

Jeremiah Chapter 4

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Chapter 4

Theme: Return and repent; Nebuchadnezzar comes with desolation; God's judgment for sin to be terrible.

Outline:

1-2 Blessings Offered to Israel to Return

3-4 Reprieve Implied to Judah to Repent

5-18 Chaldeans To Destroy Judah for Sins

19-31 Lamenting the Great Calamity of War

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 9; Isaiah 13; Daniel 2; Daniel 4; Lamentations; Ezekiel 16; Ezekiel 23.

Related Links:

- A. *Introduction to the Book of Jeremiah ... here.*
- B. *Babylon – History and Prophecies.*
- C. *Lying Spirit from God (Ahab's Death).*
- D. *Habakkuk (Judgment of Chaldeans).*

Introduction:

- A. Embrace the book of Jeremiah; God Jehovah does not change; repent for sins like Jeremiah preached.
- B. Hear Jeremiah's inspired sermon – reminding them of their sins but now adding the pain of judgment.
- C. Remember and believe that the ferocity of the judgment here was appropriate and right for their sins.
- D. The God that created and rules the universe is a holy God that must punish sin/sinners (Ps 5:5; 11:5).
- E. The object of God's wrath here is His church of the Old Testament – Jerusalem and Judah of the Jews.
- F. God's judgment of His children is quite different from destruction of the wicked (Jer 4:27; 5:10,18).
- G. Remember that Babylon was a city that became an empire made up first of Chaldeans and then others.
- H. There is profit in every word of God, and it is your choice to embrace God's words or to slight them.

Blessings Offered to Israel to Return – Verses 1-2

1 If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not

remove.

- A. The first two verses are to Israel – not Judah – from chapter three (Jer 3:12-15,20-25).
 - 1. Judah and Jerusalem are stated next as the primary, probationary object of Jeremiah.
 - 2. Israel had been destroyed and scattered by the Assyrians at least 93 years earlier.
 - 3. The offers of forgiveness and terms of repentance were for the conviction of Judah.
 - 4. If they were past, it did not work; if present, only to a few; if future, then glorious.
- B. The last verses of chapter three illustrated repentance, but God clarified it and promised.
- C. Returning or repenting to God must be on His terms and by His definition in scripture.
 - 1. The return must be more than mere reformation, for it must be a return to Jehovah.
 - 2. The return must include eliminating offences to a holy God – abominable idolatry.
 - 3. The return must be complete and thorough, not moving again as many times before.
- D. We choose *remove* as active on Israel's part by (1) the necessary result of truly returning and putting away idolatry, (2) they were already removed passively by Assyria 93 years earlier at least, (3) there is a continuation of their action in the next verse of a full return, for (4) full and true repentance will seldom backslide again (II Cor 7:9-11; 10:3-6).
- E. Lesson: Repentance must be complete, detailed, and thorough for God to show mercy.
- F. Lesson: Elihu's description of proper repentance is good to remember (Job 33:27-28)

2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

- A. Here is continued description of complete and thorough repentance – godly swearing.
 - 1. Swearing is an act of worship appealing to the highest authority or being (Heb 6:16).
 - 2. The best oath is this one found through the Bible that appeals to the LORD Jehovah.
 - 3. If or when Israel truly repented, then they would have a totally new way of swearing.
 - 4. Though spoken to nations, it was the difference of Jehovah or Baal (Jeremiah 12:16).
- B. God inspired Jeremiah to write four rules of proper swearing that Israel had long failed.
 - 1. First, they would swear only by the name of Jehovah – the only living and true God.
 - 2. Second, all aspects of oaths must be done in truth and for truth (Jer 5:2; Isaiah 48:1).
 - 3. Third, all aspects of oaths must be in judgment – fully fair (I Sam 14:39; Matt 14:7).
 - 4. Fourth, all aspects of oaths must be in righteousness – total performance (Ps 15:4).
- C. This full (necessarily future) repentance by Israel would result in Gentile conversions.
 - 1. This is not a reference to nations glorying in Israel, or it would be the second person.
 - 2. This is not a nation, but a plurality of nations, consistent with earlier (Jer 3:16-19).
 - 3. A further product of their repentance (future) would be Messiah's kingdom for all.
 - 4. When did a plurality of nations bless themselves by and glory in Jehovah? When?

