

## Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Further Warnings and Exhortations (c. 620–609 BC)

### Jeremiah 17

#### Judah's Indelible Sin

- 1 "The sin of Judah *is* written with an iron stylus,  
with a point of diamond *it is* engraved  
on the tablet of their heart,  
and on the horns of their altars.
- 2 As the remembering of their children,  
*so is the remembering of* their altars  
and their poles of Asherah worship  
beside *the* leafy trees on *the* high hills.
- 3 O my mountain in the open country,  
I will give your wealth, all your treasures, for spoil,  
your high places, because of *your* sin,  
throughout all your territories.
- 4 And you will let go your hand from your inheritance  
that I gave to you,  
and I will make you serve your enemies  
in the land that you do not know,  
for you kindled a fire in my anger,  
until eternity it will be kindled."

#### A Choice of Curse or Blessing

5 Thus says Yahweh,

- "Cursed is* the person who trusts in humankind  
and makes flesh his strength,  
and turns aside his heart from Yahweh.
- 6 And he will be like a juniper in the wilderness,  
and he will not see when good comes,  
and he will dwell *in the* parched places in the desert,  
*in* a land of salt flats, where no one lives.
  - 7 Blessed be the person who trusts in Yahweh,  
and Yahweh is his trust.
  - 8 For he will be like a tree planted by water,  
and to *the* stream it sends its roots,  
and it will not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves will be luxuriant,  
and in *the* year of drought it will not be anxious,  
and it will not cease from the bearing of fruit. [cf. [Ps 1:3](#)]

#### The Incurable Condition of the Human Heart

- 9 The heart *is* deceitful more than anything else,  
and it *is* disastrous. Who can understand it?
- 10 I, Yahweh, examine *the* mind,  
*I* test *the* heart,  
and give to each one according to his way,  
according to the fruit of his deeds.
- 11 *Like* a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay  
*is* one who amasses wealth without justice.  
In the middle of his days it will leave him,  
and at his end he will *prove to* be a fool."

#### Jeremiah's Appeal for Vindication

- 12 A lofty throne of glory from the beginning  
*is* the place of our sanctuary.
- 13 O Yahweh, the hope of Israel,  
all *those who* forsake you will be put to shame,

and *those who* turn aside from you in the earth will be recorded,  
for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, Yahweh.

- 14 Heal me, O Yahweh, and I will be healed,  
save me, and I will be saved,  
for you *are* my praise.
- 15 Look, they *are* saying to me,  
“Where *is* the word of Yahweh?  
Please let it come.”
- 16 But I, I have not run away from being a shepherd who follows you,  
and I have not desired the disastrous day.  
You, you know the pronouncement of my lips,  
it was before your face.
- 17 You must not become to me a terror,  
you *are* my refuge in *the* day of disaster.
- 18 Let my persecutors be put to shame,  
but as for me, *do* not let me be put to shame.  
Let them be dismayed,  
but as for me, *do* not let me be dismayed.  
Bring on them the day of disaster,  
and *with* double destruction, destroy them.

#### Warning About Sabbath Observance

- 19 Thus said Yahweh to me, “Go, and you must stand in the People’s Gate through which the kings of Judah enter, and through which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem.
- 20 And you must say to them, ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem who enter through these gates.
- 21 Thus says Yahweh, “Be on your guard for the sake of yourselves, that you must not carry a burden on the day of the Sabbath, and you must *not* bring *it* through the gates of Jerusalem.
- 22 And you must not carry a burden from your houses on the day of the Sabbath, and you must not do any work. But you must declare holy the day of Sabbath, just as I commanded your ancestors.
- 23 Yet they did not listen, and they did not incline their ear, and they hardened their neck *so as* to not hear, nor to receive discipline.
- 24 “And it will happen, if you carefully listen to me,” declares Yahweh, “to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the day of the Sabbath, but to declare holy the day of Sabbath, not to do on it any work,
- 25 then kings and officials who sit on the throne of David will enter through the gates of this city riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their officials, the people of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever.
- 26 And they will come from the towns of Judah, and from all around Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the Shephelah, and from the hill country, and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and grain offerings, and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings *to* the house of Yahweh.
- 27 But if you do not listen to me, to declare holy the day of the Sabbath, and to not carry a burden and enter through the gates of Jerusalem on the day of the Sabbath, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it will not be quenched.” ”

## Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—The Visit to the Potter (c. 620–609 BC)

### Jeremiah 18

#### The Message of the Potter

- 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,
- 2 “Stand up and go down *to* the house of the potter, and there I will let you hear my words.”
- 3 So I went down *to* the house of the potter and look, there he was doing work at the potter’s wheels.
- 4 And the vessel that he *was* making with the clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter, so he made again another vessel, as it was right in the eyes of the potter to make.
- 5 And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,
- 6 “Like this potter, am I not able to do to you, O house of Israel?” declares Yahweh. “Look, like the clay in the hand of the potter, so *are* you in my hand, O house of Israel.
- 7 One moment I speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom, to uproot, and to tear down, and to destroy *it*.
- 8 But *if* that nation turns back from its evil that I have threatened against it, then I will relent concerning the disaster that I planned to do to it.
- 9 And the *next* moment I speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant *it*.

10 But *if* it does evil in my sight, to not listen to my voice, then I will relent concerning the good that I said I would do *to* it.

11 “So now then, say, please, to the people of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says Yahweh, “Look, I *am* preparing evil against you, and I *am* planning a plan against you. Please turn back, each one from his evil way, and walk rightly *in* your ways and your deeds.”’

12 But they will say, ‘*It is* hopeless, for we will go after our *own* plans, and each one of us will act *according to* the stubbornness of his evil heart.’

### **Punishment of a Forgetful People**

13 “Therefore thus says Yahweh,

‘Please ask among the nations, “Who has heard the like of this?”

The virgin of Israel has done something very horrible.

14 Does the snow of Lebanon leave from *the* crags of Sirion?

Or are *the* cold waters flowing from distant mountains dried up?

15 But my people have forgotten me.

They make smoke offerings to the idols,

and they caused them to stumble in their ways, *the* ancient ways,  
to go *into* bypaths, not *one that* is built up.

16 To make their land a horror,

*an object of* whistling for eternity.

All *who* pass by it will be appalled,

and he will shake his head.

17 Like the wind from the east

I will scatter them before *the* enemy.

I will show them *my* back and not *my* face

in the day of their disaster.”

### **A Plot against Jeremiah**

18 Then they said, “Come and let us plan plans against Jeremiah, for instruction will not be lost from *the* priest, nor advice from *the* wise man, nor *the* word from *the* prophet. Come and let us bring charges against him, and let us not listen attentively to any of his words.”

19 Listen attentively to me, O Yahweh,  
and listen to *the* voice of my opponents.

20 Should good be repaid in place of evil?

Yet they have dug a pit for me.

Remember my standing before you to speak good for them,  
to avert your wrath from them.

21 Therefore give their children to the famine,

and hand them over to *the* power of *the* sword,

and let their wives be bereaved and widows,

and let their men be killed by death,

their young men struck dead

*by the* sword in the battle.

22 Let a cry for help be heard from their houses

when you suddenly bring upon them *the* raiding band,

for they have dug a pit to catch me,

and they have fixed secretly a trap for my feet.

23 But you, O Yahweh, you know

all their plans of assassination against me.

You must not make atonement for their iniquity,

and you must not cause their sin to be blotted out from before you.

But let them be overthrown before you.

Deal with them in the time of your anger.

## Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Lessons from a Broken Clay Jar (c. 620–609 BC)

### Jeremiah 19

#### Assembling at the Valley of Ben Hinnom

- 1 Thus said Yahweh, "Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar, and *take* some of the elders of the people, and some of the leaders of the priests,
- 2 and go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, which *is at* the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherd, and proclaim there the words that I speak to you.
- 3 And you shall say, 'Hear the word of Yahweh, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: "Look, I *am* about to bring disaster upon this place so that everyone who hears it, his ears will ring.
- 4 Because they have forsaken me, and they have defaced this place, and they have made smoke offerings in it to other gods whom they have not known, they, nor their ancestors, nor the kings of Judah, and they have filled up this place *with the blood of the* innocent,
- 5 and they have built the high places of Baal, to burn their children in the fire, burnt offerings to Baal, which I commanded not, and I ordered not, and it did not come to my mind.
- 6 "Therefore look, days *are* about to come," declares Yahweh, "when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of the Slaughter.
- 7 And I will lay waste the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will bring them to ruin by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life, and I will give their dead bodies as food to the birds of heaven and to the animals of the earth.
- 8 And I will make this city a horror, and *an object of* hissing, everyone *who* passes by it will be appalled, and will hiss because of all its wounds.
- 9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, and each one will eat the flesh of his neighbor in *the* siege and in *the* distress which their enemies and those who seek their life inflict on them."

