

# Jeremiah 06 - Impending Destruction from the North

## 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)

(iv) Severity of coming judgment (6:1-30)

(a) Destruction of Jerusalem (6:1-8)

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## Jeremiah 6

(iv) Severity of coming judgment (6:1-30)

(a) Destruction of Jerusalem (6:1-8)

**1** "Flee to safety, you sons of Benjamin, From the midst of Jerusalem! Blow a trumpet in Tekoa And raise a *warning* signal over Beth-haccerem; For evil looks down from the north, Along with a great destruction.

**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.

**1** "Flee to safety, you people of Benjamin, leave Jerusalem. Sound the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise a signal over Beth-haccerem! For calamity and terrible destruction are turning toward you from the north.

**1** O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

- Benjamin is the tribe that lies between Judah and Ephraim. The city of Jerusalem, though often associated with Judah, the royal city, is actually on the border and technically is in the tribe of Benjamin.

- Benjamin is often associated with Judah, and to the north of Benjamin is Ephraim, which of course is one of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom, but becomes idiomatic for the whole Northern Kingdom, from time to time.
- When they speak of Ephraim in a connotative sense, they mean the Northern Kingdom. Benjamin was the source of Saul in the Old Testament, and also Saul in the New Testament.

Tekoa was about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and was the hometown of Amos. There was also a pun here in Jerusalem. The word of *Tekoa* and the word *Tiqu* means sound, like from a trumpet, and so in the actual Hebrew, this whole thing has a certain euphony—a sonal type appeal as well as a conceptual type appeal. In Hebrew poetry, there is usually the juxtaposition of ideas, no meter. We in English poetry think of meter and rhyme, and such things. We notice that in the proverbs, they say the same thing in two different ways; sometimes there is a very provocative juxtaposition of concepts, which is really what they normally mean in Hebrew poetry. Incidentally, in Jeremiah, some of the passages are quite doubtful in how they should be translated. Fortunately, they are not monumental things, but in many of the passages, there are subtle issues. (It is a rather mild debate because the issues are really quite incidental.)

*Beth-haccerem*, *Beth* means the house, the house of the vineyard, which has a nice New Testament ring to it. There is a valley between Jerusalem and the land that becomes the land of Benjamin, it is the valley of Hinnom. In later chapters, the valley of Hinnom has some very unusual destinies, which give rise to an idiom among the rabbis. The valley of Hinnom gives rise to a word *gehenna*, which is used by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. *Gehenna* is not Hades in the English. The Hebrew is *shouwl*, the Greek is Hades. When we use the word hell, what we generally mean is *gehenna*, and Hades and *gehenna* are opposites. Hades is temporary; *gehenna* is permanent. Hades is probably in the center of the earth, and *gehenna* is probably in the outer darkness. This all emerges out of the valley of Hinnom, and there are some very bizarre practices that go on in the valley of Hinnom. Even here in Chapter 6 it is sort of setting the rhetorical stage.

Later on we are going to hear the tribe of Dan mentioned. Dan was the northernmost tribe. The area called Dan has several connotations, not the least of these being the northern most part of the land of Israel. Their enemies traditionally entered from the north, because of the impassable desert that was due east, so even though their enemies might not be indigenous to the north, they always attacked from the north (or if you will, from the south, from Egypt). What Jeremiah is going to emphasize here is that not only are they going to have an attack from the north, but this attack is going to be successful, and it is going to be the instrument of God in the form of judgment.

2 "The beautiful and delicate one, the daughter of Zion, I will destroy.

2 "The comely and dainty one, the daughter of Zion, I will cut off.  
2 I'll destroy the lovely and delicate Daughter of Zion.  
2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate *woman*.

3 "Shepherds and their flocks will come to her, They will pitch *their* tents around her, They will pasture, each in his place.  
3 "Shepherds and their flocks will come to her, They will pitch *their* tents around her, They will pasture each in his place.  
3 Shepherds and their flocks will come against her. They'll pitch their tents all around her, and every one will tend his flock in his own place.  
3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch *their* tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.

4 'Prepare for war against her; Arise, and let's attack at noon. Woe to us, for the day declines, For the shadows of the evening lengthen!  
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!  
4 Prepare for war against her. Get ready, let's attack at noon! How terrible for us that the day is coming to an end, and that the evening shadows are lengthening.  
4 Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

5 'Arise, and let's attack by night And destroy her palaces!"  
5 "Arise, and let us attack by night And destroy her palaces!"  
5 Get ready, let's attack at night, and destroy her fortresses."  
5 Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

### **Instructions for the Attackers**

6 For this is what the LORD of armies says: "Cut down her trees And pile up an assault ramp against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished, In whose midst there is only oppression.  
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.  
6 For this is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "Cut down trees and set up siege works against Jerusalem. It is the city to be judged, and there is oppression throughout the entire city.  
6 For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this *is* the city to be visited; she *is* wholly oppression in the midst of her.