- 5. The great blessing to Abraham for nations was justification by Christ (Galatians 3:8).
- 6. The New Testament religion of Jesus Christ gives all glory to God (I Cor 1:29-31).
- D. Lesson: Swearing is an act of worship and delights our God when done correctly ... **Swearing and Oaths**.
- E. Lesson: Swearing needs godliness, by Jehovah only, for right reasons, with right action.
- F. Lesson: Never let dispensationalists steal Abraham's blessing in Christ for satanic Jews.

Reprieve Implied to Judah to Repent – Verses 3-4

3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

- A. Here is a change – leaving the offers and promises to Israel – to rebuke Judah for sins.
 - 1. This is the original group God called Jeremiah to blast, so he begins here in earnest.
 - 2. Verses for Israel were to provoke Judah and for gospel promises (Jer 3:1-25; 4:1-2).
 - 3. The following verses are specific to the times of Jeremiah and the coming Chaldeans.
- B. The words here are from the LORD Jehovah himself, but preached in turn by Jeremiah.
- C. God's charge to Judah to repent of sin was to sow its seeds in good, prepared ground.
 - 1. As the nation and culture were agrarian, such a metaphor as here was fully grasped.
 - 2. **Fallow** = fields or ground left dormant, unused, for usually a year to let the soil rest.
 - 3. Such ground would have been hard and covered with weeds, needing to be plowed.
 - 4. And they should not sow seeds of repentance in ground with thorns to choke them.
 - 5. He meant, *Hear the word I declare to you and humbly receive it for full repentance*.
 - 6. Similar in practical meaning to Jesus' parable of the sower, let this change bear fruit.
 - 7. Similar language was used by Hosea about a hundred years earlier (Hosea 10:12).
- D. Lesson: As Jesus warned His disciples, *Take heed therefore how ye hear* (Luke 8:18).
- E. Lesson: Instead of expecting a preacher to revive you, get ready for revival yourself.
- F. Lesson: The great fruit of Ezra's preaching was by preparation and passion (Ne 8:1-12).

4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

- A. In the Bible, circumcision – removal of a foreskin – is removing ones prideful rebellion.
 - 1. Moses, much earlier in their history, had told all Israel the same thing (Deut 10:16).
 - 2. This is clearly a matter of the heart – choosing to fear and love God and nothing else.
 - 3. Stephen, much later in their history, warned those Jews to do the same (Acts 7:51).
- B. The Bible does not connect circumcision to baptism, but to Christ's death (Col 2:11).

- C. The consequence of not doing so was unquenchable fire – Nebuchadnezzar then Titus.
 - 1. Unquenchable fire does not require eternal hell but merely fire you cannot put out.
 - 2. Moses and Paul taught, which occurred twice to Israel, consuming fire (Deut 4:24).
 - 3. John the Baptist applied similar words to the certain ruin of Jerusalem (Matt 3:12).
- D. Lesson: Cut off or cut out anything in life that competes with godliness (Matt 5:29-30).
- E. Lesson: God regenerates, but full circumcision requires conversion (Rom 2:28-29; [Romans 2 \(5 Sermons\)](#)).
- F. Lesson: Presbyterian folly binds literal circumcision to sprinkling (Col 2:10-15; [Colossians 2 \(3 sermons\)](#)).

Chaldeans to Destroy Judah for Sins – Verses 5-18

5 Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

- A. Here begins more detailed and specific warnings by Jeremiah about coming destruction.
 - 1. The audience, as specified at ordination, are the remaining Jews of Judah (Jer 1:18).
 - 2. He was to get busy (recall the almond tree rod), for horrible war was coming soon.
- B. Jeremiah was to dramatically use words that describe war coming in their own country.
 - 1. They used trumpets to announce danger before radio, television, emails, texts, etc.
 - 2. Assemble the people by shouting to get the attention of all and leave none at risk.
 - 3. Let us together take what we can and leave our farms for protection in walled cities.
- C. Lesson: Believers and churches must warn each other of coming wrath (I Thes 5:1-11).

