

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 the trumpet in the land;
 Cry aloud and say,
 ‘Assemble yourselves, and let us go
 Into the fortified cities.’
- 6 “Lift up a standard toward Zion!
 Seek refuge, do not stand *still*,
 For I am bringing evil from the north,
 And 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 a waste.
 Your cities will be ruins
 Without inhabitant.
- 8 “For this, put on sackcloth,
 Lament and wail;
 For the fierce anger of the LORD
 Has not turned back from us.”

9 “It shall come about in that day,” declares the LORD, “that the heart of the king and the heart of the princes will fail; and the priests will be appalled and the prophets will be astounded.”

10 Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Surely You have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘You will have peace’; whereas a sword touches the throat.”

The Scorching Hot Wind of Judgment

- 11 In that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “A scorching wind from the bare heights in the wilderness in the direction of the daughter of My people—not to winnow and not to cleanse,
 12 a wind too strong for this—will come at My command; now I will also pronounce judgments against them.
- 13 “Behold, he goes up like clouds,
 And his chariots like the whirlwind;
 His horses are swifter than eagles.
 Woe to us, for we are ruined!”
- 14 Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem,
 That you may be saved.
 How long will your wicked thoughts
 Lodge within you?
- 15 For a voice declares from Dan,
 And proclaims wickedness from Mount Ephraim.
- 16 “Report *it* to the nations, now!
 Proclaim over Jerusalem,
 ‘Besiegers come from a far country,
 And lift their voices against the cities of Judah.
- 17 ‘Like watchmen of a field they are against her round about,
 Because she has rebelled against Me,’ declares the LORD.
- 18 “Your ways and your deeds
 Have brought these things to you.
 This is your evil. How bitter!
 How it has touched your heart!”

Jeremiah's Anguished Cry

- 19 My soul, my soul! I am in anguish! Oh, my heart!
 My heart is pounding in me;
 I cannot be silent,

Because you have heard, O my soul,
The sound of the trumpet,
The alarm of war.

20 Disaster on disaster is proclaimed,
For the whole land is devastated;
Suddenly my tents are devastated,
My curtains in an instant.

21 How long must I see the standard
And hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 “For My people are foolish,
They know Me not;
They are stupid children
And have no understanding.
They are shrewd to do evil,
But to do good they do not know.”

A Vision and an Oracle about the Coming Destruction

23 I looked on the earth, and behold, *it was* formless and void;
And to the heavens, and they had no light.

24 I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking,
And all the hills moved to and fro.

25 I looked, and behold, there was no man,
And all the birds of the heavens had fled.

26 I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a wilderness,
And all its cities were pulled down
Before the LORD, before His fierce anger.

27 For thus says the LORD,
“The whole land shall be a desolation,
Yet I will not execute a complete destruction.

28 “For this the earth shall mourn
And the heavens above be dark,
Because I have spoken, I have purposed,
And I will not change My mind, nor will I turn from it.”

The Death Agony of Zion

29 At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees;
They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks;
Every city is forsaken,
And no man dwells in them.

30 And you, O desolate one, what will you do?
Although you dress in scarlet,
Although you decorate *yourself with* ornaments of gold,
Although you enlarge your eyes with paint,
In vain you make yourself beautiful.
Your lovers despise you;
They seek your life.

31 For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor,
The anguish as of one giving birth to her first child,
The cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath,
Stretching out her hands, *saying*,
“Ah, woe is me, for I faint before murderers.”

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

Jeremiah 5

Jeremiah's Vain Search for a Righteous Person

1 “Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,
And look now and take note.

