

# Ezekiel 05 - Judgment on Jerusalem (Cont'd); Judgment of the Thirds

## I. Imminent judgment upon Judah (Ezek 1:1—24:27)

### (2) Prophecies of coming judgment against Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 4:1—24:27)

#### (A) Imminent judgment (Ezek 4:1—11:25)

##### (a) Four signs showing the reality of the coming siege (Ezek 4:1—5:17)

###### (iv) Ezekiel's haircut indicating results of the siege (5:1-17)

###### (a) Sign (5:1-4)

(1) Hair shaved and divided (5:1)

(2) One-third burned (5:2a)

(3) One-third hit by sword (5:2b)

(4) One-third scattered (5:2c)

(5) Some saved (5:3-4)

###### (b) Interpretation (5:5-17)

(1) Jerusalem sin (5:5-7)

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## Ezekiel 5

### (iv) Ezekiel's haircut indicating results of the siege (5:1-17)

#### (a) Sign (5:1-4)

(1) Hair shaved and divided (5:1)

**1** "As for you, son of man, take a **sharsword**; take and use it **as a barber's razor on your head and beard**. Then **take scales for weighing** and **divide the hair**.

**1** "As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword; take and use it as a barber's razor on your head and beard. Then take scales for weighing and divide the hair.

**1** "Now as for you, Son of Man, you are to go find a sharp sword and use it like a barber's razor. You are to cut your hair and beard. Then you are to take a weighing scale and divide your shaved hair into three parts.

**1** And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take three balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

- "...sharp sword" - *chereb*, figurative of Nebuchadnezzar's sweeping the city clean of its inhabitants (Is 7:20; Jer 41:5)

- Divine justice is accurate and precise
- The Hebrew word *chereb* was a common word for weapon and is used 83x times by Ezekiel to speak of the means by which Jerusalem (6:11), Edom (25:13), Tyre (26:6, 8), Egypt (29:8-9; 30:4), and Gog (38:21) would be destroyed
- Ezekiel was instructed to use this *chereb* in two ways:
  - As a barber's razor (v1)
  - As as symbolic weapon of war (v2), representing "the sword of Nebuchadnezzar"
- "...as a barber's razor on your head and beard" - the first use of the *chereb* was for Ezekiel to shave his head and beard
- In Hebrew Bible, shaving denoted either mourning (Is 15:2; 22:12; Jer 16:6; 48:37; Ezek 27:31; Amos 8:10), or a symbol of disgrace (2 Sam 10:4; Ezek 7:18)
- The fact that Ezekiel was instructed to shave himself was significant because he was a priest. The hair and beard of a priest symbolized his consecration, and Levites serving as priests were prohibited from cutting them off (Lev 19:27; 21:5).
- However, the directive from God to Ezekiel does not contradict Mosaic Law because, in this context, Ezekiel was functioning as a prophet, not a priest
- "...take scales for weighing" - after shaving his head and beard, God instructed Ezekiel to divide the hair by weight using scales and divide it into three equal portions
- This speaks to the precision of God's punishment; He's extremely precise in doing out judgment
- The three "thirds" were symbolic of what would happen to the Israelites (v2)

- (2) One-third burned (5:2a)
- (3) One-third hit by sword (5:2b)
- (4) One-third scattered (5:2c)

2 A third you shall **burn in the fire at the center of the city, when the days of the siege are completed**. Then you shall take a third and **strike it with the sword all around the city, and a third you shall scatter to the wind**; for I will unsheathe a sword behind them.

2 One third you shall burn in the fire at the center of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. Then you shall take one third and strike *it* with the sword all around the city, and one third you shall scatter to the wind; and I will unsheathe a sword behind them.

2 You are to burn a third of it in the middle of the city when you've finished your siege. Next, you are to take another third of it and beat it with your sword. Last, you are to scatter the remaining third to the wind, after which I'll unsheathe my sword and pursue them.

2 Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.