6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

- A. The wartime standard or ensign should be set to point the assembling Jews to Jerusalem.
 - 1. Jerusalem was elevated and had originally been the fortress of Zion (II Samuel 5:7).
 - 2. It was a large city with key preparations to withstand a siege, like in Hezekiah's day.
- B. All citizens should retire to Jerusalem; they should not stay behind thinking to be safe.
- C. Why hurry to Jerusalem? Because God would bring an army from the north to destroy.
 - 1. The route Chaldeans took around the Arabian Desert brought them from the north.
 - 2. Babylon was only a city by itself, but it led a confederation of nations from the north.
- D. Lesson: We have mount Sion, Jerusalem above, where we should flee (Heb 12:22-24).

7 The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is

on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and ***thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.***

- A. The lion is Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldean/Babylonian Empire, God's king of kings.
 - 1. How do we know the lion is Nebuchadnezzar? By context of this book (Jer 50:17).
 - 2. Note words – *is come up from his thicket and is on his way*, like the almond tree rod; by the prophet's view, Nebuchadnezzar had left Babylon for his 1000-mile march.
 - 3. He is called a lion, just as the Babylonian beast is depicted by Daniel (Dan 7:1-4).
 - 4. Lions have been used for mighty enemies and will be (Jer 2:15; 49:19; 50:17; etc.).
 - 5. Babylon's art, shields, ensigns, gates showed Babylon as a great lion, king of beasts.
 - 6. God considers the lion the king of beasts that turns away from no other (Prov 30:30).
 - 7. Enjoy a genitive phrase here, either, *destroyer of the Gentiles* = a Gentile that destroys, or, he that destroyed Gentile nations previously, such as Assyria and Nineveh with his father Nabopolassar, and would destroy other Gentile nations again soon (Jer 25:9; 50:23; Isaiah 14:4-12,16-17; Ezekiel 26:7; 29:19; 30:10-11; etc.).
 - 8. Depending on when Jeremiah preached this, Nebuchadnezzar was or was not yet, for his first year as king of Babylon was the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer 25:1).
- B. He would arrive very surely and would make the Jews' promised land desolate waste.
 - 1. **Desolate** = laid waste; left alone, without companion, solitary, lonely, empty.
 - 2. Like Sennacherib, cities of Judah were wasted first and then the city of Jerusalem.
 - 3. Nebuchadnezzar would finish his work assigned by Jehovah, so none would survive.
 - 4. In specific terms, some cities had none left; in general terms, it was close enough.
 - 5. For extensive use of desolate and desolation, see Daniel's 70-weeks (Dan 9:26-27).
- C. Lesson: No king has ever reigned or ever moved without direction from God (Pr 21:1).
- D. Lesson: Jesus' abomination of desolation was the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem.

8 For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.

- A. Jeremiah's preaching foretold war with Babylon was certain and deserved lamenting.
- B. They should alter their clothing and comfort to bewail their sins and God's just wrath.
- C. Jerusalem and Judah had not done anything to turn God's great wrath away from them.
- D. Jehovah is fierce to sinners, as Isaiah, *his hand is stretched out still* (Is 9:12,17,21; 10:4).
- E. The God of the Bible, Jehovah of Moses, has fierce anger and Judah should have known.
 - 1. **Fierce** = Ardent, eager; full of violent desire; furiously zealous or active.
 - 2. God's anger is often described as fierce (Ex 32:12; Num 25:4; 32:14; Zeph 3:8; etc.).
- F. Lesson: Chastening can be much more severe than you have experienced or even think.

