THE QUESTION

Who is the weeping woman in Lamentations (Lamentations 1:1–2)?

Asked by a THF member on November 4, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 6 numbered quotations · the 16 early Christian passages and 164 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/who-is-the-weeping-woman-in-lamentations-lamentations-1-1-2

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

The weeping woman in Lamentations 1 is the city of Jerusalem, pictured as a widow who mourns. Clement of Alexandria reads these opening lines as Jeremiah grieving over the city that now sits alone. Other early writers also speak of Jerusalem as a widow and of Zion as a mother.

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POINT 1 OF 5

The woman is the city herself

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Alexandria quotes the opening of Lamentations. The one who sits alone, became like a widow, and weeps at night is the city that was once full of people.

1 “How the city sits alone, she who was once full of people. She who ruled over territories has become like a widow. She has come under tribute. Weeping, she wept in the night.”"

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 1.9 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 5, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 5

Clement hears a loving rebuke in the lament

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement says that mourning over someone's fate can carry a hidden warning meant to heal. He says God used this way of speaking through Jeremiah when he lamented the city.

2 “Lamenting a person's fate contains hidden rebuke, and by skillful help it brings salvation, as if under a veil. He used this method through Jeremiah: "How the city sits alone, she who was once full of people. She who ruled over territories has become like a widow. She has come under tribute. Weeping, she wept in the night.”"

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 1.9 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 5, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
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POINT 3 OF 5

Early writers call Jerusalem a widow

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

When explaining Jesus' parable of the widow and the unjust judge, Hippolytus and Irenaeus both say the widow stands for Jerusalem. This is a different passage, but it shows the same picture of Jerusalem as a woman left alone.

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3 “And when he says that there was a widow in the city, he is referring to Jerusalem itself, which really is a widow, forsaken by her perfect heavenly spouse, God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 9, page 5** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

4 “This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one “who feared not God, nor regarded people,” to whom the widow turned in her forgetfulness of God—that is, the earthly Jerusalem—to be avenged of her adversary.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book V* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 3, page 4** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 5

The prophets also picture Zion as a mother

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin quotes Isaiah, where Zion gives birth to her children and those who mourn for Jerusalem are told to rejoice with her. The prophets often speak of the city as a woman with children.

5 “Has the earth brought forth in one day? and has she produced a nation at once? for Zion has labored and borne her children.”

later in the same passage

“Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and hold a joyous assembly, all you who love her.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 1, page 4** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 5

Some applied the Zion image to the Church

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Methodius takes Isaiah's picture of Zion giving birth and applies it to the Church, which he says brings forth children through baptism. This is a Christian reading of the same city-as-woman language.

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6 “So you also must confess that the Church labors and gives birth to those who are baptized.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Methodius,** *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 7 (c. 270–311 AD) **Source 14, page 5** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- Only one of these passages quotes Lamentations itself; the others use the same picture of Jerusalem or Zion from other parts of Scripture.
- These passages do not go through the rest of Lamentations 1 verse by verse.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 16 early Christian passages and 164 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–16, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 17–88, in Bible order), then 92 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *16 passages from 8 writers*

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · source 1*

1 *Dialogue with Trypho* (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “Zion has travailed and borne her children… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 2–4*

2 *Against Heresies: Book I* (1885 English) “she is beloved who was not beloved;” and in what sense He says that “more are the children of her that was desolate, than of her who possessed a husband… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Against Heresies: Book V* **Quote 4, page 3** “is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one “who… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Against Heresies: Book IV* regarding Jerusalem and the Lord, some claim that if it had been "the city of the great King," it would not have been abandoned. This is like saying that if… [continues online] **read ›**

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Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 5–6*

5 *Instructor* 1.9 (1885 English) **Quotes 1, 2, page 2** “came under tribute; weeping, she wept in the night. Lamentations 1:1-2… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Instructor* 2.8 (1885 English; on point 1) “the dishevelled hair is mourning Jerusalem, the deserted, for whom the prophetic lamentations were uttered… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 7–8*

7 *An Answer to the Jews* 3 “cities are completely burned with fire; strangers devour your country before your eyes; and the daughter of Zion is left desolate, like a hut in a vineyard, like a shelter… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Against Marcion* 23 “daughter of Sion has been deserted like a cottage in a vineyard, or a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, Isaiah 1:7-8, ever since the time when Israel… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · sources 9–11*