- "...burn in the fire at the center of the city" - the first portion, comprising one-third of the hair, was to be burned in the fire in the midst of the city—namely, the city that the prophet had previously drawn on a clay brick/tablet (Cf. 4:1)
- "...when the days of the siege are completed" - the timing of this act was to coincide with the fulfillment of the days of the siege, i.e., it was to take place as soon as Jerusalem had fallen
- "...strike *it* with the sword all around the city" - the second third of the hair was to be smitten with the sword all around the city
- "...a third you shall scatter to the wind" - the final third was to be scattered to the wind
- "...I will unsheathe a sword behind them" - after all of this was fulfilled, God would draw out a sword after them. This grave statement shows that even the Jews who went into exile would face persecution in foreign lands.

(5) Some saved (5:3-4)

- 3 Take also a few *hairs* in number from them and bind them in the hems of your *robes*.
- 3 Take also a few in number from them and bind them in the edges of your *robes*.
- 3 You are to preserve a few strands of hair and hide them in the folds of your garment.
- 3 Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.
- Despite the devastating impact of Nebuchadnezzar's assault on Judah, God will preserve a remnant
  - From the hair that God told Ezekiel to "scatter to the wind" (v2), Ezekiel was to take a few hairs out and secure them to the folds of his skirts (the edges of Ezekiel's long tunic, which was common attire in those days, which could be gathered up and tucked into a belt, forming a makeshift pocket) (Cf. Haggai 2:12)
  - This remnant would not be a *believing* remnant, but a *surviving* remnant
- 4 Take again **some of them** and throw them into the **fire** and burn them in the fire; from it a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.
- 4 Take again some of them and throw them into the fire and burn them in the fire; from it a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.
- 4 Then you are to take a few strands, throw them in the fire, and incinerate them. A fire will proceed to the house of Israel from there."
- 4 Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.
- "...some of them" - some of the hair that God commanded Ezekiel to save out of the hair to be scattered
  - This verse indicates that even among this surviving (not believing) remnant, there would be casualties

- This indicates that despite escaping alive from Jerusalem's fall, many people would still meet their demise in exile
- Rather than avoiding death, they would perish alongside the city or even within its confines. Hence, the judgment would affect both those inside and those outside Jerusalem.
- In summary, this fourth symbolic act (5:1-4) illustrates the fate awaiting the inhabitants of Jerusalem when it ultimately succumbs to judgment

(b) Interpretation (5:5-17)

(1) Jerusalem sin (5:5-7)

**5 "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'This is Jerusalem; I have placed her at the center of the nations, with lands around her.**

**5** "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her.

**5** "This is what the Lord GOD says, 'This is Jerusalem. I placed her in the center of nations, with many nations surrounding her.

**5** Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

- "This is what the Lord GOD says" - *koh 'amar 'adanay YHWH*, this section (v5-17), describing the application of the symbolism in Ezekiel's four sign-acts, begins with this powerful Hebrew citation formula

- Verse 17 ends this section with, "I, the LORD, have spoken" [*'ani YHWH dibbarti*]
- What lies in v6-16 is a speech of judgment from God Himself, with summary statements and explanations for the punishment that would be inflicted upon Jerusalem
  - Verses 5-12 describe the judgment on Jerusalem
  - Verses 13-17 give the duration of the judgment
- "...This is Jerusalem" - the target is identified; Jerusalem has been at the center of the symbolic actions since 4:3
- "...center of the nations" - *betoch*, "in the midst" or "in the middle"; it literally means that Jerusalem is the "navel" of the world (Cf. 38:12)
- God is not speaking geographically here, but theologically. God's purpose in making Jerusalem central in this theological context was so that she could testify to His righteousness.
- As v6-12 clearly show, this is not what happened. Jerusalem was not characterized by righteousness, but by sin.

**6** But she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the nations, and against My statutes more than the lands which surround her; for they have rejected My ordinances

and have not walked in My statutes.'