9 And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

- A. The future day is when Nebuchadnezzar arrived with his army; he had three expeditions.
 - 1. Jeremiah's 21st and Jehoiakim's 3rd; he took Daniel captive (II Kgs 24:1; Dan 1:1).
 - 2. Jeremiah's 29th and Zedekiah's 1st; he took Ezekiel and Mordecai (Esther 2:5-7).
 - 3. Jeremiah's 40th and Zedekiah's 11th; he got the city and burned it (Jer 39:2; 52:6-7).
- B. The four officers in Judah, which were listed before, will be greatly troubled (Jer 2:26).
 - 1. Though the four officers should be brave for various reasons, they would be terrified.
 - 2. Though the four officers had been told by Jeremiah of the war, they had not believed.
 - 3. The prophets had prophesied lies about peace, and the priests had ruled by those lies, but now both groups found their ignorance and/or lies to be hateful by horrible war.
- C. Lesson: Most sinners fear bodily harm, but God goes after your heart to hurt much more.
- D. Lesson: Give God and His Son your heart fully today lest He tear you apart inside out

10 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

- A. Jeremiah's observation began by glorious words, *Ah, Lord GOD* (Jer 1:6; 14:13; 32:17)!
- B. He had prophesied the war would result in the desolation and waste of Judah (Jer 4:7).
 - 1. He summed up coming destruction as the sword reaching the soul – no peace at all.
 - 2. What was coming was the opposite of peace – a brutal and horrific war of desolation.
- C. But now he declared confidently (*surely*) that God had greatly deceived the Judah Jews.
 - 1. Think! It was not because Jeremiah had been led to prophesy any peace to Jerusalem.
 - 2. Think! The false prophets boldly declared peace (Jer 6:14; 8:11; 14:13-14; 23:17).
 - 3. Think! These false prophets prophesied in the name of the LORD (Jer 14:14; 23:17).
 - 4. Think! God was against these rebels having any peace (Jeremiah 16:5; 15:1-4; 30:5).
 - 5. Think! The people wanted to hear lies and asked for them (Jer 5:30-31; Is 30:8-11).
 - 6. Thus, we apply what God told his contemporary Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:1-11; Is 63:17).
 - 7. Thus, we conclude He had done here what He had done to Ahab (I Kings 22:19-23).
 - 8. The judgment for the lying prophets would be severe (Jeremiah 5:10-19; 28:15-17).
- D. We deny this is Jeremiah's confusion due to previous promises of peace, like found in Isaiah, for (1) he did not pursue the argument, (2) it would be nearly blasphemous to intend it seriously, and (3) the context of promises was very different from this warning.
- E. We rejoice holily, hopefully like Jeremiah, to witness the lies of all kinds that proliferate from our first parents' choice to believe a lie rather than God (Romans 1:19-28).

- F. We surely reject Scofield's imagination that land promises to Israel were unconditional.
- G. Lesson: Do not be surprised when we preach the truth and it is opposite other Christians.
- H. Lesson: Do not be surprised when you share truth and find blindness (II Tim 2:24-26).
- I. Lesson: A cause of religious blindness is strong delusion from God (II Thess 2:9-12).
- J. Lesson: A cause of blindness like sexual perversity, is God's, **A Reprobate Mind**.
- K. Lesson: Our God is, *The Author of Confusion*, just not in His church assemblies ... **Is God the Author of Confusion? (4 sermons)**.

11 At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,

- A. The time here is that of Nebuchadnezzar arriving with armies against Judah (Jer 4:7,13).
- B. The dry wind, a metaphor, would remove moisture with blasting and scorching heat.
 - 1. Our same Bible describes wind from the north that drives away rain (Prov 25:23).
 - 2. The wind is from the high places, thus more than a breeze reduced by the high places.
 - 3. The wind is from high places – think a powerful wind sweeping down on a valley.
 - 4. Wind was useful in the agriculture business of the time for winnowing grains, etc.
 - 5. Wind was also useful for blowing away smoke, pollen, dust, and other pollutants.
- C. His wind is also called a whirlwind or stormy wind (Jer 23:19; 30:23; Ezek 13:10-16).
 - 1. All stormy winds obey our God and fulfil His word (Ps 148:8; 107:25-29; Am 4:13).
 - 2. When God's chastening was done, another wind would blow on Babylon (Jer 51:1).
- D. Lesson: Deny Mother Nature and naturalistic heresies; storms are from and by our God.

