

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Invasion from the North (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 4:5–31

The Alarm—Invasion is Threatened

- 5 Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem and say,
 “Blow a horn through the land,
 call with a loud voice and say,
 ‘Be gathered and let us go into the fortified cities.’”
- 6 Lift up a signal toward Zion,
 bring yourselves to safety; you must not remain standing,
 for I *am* bringing evil from *the* north,
 and a great destruction.
- 7 A lion has gone up from his thicket,
 and a destroyer of nations has set out.
 He has gone out from his place to make your land as a horror,
 your cities will go to ruin without inhabitant.
- 8 Because of this gird yourselves *with* sackcloth, lament and wail,
 for the burning anger of Yahweh has not turned back from us.
- 9 And then on that day,” declares Yahweh,
 “the heart of the king and the heart of the officials will be destroyed,
 and the priests will be appalled,
 and the prophets will be astonished.”

10 Then I said, “Ah, Lord Yahweh, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘It will be peace for you,’ while the sword reaches up to the throat.”

The Scorching Hot Wind of Judgment

- 11 At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem,
 “A hot wind from the barren heights in the desert,
 in the direction of the daughter of my people,
 not to winnow and not to cleanse,
 a wind too strong for these will come for me,
 now also I speak judgments against them.”
- 12 Look, he comes up like the clouds,
 and his chariots *are* like the whirlwind,
 his horses are swifter than eagles,
 woe to us, for we are devastated.
- 13 Cleanse your heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem,
 so that you may be saved.
 How long will your thoughts of mischief
 dwell in your inner part?
- 14 For a voice *is* declaring from Dan,
 and *is* proclaiming disaster from the mountain of Ephraim.
- 15 “Report to the nations, ‘Here they are!’
 Proclaim against Jerusalem,
 ‘Besiegers *are* coming from a distant land,
 and they raise their voice against the cities of Judah.’”
- 16 Like watchers of a field they were against her from all around,
 because she has rebelled against me,” declares Yahweh.
- 17 “You obtained this for yourself
because of your way and your deeds.
 This *is* your doom, for *it is* bitter,
 yes, it has reached up to your heart.”

Jeremiah's Anguished Cry

- 19 My bowels, my bowels! I writhe!
 The walls of my heart!
 My heart is restless within me, I cannot keep silent,
 for I hear *in* my inner self the sound of a horn, *the* alarm of war.

- 20 Destruction on destruction is proclaimed,
for all of the land is devastated.
Suddenly my tents are devastated,
my tent curtains in a moment.
- 21 How long must I see *the* banner,
and hear *the* sound of a horn?
- 22 “For my people *are* foolish,
they have not known me.
They *are* foolish children,
and they do not have insight.
They *are* skillful at doing evil,
and they do not know *how* to do good.”

A Vision and an Oracle about the Coming Destruction

- 23 I looked at the earth, and behold, it was wasteland and emptiness,
and to the heavens, and *they were* without their light.
- 24 I looked at the mountains, and behold, they were quaking,
and all of the hills were jolted to and fro.
- 25 I looked and behold, there was no person,
and all of the birds of the sky had fled.
- 26 I looked and behold, the fruitful land *was* a desert,
and all of its cities were ruined before Yahweh,
before the face of his burning anger.
- 27 For thus says Yahweh, “All of the land will be a desolation,
yet I will not make a complete desolation.
- 28 Because of this the earth will mourn,
and the heavens above will become dark.
Because I have spoken, I have planned,
and I have not relented, and I will not turn back from it.”

The Death Agony of Zion

- 29 From the sound of a horseman and an archer every town flees,
they enter in the thickets and among the rocks they climb.
Every town *is* forsaken,
and there is no person *who* lives in them.
- 30 And you, *O* devastated one, what *do* you do,
that you put on crimson,
that you adorn yourself *with* ornaments of gold,
that you make your eyes look bigger with the eye make-up?
In vain you beautify yourself.
Your lovers reject you;
they seek your life.
- 31 For I heard a voice like an ill woman,
anxiety like *a woman who* bears her first child,
the voice of the daughter of Zion.
She is gasping for breath,
she is spreading out her hands:
“Woe is me, for I am becoming tired before killers.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Total Sinfulness of Judah (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 5

Jeremiah's Vain Search for a Righteous Person

- 1 “Roam about through the streets of Jerusalem,
and look please, and take note,
and search at its public squares,
if you can find a person *who* does justice,
who seeks honesty,

so that I may forgive it.

