

Jeremiah 4-5

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 2—Jeremiah's 1st message to Jerusalem (Israel's apostasy/idolatry)

Message is to 'all the families of the house of Israel'

The northern tribes were in captivity...they did not hear this message

- Dual prophecy directed more to the modern descendants of Israel

Charges of apostasy and idolatry against the people

- Worshipping false gods especially the Baals

The futility of foreign alliances—Judah was trusting in Egypt and Assyria and not God

Chapter 3—The call to repentance

v. 1-5 Judgment against the people because of spiritual adultery

v. 6 Jeremiah's 2nd message—backsliding Israel

Worshipping on every high mountain and under every green tree

Jeremiah told to proclaim the words to the north—backsliding Israel (end time Israel)

End time prophecy—future restoration of Israel

Jerusalem will be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered to it

Israel's repentance will be genuine

Northern tribes of Israel area of captivity



Judah/Jerusalem

Chapter 4

v. 1-4 Future restoration continued

¹“If you will return, O Israel,” says the Lord, “Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved.

² And you shall swear, ‘The Lord lives,’ In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; The nations shall bless themselves in Him, And in Him they shall glory.”

v. 1 God pleads with end time **Israel** to repent/return to Him, put away their pagan ways/idols and it will lead to their restoration

“return”= repent

“return” may also mean to return from exile

v. 2 Their repentance must be genuine

If they, Israel and Judah, completely commit to following God in truth, judgment and righteousness, it will also lead to the blessings from God

Focus to Judah and Jerusalem...Two metaphors of the need to repent

3 For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: “Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

4 Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”

v. 3 Agricultural metaphor

The people of Judah and Jerusalem need to break up the fallow/hard ground of their hearts by means of repentance

“thorns’ –of idolatry that can choke spiritual renewal

v. 4 Metaphor of circumcision (The sign of being under the covenant with God)

- They need to circumcise their hearts so that inwardly they are right with God—a spiritual conversion

v. 4 [Last part] A warning—to the people of Jeremiah’s day (and all Israel)

- If they did not truly repent, they would experience God’s wrath, because of their wickedness

Ch. 4:5—Ch. 6:30: **Judgment** against Judah in Jeremiah's day... end time prophecy interwoven

The enemy is coming...An eminent invasion (v. 5-31)

5 Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say: “Blow the trumpet in the land; Cry, ‘Gather together,’ And say, ‘Assemble yourselves, And let us go into the fortified cities.’

6 Set up the standard toward Zion. Take refuge! Do not delay! For I will bring disaster from the north, And great destruction.”

7 The lion has come up from his thicket, And the destroyer of nations is on his way. He has gone forth from his place To make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste, Without inhabitant.

v. 5 “Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem”

Judah and Jerusalem are warned with the trumpet blast, which signals an enemy approaching and to take refuge

v. 6 “take refuge” because the enemy is coming from the north (Babylon)

- Can also point to future end time Babylon

v. 7 The enemy is ferocious like a lion (Babylon)

The land and the cities will be laid waste—utter destruction

9 “And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord, “That the heart of the king shall perish, And the heart of the princes; The priests shall be astonished, And the prophets shall wonder.”

10 Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, ‘You shall have peace,’ Whereas the sword reaches to the heart.

v. 9 “in that day”—all these mentioned had become corrupt since Josiah’s day
“heart”= courage...courage perishing of the kings and priests

- The leaders of the nation will be caught off guard because they did not heed the warning
 - Leaves off with **‘the prophets’**...leads into v. 10

v. 10 “greatly deceived” (Companion Bible) “Heb. idiom for declaring that they would be deceived: i.e. by the false prophets who prophesied peace”

(priests and prophets)

(Moffatt) “Ah Lord Eternal, **they** will cry, ‘thou hast deceived this people utterly!’”

(Expositors) “In short, the false prophets has spoken deceptively to the people; they had misled the people into false hopes; and God had permitted it all. Instead of peace destruction faced Judah.”

The approaching enemy continued

11 At that time it will be said To this people and to Jerusalem, “A dry wind of the desolate heights blows in the wilderness— Toward the daughter of My people— Not to fan or to cleanse—

12 A wind too strong for these will come for Me; Now I will also speak judgment against them.”

13 “Behold, he shall come up like clouds, And his chariots like a whirlwind. His horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we are plundered!”

v. 11 “At that time”—of utter destruction, addressed to the people of Jerusalem

“dry wind”—a strong desert storm (sirocco) that leaves a path of destruction

“not to fan or to cleanse”—has another purpose: judgment

v. 12 a strong wind is necessary

➤ The purpose of the “wind”—God’s judgment

v. 13 “clouds” ... “chariots” ... “eagles”—the dust clouds of the swift chariots and horses of the Babylonian army...then the people cry: “We are plundered”

14 O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, That you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?

15 For a voice declares from Dan And proclaims affliction from Mount Ephraim:

16 “Make mention to the nations, Yes, proclaim against Jerusalem, That watchers come from a far country And raise their voice against the cities of Judah.