9 *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 1 **Quote 3, page 3** “who is the Judge of all. And when he says that there was a widow in the city, he is referring to Jerusalem itself, which really is a widow, forsaken… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 1 (on point 3) says: "There was in a city a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city who came to him… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 1 “daughter of Sion shall be left as a cottage in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · source 12*

12 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 4.1 (on point 4) to mean a mind, or a man seeing God. The apostle again makes a similar revelation about Jerusalem, saying, "The Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother… [continues online] **read ›**

Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · sources 13–14*

13 *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 4 (on point 5) useful and helpful aid toward incorruption. He sends it as an ally to those who are fighting for Zion and longing for it, as the psalm shows. Zion is radiant… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 7 **Quote 6, page 4** earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born all at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.’ From… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 15–16*

15 *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 46 “Jeremiah 15:9 also speaks of the city of Jerusalem, in which He… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Divine Institutes* 19 (1885 English) “Jeremiah: Jeremiah 15:9 She who brings forth is affrighted, and vexed in spirit… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *72 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

17 **2 Samuel 1:24** Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with your ornaments, who put ornaments of gold upon your garments. **read ›**

18 **2 Kings 19:21** This is the word that the Lord has spoken against him: The virgin daughter of Zion has rejected you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you. **read ›**

19 **Proverbs 1:27** and when sudden alarm comes upon you, and your overthrow is upon you like a storm, and when trouble and siege come upon you, or when ruin comes upon you. **read ›**

20 **Proverbs 7:17** I have sprinkled my bed with saffron, and my house with cinnamon. **read ›**

21 **Isaiah 3:26** And the chests of your ornaments shall mourn; and you shall be left alone, and you shall be leveled to the ground. **read ›**

22 **Jeremiah 6:2** And your height shall be taken away, O daughter of Zion. **read ›**

23 **Jeremiah 14:2** Judea has mourned, and her gates have been emptied, and they are darkened on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. **read ›**

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24 **Lamentations 1:1** After Israel had been taken captive and Jerusalem made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping, and he lamented this lament over Jerusalem and said: Aleph. How the city that was full of peoples sits alone! She has become like a widow; she who was populous among the nations, ruler among the provinces, has become subject to tribute. **read ›**

25 **Lamentations 1:2** Beth. Weeping, she has wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; and there is none to comfort her among all her lovers; all her friends have dealt faithlessly with her; they have become her enemies. **read ›**

26 **Lamentations 1:3** Gimel. Judea has been carried away because of her humiliation and because of the greatness of her slavery; she dwells among the nations, she has found no rest; all her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of her oppressors. **read ›**

27 **Lamentations 1:4** Daleth. The roads of Zion mourn, because no one comes to the feast; all her gates are desolate; her priests groan; her virgins are led away, and she herself is bitter within. **read ›**

28 **Lamentations 1:5** He. Her oppressors have become the head, and her enemies have prospered; for the Lord has humbled her for the multitude of her ungodly deeds; her infants have gone into captivity before the oppressor. **read ›**

29 **Lamentations 1:6** Waw. And from the daughter of Zion all her majesty has been taken away; her rulers became like rams that find no pasture, and they went on without strength before the pursuer. **read ›**

30 **Lamentations 1:7** Zain. Jerusalem remembered the days of her humiliation and of her rejection, all her desirable things that were from days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the oppressor, and there was none to help her; her enemies saw it and laughed at her dwelling. **read ›**

31 **Lamentations 1:8** Heth. Jerusalem has sinned a sin; therefore she has become a thing tossed about; all who honored her have humbled her, for they have seen her shame; and she herself groaned and turned backward. **read ›**

32 **Lamentations 1:9** Teth. Her uncleanness is before her feet; she did not remember her last end; she has brought down her proud things; there is none to comfort her. See, O Lord, my humiliation, for the enemy has magnified himself. **read ›**

33 **Lamentations 1:12** Lamed. All you who pass by on the way, turn and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has come upon me; the Lord, who spoke in me, has humbled me in the day of the anger of his wrath. **read ›**

