

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Condemnation of False Prophets (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 23:9–40

Condemnation of Godless Prophets and Priests

9 Here is what the LORD says concerning the false prophets:

My heart and my mind are deeply disturbed.

I tremble all over.

I am like a drunk person,

like a person who has had too much wine,

because of the way the LORD

and his holy word are being mistreated.

10 For the land is full of people unfaithful to him.

They live wicked lives and they misuse their power.

So the land is dried up because it is under his curse.

The pastures in the wilderness are withered.

11 Moreover, the LORD says, "Both the prophets and priests are godless.

I have even found them doing evil in my temple!

12 So the paths they follow will be dark and slippery.

They will stumble and fall headlong.

For I will bring disaster on them.

A day of reckoning is coming for them."

The LORD affirms it!

Evil Prophets of Samaria Compared to Prophets of Jerusalem

13 The LORD says, "I saw the prophets of Samaria

doing something that was disgusting.

They prophesied in the name of the god Baal

and led my people Israel astray.

14 But I see the prophets of Jerusalem

doing something just as shocking.

They are unfaithful to me

and continually prophesy lies.

So they give encouragement to people who are doing evil,

with the result that they do not stop their evildoing.

I consider all of them as bad as the people of Sodom,

and the citizens of Jerusalem as bad as the people of Gomorrah.

15 So then I, the LORD who rules over all,

have something to say concerning the prophets of Jerusalem:

'I will make these prophets eat the bitter food of suffering

and drink the poison water of judgment.

For the prophets of Jerusalem are the reason

that ungodliness has spread throughout the land.'"

God Warns Judah to Reject the Message of the False Prophets

16 The LORD who rules over all says to the people of Jerusalem:

"Do not listen to what those prophets are saying to you.

They are filling you with false hopes.

They are reporting visions of their own imaginations,

not something the LORD has given them to say.

17 They continually say to those who reject what the LORD has said,

'Things will go well for you!'

They say to all those who follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts,

'Nothing bad will happen to you!'

18 Yet which of them has ever stood in the LORD's inner circle

so they could see and hear what he has to say?

Which of them have ever paid attention or listened to what he has said?

19 But just watch! The wrath of the LORD

will come like a storm!

- Like a raging storm it will rage down
on the heads of those who are wicked.
- 20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he has fully carried out his intended purposes.
In days to come
you people will come to understand this clearly.
- 21 I did not send those prophets.
Yet they were in a hurry to give their message.
I did not tell them anything.
Yet they prophesied anyway.
- 22 But if they had stood in my inner circle,
they would have proclaimed my message to my people.
They would have caused my people to turn from their wicked ways
and stop doing the evil things they are doing.
- 23 Do you people think that I am some local deity
and not the transcendent God?" the LORD asks.
- 24 "Do you really think anyone can hide himself
where I cannot see him?" the LORD asks.
"Do you not know that I am everywhere?"
the LORD asks.

God's Rejection of the Lying Prophets

- 25 The LORD says, "I have heard what those prophets who are prophesying lies in my name are saying. They are saying, 'I have had a dream! I have had a dream!'
- 26 Those prophets are just prophesying lies. They are prophesying the delusions of their own minds.
- 27 How long will they go on plotting to make my people forget who I am through the dreams they tell one another? That is just as bad as what their ancestors did when they forgot who I am by worshiping the god Baal.
- 28 Let the prophet who has had a dream go ahead and tell his dream. Let the person who has received my message report that message faithfully. What is like straw cannot compare to what is like grain! I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 29 My message is like a fire that purges dross! It is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces! I, the LORD, so affirm it!
- 30 So I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who steal messages from one another that they claim are from me.
- 31 I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who are using their own tongues to declare, 'The LORD declares...'
- 32 I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who dream up lies and report them. They are misleading my people with their reckless lies. I did not send them. I did not commission them. They are not helping these people at all. I, the LORD, affirm it!"

The Burden of the Lord

- 33 The LORD said to me, "Jeremiah, when one of these people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, 'What burdensome message do you have from the LORD?' Tell them, 'You are the burden, and I will cast you away. I, the LORD, affirm it!'
- 34 I will punish any prophet, priest, or other person who says "The LORD's message is burdensome." I will punish both that person and his whole family."
- 35 So I, Jeremiah, tell you, "Each of you people should say to his friend or his relative, 'How did the LORD answer? Or what did the LORD say?'
- 36 You must no longer say that the LORD's message is burdensome. For what is 'burdensome' really pertains to what a person himself says. You are misrepresenting the words of our God, the living God, the LORD who rules over all.
- 37 Each of you should merely ask the prophet, 'What answer did the LORD give you? Or what did the LORD say?'
- 38 But just suppose you continue to say, 'The message of the LORD is burdensome.' Here is what the LORD says will happen: 'I sent word to you that you must not say, "The LORD's message is burdensome." But you used the words "The LORD's message is burdensome" anyway.
- 39 So I will carry you far off and throw you away. I will send both you and the city I gave to you and to your ancestors out of my sight.
- 40 I will bring on you lasting shame and lasting disgrace which will never be forgotten!"

