin daughter Judah.

This is a further metaphor; it's a metaphor of treading grapes into red juice to turn it into wine. And we would think of a bloodbath, and this gets picked up later by Third Isaiah, Isaiah 63 describes at great length this bloodbath that God can cause. It's picked up again in the New Testament in Revelation 14 and in 19, this metaphor of God punishing in terms of a bloodbath.

The virgin daughter Judah. We've had daughter Zion before, and we will again, but here we get daughter Judah. I said last time that the daughter stands for a personification as a woman.

But here we get the word virgin added, and in the prophets, in the pre-exilic prophets, we find this term used. It means hitherto undefeated in this case, and it's used of the people of the northern kingdom in Amos chapter 5 in verse 2. It's used of the people of the southern kingdom in Jeremiah 14 and verse 17. And then verse 16 comes back to personal grief.

It moves from disaster and its theological cause to distress. For these things, I weep, my eyes flow with tears, for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage. And this is the grief that Zion began with in verse 12 in talking about my sorrow, my unique sorrow.

And here she's giving vent to it in tears, in her personal grief. This idea of comfort is something that the mentor stressed earlier in Chapter 1, and now she picks it up: the lack of comfort. And a comforter would be so good to revive my courage or restore my morale, but I'm all alone.

And so, we come back in thought to that key word of the whole chapter: how lonely sits the city with no one to help. And then she goes on to say, my children are desolate for the enemy has prevailed. Zion's children are, of course, the citizens of Jerusalem, and here it's a reference to the congregation of Judeans who were meeting in Jerusalem, and she says that they were desolate.

And the enemy, of course, is Babylon, as it was earlier in verse 9. And so, in verse 16 we get an expression of distress, of human grief. There's no longer the theological interpretation, that rational interpretation, but this emotional outburst. And, of course, grief needs both.

We had it in verse 12, we get it in verse 16, and so in verses 12 to 16, this expression of emotional grief frames the theological significance of the disaster in 13 and 15. But that inner framework, 13 to 15, is an endorsement of the mentor's explanations earlier in the chapter, in the first half of chapter one. And the hint is, of course, in the way that Zion speaks; the hint is the congregation needs to endorse it too, and Zion is a role model for the congregation.

Of course there's a new note added here, this day of the Lord motif. In giving a theological explanation, we saw last time that there were quotations and allusions to Deuteronomy 28, the list of punishment for God's people if they stray drastically from that covenant relationship. And the mentor has picked that up as the interpretation from the law, the Mosaic law, as an explanation for this terrible disaster.

But now Zion has made her own contribution, and now she turns to the prophets. This day of the Lord motif has become a reality, as the pre-exilic prophet said, it's become true. And so, this is a way of underlining the fact that this terrible thing is from God.

So, whereas the mentor has appealed to Deuteronomy 28, the Torah, Zion appeals to the prophets in support of finding theological meaning in the fall of Jerusalem. This is a factor that needs to appear so often in the grieving process to find significance and hunt for meaning. Is there any meaning? It might be meaningless, but is there any meaning in this disaster that I can learn from? Then, in verse 17, as I said at the beginning, the mentor takes over briefly, and then he's going to go back and let Zion have more to say in 18 through 22.

Looking at this as a script for a liturgy, in the liturgical drama, the main speaker gives Zion a little time to cry until she can carry on. He goes through this next stanza in verse 17, and then Zion composed herself. So, we can see a little bit of drama in this interruption.

It's a purposeful interruption that the mentor gives. It's quite fitting in the context of the liturgy. And what does the mentor have to say in verse 17? He starts by saying Zion stretches out her hands, but there's no one to comfort her.

And he's giving a sort of commentary on what Zion has been saying. In verse 12, Zion is saying, is it nothing to you or you pass by? And she's appealing to pass us by. Please, please, please show me a bit of compassion and stop and stay a while with me.