17 Like keepers of a field they are against her all around, Because she has been rebellious against Me,” says the Lord.

18 “Your ways and your doings Have procured these things for you. This is your wickedness, Because it is bitter, Because it reaches to your heart.”

v. 14 “Wash your heart from wickedness”

- Repent—and they still could be saved...but evil is lodged in them

v. 15-16 The enemy coming from the north—

- Dan located to the extreme north in Israel...1st area to be invaded
- Ephraim, also to the north, but closer to Judah...the enemy is on the march, closing in

“watchers”—those who besiege or blockade a city (Theological Wordbook OT)
(Parallel Com.) “The watchers (besiegers) symbolize the eyes of divine judgment”

Sorrow for the doomed nation: 1st of Jeremiah's laments

19 O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, Because you have heard, O my soul, The sound of the trumpet, The alarm of war.

20 Destruction upon destruction is cried, For the whole land is plundered. Suddenly my tents are plundered, And my curtains in a moment.

21 How long will I see the standard, And hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 “For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.”

v. 19 “my soul, my soul” (KJV) “my bowels, my bowels”= anguish, distress

- Jeremiah feels a sorrow in his heart knowing of the coming destruction/war

v. 20 “my tents are plundered”—Jeremiah identifies with the people, their homes destroyed
“my curtains”—a figure for the tents/dwelling places

v. 21 He desires to know how long the destruction will last
“standard”= battle standard

v. 22 There is a reason for the coming destruction: The people have turned from God
They have become so spiritually foolish, they cannot perceive their plight

The vision of chaos (v. 23-28)
Using creation language as a figure of coming judgment

23 I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light.

24 I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth.

25 I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled.

26 I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the Lord, By His fierce anger.

v. 23 The invading armies have left total destruction “without form and void”
(Parallel Com.) “Archeological excavations have shown that every one of the cities that existed in Jeremiah’s day were completely destroyed.”

“no light”—darkness being a symbol of God’s judgment

v. 24-25 Desolation was so complete that the mountains, hills, man and birds were affected

v. 26 Fruitful areas become a wilderness, cities destroyed...God’s judgment for sin and wickedness

Vision of chaos continued

27 For thus says the Lord: “The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end.

28 For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it.

v. 27 God’s punishment results in a desolate land, but not a complete punishment

“Yet I will not make a full end”

➤ A remnant of the people will be left...

V .28 “earth mourning and heavens black”—symbols of God’s judgment

But He will not turn back on the judgment because of sin and wickedness

The plundering of the land

29 The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen. They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks. Every city shall be forsaken, And not a man shall dwell in it.

30 “And when you are plundered, What will you do? Though you clothe yourself with crimson, Though you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, Though you enlarge your eyes with paint, In vain you will make yourself fair; Your lovers will despise you; They will seek your life.

31 “For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself; She spreads her hands, saying, ‘Woe is me now, for my soul is weary Because of murderers!’

v. 29 The people flee from the armies advancing, abandoning the cities

v. 30 “What will you do?” Instead of turning to God, they try to smooth it over with the enemy
(Nelson Study Bible) “The word **lovers** describes Judah and Israel’s history of physical and spiritual prostitution”

v. 31 A picture of Jerusalem crying out like a woman in labor and anguish...but does not cry out to God
She spreads her hands in agony as death approaches at the hands of the enemy

Chapter 5

The reasons for God's judgment

v. 1-9 Dialog between God and Jeremiah

1 Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places If you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her.

2 Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' Surely they swear falsely."

v. 1 God challenges Jeremiah to find **one** righteous person in Jerusalem...and if he does God will pardon the whole city

(open places= public concourses) (speaking of the masses of the people)

(Companion Bible) "Points to the reign of Jehoiakim rather than that of Josiah"

➤ The people become worse morally and spiritually

v. 2 They might profess to follow God, but their conduct proves they are lying

3 O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return.

4 Therefore I said, “Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.

5 I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.” But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds.

v. 3 Jeremiah responds that though God had tried to correct them they refused to repent

- God had allowed foreign invasion at times but they end up not responding/not repenting
Correction (Heb.)= chastisement, discipline and instruction

v. 4 He adds that the common people are the poor, spiritually uneducated, do not comprehend God’s justice
Judgment= justice...repeated in verses 1, 4, 5

v. 5 Maybe a better idea is to go to the leaders, the spiritually educated...but he discovers that they have abandoned God as well
“broken the yoke and burst the bonds”—of service to God

6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them, A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them; A leopard will watch over their cities. Everyone who goes out from there shall be torn in pieces, Because their transgressions are many; Their backslidings have increased.

7 “How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me And sworn by those that are not gods. When I had fed them to the full, Then they committed adultery And assembled themselves by troops in the harlots’ houses.