34 **Lamentations 1:16** Ayin. My eye has brought down water, for he who comforts me, who brings back my soul, has been removed far from me; my sons have been made desolate, for the enemy has prevailed. **read ›**

35 **Lamentations 1:17** Pe. Zion has spread out her hand; there is none to comfort her; the Lord has given command to Jacob; his oppressors are all around him; among them Jerusalem has become like a woman set apart in her uncleanness. **read ›**

36 **Lamentations 1:20** Resh. See, O Lord, for I am hard pressed; my belly is troubled, and my heart is turned within me, for rebelling, I have rebelled; outside, the sword has left me childless, as death does in the house. **read ›**

37 **Lamentations 2:1** Aleph. How the Lord in his anger has darkened the daughter of Zion! He has cast down from heaven to earth the glory of Israel, and has not remembered the footstool of his feet. **read ›**

38 **Lamentations 2:10** Yod. The elders of the daughter of Zion have sat upon the ground, they have kept silence; they have thrown dust upon their heads; they have wrapped themselves in sackcloth; they have brought down to the ground the leading virgins in Jerusalem. **read ›**

39 **Lamentations 2:13** Mem. What shall I testify to you, or to what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? Who will save and comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For the cup of your ruin is made great; who will heal you? **read ›**

40 **Lamentations 2:18** Tsade. Their heart cried out to the Lord: “Walls of Zion, bring down tears like a brook day and night; give yourself no relief; let not the daughter of your eyes be silent.” **read ›**

41 **Lamentations 3:51** My eye will pick my soul clean beyond all the daughters of the city. **read ›**

42 **Daniel 2:17** And Daniel went into his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his friends, **read ›**

43 **Micah 5:2** And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, are few in number to be among the thousands of Judah; out of you one shall come forth for me to be ruler of Israel, and his goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity. (Septuagint Micah 5:1 (Micah 5:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

44 **Nahum 1:8** And with a flood at his passing he will make an end; darkness will pursue those who rise up, and his enemies. **read ›**

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45 **Nahum 1:9** What are you devising against the Lord? He himself will make an end; he will not take vengeance twice at once in trouble. **read ›**

46 **Nahum 1:12** Thus says the Lord who rules over many waters: Even so they will be scattered, and the report of you will not be heard anymore. **read ›**

47 **Nahum 1:13** And now I will break his rod from you, and I will burst your bonds. **read ›**

48 **Habakkuk 1:8** His horses will leap beyond leopards, and they are keener than the wolves of Arabia; his horsemen will ride out and rush from afar, and they will fly like an eagle eager to eat. **read ›**

49 **Baruch 4:9** For she saw the anger that came upon you from God, and she said, “Hear, you neighbors of Zion; God has brought great mourning upon me. **read ›**

50 **Baruch 4:12** Let no one rejoice over me, a widow and forsaken by many; I have been made desolate because of the sins of my children, for they turned aside from the law of God, **read ›**

51 **Baruch 4:14** Let the neighbors of Zion come, and remember the captivity of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting has brought upon them. **read ›**

52 **Baruch 4:36** Look toward the east, O Jerusalem, and see the gladness that is coming to you from God. **read ›**

53 **1 Maccabees 1:27** Every bridegroom took up a lament, and she who sat in the bridal chamber was in mourning. **read ›**

54 **1 Maccabees 1:38** Because of them the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled, and it became a dwelling of foreigners; she became foreign to her own offspring, and her children forsook her. **read ›**

55 **1 Maccabees 3:45** Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; none of her children went in or out. The sanctuary was trampled down, and foreigners were in the citadel, a place where the nations stayed. Joy was taken away from Jacob, and the flute and the harp ceased. **read ›**

56 **1 Maccabees 7:17** “They poured out the flesh of your devout ones and their blood all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them.” **read ›**

57 **Matthew 3:14** But John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?” **read ›**

58 **Luke 12:11** When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you will answer or what you will say; **read ›**

59 **Acts 1:8** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **read ›**

60 **Acts 1:21** Therefore, of the men who accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **read ›**

61 **Acts 3:8** Leaping up, he stood and began to walk. He entered with them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God. **read ›**

62 **Romans 6:2** May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer? **read ›**

63 **Romans 8:19** For the eager expectation of creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. **read ›**