- 2 And though they say, 'As Yahweh lives,'
therefore they swear falsely."
- 3 O Yahweh, do not your eyes *look* for honesty?
You have struck them, but they felt no pain,
you have destroyed them, they refused to take discipline.
They have hardened their faces more than rock,
they have refused to turn back.
- 4 Then I said, "*They are* just simple people,
they are foolish,
for they know not the way of Yahweh,
the law of their God.
- 5 Let me go to the great,
and let me speak with them,
for they know the way of Yahweh,
the law of their God."
However, they together have broken *the* yoke,
they have torn to pieces *the* bonds.
- 6 Therefore a lion from *the* forest will kill them,
A wolf *from the* desert plains will devastate them.
A leopard *is* watching their cities,
everyone *who* goes out from there will be torn,
because their transgressions are many,
their apostasies are numerous.

God's Justification for Judah's Punishment

- 7 "How can I forgive you?
Your children have forsaken me,
and they have sworn by *those who are* not gods.
But I fed them to the full,
and they committed adultery,
and flocked *to* the house of a prostitute.
- 8 They were well-fed lusty horses,
they neighed each to the wife of his neighbor.
- 9 Because of these *things* shall I not punish?" declares Yahweh,
"and on a nation *who is* like this, shall I not take revenge?
- 10 Go up through her vineyards and destroy,
but you must not make complete destruction.
Remove her branches,
for they *are* not to Yahweh.
- 11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah
have dealt utterly treacherously with me," declares Yahweh.
- 12 "They have denied Yahweh, and have said,
'Not he, for evil will not come on us,
we will see neither sword nor famine.
- 13 And the prophets are like wind,
and the word *is* not in them.'
Thus it will be done to them."

The Coming of a Distant Nation against Judah

- 14 Therefore thus says Yahweh, the God of hosts,
"Because you have spoken this word,
look, I *am* making my words in your mouth like a fire,
and this people wood, and it will devour them.
- 15 Look, I *am* about to bring on you a nation from afar,
O house of Israel," declares Yahweh.
"It *is* an enduring nation, it *is* an ancient nation.
A nation whose language you do not know,

and you cannot understand what they speak.

- 16 Their quiver *is* like an open tomb,
all of them *are* warriors.
- 17 And they will eat your harvest and your food,
they will eat your sons and your daughters,
they will eat your flock and your herd,
they will eat your vine and your fig tree,
they will smash with the sword your fortified cities,
in which you trust.

18 “But even in those days,” declares Yahweh, “I will not make you a complete destruction.

19 And then, when you *people* say, ‘Why has Yahweh our God done all of these *things* to us?’ Then you will say to them, ‘As you have forsaken me and have served gods of a foreign land in your land, so will you serve strangers in a land that does not belong to you.’

Warning to a Foolish and Rebellious People

- 20 “Declare this in the house of Jacob,
and proclaim it in Judah, saying,
- 21 ‘Hear this please, *O* foolish and senseless people,
who have eyes but do not see,
who have ears but do not hear.’ [\[Mark 8:18\]](#)
- 22 Do you not revere me?” declares Yahweh,
“Do you not tremble before me?
For I have placed *the* sand *as* a boundary for the sea,
as an everlasting limit, and it cannot pass over it,
and they rise and fall loudly, but they cannot prevail,
and its waves roar, but they cannot pass over it.
- 23 But for this people is a stubborn and rebellious heart,
they have turned aside and have gone *away*.
- 24 And they do not say in their hearts,
‘Let us fear please Yahweh our God,
the *one who* gives *the* autumn rain and *the* spring rain in its season,
the set times of the harvest he keeps for us.’
- 25 Your iniquities have disturbed these,
and your sins have kept away the good from you.
- 26 For wicked people are found among my people,
they lie in wait like the hiding of fowlers,
they set up a trap,
they catch humans.
- 27 Like a cage full of birds,
so their houses *are* full of fraud.
Therefore they have become great,
and they have become rich.
- 28 They have grown fat,
they have grown sleek,
also, their evil deeds have no limit.
They do not judge *with* justice,
the legal cause of *the* orphan,
or allow it to succeed,
and *the* legal case of *the* poor,
they do not defend.
- 29 Because of these *things* shall I not punish?” declares Yahweh,
“and on a nation who *is* like this, shall I not take revenge?
- 30 A horrific event and something horrible has happened in the land.
- 31 The prophets prophesy falsely,
and the priests rule by their own authority,
and my people love *it* so much.
But what will you do when the end comes?