8 They were like well-fed lusty stallions; Every one neighed after his neighbor’s wife.

9 Shall I not punish them for these things?” says the Lord. “And shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?

v. 6 The results are: to receive judgment, because of their transgressions

The lion, wolf and leopard symbols of ravaging nature of Babylon's army
“backslidings”= apostasies (Companion Bible)

v. 7 “How shall I pardon you for this?” (Deserving of judgment: He spells it out)

- They had forsaken God and worshipped other gods
- Committing adultery and harlotry—the forms of idolatry associated with the fertility cults, of Baal

v. 8 Describing both physical and spiritual adultery the people were involved in

v. 9 God’s decision to punish the people for such sins
“Myself” (KJV) ‘My soul’-- fig. for emphasis (Companion Bible)

Destruction coming v. 10-13

10 “Go up on her walls and destroy, But do not make a complete end. Take away her branches, For they are not the Lord’s.

11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me,” says the Lord.

v. 10 An image of breaking off the sinful branches...but not a complete end (remnant)

“branches” (KJV) “battlements” (Heb. *zamiyr*)= branch
Walls= fortification

v. 11 Israel and Judah are called out for rejecting God
(The northern tribes of Israel were in captivity)

Treacherously (Heb. *bagad*)= deceitfully, unfaithfully...a revolt against the Lord (false prophets work)

False prophets empty message

12 They have lied about the Lord, And said, “It is not He. Neither will evil come upon us, Nor shall we see sword or famine.

13 And the prophets become wind, For the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them.”

v. 12 The false prophets unfaithful lies about God and the coming destructions
Misleading the people with message of false security

v. 13 “wind” (Heb. *ruah*) “the connotation being emptiness, the futility of mere breath” (Theological Wordbook OT)

God's message of judgment through Jeremiah—dual prophecy

14 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: “Because you speak this word, Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, And this people wood, And it shall devour them.

15 Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel,” says the Lord. “It is a mighty nation, It is an ancient nation, A nation whose language you do not know, Nor can you understand what they say.

v. 14 “Lord God of hosts”—a battle name for God
Jeremiah is speaking God's word...words of fire which consumes the people like wood

- It consumes them because they are ferocious words

v. 15 Dual prophecy—relating to Jeremiah's day and the end time
“house of Israel”—being addressed...who had gone into captivity (don't hear these words)

“nation”= Babylon...ancient nation (Gen. 10:10)
Babylonians spoke Aramaic and wrote in Akkadian...hard to understand for the common man

16 Their quiver is like an open tomb; They are all mighty men.

17 And they shall eat up your harvest and your bread, Which your sons and daughters should eat. They shall eat up your flocks and your herds; They shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; They shall destroy your fortified cities, In which you trust, with the sword.

Their warriors would bring death and destruction upon the crops, herds and even children
They would destroy the fortified cities (their military) which they trusted

Dual prophecy continues

18 “Nevertheless in those days,” says the Lord, “I will not make a complete end of you.

19 And it will be when you say, ‘Why does the Lord our God do all these things to us?’ then you shall answer them, ‘Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens in a land that is not yours.’

- v. 18 “in those days”—language of the last days
- “I will not make a complete end of you”—a remnant left
 - A remnant anciently and in the future

v. 19 The people ask why the destruction upon us?

The answer: because of forsaking God and worshipping foreign gods

- “you will serve aliens in a land that is not yours”—into captivity/exile

20 “Declare this in the house of Jacob And proclaim it in Judah, saying,
21 ‘Hear this now, O foolish people, Without understanding, Who have eyes and see not, And who have ears and hear not:

22 Do you not fear Me?’ says the Lord. ‘Will you not tremble at My presence, Who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, By a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, Yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.

v. 20 The message is to: House of Jacob [Ch. 2:4]—northern ten tribes...
And Judah—Judah and Benjamin= southern tribes

The message affects them all

v. 21 They are spiritually blind and deaf-- to God’s word

v. 22 They do not fear nor properly worship the true God who is the creator of everything on earth

23 But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; They have revolted and departed.

24 They do not say in their heart, “Let us now fear the Lord our God, Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.”

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

v. 23 The people have defied and rebelled against God

v. 24 They do not have the proper fear and respect of Him who provides the blessings
“rain in season”—hits at Baal who supposedly provided the rain

v. 25 It is their sins that result in blessings being taken away

26 'For among My people are found wicked men; They lie in wait as one who sets snares; They set a trap; They catch men.

27 As a cage is full of birds, So their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich.

28 They have grown fat, they are sleek; Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the fatherless; Yet they prosper, And the right of the needy they do not defend.

v. 26-27 Wicked men who trap people by deceit for personal gain and to grow rich

v. 28 Sins against the fatherless, poor and needy...they neglect taking care of them

29 Shall I not punish them for these things?’ says the Lord. ‘Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?’

30 “An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land:

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But
what will you do in the end?

v. 29 The coming judgment upon the nation for their sins is justified

v. 30-31 The root cause of the nations sin and wickedness—false prophets, false religion

“rule by their own power”—not by God’s spirit...and the people love it that way

“But what will you do in the end?”—how will you respond, or what will you do when this judgment comes?

Lessons

O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, That you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?

Even though destruction was certain because of wickedness, God called the people to repentance

➤ He will always give people a chance to repent

God called out the spiritually blind and deaf to His word, they would not listen

➤ Apply God's word in our lives while we have opportunity