6 But she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the nations and against My statutes more than the lands which surround her; for they have rejected My ordinances and have not walked in My statutes.'

6 But she rebelled against my ordinances and my statutes. She practiced more evil than all the nations and territories around her. They rejected my ordinances and didn't live by my statutes.'

6 And she [Jerusalem] hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

- The cause of God's coming judgment was her "rebellion" and "wickedness"

— Rather than fulfill her purpose of demonstrating the righteousness of God, they were more wicked and rebellious than the pagan nations that surrounded them

— Ex 24:3; Lev 19:37 show that the content of the Mosaic Law was defined in terms of ordinances and statutes (Cf. Deut 4:1—5:1; 6:1-2). Israel had rejected God's Law, and the people had not walked in it but instead were rebellious toward it.

7 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: 'Because you have more **turmoil** than the nations that surround you *and* have not walked in My statutes, nor executed My ordinances, nor acted in accordance with the ordinances of the nations around you,'

7 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because you have more turmoil than the nations which surround you *and* have not walked in My statutes, nor observed My ordinances, nor observed the ordinances of the nations which surround you,'

7 "Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: 'Because you're more disrespectful than the nations that surround you, you didn't follow my statutes or follow my ordinances. You didn't even follow the ordinances of the surrounding nations!'

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you;

- God reiterates that Jerusalem had failed to reflect the righteousness of the Mosaic Law by keeping its statutes and ordinances. This failure became the basis for divine judgment.

- "...turmoil" - hamanechem, turbulent; comes from the noun hamon, meaning "a sound," "murmur," "roar," "crowd," or "abundance"

— However the manner it is used in v7 is unique. Since this word is nowhere else used in the OT, it's difficult to interpret.

— Most Hebrew scholars (Fruchtenbaum, et al) believe God is referring to Israel as "a tumultuous crowd." The meaning may be that they were a "worse crowd" than the nations around them, which echoes what God said in v6.

- Not only did Israel fail to keep their own laws (the Mosaic Law), but they did not even walk according to the laws of the pagan Gentiles around them. In essence, they sunk even deeper into wickedness than those who did not know God or His Law (Cf. 11:12).
- Not only did Jerusalem fail to keep God's ordinances and statutes, but she failed to live up to her name:
  - *The place on which Abraham had erected the altar was the same whereon Adam had brought the first sacrifice, and Cain and Abel had offered their gifts to God—the same whereon Noah raised an altar to God after he left the ark; and Abraham, who knew that it was the place appointed for the Temple, called it Yireh, for it would be the abiding place of the fear and the service of God. But as Shem had given it the name Shalem, Place of Peace, and God would not give offense to either Abraham or Shem, He united the two names [Yireh Shalem], and called the city by the name Jerusalem. [Louis Ginzberg (Talmudic scholar and rabbi, 1873-1953), *The Legends of the Jews – Volume I, Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913), p. 285.]*

## (2) Jerusalem's judgment (5:8-12)

8 therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: 'Behold, **I, even I, am against you**, and I will execute judgments among you **in the sight of the nations**.

8 therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I, even I, am against you, and I will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations.

8 "Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: 'Watch out! I—that's right, even I—am against you. I'll carry out my sentence among you right in front of the nations.

8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.

- Because of Jerusalem's unique failure, God pronounced a unique judgment on her; God identifies Himself ("Lord GOD") as the Author of this judgment

- "...I, even I, am against you" - while God would use Nebuchadnezzar as the instrument of his judgment, there was to be no question that it was God who was bringing the judgment against Jerusalem

- "...in the sight of the nations" - God's judgment through Nebuchadnezzar would be an "open secret," a very public judgment, open for all to see

— God's rationale was that Israel sinned "in the sight of the nations" so they would be punished "in the sight of the nations" (Cf. 20:22; 22:16)

— However, God's providential grace during Israel's restoration would also be displayed "in the sight of the nations" (Cf. 20:9,14,41; 28:25; 38:23; 39:27)