12 Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them.

- A. This wind from the high places, from the north, would be a full wind without any relief.
- B. Note: it would come to God, and He would then redirect it against Judah as His sentence, for whether stars or winds, He knows them all, and they are truly at His beck and call.
- C. The great and dreadful God would issue sentence against the rebels – His own people.
- D. Lesson: God can issue sentence against you, or He can issue orders for your prosperity.

13 Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

- A. Here is the sentence of Almighty God against those Jews – war from Nebuchadnezzar.
- B. The prophets used similitudes, and some harder ones are coming; get ready (Hos 12:10).

1. Clouds can arise quickly and soon fill the sky before you notice any gradual change.
 2. As a violent tornado comes crashing fast into a place, so would Babylon's chariots.
 3. Horses can reach about 45mph, but eagles can fly about 150mph. A strong metaphor!
 4. Note that two of the comparisons were similes and the third one a true metaphor.
- C. The description and then the response of the guilty doomed are powerful. Feel the fear.
- D. They were spoiled, not in the sense of pampered entitlement, but ravaged by the war.
- E. Lesson: Our God is holy, and His holiness causes men to cry out in woe (Isaiah 6:1-5).
- F. Lesson: Similitudes of the prophets are important to grasp for Matthew 24; Acts 2; etc.
- G. Lesson: The best example of similitudes with an explanation is Isaiah 13 about Babylon.

14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

- A. Jeremiah on behalf of God appeals to the nation to repent to gain a reprieve or respite.
- B. Here the call is to wash the heart from wickedness, earlier it was circumcision (Jer 4:4).
- C. Judgment was certain; intercessors would not work; but Nebuzaradan could be merciful.
- D. Which vain thoughts? Peace (Jer 23:17); the temple (Jer 7:1-15); Egypt (Jer 2:36-37).
- E. Lesson: Jesus washed our sins away by His blood (Rev 1:5), but we can wash (Jas 4:8).
- F. Lesson: Hate vain thoughts; any thought even a little different from scripture is a lie.
- G. Lesson: Any alternative thought to repentance and righteousness is a most vain thought.
- H. Lesson: Here is much more of vain thoughts: *Delusions of Deceived Christians ... Delusions of Deceived Christians (4 Sermons)*.

15 For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim.

- A. The news reports, not the prophet, would announce the arrival of king Nebuchadnezzar.
- B. The news would be horrible – the foreign armies had covered all of Israel for Jerusalem.
1. The city of Dan was the outermost place northward that his army would reach first, for when Israel is described in its length, it is from Dan to Beersheba (II Sam 24:15).
 2. The tribe of Ephraim was the innermost tribe before crossing over into Judah itself.
- C. What was the news? What was published? The great calamity of war was about to begin.

16 Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

- A. News of Nebuchadnezzar in the area should be known by all nations and by the Jews.
1. The nations should know Jeremiah's prophecies and warnings were indeed accurate.

2. Let the news be published against Jerusalem that the lion has arrived from Babylon.
- B. The far country is Babylon, a city in the land of the Chaldeans, in distant Mesopotamia.
- C. Watchers are angels (Daniel 4:13,17,23); here they are recon teams and advance troops.
 1. These are the only two places in the Bible. It must include the action of watching.
 2. Furthermore, it was not all angels that watched Nebuchadnezzar, but one or a few.
 3. The following verse compares keepers of a field that restrict any access or egress.
 4. Their scouting included all her preparations and more importantly her weaknesses.
 5. Best troops can easily and quickly surround a city before the besieging army arrives.
 6. The report they gave about Jerusalem and Judah's other cities was positive and sure

17 As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.

- A. The troops described in the previous verse's commentary have surrounded Jerusalem.
- B. For any value in a field, whether hunting or reaping, they controlled access and egress.
- C. Besieging cities was common due to walls; famine and/or pestilence opens gates; walls can be broken down eventually with engines (II Chr 16:1; Zech 12:2; Luke 19:43-44).
- D. Why was this evil thing and bitter happening to them? Because of rebel sins (Jer 2:19).
- E. Lesson: Never lie against the Lord and presume otherwise when you have been sinning.

