

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jerusalem's Coming Ruin (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 9:7–26

God's Justification for the Coming Punishment

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts,

“Behold, I will refine them and assay them;
For what *e/se* can I do, because of the daughter of My people?”

8 “Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
It speaks deceit;

With his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor,
But inwardly he sets an ambush for him.

9 “Shall I not punish them for these things?” declares the LORD.

“On a nation such as this
Shall I not avenge Myself?”

10 “For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing,
And for the pastures of the wilderness a dirge,
Because they are laid waste so that no one passes through,
And the lowing of the cattle is not heard;
Both the birds of the sky and the beasts have fled; they are gone.

11 “I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
A haunt of jackals;
And I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.”

12 Who is the wise man that may understand this? And *who is* he to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined, laid waste like a desert, so that no one passes through?

13 The LORD said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it,

14 but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baals, as their fathers taught them,”

15 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink.

16 I will scatter them among the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send the sword after them until I have annihilated them.”

A Lament over Jerusalem's Destruction

17 Thus says the LORD of hosts,

“Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come;
And send for the wailing women, that they may come!

18 “Let them make haste and take up a wailing for us,
That our eyes may shed tears
And our eyelids flow with water.

19 “For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion,
‘How are we ruined!

We are put to great shame,
For we have left the land,
Because they have cast down our dwellings.’”

20 Now hear the word of the LORD, O you women,

And let your ear receive the word of His mouth;
Teach your daughters wailing,
And everyone her neighbor a dirge.

- 21 For death has come up through our windows;
It has entered our palaces
To cut off the children from the streets,
The young men from the town squares.
- 22 Speak, “Thus says the LORD,
‘The corpses of men will fall like dung on the open field,
And like the sheaf after the reaper,
But no one will gather *them*.’”

The Only Basis for Boasting

23 Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;
24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, [[1 Cor 1:31](#); [2 Cor 10:17](#)] that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

Circumcision Will Not Save You—Circumcise Your Hearts!

25 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised—
26 Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.”

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Idolatry and the Coming Exile (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 10

The Foolishness of Idolatry

- 1 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.
2 Thus says the LORD,
- “Do not learn the way of the nations,
And do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens
Although the nations are terrified by them;
- 3 For the customs of the peoples are delusion;
Because it is wood cut from the forest,
The work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool.
- 4 “They decorate *it* with silver and with gold;
They fasten it with nails and with hammers
So that it will not totter.
- 5 “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they,
And they cannot speak;
They must be carried,
Because they cannot walk!
Do not fear them,
For they can do no harm,
Nor can they do any good.”

- 6 There is none like You, O LORD;
You are great, and great is Your name in might.
- 7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?
Indeed it is Your due!
For among all the wise men of the nations
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like You.
- 8 But they are altogether stupid and foolish
In their discipline of delusion—their idol is wood!
- 9 Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
And gold from Uphaz,
The work of a craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith;
Violet and purple are their clothing;
They are all the work of skilled men.
- 10 But the LORD is the true God;
He is the living God and the everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth quakes,
And the nations cannot endure His indignation.
- 11 Thus you shall say to them, “The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”
- 12 *It is* He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom;
And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.
- 13 When He utters His voice, *there is* a tumult of waters in the heavens,
And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain,
And brings out the wind from His storehouses.
- 14 Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge;
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;
For his molten images are deceitful,
And there is no breath in them.
- 15 They are worthless, a work of mockery;
In the time of their punishment they will perish.
- 16 The portion of Jacob is not like these;
For the Maker of all is He,
And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts is His name.

Announcement of Exile

- 17 Pick up your bundle from the ground,
You who dwell under siege!
- 18 For thus says the LORD,

“Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land
At this time,
And will cause them distress,

That they may be found.”

- 19 Woe is me, because of my injury!
My wound is incurable.
But I said, “Truly this is a sickness,
And I must bear it.”
- 20 My tent is destroyed,
And all my ropes are broken;
My sons have gone from me and are no more.
There is no one to stretch out my tent again
Or to set up my curtains.
- 21 For the shepherds have become stupid
And have not sought the LORD;
Therefore they have not prospered,
And all their flock is scattered.
- 22 The sound of a report! Behold, it comes—
A great commotion out of the land of the north—
To make the cities of Judah
A desolation, a haunt of jackals.

Jeremiah’s Prayer

- 23 I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself,
Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.
- 24 Correct me, O LORD, but with justice;
Not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing.
- 25 Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You
And on the families that do not call Your name;
For they have devoured Jacob;
They have devoured him and consumed him
And have laid waste his habitation.

Josiah’s National Religious Reform (629t BC)

2 Kings 23:4–20

2 Chronicles 34:3b–7

4 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven;

and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

5 He did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the

3b and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.

4 They

tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down;

surrounding area of Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven.

6 He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people.

7 He also broke down the houses of the *male* cult prostitutes which *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah.

8 Then he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates which *were* at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on one's left at the city gate.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.

10 He also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech.

11 He did away with the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the official, which *was* in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 The altars which *were* on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down; and he smashed them there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron.

13 The high places which *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled.

14 He broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones.

15 Furthermore, the altar that *was* at Bethel *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who

also the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah.

16 Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that *were* there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned *them* on the altar and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. [[1 Kgs 13:1–3](#)]

17 Then he said, “What is this monument that I see?” And the men of the city told him, “It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.”

18 He said, “Let him alone; let no one disturb his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

19 Josiah also removed all the houses of the high places which *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made provoking the LORD; and he did to them just as he had done in Bethel.

20 All the priests of the high places who *were* there he slaughtered on the altars and burned human bones on them; then he returned to Jerusalem.

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins, 7a he also tore down the altars and beat the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.

5 Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.

7b Then he returned to Jerusalem.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The account of Josiah’s religious reforms in Chronicles differs from that found in Kings. According to 2 Kings 22:3ff., the reform is a one-time, all-embracing event, which took place at Josiah’s eighteenth year as a result of the discovery of the Book of the Law. In Chronicles, the reform is seen as a prolonged process, beginning in the eighth year of Josiah’s reign, with the main phase of the purge of the land belonging to the twelfth year of his reign. These stages of the reform predated the finding of the Law and may be seen, along with Jeremiah’s preaching, as its cause. The reform is concluded by the events of the eighteenth year: the renewing of the covenant and the celebration of the Passover.¹ My opinion at this time is that Kings contains a compressed account of Josiah’s reforms and that Chronicles expands that

¹ Sara Japhet, “I & II Chronicles,” *The Old Testament Library*, pp. 1017–1018.

account revealing the hidden chronology. Thus I have re-ordered Kings and harmonized it with Chronicles.