

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—A Corrupt People and Their Punishment (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 13:1–14

The Ruined Linen Garment

- 1 The LORD said to me, "Go and buy some linen shorts [loincloth] and put them on. Do not put them in water."
- 2 So I bought the shorts as the LORD had told me to do and put them on.
- 3 Then the LORD spoke to me again and said,
- 4 "Take the shorts that you bought and are wearing and go at once to Perath. Bury the shorts there in a crack in the rocks."
- 5 So I went and buried them at Perath as the LORD had ordered me to do.
- 6 Many days later the LORD said to me, "Go at once to Perath and get the shorts I ordered you to bury there."
- 7 So I went to Perath and dug up the shorts from the place where I had buried them. I found that they were ruined; they were good for nothing.
- 8 Then the LORD said to me,
- 9 "I, the LORD, say: 'This shows how I will ruin the highly exalted position in which Judah and Jerusalem take pride.
- 10 These wicked people refuse to obey what I have said. They follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts and pay allegiance to other gods by worshiping and serving them. So they will become just like these linen shorts which are good for nothing.
- 11 For,' I say, 'just as shorts cling tightly to a person's body, so I bound the whole nation of Israel and the whole nation of Judah tightly to me.' I intended for them to be my special people and to bring me fame, honor, and praise. But they would not obey me.

The Smashed Wineskins

- 12 "So tell them, 'The LORD, the God of Israel, says, "Every wine jar is made to be filled with wine.'" And they will probably say to you, 'Do you not think we know that every wine jar is supposed to be filled with wine?'
- 13 Then tell them, 'The LORD says, "I will soon fill all the people who live in this land with stupor. I will also fill the kings from David's dynasty, the priests, the prophets, and the citizens of Jerusalem with stupor.
- 14 And I will smash them like wine bottles against one another, children and parents alike. I will not show any pity, mercy, or compassion. Nothing will keep me from destroying them,' says the LORD."

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Catastrophes That Cannot Be Averted (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 14:1–15:9

A Severe Drought

- 14:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah about the drought.
- 2 "The people of Judah are in mourning.
The people in her cities are pining away.
They lie on the ground expressing their sorrow.
Cries of distress come up to me from Jerusalem.
 - 3 The leading men of the cities send their servants for water.
They go to the cisterns, but they do not find any water there.
They return with their containers empty.
Disappointed and dismayed, they bury their faces in their hands.
 - 4 They are dismayed because the ground is cracked
because there has been no rain in the land.
The farmers, too, are dismayed
and bury their faces in their hands.
 - 5 Even the doe abandons her newborn fawn in the field
because there is no grass.
 - 6 Wild donkeys stand on the hilltops
and pant for breath like jackals.
Their eyes are strained looking for food,
because there is none to be found."

Jeremiah Intercedes for the People

- 7 Then I said,
- "O LORD, intervene for the honor of your name
even though our sins speak out against us.
Indeed, we have turned away from you many times.
We have sinned against you.

- 8 You have been the object of Israel's hopes.
You have saved them when they were in trouble.
Why have you become like a resident foreigner in the land?
Why have you become like a traveler who only stops in to spend the night?
- 9 Why should you be like someone who is helpless,
like a champion who cannot save anyone?
You are indeed with us,
and we belong to you.
Do not abandon us!"

God Commands Jeremiah to Stop Praying

10 Then the LORD spoke about these people.

"They truly love to go astray.
They cannot keep from running away from me.
So I am not pleased with them.
I will now call to mind the wrongs they have done
and punish them for their sins."

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for good to come to these people!

12 Even if they fast, I will not hear their cries for help. Even if they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will kill them through wars, famines, and plagues."

Jeremiah Blames False Prophets

13 Then I said, "Oh, Lord GOD, look! The prophets are telling them that you said, 'You will not experience war or suffer famine. I will give you lasting peace and prosperity in this land.'"

God's Judgment on the False Prophets

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Those prophets are prophesying lies while claiming my authority! I did not send them. I did not commission them. I did not speak to them. They are prophesying to these people false visions, worthless predictions, and the delusions of their own mind.