— The consequences of judgment God is about to be unleashed would not be a surprise to Israel if they knew God's Law. Moses foretold the consequences if Israel failed to keep

God's Law, and three times he gave the same specific warnings that Ezekiel now proclaimed:

- Lev 26:14-39
- Deut 8:11-20
- Deut 28:15-68

9 And because of all your abominations I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again.

9 And because of all your abominations, I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again.

9 In fact, I'm going to do what I've never done before and what I'll never again do, because of all of your loathsome behavior:

9 And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.

- God proclaimed that the impending judgment would be unique, unlike anything He had done before and something He would not repeat in the future

— Unparalleled sins demand unparalleled punishment

10 Therefore, **fathers will eat their sons among you**, and **sons will eat their fathers**; for I will execute judgments on you and **scatter all your remnant to every wind**.

10 Therefore, fathers will eat *their* sons among you, and sons will eat their fathers; for I will execute judgments on you and scatter all your remnant to every wind.

10 Fathers will eat their children in your midst. After this, your sons will eat their fathers as I carry out my sentence against you and scatter your survivors to the winds!'

10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

- What God threatened in v9 is explained in v10...

- "...fathers will eat *their* sons among you" - in Israel's midst, a horrifying scenario would unfold where fathers would resort to eating their own sons, and sons likewise would eat their fathers

— This is how they would satisfy their extreme hunger brought on by the famine during the siege (Cf. Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57)

— Jeremiah, a contemporary of Ezekiel, prophesied the same thing

Jer 19:9: And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh during the siege and in the hardship with which their enemies and those who seek their life will torment them."

— Jeremiah also vividly describes the fulfillment of this prophecy:

Lam 4:10: The hands of compassionate women Boiled their own children; They became food for them Due to the destruction of the daughter of my people.

— Cannibalism is considered the most reprehensible facet among the judgments for disobedience in the Mosaic Law:

*The curse of cannibalism is especially repulsive in light of the God-ordained position of the family in the nation of Israel and her theocracy... The judgment falls when Israel, in her disobedience to God, is attacked by a foreign army. The siege would be so severe that starvation would ravage the cities of Israel, and this would lead to the unthinkable act of eating one's own children...*

*Jewish history records at least four major periods where it fell on the Jews:*

1. *The siege of Samaria by the Syrians (2 Kings 6:24-29)*
2. *The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (prophesied in Jer 19:7-9; Ezek 5:7-10; fulfilled in Lam 2:19-20; 4:8-11)*
3. *The siege of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman legions in 70 AD*
4. *The Nazi Holocaust under Hitler and the Germans*

*The future holocaust of the Tribulation will be the worst of all and, undoubtedly, will once again bring brutal starvation and the consequent curse of cannibalism. [Barry R. Leventhal, *Where Was God? Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2024), pp. 171-172.]*

— "...sons will eat their fathers" - the threat of what would happen during the siege of Jerusalem goes well beyond fathers eating their sons

— Nowhere is it mentioned of sons killing their parents and eating their flesh during the extremities of famine. This part of the verse is the interpretation of the third of the hair being burned in fire (v2).

— "...scatter all your remnant to every wind" - another warning of judgment by God; a prophecy of the *diaspora*

— The survivors of the siege would be scattered, leading to their exile among the surrounding nations

11 Therefore as I live,' declares the Lord GOD, 'Because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable idols and with all your abominations, I definitely will also withdraw and **My eye will have no pity, and I also will not spare.**

11 So as I live,' declares the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable idols and with all your abominations, therefore I will also withdraw, and My eye will have no pity and I will not spare.

11 "Therefore, as sure as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "because you've defiled my sanctuary with every loathsome thing and every abomination, I'll restrain myself, and I'll show neither pity nor compassion.

**11** Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

- The consequences keep on coming... God now forewarns of a decrease in the Jewish population, the cause of which is that the Jewish people had "defiled My sanctuary" with their "detestable idols" and "abominations"

— The specifics of these actions will be clarified in Ezek 8, where the prophet sees the Temple in a vision and witnesses these abominations firsthand

— This likely refers to the idol that King Manasseh placed on the Temple grounds (2 Kings 21:7)

- "...My eye will have no pity, and I also will not spare" - means that this decree from God was irrevocable

**12 A third of you will die by plague or perish by famine among you, a third will fall by the sword around you, and a third I will scatter to every wind**, and I will unsheathe a sword behind them.

12 One third of you will die by plague or be consumed by famine among you, one third will fall by the sword around you, and one third I will scatter to every wind, and I will unsheathe a sword behind them.

12 A third of you will die by pestilence, starving because of the famine in your midst. Another third will die violently by the violence of war around you. The final third I'll scatter to the wind as I unsheathe my sword to pursue them.

12 A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

- "A third of you will die by plague or perish by famine among you" - the fulfillment of this prophecy is described in 2 Kings 25:3

2 Kings 25:3: On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

- "...a third will fall by the sword around you" - this prophecy was fulfilled when the Babylonians broke into the city (Jer 52:7)

Jer 52:7: Then the city was breached, and all the warriors fled and left the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls which was by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah.

- "...a third I will scatter to every wind" - those of the *Diaspora*, who even in exile and dispersion, would suffer persecution

These judgments are referred to in v2 (Cf. Jer 14:12) and are *limited solely to the Babylonian sieges of Jerusalem*. This is a specific prophecy of thirds, and how the 2/3rds will die (1/3 with pestilence and 1/3 by the sword); 1/3 will be scattered. Neither the destruction in Jerusalem in 70 AD nor the Tribulation are in view here. Even though Zech 13:8-9 indicates that during the Great Tribulation 2/3 of the Jews will die, it is not specific as to how, and the surviving 1/3 is not scattered under divine judgment, rather they are saved and regathered.

(3) Jerusalem's reproach (5:13-17)

**13 'Then My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal, when I have spent My wrath upon them.**

**13** 'Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them.

**13** "Only then will I stop being angry—my burning in anger. Then they'll know that I've spoken out in my arduous anger. Only then will my burning anger against them be exhausted.

**13** Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

- After giving the details of the judgments, and the reasons for them, God now outlines the timeframe of these judgments...

- "Then My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased" - the divine wrath/judgment for Jerusalem's sins would achieve precisely what God's anger had intended

— God will display His deliberate and purposeful anger that, once executed, will fulfill its goals

- "...I will be appeased" - *hinnechameti*, from the root *nacham* meaning "to be sorry" or "to console oneself"

— In the context of this passage, it refers to the satisfaction of divine justice—a justice that always has to be satisfied (Cf. propitiation)

- "...then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken" - once Ezekiel's prophecies were carried out, all of Israel would know that God had indeed "spoken"

- "...zeal" - *kinah*, "ardor" or "jealousy"; refers to passionate, burning wrath

- "...when I have spent My wrath upon them" - there is no specific time duration given for these judgments, but rather until the time that God's wrath was "spent"

— At the point His wrath is "spent," God would cause His anger toward His people to rest

14 Moreover, I will make you a **site of ruins** and a **disgrace among the nations** that surround you, in the sight of everyone who passes by.

14 Moreover, I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the nations which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by.

14 I'm also going to turn you into a waste and an object of insult among the nations that surround you and in front of every person who passes by.

14 Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.

- The consequences of God's wrath...

- "...site of ruins" - *leharbah*, desolation

- "...disgrace among the nations" - *leherpah*, reproach

— The point of using these two terms [*leharbah* and *leherpah*] is to emphasize the profound humiliation that Jerusalem would endure

— The neighboring nations would observe Israel's rise and fall. The destruction would be a vivid testimony that God's judgment had come upon the land. A nation that was once teeming with people would suddenly be denuded of its population and subjected to reproach.

— The fulfillment of these verses is seen in Lam 2:10

Lam 2:10: The elders of the daughter of Zion Sit on the ground *and* are silent. They have thrown dust on their heads; They have put on sackcloth. The virgins of Jerusalem Have bowed their heads to the ground.

15 So it will be **adisgrace**, an *object of abuse*, a warning, and an object of horror to the nations that surround you when I execute judgments against you in anger, wrath, and raging reprimands. **I, the LORD, have spoken.**

15 So it will be a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the nations who surround you when I execute judgments against you in anger, wrath and raging rebukes. **I, the LORD, have spoken.**

15 As a result, Jerusalem will become an insult, an object of taunt, an example of chastisement, and a useless waste to all the nations that surround you when I carry out my sentence against you in my anger, my burning rage, and my burning rebukes. **I, the LORD, have spoken it.**

**15** So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. **I the LORD have spoken it.**

- This verse further details the humiliation of Jerusalem with these judgments:

- "...a disgrace" - *herpâ*, a taunt or insult; the word is consistently used when an insult is aimed at something holy
- Thus, it implies that the nations were scoffing at Israel's self-perception as a holy people
- The fulfillment of these prophecies are documented in Lam 2:15-16

Lam 2:15-16:

15 All who pass along the way Clap their hands *in ridicule* at you; They hiss and shake their heads At the daughter of Jerusalem: "Is this the city of which they said, 'Perfect in beauty, A joy to all the earth'?"

16 All your enemies Have opened their mouths wide against you; They hiss and gnash *their* teeth. They say, "We have engulfed *her*! This certainly is the day which we awaited; We have reached *it*, we have seen *it*!"

- "...I, the LORD, have spoken" - the guarantee that these will happen, exactly as God says; there is no time for repentance or changing His mind at this point (Cf. v17)

**16 When I send against them the deadly arrows of famine which were for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you, then I will also intensify the famine upon you and break off your provision of bread.**

16 When I send against them the deadly arrows of famine which were for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you, then I will also intensify the famine upon you and break the staff of bread.

16 I'll send arrows of severe famine in their direction, meant for destruction, which I'll shoot, intending to destroy them. I'll make you have more and more famines that will attack you, and I'll disrupt your source of food.

16 When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:

- "...I send against them the deadly arrows of famine" - this pronouncement correlates with the provisions of the Mosaic Law, where famine is given as a key curse for disobedience (Deut 32:23-24)

- "...for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you" - God is clear that the purpose of these famine-inducing arrows was the destruction of His own people

- "...intensify the famine" - and God would intensify the famine until the city was completely destroyed

- "...break off your provision of bread" - He would personally cut off Israel's food supply (Cf. v12)

- Moses prophesied this breaking off their provision of bread in Lev 26:26, and Jeremiah prophesied the same thing (Jer 15:2)

17 **I will send on you famine** and **vicious animals**, and they will bereave you of children; **plague** and **bloodshed** also will pass through you, and I will bring the **sword** on you. I, the LORD, have spoken."

17 Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, the LORD, have spoken."

17 "I'll send famine and wild beasts against you that will rob you of your children. Pestilence and bloodshed will devastate you when I'll declare war on you. I, the LORD, have spoken."

17 So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it.

- "I will send on you famine" - God again names famine as a method of judgment/destruction, then lists four additional judgments:
- "...vicious animals" - when food becomes scarce, wild animals begin to hunt humans
- "...plague" - disease
- "...bloodshed" - in the context of this verse, bloodshed refers to hemorrhage associated with the plagues/disease rather than bloodshed at the hands of the enemy
- "...sword" - destruction by war
- All five of these means of destruction that God will use to destroy Jerusalem—famine, vicious animals, plague, bloodshed, and sword—were prophesied by Moses as curses for disobedience (Cf. Lev 26:22-26; Deut 32:23-25)