And nobody did. How do we know nobody did? Because of verse 16, a comforter is far from me. Nobody stopped, and Zion was left alone.

And so in this first line here in verse 17, there's a little summary combining verses 12 and 16. But then it moves on to the heart of what Zion had to say, and that was the theological interpretation. And there's a summary there in this next part of verse 17.

The Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should become his foes. Jacob, of course, is another word for Israel. You remember the patriarch, Jacob, was renamed Israel.

Jacob and Israel are both covenant names applied to the nation. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, only Judah represented that covenant nation. So here she is called Judah.

And what this is saying here, what the mentor means to say, is that the pre-exilic prophets had predicted international warfare as Yahweh's means of punishing Israel. He's reflecting on this Day of the Lord in reference to what Zion has said and giving a summary. Yes, the Lord did command against Jacob that his neighbors should become his foes.

And that command is found in the words of the pre-exilic prophets. And then the result of this terrible thing, oh yes, the neighbors becoming his foes. Babylon was perhaps too far off to be a neighbor, but we said yesterday that Babylon had an international army with detachments from all over the provinces, and so there would be a co-opting of people from the nations around.

Perhaps nations that first stood on Judah's side, but now being forced to send their own troops to form part of the army of Babylon. But then there's the effect at the end of verse 17, Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them. What's this filthy

thing? Well, one scholar has pointed out that there's a place in the Old Testament where it refers to a corpse as unclean.

Stay away from a corpse, or else you'll be defiled and become unclean and won't be able to worship God. There's something to avoid and have nothing to do with. And the effect is that Zion is shunned, and so it's pointing back to that lack of comfort.

Here's another reason why there's no comfort. Oh, get away from Judah. And so this fits that context of that lack of comfort.

And then Zion speaks again, and in the Dramatic Liturgy she's now ready to resume her speech. She's had a bout of sobbing and which was announced in verse 16, and now she can take over again and speak. And 18 to 22 is this last section, in fact.

And let's look over it as a whole. What's going on in 18 to 22? Well, in terms of trajectories or pathways, it's a mixture of grief, guilt, and grievance. They're all mixed together in 18 to 22.

This is very much part of the grief process, in that one doesn't think logically and rationally, but very often, one has to throw together different things as they come to mind and as they come from the heart. And so, it is here that the three trajectories are all going to be represented in 18 to 22 in keeping with the outworking of grief. In terms of genres, it's a combination of a funeral lament, most of it in 18 to 20, but there's also a prayer lament in 21 to 22.

Of course, we found a funeral lament; the first section of 12 to 16 was all a funeral lament, but as in chapter 1, it's a sort of a hybrid because it's no longer purely secular, but it does include a divine component so far as an interpretation is concerned. This divine component is a sort of a bridge so that a funeral lament can turn into a prayer lament in point of fact, as it does here in 18 to 22. And then in terms of the whole processing of grief as a whole, 18 to 20, there's a lot going on there.

There's an interpretation in the first line of 18, meaning a meaning imposed on this disaster, and then losses are described in the rest of 18 and in verse 19. Then there's an emotional outburst in the first two parts of verse 20, and then that moves on to interpretation towards the end of verse 20. But the conclusion of verse 20 describes a further loss and goes back to grief.

And so, we see it's a very mixed passage, and listening to people grieving, very often you find this jumping from one aspect to another aspect to another aspect, and so it's very real, this account of grief being processed here. So, Zion is speaking again, and she says, the Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word. The Lord is

in the right, of course,. The implication is, that I'm in the wrong, and so this is very much a confession.

And now Zion is giving some emphasis to her part in the disaster in this confession. It reminds me of a person who goes to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous for the first time and is encouraged to come forward, and he says, I am John, and I am an alcoholic, or she says, I am Jane, and I am an alcoholic, and that that's the first stage of that confession, and that rethinking that needs to be done in that whole processing that Alcoholics Anonymous is so famous for. Now earlier, especially in 12 to 15, there's been stress there on Zion's lips, on Yahweh's part in the downfall.