- And seek in her open squares,
 If you can find a man,
 If there is one who does justice, who seeks truth,
 Then I will pardon her.
- 2 “And although they say, ‘As the LORD lives,’
 Surely they swear falsely.”
- 3 O LORD, do not Your eyes *look* for truth?
 You have smitten them,
But they did not weaken;
 You have consumed them,
 But they refused to take correction.
 They have made their faces harder than rock;
 They have refused to repent.
- 4 Then I said, “They are only the poor,
 They are foolish;
 For they do not know the way of the LORD
Or the ordinance of their God.
- 5 “I will go to the great
 And will speak to them,
 For they know the way of the LORD
And the ordinance of their God.”
 But they too, with one accord, have broken the yoke
And burst the bonds.
- 6 Therefore a lion from the forest will slay them,
 A wolf of the deserts will destroy them,
 A leopard is watching their cities.
 Everyone who goes out of them will be torn in pieces,
 Because their transgressions are many,
 Their apostasies are numerous.

God’s Justification for Judah’s Punishment

- 7 “Why should I pardon you?
 Your sons have forsaken Me
 And sworn by those who are not gods.
 When I had fed them to the full,
 They committed adultery
 And trooped to the harlot’s house.
- 8 “They were well-fed lusty horses,
 Each one neighing after his neighbor’s wife.
- 9 “Shall I not punish these *people*,” declares the LORD,
 “And on a nation such as this
 Shall I not avenge Myself?”
- 10 “Go up through her vine rows and destroy,
 But do not execute a complete destruction;
 Strip away her branches,
 For they are not the LORD’s.
- 11 “For the house of Israel and the house of Judah
 Have dealt very treacherously with Me,” declares the LORD.
- 12 They have lied about the LORD
 And said, “Not He;
 Misfortune will not come on us,
 And we will not see sword or famine.
- 13 “The prophets are *as* 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 the LORD, the God of hosts,

“Because you have spoken this word,
Behold, I am making My words in your mouth fire
And this people wood, and it will consume them.

15 “Behold, I am bringing a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel,” declares the LORD.

“It is an enduring nation,
It is an ancient nation,
A nation whose language you do not know,
Nor can you understand what they say.

16 “Their quiver is like an open grave,
All of them are mighty men.

17 “They will devour your harvest and your food;
They will devour your sons and your daughters;
They will devour your flocks and your herds;
They will devour your vines and your fig trees;
They will demolish with the sword your fortified cities in which you trust.

18 “Yet even in those days,” declares the LORD, “I will not make you a complete destruction.

19 “It shall come about when they say, ‘Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?’ then you shall say to them, ‘As you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve strangers in a land that is not yours.’”

Warning to a Foolish and Rebellious People

20 “Declare this in the house of Jacob
And proclaim it in Judah, saying,

21 ‘Now hear this, 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 fear Me?’ declares the LORD.
‘Do you not tremble in My presence?
For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea,
An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it.
Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.

23 ‘But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;
They have turned aside and departed.

24 ‘They do not say in their heart,
“Let us now fear the LORD our God,
Who gives rain in its season,
Both the autumn rain and the spring rain,
Who keeps for us
The appointed weeks of the harvest.”

25 ‘Your iniquities have turned these away,
And your sins have withheld good from you.

26 ‘For wicked men are found among My people,
They watch like fowlers lying in wait;
They set a trap,
They catch men.

27 ‘Like a cage full of birds,
So their houses are full of deceit;
Therefore they have become great and rich.

28 ‘They are fat, they are sleek,
They also excel in deeds of wickedness;
They do not plead the cause,
The cause of the orphan, that they may prosper;
And they do not defend the rights of the poor.

29 ‘Shall I not punish these *people*?’ declares the LORD,
‘On a nation such as this
Shall I not avenge Myself?’

30 “An appalling and horrible thing

- Has happened in the land:
 31 The prophets prophesy falsely,
 And the priests rule on their *own* authority;
 And My people love it so!
 But what will you do at the end of it?