#### The Broken Jar and Its Symbolic Meaning

- 10 "Then you shall break the jar before the eyes of the men who go with you.
- 11 And you shall say to them, 'Thus says Yahweh of hosts: "So I will break this people and this city as one breaks the vessel of the potter, so that it is not able to be repaired again. And in Topheth they will bury until there is no room to bury.
- 12 Thus will I do to this place," declares Yahweh, "and to its inhabitants, to make this city like Topheth.
- 13 And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be unclean like the place of Topheth, all the houses where they made smoke offerings upon their roofs to all the host of heaven, and *where* they poured out libations to other gods." "'
- 14 Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where Yahweh had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the courtyard of the house of Yahweh and said to all the people,
- 15 "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Look, I *am* about to bring to this city and upon all its towns all the disaster that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their neck to not hear my words.'"

## Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jeremiah's Humiliation and Despair (c. 620–609 BC)

### Jeremiah 20

#### Pashhur's Punishment of Jeremiah

- 1 Now Pashhur, the son of Immer, the priest *who was* officer in charge in the temple of Yahweh, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things.
- 2 Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks that *were* in the upper Gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the temple of Yahweh.
- 3 And then on the next day, when Pashhur brought Jeremiah out from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "Yahweh will not call your name Pashhur, but Terror From All Around.
- 4 For thus says Yahweh, 'Look, I *am* making you a terror to yourself and to all your friends, and they will fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes *will be* seeing *it*. And all Judah I will give into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will deport them *to* Babylon, and he will strike them with the sword.
- 5 And I will give all the wealth of this city, and all its acquisitions, and all its precious items, and all of the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, and they will plunder them, and they will seize them, and they will bring them *to* Babylon.
- 6 And you, Pashhur, and all *those who* live *in* your house will go into captivity, and you will go *to* Babylon, and there you will die, and there you will be buried, you, and all your friends to whom you have prophesied falsely.'"

#### Jeremiah Bemoans His Lot

- 7 You have persuaded me, O Yahweh, and I was persuaded.  
You have overpowered me, and you have prevailed.

I have become a laughingstock all day *long*.

Everyone *is* mocking me.

- 8 For as often as I speak,  
I must cry out violence and destruction.  
I must shout, for the word of Yahweh has become for me  
a disgrace and derision all day *long*.

- 9 But *if* I say, "I will not mention him  
and I will no longer speak in his name,"  
then it becomes in my heart like a fire burning,  
locked up in my bones,  
and I struggle to contain *it*,  
and I am not able.

- 10 For I hear the rumor of many,  
"Terror *is* from all around, denounce *him*,  
yes, let us denounce him!"  
All my close friends *are* watchers of my stumbling,  
*saying*, "perhaps he can be persuaded,  
and we can prevail over him,  
and we can take our revenge on him."

#### **Jeremiah Prays for Vengeance**

- 11 But Yahweh *is* with me like a powerful warrior.  
Therefore my persecutors will stumble and will not prevail.  
They will be very ashamed, for they will not achieve success.  
*Their* everlasting insult will not be forgotten.
- 12 Yet, *O* Yahweh of hosts, who tests *the* righteous,  
who sees *the* heart and *the* mind,  
let me see your retribution upon them,  
for to you I have revealed my legal case.
- 13 Sing to Yahweh, praise Yahweh,  
for he has delivered *the* life of *the* poor from *the* hand of evildoers.

#### **Jeremiah's Curses the Day of His Birth (Echoes of Job)**

- 14 Cursed be *the* day *on* which I was born,  
let not the day *on* which my mother gave birth to me be blessed.
- 15 Cursed be the man who brought the news *to* my father,  
saying, "A child is born to you, a son!"  
and he made him very glad.
- 16 And let that man be like the cities  
that Yahweh demolished without regret,  
and let him hear a cry for help in the morning,  
and an alarm at the time of noon.
- 17 Because he did not kill me in *the* womb,  
so that my mother would have been for me my grave,  
and *her* womb *would be* pregnant forever.
- 18 Why did I come out from *the* womb,  
to see toil, and sorrow, and *to* end my days in shame?