15 I did not send those prophets, though they claim to be prophesying in my name. They may be saying, 'No war or famine will happen in this land.' But I, the LORD, say this about them: 'War and starvation will kill those prophets.'

16 The people to whom they are prophesying will die through war and famine. Their bodies will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem and there will be no one to bury them. This will happen to the men and their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out on them the destruction they deserve."

Jeremiah's Lament and Supplication

17 "Tell these people this, Jeremiah:
'My eyes overflow with tears
day and night without ceasing.
For my people, my dear children, have suffered a crushing blow.
They have suffered a serious wound.

18 If I go out into the countryside,
I see those who have been killed in battle.
If I go into the city,
I see those who are sick because of starvation.
For both prophet and priest go about their own business
in the land without having any real understanding.'"

19 Then I said,

"LORD, have you completely rejected the nation of Judah?
Do you despise the city of Zion?
Why have you struck us with such force
that we are beyond recovery?
We hope for peace, but nothing good has come of it.
We hope for a time of relief from our troubles, but experience terror.

- 20 LORD, we confess that we have been wicked.
We confess that our ancestors have done wrong.
We have indeed sinned against you.
- 21 For the honor of your name, do not treat Jerusalem with contempt.
Do not treat with disdain the place where your glorious throne sits.
Be mindful of your covenant with us. Do not break it!
- 22 Do any of the worthless idols of the nations cause rain to fall?
Do the skies themselves send showers?
Is it not you, O Lord our God, who does this?
So we put our hopes in you
because you alone do all this.”

The Futility of Intercession

15:1 Then the LORD said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me pleading for these people, I would not feel pity for them! Get them away from me! Tell them to go away!

2 If they ask you, ‘Where should we go?’ tell them the LORD says this:

“Those who are destined to die of disease will go to death by disease.
Those who are destined to die in war will go to death in war.
Those who are destined to die of starvation will go to death by starvation.
Those who are destined to go into exile will go into exile.”

3 “I will punish them in four different ways: I will have war kill them. I will have dogs drag off their dead bodies. I will have birds and wild beasts devour and destroy their corpses.

4 I will make all the people in all the kingdoms of the world horrified at what has happened to them because of what Hezekiah’s son Manasseh, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.”

The End of God’s Pity

5 The LORD cried out,

“Who in the world will have pity on you, Jerusalem?
Who will grieve over you?
Who will stop long enough
to inquire about how you are doing?

- 6 I, the LORD, say: ‘You people have deserted me!
You keep turning your back on me.’
So I have unleashed my power against you and have begun to destroy you.
I have grown tired of feeling sorry for you!”

7 The LORD continued,

“In every town in the land I will purge them
like straw blown away by the wind.
I will destroy my people.
I will kill off their children.
I will do so because they did not change their behavior.

- 8 Their widows will become in my sight more numerous
than the grains of sand on the seashores.
At noontime I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of their young men.
I will cause anguish and terror
to fall suddenly upon them.

- 9 The mother who had seven children will grow faint.
All the breath will go out of her.
Her pride and joy will be taken from her in the prime of their life.
It will seem as if the sun had set while it was still day.
She will suffer shame and humiliation.
I will cause any of them who are still left alive

to be killed in war by the onslaughts of their enemies,”

says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jeremiah's Complaint and God's Rebuke (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 15:10–21

Jeremiah Feels Sorry for Himself

10 I said,

“Oh, mother, how I regret that you ever gave birth to me!
I am always starting arguments and quarrels with the people of this land.
I have not lent money to anyone and I have not borrowed from anyone.
Yet all of these people are treating me with contempt.”

11 The LORD said,

“Jerusalem, I will surely send you away for your own good.
I will surely bring the enemy upon you in a time of trouble and distress.

12 Can you people who are like iron and bronze
break that iron fist from the north?

13 I will give away your wealth and your treasures as plunder.
I will give it away free of charge for the sins you have committed throughout your land.

14 I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you know nothing about.
For my anger is like a fire that will burn against you.”

15 I said,

“LORD, you know how I suffer.
Take thought of me and care for me.
Pay back for me those who have been persecuting me.
Do not be so patient with them that you allow them to kill me.
Be mindful of how I have put up with their insults for your sake.