Jeremiah Calls on Jehoiakim and Judah to Repent (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 26

Another Temple Sermon (see Jeremiah 7–10)

- 1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah at the beginning of the reign of Josiah's son, King Jehoiakim of Judah.
- 2 The LORD said, "Go stand in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. Speak out to all the people who are coming from the towns of

Judah to worship in the LORD's temple. Tell them everything I command you to tell them. Do not leave out a single word!
 3 Maybe they will pay attention and each of them will stop living the evil way they do. If they do that, then I will forgo destroying them as I had intended to do because of the wicked things they have been doing.
 4 Tell them that the LORD says, 'You must obey me! You must live according to the way I have instructed you in my laws.
 5 You must pay attention to the exhortations of my servants the prophets. I have sent them to you over and over again. But you have not paid any attention to them.
 6 If you do not obey me, then I will do to this temple what I did to Shiloh. And I will make this city an example to be used in curses by people from all the nations on the earth.'"

Arrest and Trial of Jeremiah

7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say these things in the LORD's temple.
 8 Jeremiah had just barely finished saying all the LORD had commanded him to say to all the people. All at once some of the priests, the prophets, and the people grabbed him and shouted, "You deserve to die!
 9 How dare you claim the LORD's authority to prophesy such things! How dare you claim his authority to prophesy that this temple will become like Shiloh and that this city will become an uninhabited ruin!" Then all the people crowded around Jeremiah.
 10 However, some of the officials of Judah heard about what was happening and they rushed up to the LORD's temple from the royal palace. They set up court at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's temple.
 11 Then the priests and the prophets made their charges before the officials and all the people. They said, "This man should be condemned to die because he prophesied against this city. You have heard him do so with your own ears."
 12 Then Jeremiah made his defense before all the officials and all the people. "The LORD sent me to prophesy everything you have heard me say against this temple and against this city.
 13 But correct the way you have been living and do what is right. Obey the LORD your God. If you do, the LORD will forgo destroying you as he threatened he would.
 14 As to my case, I am in your power. Do to me what you deem fair and proper.
 15 But you should take careful note of this: If you put me to death, you will bring on yourselves and this city and those who live in it the guilt of murdering an innocent man. For the LORD has sent me to speak all this where you can hear it. That is the truth!"
 16 Then the officials and all the people rendered their verdict to the priests and the prophets. They said, "This man should not be condemned to die. For he has spoken to us under the authority of the LORD our God."
 17 Then some of the elders of Judah stepped forward and spoke to all the people gathered there. They said,
 18 "Micah from Moresheth prophesied during the time Hezekiah was king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah,

'The LORD who rules over all says,
 "Zion will become a plowed field.
 Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble.
 The temple mount will become a mere wooded ridge.'" [\[Mic 3:12\]](#)

19 King Hezekiah and all the people of Judah did not put him to death, did they? Did not Hezekiah show reverence for the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? Did not the LORD forgo destroying them as he threatened he would? But we are on the verge of bringing great disaster on ourselves."

Arrest and Slaying of Uriah the Prophet

20 Now there was another man who prophesied as the LORD's representative against this city and this land just as Jeremiah did. His name was Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim.
 21 When the king and all his bodyguards and officials heard what he was prophesying, the king sought to have him executed. But Uriah found out about it and fled to Egypt out of fear.
 22 However, King Jehoiakim sent some men to Egypt, including Elnathan son of Achbor,
 23 and they brought Uriah back from there. They took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him executed and had his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.

Jeremiah is Released

24 However, Ahikam son of Shaphan used his influence to keep Jeremiah from being handed over and executed by the people.

Jeremiah Warns Judah About the Coming Babylonian Attack (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 25

Judah's Refusal to Listen to the Prophets

1 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD spoke to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah. (That was the same as the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon.)

2 So the prophet Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the people who were living in Jerusalem.

3 “For the last twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon was ruling in Judah until now, the LORD has been speaking to me. I told you over and over again what he said. But you would not listen.

4 Over and over again the LORD has sent his servants the prophets to you. But you have not listened or paid attention.

5 He said through them, ‘Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and stop doing the evil things you are doing. If you do, I will allow you to continue to live here in the land that I gave to you and your ancestors as a lasting possession.