18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

- A. The verse perfectly describes the cause of Judah's great calamity – their choices in life.
 1. Their character and conduct, their rebellious idolatry, and their sins had caused it.
 2. The excellent word procure is used again here for obtaining such things (Jer 2:17).
- B. This is thy wickedness, a metonym of cause for effect, for the result of their own deeds.
- C. Their hearts were terribly pained by bitterness all around, but it was due to their sins.
- D. Lesson: Though easier to see some times than others, sins' results are bitter and painful.
- E. Lesson: Be sure your sin will find you, is the rule of God. Beware. Embrace your pain.
- F. Lesson: The way of transgressors is hard, is also God's rule. Beware. It can get worse.

Lamenting the Great Calamity of War – Verses 19-31

19 My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul,

the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

- A. The following lamentation over the destruction of Judah is by God and by Jeremiah.
 - 1. There are references more suitable for Jehovah speaking than Jeremiah (Jer 4:22,28).
 - 2. There are references more suitable for Jeremiah speaking than Jehovah (Jer 4:26).
 - 3. There are references that seem to include both speaking in but one verse (Jer 4:27).
 - 4. We understand Jeremiah speaking here due to the human elements and result of war.
 - 5. Jeremiah wrote the book, *The Lamentations*, and he lamented elsewhere (Jer 9:1,10).
 - 6. The speaker does not matter very much; the words of desolation mean everything.
- B. The painful cry here is due to the peaceful homeland destroyed by violent foreigners.
 - 1. Bowels have an anatomical meaning, but metaphorically are the deepest feelings.
 - 2. Heart pain, which is quite rare, but incredibly painful, can take away your breath.
 - 3. The speaker, whether Jehovah or Jeremiah, cannot stop crying and howling in pain.
 - 4. What is the cause of this great unhappiness? The state of war in one's own country.
 - 5. It is the sound and alarm of war here, but the destruction of this terrible war is next.
- C. Lesson: You have never truly heard the sound of war, so you should give God thanks.
- D. Lesson: God can chasten or judge men with inward pain that exceeds any other hurt.

20 Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

- A. Destruction followed destruction as news reports circulated of violence in other areas.
- B. Nothing was left in the land of Judah and Benjamin as it was before Nebuchadnezzar.
- C. If metaphors, they intend more than tents or curtains – speed and ease of cities ruined.
- D. If not metaphors, but his own personal housing in Anathoth, the war found even them.
- E. Lesson: When God brings judgment, it can be one bad event followed soon by another.
- F. Lesson: Be ready to lose things you hold dear and to worship God as Giver and Taker.

21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

- A. Standards were visible and trumpets were sounding by the Jews for defense of Judah.
- B. Standards were visible and trumpets were sounding by the Chaldeans for destruction.
- C. The constant state of conflict with lives, assets, and nation at stake would be exhausting.

22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

- A. Why is this painful calamity occurring in God's nation of former favor, mercy, worship?

1. Jehovah called them His people, even now, for He had formed and chosen the nation.
 2. But the chastening of His people at times might exceed His general mercy to others.
- B. The character and conduct of the Jews, the chosen nation of Jehovah, was wildly sinful.
1. First, they are fools by denying me and choosing stumps and stones for their deities.
 2. Second, they are sottish brats without any understanding of the consequences for sin.
 3. **Sottish** = Foolish, doltish, stupid. Given or addicted to, characterized or affected by, excessive drinking or coarse self-indulgence.
 4. Third, they are creative, energetic, and mindful to sin but no ambition to know God.
 5. God tried many times to teach them and warn them (Jer 7:13-15,21-26; 32:33; etc.).
- C. God revealed Himself to them more than others, but they did nothing with the privilege.
- D. Lesson: Take advantage of all opportunities to know God and His ways for your life.
- E. Lesson: To whom much is given shall much be required, so make much of privileges.