Yahweh was responsible; Yahweh was providentially behind the Babylonians, and there'd been a glance at the responsibility borne by Judah or Jerusalem in this respect, in terms of transgressions and rebellious ways, but it had been very briefly spoken of. But now, picking up, as it were, my transgressions in verse 12, in verse 14, my transgressions were bound into a yoke, my acts of rebellion. She moves to confession and her own responsibility in this terrible disaster.

The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against the word. It's not the same Hebrew word as is used in transgressions, but it's a synonym of it, and when we come to chapter 3 and verse 42, we shall find that both verbs of rebellion are used side by side, but there's an acknowledgment. And so, verse 14 is in the background here, my rebellious ways, my transgressions.

But when we looked at verse 14, we said it was an echo of verse 5, where the mentor had said, the Lord has made us suffer for the multitude of her transgressions, her rebellious ways. And so, verse 14 depends very much on verse 5, but that's saying something more because at the beginning and end of verse 5, there were echoes of Deuteronomy 28, and the mentor had been appealing to the Torah, to the punishment for violating the covenant he had made with Israel at the beginning and at the end of verse 5. And so, this means that when it says in verse 18, I have rebelled against his word, this word presumably Zion has been listening carefully to the mentor, and it's the word in Deuteronomy 28. And so, it's not only the day of the Lord, it's not only a prophetic phenomenon background that underlies the punishment of Zion, but it's also the Torah as well.

It's both the law and the prophets agree in that responsibility, but at this point, he seems to be referring and agreeing with a mentor that Deuteronomy 28 is also involved. But then, in the second part of 18, there's an appeal for empathy to the nations of the world. But here are all you peoples, behold my suffering, my young men, my young women, and young men have gone into captivity.

Now, this is fascinating because this going away into captivity occurred back in verse 5, spoken by the mentor, and we saw there it was a quotation from Deuteronomy 28

and verse 41, and it comes up again. And so, Zion herself quotes Deuteronomy 28 and sees a fulfillment of one of those curses, divine curses, in that chapter of Deuteronomy. So, it's not only the prophets but also the law that underline and give meaning to this catastrophe that Lamentations is very much promoting this interpretation to validate what has happened as from God.

And then, in the end, the loss of the exiles, the loss of her family, my young men, and my young women have gone into captivity. In verse 16, Zion's children were those who were left behind, but here, the young men and young women are the exiles who've been marched many, many miles back to Mesopotamia. And so, both members of Zion's family have suffered.

And then, in 19, there are further losses mentioned. I called to my lovers, but they deceived me. There's a whole range of human losses that now Zion commemorates.

And so, here we have grief in the narrowest sense. Lovers, as back in chapter 1, in verse 2, on the mentor's lips, they're the allies, the local allies, local national allies. I called to my lovers, but they deceived me.

They didn't back me up, and they went over to Babylon's side, either willingly or unwillingly, and they supported me no longer. And so, that conference in Jeremiah 27, it all came to nothing. And that united decision from the Palestinian nations to unite against Babylon, it all collapsed.

And so, my lovers deceived me. Here, the NIV gets it right and actually uses allies instead of lovers. And so, that was one human loss.

And then, internally, my priests and elders perished in the city while seeking food to revive their strength. During that siege of 18 months, there were many casualties from starvation, and among them were the natural leaders of Zion, priests, religious leaders, and civil leaders, elders. And so, they had both died.

And so, here is a series of human losses that Zion suffered. And then, in verse 20, she returns to the prayer appeal that she'd started, interrupting the mentor at the end of verse 9 and the end of verse 11. Now, she comes again to this appeal in prayer.

Yahweh's the only one left who can help Zion. All other natural helpers, all human helpers, including priests who had access to God, they were there no longer. So, all one could do was to appeal directly to God himself and appeal for sympathy and to take Zion's side.

See, O Lord, how distressed I am. My stomach churns. My heart is wrung within me.