6 Do not pay allegiance to other gods and worship and serve them. Do not make me angry by the things that you do. Then I will not cause you any harm.’

7 So, now the LORD says, ‘You have not listened to me. But you have made me angry by the things that you have done. Thus you have brought harm on yourselves.’

Seventy Years of Punishment

8 “Therefore, the LORD who rules over all says, ‘You have not listened to what I said.

9 So I, the LORD, affirm that I will send for all the peoples of the north and my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and all the nations that surround it. I will utterly destroy this land, its inhabitants, and all the nations that surround it and make them everlasting ruins. I will make them objects of horror and hissing scorn.

10 I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in these lands. I will put an end to the sound of people grinding meal. I will put an end to lamps shining in their houses.

11 This whole area will become a desolate wasteland. These nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years.’

12 “‘But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation for their sins. I will make the land of Babylon an everlasting ruin. I, the LORD, affirm it!

13 I will bring on that land everything that I said I would. I will bring on it everything that is written in this book. I will bring on it everything that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

14 For many nations and great kings will make slaves of the king of Babylon and his nation too. I will repay them for all they have done!”

The Cup of God’s Wrath

15 So the LORD, the God of Israel, spoke to me in a vision. “Take this cup from my hand. It is filled with the wine of my wrath. Take it and make the nations to whom I send you drink it.

16 When they have drunk it, they will stagger to and fro and act insane. For I will send wars sweeping through them.”

17 So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand. I made all the nations to whom he sent me drink the wine of his wrath.

18 I made Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its officials drink it. I did it so Judah would become a ruin. I did it so Judah, its kings, and its officials would become an object of horror and of hissing scorn, an example used in curses. Such is already becoming the case!

19 I made all of these other people drink it: Pharaoh, king of Egypt; his attendants, his officials, his people,

20 the foreigners living in Egypt; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the land of the Philistines, the people of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, the people who had been left alive from Ashdod;

21 all the people of Edom, Moab, Ammon;

22 all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon; all the kings of the coastlands along the sea;

23 the people of Dedan, Tema, Buz, all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples;

24 all the kings of Arabia who live in the desert;

25 all the kings of Zimri; all the kings of Elam; all the kings of Media;

26 all the kings of the north, whether near or far from one another; and all the other kingdoms which are on the face of the earth.

After all of them have drunk the wine of the LORD’s wrath, the king of Babylon must drink it.

27 Then the LORD said to me, “Tell them that the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, ‘Drink this cup until you get drunk and vomit. Drink until you fall down and can’t get up. For I will send wars sweeping through you.’

28 If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink it, tell them that the LORD who rules over all says ‘You most certainly must drink it!

29 For take note, I am already beginning to bring disaster on the city that I call my own. So how can you possibly avoid being punished? You will not go unpunished! For I am proclaiming war against all who live on the earth. I, the LORD who rules over all, affirm it!’

God’s Coming Judgment on All Nations

30 “Then, Jeremiah, make the following prophecy against them:

‘Like a lion about to attack, the LORD will roar from the heights of heaven;
from his holy dwelling on high he will roar loudly.
He will roar mightily against his land.

- He will shout in triumph like those stomping juice from the grapes against all those who live on the earth.
- 31 The sounds of battle will resound to the ends of the earth.
For the LORD will bring charges against the nations.
He will pass judgment on all humankind
and will hand the wicked over to be killed in war.’
The LORD so affirms it!
- 32 The LORD who rules over all says,
‘Disaster will soon come on one nation after another.
A mighty storm of military destruction is rising up
from the distant parts of the earth.’
- 33 Those who have been killed by the LORD at that time
will be scattered from one end of the earth to the other.
They will not be mourned over, gathered up, or buried.
Their dead bodies will lie scattered over the ground like manure.
- 34 Wail and cry out in anguish, you rulers!
Roll in the dust, you who shepherd flocks of people!
The time for you to be slaughtered has come.
You will lie scattered and fallen like broken pieces of fine pottery.
- 35 The leaders will not be able to run away and hide.
The shepherds of the flocks will not be able to escape.
- 36 Listen to the cries of anguish of the leaders.
Listen to the wails of the shepherds of the flocks.
They are wailing because the LORD
is about to destroy their lands.
- 37 Their peaceful dwelling places will be laid waste
by the fierce anger of the LORD.
- 38 The LORD is like a lion who has left his lair.
So their lands will certainly be laid waste
by the warfare of the oppressive nation
and by the fierce anger of the LORD.”

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