

Jeremiah 17 - Judah's Sin & Punishment; The Heart is Wicked; Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

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)

(H) Eighth message: God imposes restrictions on Jeremiah concerning marriage, mourning, and merriness (Jer 16:1—17:27)

(b) Sins leading to judgment (Jer 16:10—17:27)

(iii) Entrenched sin (17:1-4)

(iv) God uses Psalm 1 to contrast the fate of the wicked and righteous (17:5-8)

(v) Wicked hearts (17:9-11)

(vi) Jeremiah's imprecation (17:12-18)

(vii) Sabbath violation (17:19-27)

Jeremiah 17

(iii) Entrenched sin (17:1-4)

1 The sin of Judah is written with an iron stylus; With a diamond point it is engraved on the tablet of their hearts And on the horns of their altars,

1 The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; With a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart And on the horns of their altars,

1 The sin of Judah is engraved with an iron stylus. It is inscribed with a diamond point on the tablet of their heart and on the horns of their altars.

1 The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron, *and* with the point of a diamond: *it is* graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;

2 As they remember their children, So they *remember* their altars and their Asherim By green trees on the high hills.

2 As they remember their children, So they *remember* their altars and their Asherim By green trees on the high hills.

2 When their sons remember, they remember their altars and their Asherah poles beside green trees on the high hills.

2 Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

- Judah's sin is indelible, therefore their judgment is inescapable. God's law is engraved in stone, their sin is engraved in their heart. The precision of that engraving is dramatized by these tools (pen of iron, point of a diamond).

— Job 19:24: engravings cannot be erased. The heart is declared not only sick, but incurably sick. God himself does not change the heart, He gives you a new one. Cf. Hammurabi Steele, Moabite Stone, and Behistun.

- Temple: Blood on 4 horns of the altar (Lev 16:18).

3 Mountain of Mine in the countryside, I will turn over your wealth and all your treasures as plunder, Your high places for sin throughout your borders.

3 O mountain of Mine in the countryside, I will give over your wealth and all your treasures for booty, Your high places for sin throughout your borders.

3 My mountain in the field, your wealth and your treasures I'll give as spoil; along with your high places as the price of your sin throughout your territory.

3 O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance *and* all thy treasures to the spoil, *and* thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders.

4 And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance That I gave you; And I will make you serve your enemies In the land which you do not know; For you have kindled a fire in My anger Which will burn forever.

4 And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance That I gave you; And I will make you serve your enemies In the land which you do not know; For you have kindled a fire in My anger Which will burn forever.

4 You will let go of your inheritance which I gave you, and I'll make you serve your enemies in a land that you don't know. For with my anger you have started a fire that will burn forever.

4 And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, *which* shall burn for ever.

- The underlying thought here is "You want to dedicate your lands to the idols, you got it. You go to the land of the idols."

- Asherim (sacred tree Asherah; Baal cult, symbol of Canaanite goddess Atthart): poles beside Canaanite altars. Prescribed by Mosaic Law (Deut 16:21).

[2 Chr 36:21 not equal to this passage; 25:11, 29:10...]

(iv) God uses Psalm 1 to contrast the fate of the wicked and righteous
(17:5-8)

5 This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

5 Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

5 This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the person who trusts in mankind, who makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

- Cursed be the man who trusts flesh. There are three words for "man" in the Bible: *geber* is used here which means man (vs. children) with strength in battle - to be mighty. [vs. Adam which is mankind, humanity, or basar which is "flesh": man's frailty vs. God's omnipotence.]

- Is this "man" Jehoiakim? Zedekiah? (Reliance on Egypt vs Nebuchadnezzar). Cf. Ps 1:3.

6 "For he will be like a bush in the desert, And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt that is not inhabited.

6 "For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant.

6 He will be like a bush in the desert, and he won't see when good comes. He will dwell in parched places in the wilderness, a land of salt, without inhabitants.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose trust is the LORD.

7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD.

7 Blessed is the person who trusts in the LORD, making the LORD his trust.

7 Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

8 "For he will be like a tree planted by the water That extends its roots by a stream, And does not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought, Nor cease to yield fruit.

8 "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit.