64 **Romans 8:21** that the creation itself also will be delivered from the slavery of decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. **read ›**

65 **Romans 9:18** So then, he has mercy on whom he desires, and he hardens whom he desires. **read ›**

66 **Romans 9:19** You will say then to me, “Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?” **read ›**

67 **Romans 14:2** One believes he may eat everything, but the weak person eats vegetables. **read ›**

68 **Romans 15:5** Now may the God of perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, **read ›**

69 **1 Corinthians 4:9** For I think that God has displayed us apostles last, as men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. **read ›**

70 **1 Corinthians 4:12** and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; **read ›**

71 **1 Corinthians 4:14** I do not write these things to shame you, but I admonish you as my beloved children. **read ›**

72 **1 Corinthians 5:1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and sexual immorality of a kind not even named among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife. **read ›**

73 **2 Corinthians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia: **read ›**

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74 **2 Corinthians 1:2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **read ›**

75 **2 Corinthians 1:4** who comforts us in all our trouble, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **read ›**

76 **2 Corinthians 1:5** For as the sufferings of Christ abound to us, even so our comfort also abounds through Christ. **read ›**

77 **2 Corinthians 1:6** But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation, which works through endurance of the same sufferings that we also suffer; and our hope for you is firm. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation, **read ›**

78 **2 Corinthians 1:7** knowing that as you share in the sufferings, so you also share in the comfort. **read ›**

79 **2 Corinthians 1:8** For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of our trouble which came upon us in Asia: we were weighed down beyond measure, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. **read ›**

80 **2 Corinthians 1:9** But we ourselves had the sentence of death within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, **read ›**

81 **2 Corinthians 1:12** For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. **read ›**

82 **2 Corinthians 1:15** In this confidence, I was determined to come first to you, that you might have a second favor, **read ›**

83 **2 Corinthians 1:17** When I therefore planned this, did I act lightly? Or do I plan the things I plan according to the flesh, so that with me there should be both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? **read ›**

84 **2 Corinthians 2:1** But I determined this for myself, that I would not come to you again in sorrow. **read ›**

85 **2 Corinthians 2:2** For if I make you grieve, then who will make me glad but he who is made to grieve by me? **read ›**

86 **2 Corinthians 2:10** Now I also forgive anyone to whom you forgive anything. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, **read ›**

87 **2 Corinthians 2:13** I had no relief for my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother, but taking my leave of them, I went out into Macedonia. **read ›**

88 **2 Corinthians 2:15** For we are a pleasing aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *92 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 3:7 · 3:15

1 Samuel 12:3

2 Samuel 22:44

1 Kings 9:7

Psalms 18:43 · 50:3 · 59:11

Isaiah 1:7 · 3:1 · 8:5 · 14:12 · 42:5 · 43:21 · 51:6 · 53:2

Jeremiah 2:12 · 2:19 · 4:4 · 4:22 · 6:30 · 11:18 · 15:9 · 17:9 · 31:31

Daniel 9:26 · 12:4

Hosea 12:10

Amos 8:10

Jonah 2:5 · 2:10

Zechariah 3:3

Malachi 3:1

Matthew 5:38 · 22:1 · 26:23

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Mark 1:2 · 7:6 · 7:8
Luke 10:18 · 11:21 · 11:50 · 18:2
John 1:6 · 5:28 · 5:43 · 6:31 · 7:38 · 8:56 · 9:6 · 9:7 · 11:44 · 12:13 · 12:24 · 15:16 · 20:20
Acts 13:17
Romans 1:17 · 4:11 · 6:7 · 7:24 · 10:14 · 13:4
1 Corinthians 3:6 · 9:9 · 15:11 · 15:20 · 15:42 · 15:46 · 15:47 · 15:52
Ephesians 2:7 · 2:15 · 4:25 · 4:26 · 5:4
Philippians 3:1
Colossians 3:5
1 Timothy 3:15
Hebrews 1:3 · 3:5 · 8:8
1 Peter 1:19 · 2:10
1 John 2:18
Revelation 1:20 · 4:6 · 5:7 · 11:19 · 13:1 · 13:18 · 16:1

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Who is the weeping woman in Lamentations (Lamentations 1:1–2)?” on November 4, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY