

# Jeremiah 05 - The Justice of God's Judgment

## II. Thirteen prophecies of judgment upon Judah (Jer 2:1—25:38)

(1) Nine general prophecies of judgment that include offers of repentance (Jer 2:1—19:15)

- (B) Second message: coming judgment and the necessity for repentance (Jer 3:6—6:30)
  - (d) Coming judgment (Jer 4:5—6:30)
    - (iii) Sins leading to the judgment (5:1-31)
      - (a) Unwillingness to repent (5:1-3)
      - (b) Apostasy (5:4-6)
      - (c) Harlotry (5:7-9)
      - (d) False sense of security (5:10-19)
      - (e) Stubbornness and rebellion (5:20-31)

### Jeremiah 5

- (iii) Sins leading to the judgment (5:1-31)
  - (a) Unwillingness to repent (5:1-3)

1 "Roam about through the streets of Jerusalem, And look and take notice. And seek in her public squares, If you can find a person, If there is one who does justice, who seeks honesty, Then I will forgive her.

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.

1 "Wander through the streets of Jerusalem. Look and investigate; search through her squares and see whether you find anyone— even one person there—doing justice and seeking truth. Then I'll forgive them.

1 Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.

- He will pardon the group for one righteous

— Cf. Gen 18:23-33 when the three special visitors reach Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, two angels and the Lord, and the angels go on because they have an errand in Sodom and Gomorrah. And the Lord negotiates with Abraham, or more precisely Abraham presumes to

negotiate with God. God agrees with Abraham's logic, but for the righteous He would spare the whole city (Jer 15:1-4)

- 2 "And although they say, 'As the LORD lives,' Certainly they swear falsely."
- 2 "And although they say, 'As the LORD lives,' Surely they swear falsely."
- 2 Although they say, 'As surely as the LORD lives,' still they are swearing falsely."
- 2 And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.

### **The Prophet Speaks**

3 LORD, do Your eyes not *look* for honesty? You have struck them, But they did not weaken; You have consumed them, *But* they refused to accept discipline. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to repent.

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.

3 LORD, don't your eyes look for truth? You struck them, but they didn't flinch. You brought them to an end, but they refused to receive discipline. They made their faces harder than stone, and they refused to repent.

3 O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, *but* they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

#### *(b) Apostasy (5:4-6)*

4 Then I said, "They are only the poor, They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the LORD *Or* the judgment of their God.

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.

4 Then I said, "These are only the poor, they're foolish, for they don't know the LORD's way, the requirement of their God.

4 Therefore I said, Surely these *are* poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, *nor* the judgment of their God.

5 "I will go to the great And speak to them, For they know the way of the LORD *And* the judgment of their God." But together they *too* have broken the yoke *And* burst the restraints.

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.

5 Let me go to the leaders and speak to them. For they know the LORD's way, the requirement of their God." **The LORD Answers** "But they, all together, have broken the yoke and torn off the restraints.

5 I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, *and* the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, *and* burst the bonds.

6 Therefore a lion from the forest will kill 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 wrongdoings are many, Their apostasies are numerous.

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.

6 Therefore a lion from the forest will attack them, a wolf from the desert will devastate them. A leopard is watching their towns, and everyone who goes out of them will be torn to pieces. For their transgressions are many, and their apostasies numerous.

6 Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, *and* a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, *and* their backslidings are increased.

#### (c) Harlotry (5:7-9)

7 "Why should I forgive 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 stayed at the prostitute's house.

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.

7 Why should I forgive you? Your sons have forsaken me, and you have sworn by those who aren't gods. When I gave them enough food to satisfy them, they committed adultery and marched to the prostitute's house.

7 How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by *them that* are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.

8 "They were well-fed lusty horses, Each one neighing at his neighbor's wife.

8 "They were well-fed lusty horses, Each one neighing after his neighbor's wife.

8 They were well-fed, lusty stallions, each one neighing after his neighbor's wife.

8 They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

- There is an interesting play on words here in the English (if you go all the way through the Hebrew, there are puns). *Tekoah* and the sound of the trumpet are very similar sounding words in the Hebrew.

9 "Shall I not punish *them* for these *things*?" declares the LORD, "And shall I not avenge Myself On a nation such as this?

9 "Shall I not punish these *people*," declares the LORD, "And on a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself?

9 "Should I not punish them for these *things*?" asks the LORD, "And on a nation like this, should I not seek retribution?"

9 Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

(d) False sense of security (5:10-19)

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.

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.

10 "Go through her rows of vines and destroy them, but don't completely destroy them. Strip away her branches, because they aren't the LORD's.

10 Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; 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.

11 "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me," declares the LORD.

11 For both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly unfaithful to me," declares the LORD.

11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD.

12 They have lied about the LORD And said, "Not He; Misfortune will not come upon us, Nor will we see sword or famine.

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.

12 "They have lied about the LORD by saying, 'He wouldn't do that! Disaster won't come on us. We won't see sword and famine.

12 They have belied the LORD, and said, *It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine:*

13 "The prophets are as wind, And the word is not in them. So it will be done to them!"

13 "The prophets are as wind, And the word is not in them. Thus it will be done to them!"

13 The prophets are nothing but wind, and the word is not in them. So may the disaster happen to them!"

13 And the prophets shall become wind, and the word *is* not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.

### **Judgment Proclaimed**

**14** Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of armies says: "Because you have spoken this word, Behold, I am making My words fire in your mouth, And this people wood, and it will consume them.

**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.

**14** Therefore, this is what the LORD God of the Heavenly Armies says: "Because you people have said this, my words in your mouth will become a fire and these people the wood. The fire will destroy them.

**14** Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

15 "Behold, I am bringing a nation against you from far away, you 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.

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.

15 People of Israel, I'm now bringing a nation from far away to attack you," declares the LORD. "It is an enduring nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language you don't know. And you won't understand what they say.

15 Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it *is* a mighty nation, it *is* an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

- Cf. Deut 28:49. Herodotus points out that the Scythians boasted that they were the youngest nation, not an ancient nation. The ancient nation was started by Nimrod the

hunter in Gen 10:10; 11:31; the founder of Babel, which became the root of *Babylon*. These are the Babylonians that Jeremiah had in view.

16 "Their quiver is like an open grave, All of them are warriors.

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

16 Their quiver is like an open grave, and all of them are powerful warriors.

16 Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all 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 your fortified cities, in which you trust, with the sword.

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.

17 "They'll devour your harvest and your food. They'll devour your sons and your daughters. They'll devour your vines and your fig trees. With their swords they'll batter down your fortified cities in which you trust.

17 And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.

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

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

18 "Yet even in those days," declares the LORD, "I won't destroy you completely.

18 Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you.

19 And 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, 'Just as you have abandoned Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve strangers in a land that is not yours.'

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.'

19 When the people ask, 'Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?' you are to say to them, 'Just as you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve strangers in a land that is not yours.'"

19 And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these *things* unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land *that is* not yours.

(e) Stubbornness and rebellion (5:20-31)

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

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

20 "Declare this to the descendants of Jacob, and proclaim it in Judah:

20 Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,

21 'Now hear this, you foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see, Who have ears but do not hear.

21 'Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear.

21 'Hear this, you foolish and stupid people: They have eyes, but don't see; they have ears, but don't hear.

21 Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

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 limit, and it will not cross over it. Though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; Though they roar, they will not cross over it.

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.

22 'You don't fear me, do you?' declares the LORD. 'You don't tremble before me, do you? I'm the one who put the sand as a boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot cross. Though the waves toss, they cannot prevail against it, though they roar, they cannot cross it.'

22 Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

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

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

23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts. They have turned aside and have gone away.

23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

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."

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."

24 They don't say to themselves, 'Let's fear the LORD our God, who gives rain in its season, both the autumn and the spring rain. He sets aside for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.'

24 Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

- The linking of the control of the sea and the rain shows up all over Scripture (Deut 11:10-17).

— In Ecclesiastes and in the Psalms, the linking of the water cycle is explicitly described. Solomon asked, why do all the rivers run into the sea and yet the sea doesn't get full: "...from whence they come thither they return again, the clouds do distill upon them abundantly."

— The water cycle is described in the Scripture. "He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost. This is a very specific period of time (Lev 23:15-16)

25 'Your wrongdoings have turned these away, And your sins have kept good away from you.

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

25 Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have held back from you what is good.

25 Your iniquities have turned away these *things*, and your sins have withholden good *things* from you.

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

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

26 "Evil men are found among my people. They lie in wait like someone who traps birds. They set a trap, but they do so to catch people.

26 For among my people are found wicked *men*: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; 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.

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

27 Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are filled with treachery. This is how they have become prominent and rich,

27 As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen 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, so that they may be successful; And they do not defend the rights of the poor.

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.

28 and have grown fat and sleek. There is no limit to their evil deeds. They don't argue the case of the orphan to secure justice. They don't defend the rights of the poor.

28 They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

29 'Shall I not punish *them* for these *things*?' declares the LORD, 'Or shall I not avenge Myself On a nation such as this?'

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

29 'Should I not punish them for this?' asks the LORD. 'Should I not avenge myself on a nation like this?'

29 Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

**30** "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land:

30 "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land:

30 "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land:

30 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And **the priests rule on their own authority**; And My people love it this way! But what will you do when the end comes?

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?

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?"

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it* so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

- "...the priests rule on their *own authority*" - a facetious way of saying the priests have the finest judges money could buy