

Jeremiah

Part Two

5:1 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 doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her.

In Jerusalem there is not to be found one solitary soul who concerns himself about uprightness and sincerity, does not, though rhetorically expressed, contain any rhetorical hyperbole or exaggeration such as may have arisen from the prophet's righteous indignation, or have been inferred from the severity of the expected judgment.

2 And though they say, As Yahweh liveth; surely they swear falsely.

3 O Yahweh, do not thine eyes look upon truth? thou hast stricken them, but they were 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.

The eye of the Lord is directed towards faithfulness, which is not to be found in Jerusalem.

4 Then I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish; for they know not the way of Yahweh, nor the law of their God:

5 I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they know the way of Yahweh, and the law of their God. But these with one accord have broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.

This total want of good faith and uprightness is found not only in the lower orders of the populace, amongst the mean and ignorant rabble, but in the higher ranks of the educated.

6 Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, a wolf of the evenings shall destroy them, a leopard shall watch against their cities; every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, [and] their backslidings are increased.

This verse is neither a threatening of future punishments, nor is to be taken figuratively.

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

8 They were as fed horses roaming at large; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife.

9 Shall I not visit for these things? saith Yahweh; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Such abandoned behaviour the Lord must punish.

10 Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her branches; for they are not Yahweh's.

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

Judah shows its faithlessness by denying the Lord, by saying **לֹא חִי אָנִי**.

12 They have denied Yahweh, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine:

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

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

16 Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men.

But the people is to have proof of the truth of the word of the Lord. Because it, despising the threatening of punishment, says: Misfortune shall not light upon us, the Lord will make the word in the mouth of Jeremiah a fire, and the people wood, that the fire may consume it.

17 And they shall eat up thy harvest, and thy bread, [which] thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig-trees; they shall beat down thy fortified cities, wherein thou trustest, with the sword.

18 But even in those days, saith Yahweh, I will not make a full end with you.

This people will devour the harvest and the bread, the children, the cattle, and the best fruits of the land. Devour, here as often, in the wider sense, destroy.

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

The penalty corresponds to the sin. Because Judah in its own land serves the gods of foreigners, so it must serve strangers in a foreign land.

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

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

22 Fear ye not me? saith Yahweh: will ye not tremble at my presence, who 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.

Blindness is shown in that they see not the government of God's almighty power in nature; deafness, in that they hear not the voice of God in His word.

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

24 Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear Yahweh our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in its season; that preserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

רְאֵת: they turn away and go off, and consider not that they owe their daily bread to the Lord.

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

26 For among my people are found wicked men: they watch, as fowlers lie in wait; they set a trap, they catch men.

27 As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxed rich.

28 They are waxed fat, they shine: yea, they overpass in deeds of wickedness; they plead not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, that they may prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

Through the luxurious living their wealth makes possible to them, they are grown fat and sleek. עֲשָׂרִים, in graphic description, is joined to the preceding verb. It is explained as fat bodies, become glossy, in keeping with the noun תְּשִׁיבָה, which in Song 5:14 expresses the glitter of ivory;

29 Shall I not visit for these things? saith Yahweh; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

30 A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land:

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?

Jer 5:29 is a refrain-like repetition of Jer 5:9 in which the already described moral depravity is briefly characterized, and is asserted of all ranks of the people.

6:1 Flee for safety, ye children of Benjamin, out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise up a signal on Beth-haccherem; for evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction.

2 The comely and delicate one, the daughter of Zion, will I cut off.

3 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 ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day declineth, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

5 Arise, and let us go up by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

6 For thus hath Yahweh of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast up a mound against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.

7 As a well casteth forth its waters, so she casteth forth her wickedness: violence and destruction is heard in her; before me continually is sickness and wounds.

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

The Judgment is Irrevocably Decreed. - A hostile army approaches from the north, and lays siege to Jerusalem, in order to storm the city.

9 Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn again thy hand as a grape-gatherer into the baskets.

The "remnant of Israel" is not the kingdom of Judah at large, but Judah already reduced by judgments.

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

11 Therefore I am full of the wrath of Yahweh; I am weary with holding in: pour it out upon the children in the street, 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 And their houses shall be turned unto others, their fields and their wives together; for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith Yahweh.

Their houses, fields, and wives will be handed over to others, descend to others.

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.

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

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 Yahweh.

16 Thus saith Yahweh, 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].

The Lord has not left any lack of instruction and warning. He has marked out for them the way of salvation in the history of the ancient times. It is to this reference is made when they, in ignorance of the way to walk in, are called to ask after the everlasting paths.