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

- A. Here and following are four verses of extreme metaphors describing the ruin of Judah.
1. The Holy Spirit took words from the creation account in Genesis for dramatic effect.
 2. The Judah situation, landscape, and sky was not nearly this bad in literal actuality.
 3. Some, that have never thought about speech or learned it, will think we blaspheme.
 4. Why such language? To make a point – Judah was destroyed as earlier (Jer 4:20).
 5. Why the language? It got our attention, did it not? We use such metaphors ourselves.
- B. We use extravagant, extreme, wildly excessive metaphors ourselves for dramatic effect.
1. Have you not heard anyone, someone say, *The whole world is turned upside down?*
 2. Have you not heard anyone, someone say, *It is raining cats and dogs outside today?*
 3. Have you never said or thought, *Everything is ruined; nothing is working out right?*
- C. God gave us hermeneutical help – prophets used similitudes and signs to convey God’s revelation of future events (Hosea 12:10; Rev 1:1; John 12:33; 21:19; I Peter 1:11).
1. **Similitude** = A sign or symbol; the symbolic representation of something.
 2. **Simile** = A comparison of one thing with another, indicated by use of as or like.
 3. **Signify** = To be a sign or symbol of; to represent, betoken, mean.
 4. **Sign** = Something to convey an intimation or communicate some idea.
- D. God gave hermeneutical help – examples of similitudes and signs with simple solutions.
1. Isaiah 13 has similar language to these verses but is only Medes defeating Babylon.
 2. Haggai 2 has similar language to here but is only the new religion of Jesus to Jews.
 3. Acts 2 has similar language to this but is Peter by Joel justifying Pentecost’s tongues.

- E. Therefore, the Bible is not taken literally for most uses of such apocalyptic language.
 1. The futurists err greatly, like Scofield, in requiring literal senses most everywhere.
 2. Solomon told us that such things are plain to those with understanding (Prov 8:9).
 3. The situation was terrible in Judah indeed, but it was not as bad as this metaphor.
- F. Lesson: Learn to interpret the Bible by its own rules to see figurative language ... **Rule 10: Similitudes**.
- G. Lesson: We are not preterists, so we accept apocalyptic senses like in II Peter 3 ... **Preterism**.

24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

- A. No, the mountains did not tremble nor the hills move lightly. They could not do so.
- B. Yes, what I once thought solidly in place and permanent was being easily overthrown.
- C. The change in affairs in Judah and Jerusalem was cataclysmic beyond anything I knew.
- D. See the explanation given above in the notes for the beginning of the vision (Jer 4:23).

25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

- A. No, there were men, Jews and Chaldeans, everywhere, and birds were gathered to feast.
- B. Yes, the land I was used to seemed empty in comparison to what I witnessed in my life.
- C. The change in affairs in Judah and Jerusalem was cataclysmic beyond anything I knew.
- D. See the explanation given above in the notes for the beginning of the vision (Jer 4:23).

26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger.

- A. No, not all fruitful fields were now a wilderness nor were all cities completely ruined, for Nebuchadnezzar would leave the poorer of the people to tend to what remained.
- B. Yes, the prosperous fields and carefully constructed cities of Judah were largely altered.
- C. The change in affairs in Judah and Jerusalem was cataclysmic beyond anything I knew.
- D. See the explanation given above in the notes for the beginning of the vision (Jer 4:23).
- E. What was the cause of the desolation of Judah described in such cataclysmic language?
 1. The LORD God Jehovah had come down to visit these rebel people to chasten them.
 2. It was His presence in the area – His use of foreign armies to destroy and desolate.
 3. The terrible destruction, graphically stated in extreme terms, was by His fierce anger.
- F. The God of the Bible, Jehovah of Moses, has fierce anger and Judah should have known.
 1. **Fierce** = Ardent, eager; full of violent desire; furiously zealous or active.
 2. God's anger is often described as fierce (Ex 32:12; Num 25:4; 32:14; Zeph 3:8; etc.).