- He is describing this as if it is happening, and it isn't long after this that it does literally happen, that Jerusalem is under siege by Nebuchadnezzar, the general of the Babylonian army.

— Before the siege is over, Jerusalem falls, and Nebuchadnezzar's father dies; he is now the king of Babylon. He comes to this just after his success at the battle of Carchemish with Egypt. He became the primary power in the region, laying siege to the first of three sieges of Jerusalem that spanned almost twenty years. Nebuchadnezzar executes those things that Jeremiah here prophesies.

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 constantly before Me.

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.

7 As a well keeps its waters fresh, so the city keeps her wickedness fresh. Violence and destruction are heard in her, sickness and wounds are always before me.

7 As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually *is* grief and wounds.

- This is very graphic: she is so wicked, she spews out violence the way a fountain spews out water. It is in no way as elegant and lofty as Isaiah's writing, but he is very earthy and graphic. He will paint images through here that are, in fact, uncomfortable, they are so vivid.

8 "Be warned, Jerusalem, Or I shall be alienated from you, And make you a desolation, An uninhabited land."

8 "Be warned, O Jerusalem, Or I shall be alienated from you, And make you a desolation, A land not inhabited."

8 Be warned, Jerusalem, or I'll be alienated from you. I'll make you desolate, a land not inhabited."

8 Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

(b) Sins causing severity of the judgment (6:9-21)

(1) Total corruption (6:9-15)

9 This is what the LORD of armies says: "They will thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel like the vine; Pass your hand over the branches again Like a grape gatherer."

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."

9 This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: "Let them glean the remnant of Israel as thoroughly as they would the vine. Pass your hand over them like grape gatherers over the branches.

9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets.

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 for them a rebuke; They take no delight in it.

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.

10 To whom will I speak and give a warning so they'll listen? Look, their ears are closed, and they cannot hear. Look, this message from the LORD is contemptible to them; they don't delight in it.

10 To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

- "...their ears are closed" - they cannot hear with a spiritually-tuned ear

11 But I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary of 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 old and the very old.

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.

11 I'm full of the wrath of the LORD, and I'm tired of holding it back. Pour it out on the children in the street and on the groups of young men gathered together. Indeed, both husband and wife will be caught in it, the old and the very old.

11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with *him* that *is* full of days.

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.

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.

12 Their houses will be turned over to others— their fields and wives together— when I stretch out my hand against those who live in the land," declares the LORD.

12 And their houses shall be turned unto others, *with their* fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.

- The reaction to these sayings is one of upset seen in Chapter 7-10, where what is called the Temple discourses, speeches that he made that not only caused him opposition and hatred, but hatred so bitter that it lasted all his life, even to the point of martyrdom.

— His message was not well received or popular, and the irony of it is, here is perhaps the most inflamed hatred of that day: he was treated as a traitor, and tried for treason.

13 "For from the least of them to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet to the priest Everyone deals falsely.

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.

13 "Indeed, from the least important to the most important, they're all greedy for dishonest gain. From prophet to priest, they all act deceitfully.

13 For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

- His generalization of the society at that time

14 "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace.

14 "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace.

14 They treated my people's wound superficially, telling them, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace.

14 They have healed also the hurt of *the daughter* of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace.

15 "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? They were not ashamed at all, Nor did they know even how to be ashamed. Therefore they will fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They will collapse," says the LORD.

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.

15 Were they ashamed because they did what was repugnant to God? They were not ashamed at all— they don't even know how to blush! Therefore they'll fall with those who fall. When I punish them, they'll be brought down," says the LORD.

15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

(2) Stubbornness (6:16-21)

16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find a resting place for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk *in it*.'

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*!'

16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand beside the roads and watch. Ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is. Walk in it and find rest for yourselves. But they said, 'We won't walk *in it*!'

16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.

17 "And I set watchmen over you, *saying*, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'

17 "And I set watchmen over you, *saying*, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'

17 I appointed watchmen over you. Listen for the sound of the trumpet. But they said, 'We won't listen!'

17 Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

18 "Therefore hear, you nations, And know, you congregation, what is among them.

18 "Therefore hear, O nations, And know, O congregation, what is among them.

18 Therefore, hear, nations, and know, congregation, what will happen to them.

18 Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them.

19 "Hear, 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.

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.

19 Listen, earth! I'm about to bring calamity on this people, on the fruit of their plans, because they didn't listen to my words and they rejected my instruction.

19 Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

- Concept of obedience. This is going to get its most painful contrast in the next chapter, because they hide behind the rituals in lieu of obedience, and misconstrue the Mosaic Law. God would have obedience first, then rituals or sacrifice after that as a celebration.

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."

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."

20 What good is frankincense that comes from Sheba to me, or sweet cane from a distant country? Your burnt offerings aren't acceptable, nor are your sacrifices pleasing to me."

20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

21 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: "Behold, I am placing stumbling blocks before this people. And they will stumble against them, Fathers and sons together; Neighbor and friend will perish."