And there's this psychosomatic response to suffering, as can often happen. The body and heart and mind are a unity, and one has an effect on the other. But Zion admits what the root cause of all this suffering is, because I've been very rebellious.

And she picks up that word that she'd used in verse 18, I rebelled against it. And then she speaks of a further loss. And in the New RSV, it says, in the street, the sword bereaves; in the house, it is like death.

But it's better in the NIV, and I think the translation is right there. Outside, the sword bereaves, and there is only death. And what this is talking about is looking back at that time of siege.

And it's saying outside, there had been Judean soldiers who had lost their lives at the hands of Babylonian swords. Meanwhile, inside the city, it was like death, a virtual death. In the Psalms, a number of times, death is used as a metaphor, where you're experiencing a low quality of life, and you're as good as dead.

And this was the experience, this low quality of life of people undergoing this terrible siege. And then, 21, I take it as all a prayer to God. Instead of the beginning, they heard how I was groaning.

I prefer other translations, other modern translations that render as an imperative address to God. Here, how I am groaning, and that's backed up by one of the ancient versions, the Syriac versions. And that makes a unity of verse 21, that it's all a prayer to God, which one expects.

Because this they, in the standard text, it hasn't got any antecedent. So here I am, groaning with no one to comfort me. And then it comes to a grievance.

All my enemies heard of my trouble. They're glad that you've done it. And there's this resentment of other people who are crowing over Zion's fall.

It says, bring on the day you have announced, and let them be as I am. Today, we come back to the day, and I mentioned before that there was a frame here. Verse 12 mentions the day of God's fierce anger.

And now in verse 21, we come back to the day, another form of that day of the Lord. The day of the Lord in the prophets is a very complex way of speaking, and it has a number of elements. And for one thing, as in verse 12, it speaks of a day of disaster for God's people.

But it also speaks of a day of disaster for other nations. And Zephaniah points to this other aspect in his pre-exilic prophesy. But also again, it speaks of eventually of Israel's salvation.

But that's a point that isn't specified here. But certainly, there are two different aspects: the day of the Lord is a day of punishment for the wrongdoing of God's people on the one hand, and the day of reckoning for other nations, too. And Zion makes an appeal.

I've seen one side of the day of the Lord manifesting itself in my experience, but they're to blame, too. Other people are to blame, and they've gone further than they should. And there's this resentment there.

Well, how have they gone further than they should? Verse 22 explains, let all their evildoing come before you and deal with them as you've dealt with me because of all my transgressions. And so there are sins on their part, too, and they deserve to be punished as well. And so, there's this cry for justice.

They, too, the day of the Lord must come true for them as well. And so, this is the outworking of that grievance. Let justice be done so they deserve to suffer as much as I deserve to suffer.

There is a prophetic antecedent for that, and it's a very powerful part of Isaiah chapter 10. There's a long article there that starts out with God saying that Assyria is the rod of God's anger against Judah, and Judah is to be punished by God by means of Assyria. But there's another side to that article because it goes on to say Assyria went beyond my mandate and did worse things than I intended in punishing Judah, and so Assyria must suffer in turn.

And so, there's that balance in Isaiah 10 between the punishment of God upon Judah on the one hand and against those who may suffer on the other. And something very similar comes out here in using this two-part motif of the day of the Lord. Zion's had her experience of the day of the Lord, so it should be the return of the other nations, and let prophecy come true in this other aspect of the day of the Lord.

And in closing, Zion appeals to her distress; my groans are many, and my heart is faint. This is harking back to verse 20: See O Lord, how distressed I am, show me compassion, please take my side and take my side, and that others need to suffer too. And justice, full justice, can only be done in that way.

Next time we will be studying the whole of chapter 2. And so, you have a lot to read up and study in advance on chapter 2 for our next video.

This is Dr. Leslie Allen in his teaching on the book of Lamentations. This is session 4, Lamentations 1:12-22.