G. Lesson: Remember our true God – the Flood, this history, 70 AD – and repent today.

27 For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

- A. What Jeremiah had prophesied of the coming destruction was by divine inspiration.
- B. First, as described in the previous apocalyptic terms, He would generally destroy Judah.
- C. Second, He would not eliminate Judah; He would save a remnant in Babylon and there.
 - 1. Captives were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar's expeditions and prospered.
 - 2. Poor of the land were left to keep up what was left of fields, orchards, vineyards, etc.
 - 3. Jeremiah and other Jews made their way to Egypt where the others were punished.
 - 4. A remnant returned by Cyrus' decree and rebuilt Judah for Jesus to travel and preach.
- D. Lesson: If not for the plan and mercy of Jehovah, there would be none saved any way.
- E. Lesson: If you fear God today and believe His truth and wisdom, there is not a full end.

28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

- A. Jeremiah metaphorically described God's judgment on His own people like a funeral, where the earth would mourn and the skies wear black for the grief and pain coming.
- B. What God had promised from Moses to Jeremiah, He would now execute for certain.
 - 1. The earth and heavens, with all rational and irrational creatures, are under His rule.
 - 2. He had spoken and given His warnings that were based on His righteous purposes.
 - 3. He would not repent from His threats or turn back from them – Judah was doomed.
- C. For much more about God's sovereign rule of all things, **The Dominion of God**.
- D. Lesson: Worship the glorious GOD Jehovah of the Bible for this and all His attributes.

29 The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.

- A. Rather than apocalyptic language as above, Jeremiah now preached plain, practical ruin.
- B. If Jerusalem, which fits as well as any city, the inhabitants would run away (Jer 52:7).
- C. All, the princes and soldiers and citizens, would hide wherever, like children or women.
- D. The cities of Judah would be deserted by their defenders that would flee anywhere else.

30 And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest *thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.*

- A. Jeremiah on behalf of God then mocked the efforts of the Jews to fraternize the enemy.
 - 1. Hear the mocking? What will you do then, when my spoilers have ruined the nation?
 - 2. The spoiling here is destructive raids of enemy troops ruining or taking all of value.
 - 3. **Fraternize** = To cultivate friendly relations *with* (troops of an opposing army).
 - 4. It is what Hezekiah foolishly did with ambassadors from Babylon (II Kgs 20:12-13).
 - 5. God sent foreigners with another language, so communication was hard (Jer 5:15).
- B. The Jews had committed religious whoredom with Babylon (Ezek 16:15-47; 23:11-35).
 - 1. The lovers in this verse are their former Chaldean friends in religious cooperation.
 - 2. No matter what they tried now, Babylon would have no affection or mercy for them.
 - 3. God mocked their efforts to gain advantage by three different aspects of whore attire.
 - 4. Instead of any fond remembrance, there would be fury to revenge their long march.
- C. Lesson: If you do not repent today for sins, what will you do when He has spoiled you?
- D. Lesson: If friendly with the world, and vice versa, they will not help you in real trouble.
- E. Lesson: Do not presume on repentance always. He can take it and mercy away (Pr 29:1).

31 *For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.*

- A. Jeremiah added a summary to his sermon similar to the lamentation's open (Jer 4:19).
 - 1. Having earlier in the chapter and book described their sins, he then foretold the pain.
 - 2. Remember, this was a prophetic sermon of what was coming by Chaldean armies.
- B. He described Jewish women, citizens of Zion, as a woman (a simile) in grief and pain.
 - 1. The Bible fairly describes the pain of childbirth from Eden (Gen 3:16; I Sam 4:19).
 - 2. The first birth is generally the hardest birth due to lack of experience and stretching.
 - 3. Of course, women of Judah would be in such grief at the lack of food and protection.
 - 4. Destruction and death occurred every day causing hopeless cries of anguish and fear.
- C. Lesson: Women do all they can to minimize pain of childbirth; you can by repenting.