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 sons of Benjamin,
 From the midst of Jerusalem!
 Now blow a trumpet in Tekoa
 And raise a signal over Beth-haccerem;
 For evil looks down from the north,
 And a great destruction.
- 2 "The comely and dainty one, the daughter of Zion, I will cut off.
- 3 "Shepherds and their flocks will come to her,
 They will pitch *their* tents around her,
 They will pasture each in his place.
- 4 "Prepare war against her;
 Arise, and let us attack at noon.
 Woe to us, for the day declines,
 For the shadows of the evening lengthen!
- 5 "Arise, and let us attack by night
 And destroy her palaces!"

6 For thus says the LORD of hosts,

"Cut down her trees
 And cast up a siege against Jerusalem.
 This is the city to be punished,
 In whose midst there is only oppression.

- 7 "As a well keeps its waters fresh,
 So she keeps fresh her wickedness.
 Violence and destruction are heard in her;
 Sickness and wounds are ever before Me.
- 8 "Be warned, O Jerusalem,
 Or I shall be alienated from you,
 And make you a desolation,
 A land not inhabited."

Punishment of a Shameless People

- 9 Thus says the LORD of hosts,
 "They will thoroughly glean as the vine the remnant of Israel;
 Pass your hand again like a grape gatherer
 Over the branches."
- 10 To whom shall I speak and give warning
 That they may hear?
 Behold, their ears are closed
 And they cannot listen.
 Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them;
 They have no delight in it.
- 11 But I am full of the wrath of the LORD;
 I am weary with holding *it* in.
 "Pour *it* out on the children in the street
 And on the gathering of young men together;
 For both husband and wife shall be taken,

- The aged and the very old.
- 12 “Their houses shall 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 the LORD.
- 13 “For from the least of them even to the greatest of them,
Everyone is greedy for gain,
And from the prophet even to the priest
Everyone deals falsely.
- 14 “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially,
Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
But there is no peace.
- 15 “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done?
They were not even ashamed at all;
They did not even know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
At the time that I punish them,
They shall be cast down,” says the LORD.

Refusal to Heed God’s Warnings

- 16 Thus says the LORD,
“Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths,
Where the good way is, and walk in it;
And you will find rest for your souls.
But they said, ‘We will not walk *in it*.’
- 17 “And I set watchmen over you, *saying*,
‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’
But they said, ‘We will not listen.’
- 18 “Therefore hear, O nations,
And know, O congregation, what is among them.
- 19 “Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people,
The fruit of their plans,
Because they have not listened to My words,
And as for My law, they have rejected it also.
- 20 “For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba
And the sweet cane from a distant land?
Your burnt offerings are not acceptable
And your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me.”

The Terrors of the Approaching Enemy

- 21 Therefore, thus says the LORD,

“Behold, I am laying stumbling blocks before this people.
And they will stumble against them,
Fathers and sons together;
Neighbor and friend will perish.”
- 22 Thus says the LORD,
“Behold, a people is coming from the north land,
And a great nation will be aroused from the remote parts of the earth.
- 23 “They seize bow and spear;
They are cruel and have no mercy;
Their voice roars like the sea,
And they ride on horses,
Arrayed as a man for the battle
Against you, O daughter of Zion!”
- 24 We have heard the report of it;
Our hands are limp.
Anguish has seized us,

- Pain as of a woman in childbirth.
- 25 Do not go out into the field
And do not walk on the road,
For the enemy has a sword,
Terror is on every side.
- 26 O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth
And roll in ashes;
Mourn as for an only son,
A lamentation most bitter.
For suddenly the destroyer
Will come upon us.

God Commissions Jeremiah to Test His People

- 27 “I have made you an assayer *and* a tester among My people,
That you may know and assay their way.”
- 28 All of them are stubbornly rebellious,
Going about as a talebearer.
They are bronze and iron;
They, all of them, are corrupt.
- 29 The bellows blow fiercely,
The lead is consumed by the fire;
In vain the refining goes on,
But the wicked are not separated.
- 30 They call them rejected silver,
Because the LORD has rejected them.

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