Eikhah 1:1-10

1. Alas! Lonely sits the city
   Once great with people!
   She that was great among nations
   Is become like a widow;
   The princess among states
   Is become a thrall.

2. Bitterly she weeps in the night,
   Her cheeks wet with tears.
   There is none to comfort her
   Of all her friends.
   All her allies have betrayed her;
   They have become his foes.

3. Judah has gone into exile
   Because of misery and harsh oppression;
   When she settled among nations,
   She found no rest;
   All her pursuers overtook her
   In the narrow places.

4. Zion's road are in mourning,
   Empty of festival pilgrims;
   All her gates are deserted.
   Her priests sigh,
   Her maidens are unhappy--
   She is utterly disconsolate!

5. Her enemies are now the masters,
   Her foes are at ease,
   Because the LORD has afflicted her
   For her many transgressions;
   Her infants have gone into captivity
   Before the enemy.

6. Gone from Fair Zion are all
   That were her glory;
   Her leaders were like stages
   That found no pasture;
   They could only walk feebly,
   Before the pursuer.

7. All the precious things she had
   In the days of old
   Jerusalem recalled
   In her days of woe and sorrow,
   When her people fell by enemy hands
   With none to help her;
   When the enemies looked on and gloated
   Over her downfall.
8. Jerusalem has greatly sinned,
Therefore she is become a mockery.
All who admired her despised her,
For they have seen her disgraced;
And she can only sigh and shrink back.

9. Her uncleanness clings to her skirts.
She gave no thought to her future;
She has sunk appallingly,
With none to comfort her.

See, O LORD my misery;
How the enemy jeers!

10. The foe has laid hands
On everything dear to her.
She has seen her Sanctuary
Invaded by nations
Which You have denied admission
Into Your community.
Discussion questions for Eikhah 1: 1- 10
In this first chapter of Eikhah describing the destruction of Jerusalem, the author provides a collection of searing images. This introductory chapter creates a mood that prevails throughout the entire book.

1. How would you describe that mood?
2. How does Jeremiah describe Jerusalem physically?
3. How does Jeremiah describe Jerusalem metaphorically?
4. Why employ two types of descriptors?
5. Which presentation do you think is more unsettling, the physical or the metaphorical? Or do you see them as equivalent?
6. How does Jeremiah understand God’s role in Jerusalem’s destruction?