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Coming Siege and Fall of Jerusalem (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 6

An Appeal to Flee the Coming Siege

- 1 Flee for safety, *O* children of Benjamin,
from the midst of Jerusalem.
And in Tekoa blow a horn,
and on Beth-haccherem lift up a signal,
for evil looks down from *the* north,
and a great destruction.
- 2 The lovely and the delicate,
the daughter of Jerusalem, I will destroy.
- 3 Shepherds and their flocks will come against her,
they will pitch *their* tents against her all around,
they will pasture, each his portion.
- 4 Sanctify war against her.
Arise, and let us attack at noon.
Woe to us, for the day turns,
for *the* shadows of evening are lengthened.
- 5 Arise, and let us attack by night,
and let us destroy her citadel fortresses.”
- 6 For thus says Yahweh of hosts,
“Cut down trees and heap up a siege ramp against Jerusalem.
This *is* the city that must be punished,
its oppression *is* in its midst.
- 7 As a water well keeps its water cool,
so she keeps cool her wickedness.
Violence and destruction are heard within her,
sickness and wounds *are* continually before me.
- 8 Be warned, *O* Jerusalem,
lest I turn away from you in disgust,
lest I make you a desolation,
a land that is not inhabited.”

Punishment of a Shameless People

- 9 Thus says Yahweh of hosts:
“They will thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine,
turn back your hand over *the* branches like a grape-gatherer.
- 10 To whom shall I speak and admonish,
that they may hear?
Look, their ears *are* closed,
and they are not able to listen attentively.
Look, the word of Yahweh is to them an object of scorn,
they do not delight in it.
- 11 But I am full with the wrath of Yahweh,
I struggle to hold *it* in.
Pour *it* out on *the* children in the street,
and on the assemblies of young men at the same time.
For even husband with wife will get trapped,
the old with *him who is* full of days.
- 12 And their houses will be turned over to others,
their fields and *their* wives together.
For I will stretch out my hand
against the inhabitants of the land,” declares Yahweh.
- 13 “For from the smallest of them to the greatest of them,
everyone makes profit for unlawful gain.
And from the prophet to the priest,
everyone practices deceit.
- 14 And they have treated the wound of my people lightly,

saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace.

- 15 Have they acted ashamed, for they have committed a detestable thing?
Not at all, nor were they ashamed; they did not know to feel humiliated.
Therefore they will fall among *those who* fall at the time I punish them,
they will stumble," says Yahweh.

Refusal to Heed God's Warnings

- 16 Thus says Yahweh: "Stand at *the* roads and look,
and ask for *the* ancient paths, where the way of the good *is*,
and walk in it, and find rest for your inner selves.
But they said, 'We will not walk *in it*.'
17 And I raised up watchmen over you:
'Listen attentively to *the* sound of a horn.'
But they said, 'We will not listen attentively.'
18 Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O community,
what will happen to them.
19 Hear, O earth,
look, I *am* about to bring disaster to this people,
the fruit of their plans,
because they have not listened attentively to my words,
and my teaching, they have rejected it also.
20 What *is* this to me?
Frankincense comes from Sheba,
and the precious spice reed from a distant land.
Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,
your sacrifices are not pleasing to me."

The Terrors of the Approaching Enemy

- 21 Therefore thus says Yahweh:
"Look, I *am* about to put before this people stumbling blocks,
and they will stumble against them,
fathers and children together,
neighbor and his friend will perish."
22 Thus says Yahweh:
"Look, a people *is* coming from *the* land of *the* north,
a great nation is woken up from *the* farthest part of *the* earth.
23 *The* bow and *the* short sword they grasp *are* cruel,
and they show no mercy.
Their sound roars like the sea, and on horses they ride,
drawn up like a man for battle against you, O daughter of Zion."
24 We have heard news of it,
our hands grow slack,
anxiety has grasped us,
pain as a *woman who* gives birth.
25 You must not go out *into* the field,
and you must not walk on the road,
for the enemy has a sword,
terror *is* all around.
26 O daughter of my people,
gird yourself *with* sackcloth,
and roll about in the ashes in mourning,
a mourning ceremony *as for* an only child.
Make for yourself wailing of bitterness,
for suddenly the destroyer will come upon us.

God Commissions Jeremiah to Test His People

- 27 "I have made you an assayer among my people, a fortification,
so that you may know and put to the test their ways.

- 28 All of them *are* stubborn rebels,
going about *talking* slander.
They are bronze and iron,
they *are* all behaving corruptly.
- 29 *The* bellows are burned up,
lead is consumed by fire.
In vain he keeps on refining,
but *the* wicked are not torn apart.
- 30 They are called rejected silver,
For Yahweh has rejected them.”

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