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."

21 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: "I'm about to put stumbling blocks in front of this people, and fathers and sons will stumble over them together. The neighbor and his friends will perish."

21 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

### (c) Babylon's cruelty (6:22-26)

22 This is what the LORD says: "Behold, *there is* a people coming from the north land, And a great nation will be stirred up from the remote parts of the earth.

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.

22 This is what the LORD says: "Look, people are coming from a northern country. A great nation is stirring from the ends of the earth.

22 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides 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, Lined up as a man for the battle Against you, daughter of Zion!"

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!"

23 They grab bow and spear; they're cruel and show no mercy. Their sound roars like the sea as they ride on horses, deployed like men ready for battle against you, daughter of Zion."

23 They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

- There is an enormous amount of information here. These are not the Scythians for several reasons, the Scythians did not invade.

- This idea of using horses as cavalry, not drawing chariots, the Egyptians had been doing this for a long time.

— There was a lot of trading in chariots in Solomon's day, but the use of horses as cavalry was an innovation the Babylonians did do, and others obviously too.

— The cruelty of the Babylonians is pretty spectacular, the way they impaled their enemies on poles, and flayed them alive; they were known to be very aggressive.

— We see some glimpse of that in the book of Daniel when we see Nebuchadnezzar, who was an absolute despot—probably more complete than anyone since. If something didn't agree with him, it was off with that person's head, and the dispossession of all his relatives; the fiery furnace burning people alive, *houses a dung hill*, from Daniel.

24 We have heard the report of it; Our hands are limp. Anguish has seized us, Pain like *that of a woman in childbirth*.

24 We have heard the report of it; Our hands are limp. Anguish has seized us, Pain as of a woman in childbirth.

24 We have heard the news about it, and our hands are limp. Distress has seized us like a woman in labor.

24 We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

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.

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.

25 Don't go out into the field, and don't travel on the road, because the enemy has a sword, and terror is on every side.

25 Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy *and* fear is on every side.

26 Daughter of my people, put on sackcloth And roll in ashes; Mourn as for an only son, A most bitter mourning. For suddenly the **destroyer** Will come against us.

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.

26 Daughter of my people, put on sackcloth and roll in ashes. Mourn with bitter wailing, as one mourns at the death of an only son. For the destroyer will come on us suddenly.

26 O daughter of my people, gird *thee* with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

- "...destroyer" - an allusion to the Antichrist (Is 16:4-5; Jer 4:7); see [Allusions to the Antichrist](#).

- A mystic can find a message beyond these words, a message that Jeremiah had on his heart. He was dealing with his people and the anguish that is coming right on the horizon, an enemy that God is raising to power to be His instrument of judgment on the nation that has been so wantonly guilty of idolatry and rejection.

- It is interesting as we go through this: from the hordes to the north in v22, the woman in travail in v24, and this mourning for an only son in v26. It is easy to see behind these some very important prophetic typological themes.

#### (d) The Lord's rejection of His people (6:27-30)

27 "I have made you an assayer *and* an examiner among My people, So that you may know and put their way to the test."

27 "I have made you an assayer *and* a tester among My people, That you may know and assay their way."

27 "I've made you an assayer of my people, as well as a fortress. You know how to test their way."

27 I have set thee *for* a tower *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

- This is a striking verse about the Antichrist: Here we learn that the Antichrist is but a tool in the hands of God. It is God who sets him in the midst of Israel to "try" them.

— Is 10:5-6 makes a similar statement

— Similar to how Pharaoh was "raised up" by God (Rom 9:17) to accomplish His purpose, even as Pharaoh was a foreshadowing of the Antichrist.

28 All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a slanderer; *They are* bronze and iron. They are, all of them, corrupt.

28 All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a talebearer. *They are* bronze and iron; They, all of them, are corrupt.

28 All of them are very rebellious, going around as slanderers. They're bronze and iron, and all of them are corrupt.

28 *They are* all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: *they are* brass and iron; they are all corrupters.

29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on, But the wicked are not separated.

29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on, But the wicked are not separated.

29 The bellows blow fiercely to consume the lead with the fire. The assayer keeps on refining, but the impurities aren't separated out.

29 The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away.

30 They call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them.

30 They call them rejected silver,? Because the LORD has rejected them.

30 They're called reject silver, because the LORD has rejected them.

30 Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

- The imagery in the last few verses is that of a refiner, where you heat things, and the impurities boil to the top, and you skim it off to get the metal pure.

— They are the *reprobate silver* in the sense that they are the part that is skimmed off and rejected, as opposed to the pure silver that would be used for value. He is indulging in the idiom "the refiner's fire" in a sense.

— Incidentally, in that message is a hope, because you don't burn silver to burn it up, you burn silver to get rid of the impurities. The process isn't intended to be destroying, it is intended to be purifying.

— He loves us too much to allow us to prosper in disobedience (1 Cor 5 vs 2 Cor 2)