16 As your words came to me I drank them in,
and they filled my heart with joy and happiness
because I belong to you.

17 I did not spend my time in the company of other people,
laughing and having a good time.
I stayed to myself because I felt obligated to you
and because I was filled with anger at what they had done.

18 Why must I continually suffer such painful anguish?
Why must I endure the sting of their insults like an incurable wound?
Will you let me down when I need you
like a brook one goes to for water, but that cannot be relied on?”

God Rebukes Jeremiah

19 Because of this, the LORD said,

“You must repent of such words and thoughts!
If you do, I will restore you to the privilege of serving me.
If you say what is worthwhile instead of what is worthless,
I will again allow you to be my spokesman.
They must become as you have been.
You must not become like them.

20 I will make you as strong as a wall to these people,
a fortified wall of bronze.
They will attack you,
but they will not be able to overcome you.

For I will be with you to rescue you and deliver you,”
says the LORD.

- 21 “I will deliver you from the power of the wicked.
I will free you from the clutches of violent people.”

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Threats and Promises (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 16

Jeremiah Forbidden to Marry

- 1 The LORD said to me,
2 “Do not get married and do not have children here in this land.
3 For I, the LORD, tell you what will happen to the children who are born here in this land and to the men and women who are their mothers and fathers.
4 They will die of deadly diseases. No one will mourn for them. They will not be buried. Their dead bodies will lie like manure spread on the ground. They will be killed in war or die of starvation. Their corpses will be food for the birds and wild animals.

Jeremiah Forbidden to Mourn or Feast

- 5 “Moreover I, the LORD, tell you: ‘Do not go into a house where they are having a funeral meal. Do not go there to mourn and express your sorrow for them. For I have stopped showing them my good favor, my love, and my compassion. I, the LORD, so affirm it!
6 Rich and poor alike will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned. People will not cut their bodies or shave off their hair to show their grief for them.
7 No one will take any food to those who mourn for the dead to comfort them. No one will give them any wine to drink to console them for the loss of their father or mother.
8 “Do not go to a house where people are feasting and sit down to eat and drink with them either.

Judah’s Coming Punishment

- 9 For I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, tell you what will happen. I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in this land. You and the rest of the people will live to see this happen.”
10 “When you tell these people about all this, they will undoubtedly ask you, ‘Why has the LORD threatened us with such great disaster? What wrong have we done? What sin have we done to offend the LORD our God?’
11 Then tell them that the LORD says, ‘It is because your ancestors rejected me and paid allegiance to other gods. They have served them and worshiped them. But they have rejected me and not obeyed my law.
12 And you have acted even more wickedly than your ancestors! Each one of you has followed the stubborn inclinations of your own wicked heart and not obeyed me.
13 So I will throw you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have ever known. There you must worship other gods day and night, for I will show you no mercy.’”

God Foresees a Future Restoration

- 14 Yet I, the LORD, say: “A new time will certainly come. People now affirm their oaths with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt.’
15 But in that time they will affirm them with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other lands where he had banished them.’ At that time I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors.”

Futility of Hiding from God

- 16 But for now I, the LORD, say: “I will send many enemies who will catch these people like fishermen. After that I will send others who will hunt them out like hunters from all the mountains, all the hills, and the crevices in the rocks.
17 For I see everything they do. Their wicked ways are not hidden from me. Their sin is not hidden away where I cannot see it.
18 Before I restore them I will punish them in full for their sins and the wrongs they have done. For they have polluted my land with the lifeless statues of their disgusting idols. They have filled the land I have claimed as my own with their detestable idols.”

All Nations Will One Day Acknowledge the Lord

- 19 Then I said,
“LORD, you give me strength and protect me.
You are the one I can run to for safety when I am in trouble.
Nations from all over the earth

will come to you and say,
'Our ancestors had nothing but false gods—
worthless idols that could not help them at all.

20 Can people make their own gods?
No, what they make are not gods at all."

21 The LORD said,

"So I will now let this wicked people know—
I will let them know my mighty power in judgment.
Then they will know that my name is the LORD."

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