17 And I set watchmen over you, [saying], Hearken to the sound of the trumpet; but they said, We will not hearken.

He caused prophets to rise up amongst them, who called their attention to the threatening evil. Watchers are prophets, Eze 3:17, who stand upon the watch-tower to keep a lookout, Hab 2:1, and to give the people warning, by proclaiming what they have seen in spirit. "Hearken to the sound," etc., are not the words of the watchmen (prophets), for it is they who blow the trumpet, but the words of God; so that we have to supply, "and I said." The comparison of the prophets to watchmen, who give the alarm of the imminent danger by means of the sound of the trumpet, involves the comparison of the prophets' utterances to the clang of the signal-horn-suggested besides by Amos 3:6.

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

The crew of the ungodly is addressed along with the nations and the earth.

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; and as for my law, they have rejected it.

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

The people had no shortcoming in the matter of sacrifice in the temple; but in this service, as being mere outward service of works, the Lord has no pleasure, if the heart is estranged from Him, rebels against His commandments.

21 Therefore thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people; and the fathers and the sons together shall stumble against them; the neighbor and his friend shall perish.

22 Thus saith Yahweh, Behold, a people cometh from the north country; and a great nation shall be stirred up from the uttermost parts of the earth.

The farther the land is from which the enemy comes, the more strange and terrible he appears to the imagination.

23 They lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses, every one set in array, as a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Zion.

24 We have heard the report thereof; our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, [and] pangs as of a woman in travail.

25 Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy, [and] terror, are on every side.

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 destroyer shall suddenly come upon us.

27 I have made thee a trier [and] a fortress among my people; that thou mayest know and try their way.

To bestrew the head with ashes is a mode of expressing the greatest affliction.

28 They are all grievous revolters, going about with slanders; they are brass and iron: they all of them deal corruptly.

"Revolters of revolters" is a kind of superlative, and סְרִיר is to be derived from סָרַר, not from סָרֵר, perverse of perverse.

29 The bellows blow fiercely; the lead is consumed of the fire: in vain do they go on refining; for the wicked are not plucked away.

The trial is viewed under the figure of a long-continued but resultless process of smelting.

30 Refuse silver shall men call them, because Yahweh hath rejected them.

7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

2 Stand in the gate of Yahweh's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Yahweh, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Yahweh.

The gate of the temple into which the prophet was to go and stand, is doubtless one of the three gates of the inner or upper court, in which he could stand and address the people gathered before him, in the outer court; perhaps the same in which Baruch read Jeremiah's prophecies to the people.

3 Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, are these.

The central idea of the discourse are contained in these two verses.

5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor;

6 if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt:

7 then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.

The indispensable condition of continued sojourn in the land.

8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known,

The query before the infin. absoll. is the expression of wonder and indignation; and the infinitives are used with special emphasis for the verb.

10 and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?

Breaches of almost all the commandments are specified.

11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Yahweh.

If thieves, murderers, adulterers, etc., gathered to the temple, and supposed that by appearing there they procured the absolution of their sins, they were in very act declaring the temple to be a robbers' retreat. פִּירָץ, the violent, here: the house-breaker, robber.

12 But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith Yahweh, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not:

14 therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.

15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

I cast you out from my sight, i.e., drive you forth amongst the heathen; cf. Deu 29:27; and with the second clause cf. 2Ki 17:20. The whole seed of Ephraim is the ten tribes.

16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee.

17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

19 Do they provoke me to anger? saith Yahweh; [do they] not [provoke] themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord Yahweh: Behold, mine anger and my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

God causes the consequences of their idolatry to fall on their own head.

21 Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh.

22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices:

23 but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.

24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in [their own] counsels [and] in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

26 yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers.

27 And thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

28 And thou shalt say unto them, This is the nation that hath not hearkened to the voice of Yahweh their God, nor received instruction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

29 Cut off thy hair, [O Jerusalem], and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for Yahweh hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

30 For the children of Judah have done that which is evil in my sight, saith Yahweh: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.

31 And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded not, neither came it into my mind.

32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of Slaughter: for they shall bury in Topheth, till there be no place [to bury].

33 And the dead bodies of this people shall be food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall frighten them away.

34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become a waste.

In these verses the judgment of [Jer 7:20](#) is depicted in all its horror, and the description is introduced by a call upon Zion to mourn and lament for the evil awaiting Jerusalem and the whole land.