8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by a stream. He won't fear when the heat comes, and his leaves will be green. In a year of drought he won't be

concerned, nor will he stop producing fruit."

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

(v) Wicked hearts (17:9-11)

9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

9 "The heart is more deceitful than anything. It is incurable— who can know it?

9 The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

- There is nothing more deceitful than the heart. And desperately wicked: the word here is *anash*: it means beyond cure, it is sick. — God does not try to cure your heart. David when he prays in Ps 51 prays, "Create in me a clean heart." This idiom is used throughout the entire Scripture. God gives a new heart. Heart is the source of all human frailty (Prov 4:23). — From the heart come all deeds. See also Is 44:20; Deut 10:16.

10 "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, To give to each person according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

10 "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

10 I am the LORD who searches the heart, who tests the inner depths to give to each person according to what he deserves, according to the fruit of his deeds.

10 I the LORD search the heart, / try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

11 "As a partridge that hatches eggs which it has not laid, So is a person who makes a fortune, but unjustly; In the middle of his days it will abandon him, And in the end he will be a fool."

11 "As a partridge that hatches eggs which it has not laid, So is he who makes a fortune, but unjustly; In the midst of his days it will forsake him, And in the end he will be a fool."

11 As a partridge gathers together eggs that it didn't lay, so is a person who amasses wealth unjustly. In the middle of his life it will leave him, and in the end he will prove to be a fool

11 As the partridge sitteth *on eggs*, and hatcheth *them* not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

- Partridges don't sit on eggs they don't lay. The partridge can be used here generically and the idea becomes clear.

(vi) Jeremiah's imprecation (17:12-18)

12 A glorious throne on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

12 A glorious throne on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

12 A glorious throne exalted from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

12 A glorious high throne from the beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary.

13 LORD, the hope of Israel, All who abandon You will be put to shame. Those who turn away **on earth will be written down**, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, *that is* the LORD.

13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the LORD.

13 LORD, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn aside from you will be written in the dust, because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water.

13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, *and* they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

- "...on earth will be written down" - that is in contrast to being written in the book of life (Ex 32:32; Luke 10:20; Rev 20:12; 21:27. Cf. John 8)

— Ps 22: dust of death, separation curse: Gen 3. They are written in the dust because they have forsaken the fountain of living waters.

Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

14 Heal me, LORD, and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For You are my praise.

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For You are my praise.

14 Heal me, LORD, and I'll be healed; deliver me, and I'll be delivered, because you are my praise.

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou *art* my praise.

15 Look, they keep saying to me, "Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!"

15 Look, they keep saying to me, "Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!"

15 Look, they're saying to me, "Where is the message from the LORD? Let it come about!"

15 Behold, they say unto me, Where *is* the word of the LORD? let it come now.

16 But as for me, I have not hurried away from *being* a shepherd *following* after You, Nor have I longed for the disastrous day; You Yourself know that the utterance of my lips Was in Your presence.

16 But as for me, I have not hurried away from *being* a shepherd after You, Nor have I longed for the woeful day; You Yourself know that the utterance of my lips Was in Your presence.

16 I haven't run away from being your shepherd, and I haven't longed for the day of sickness. You know what comes out from my lips, it's open before you.

16 As for me, I have not hastened from *being* a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was *right* before thee.

17 Do not be a terror to me; You are my refuge in a day of disaster.

17 Do not be a terror to me; You are my refuge in the day of disaster.

17 Don't be a terror to me. You are my refuge in a day of trouble.

17 Be not a terror unto me: thou *art* my hope in the day of evil.

18 Let those who persecute me be put to shame, but as for me, let me not be put to shame; Let them be dismayed, but let me not be dismayed. Bring on them a day of disaster, And crush them with **double** destruction!

18 Let those who persecute me be put to shame, but as for me, let me not be put to shame; Let them be dismayed, but let me not be dismayed. Bring on them a day of disaster, And crush them with twofold destruction!

18 Let those who pursue me be put to shame, but don't put me to shame. Let them be terrified, but don't let me be terrified. Bring the day of judgment on them, and destroy them with double destruction!

18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

- "...double" - again the word *amash* meaning complete, not double destruction. Notice that these pronouncements of doom are always ethnically conditioned.

(vii) Sabbath violation (17:19-27)

19 This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and stand at the public gate, through which the kings of Judah come in and go out, as well as at all the gates of Jerusalem;

19 Thus the LORD said to me, "Go and stand in the public gate, through which the kings of Judah come in and go out, as well as in all the gates of Jerusalem;

19 The LORD told me, "Go, stand in the gate of the people, where the kings of Judah come in and go out, and in the other gates of Jerusalem as well.

19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

20 and say to them, 'Listen to the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all inhabitants of Jerusalem who come in through these gates.

20 and say to them, 'Listen to the word of the LORD, kings of Judah, and all Judah and all inhabitants of Jerusalem who come in through these gates:

20 Say to them, 'Kings of Judah, all Judah, and all the residents of Jerusalem entering these gates, hear this message from the LORD.

20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:

21 This is what the LORD says: "Take care for yourselves, and do not carry *any* load on the Sabbath day or bring *anything* in through the gates of Jerusalem.

21 Thus says the LORD, "Take heed for yourselves, and do not carry any load on the sabbath day or bring anything in through the gates of Jerusalem.

21 This is what the LORD says: "Be careful! On the Sabbath day, don't carry any load or bring anything through the gates of Jerusalem.

21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem;

22 You shall not bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day nor do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, just as I commanded your forefathers.

22 You shall not bring a load out of your houses on the sabbath day nor do any work, but keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.

22 Don't bring any load out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor are you to do any work. You are to consecrate the Sabbath day, just as I commanded your ancestors.

22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

- This may sound strange, because a few chapters ago, Jeremiah was on their case. They were obeying the literal law but without their heart.

— He is just reminding them of the Sabbath day for some very specific reasons. The Sabbath was a two-fold sign. It was in the Decalogue, it is emphasized in the Ten Commandments.

The Sabbath day emphasizes two relationships with God: one, the Creator, the Sabbath day commemorates the seventh day on which God rested; it also speaks because of its place in the Decalogue as a sign of the Covenant between Israel and the Creator, that they too would observe the seventh day as a day of rest, just as the Creator rested on the seventh day. That idea is ingrained in Genesis and engraved in the stone in Ex 20:8-11; 2:13; Ezek 20:12. Jeremiah is pointing to that which is, in effect, a metonym (it is the general for the specific). He is calling them to an acknowledgment of their Creator and their covenant relationship.

23 Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks so as not to listen or accept discipline.

23 Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take correction.

23 But they didn't listen, nor did they pay attention. They were determined not to listen and not to accept instruction.

23 But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

24 "But it will come about, if you give your attention to Me," declares the LORD, "to bring no load in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but to keep the Sabbath day holy by doing no work on it,

24 "But it will come about, if you listen attentively to Me," declares the LORD, "to bring no load in through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but to keep the sabbath day holy by doing no work on it,

24 If you listen to me carefully," declares the LORD, "and don't bring a load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, and you consecrate the Sabbath day and don't do any work on it,

24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein;

25 then there will come in through the gates of this city kings and officials sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever.

25 then there will come in through the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever.

25 then kings and princes, sitting on the throne of David will come through the gates of this city. They, their princes, the men of Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem will come riding in chariots and on horses, and this city will be inhabited forever.

25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever.

26 They will come in from the cities of Judah and from the areas surrounding Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the lowland, from the hill country, and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, and frankincense, and bringing sacrifices of thanksgiving to the house of the LORD.

26 They will come in from the cities of Judah and from the environs of Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the lowland, from the hill country and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, and bringing sacrifices of thanksgiving to the house of the LORD.

26 They'll come from the cities of Judah, from the places around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin, from the Shephelah, from the hill country, and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, and incense, and bringing thanksgiving offerings to the LORD's Temple.

26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.

- This will happen in the Millennium

27 But if you do not listen to Me, to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying a load and coming in through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will set fire to its gates, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem and not go out.""

27 But if you do not listen to Me to keep the sabbath day holy by not carrying a load and coming in through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem and not be quenched.""

27 But if you don't listen to me, to consecrate the Sabbath day and not carry any load as you enter the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I'll start a fire in its gates. It will consume the palaces of Jerusalem and won't be extinguished.""

27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.