Jeremiah Chapter 6

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Chapter 6

Theme: Coming war against the reprobate daughter of Zion for obstinance against Jehovah's warnings.

Outline:

1-7 Chaldeans to Destroy Daughter of Zion

8-12 Desolation for Refusing Any Instruction

13-15 Destruction for Several Shameful Sins

16-20 Destruction for Rebellion and Hypocrisy

21-26 Babylon's Army Will Destroy Cruelly

27-30 Jeremiah's Charge to Assay the Jews

Preparatory Reading: Jeremiah 5; Jeremiah 23; Zephaniah.

Related Links:

A. *Introduction to the Book of Jeremiah … here.*
B. Babylon – History and Prophecies.
C. Why Are Nations Blessed or Cursed?
D. *Proverbs Commentary* – Proverbs 14:34.
E. Ancient Landmarks of Old Paths *(2006).*
F. Only Right Worldview of Old Path *(2019).*
G. The Prophets of God *(Office and Work).*
H. Instant Preaching *(Hard and Pressing).*

Introduction:

A. This chapter is very similar to the previous one, and the combination will assist full comprehension.
B. The merciful and dreadful God, in that order to His people, taught and warned often before judgment.
C. Jeremiah himself as one of God's many prophets to the nation over many years exposed their filthiness.
D. God's ferocity in the terrible judgment of Jerusalem and Judah is easily justified due to her many sins.
E. We can learn about Jehovah, hate sin and rejecting His warnings, repent, and stand up and stand out.
F. Every word of God is pure (Pr 30:5). Man lives by every word of God (Luke 4:4). Let us love each.
G. Men and boys will love the military descriptions found here, and smart women and girls will as well.

Chaldeans to Destroy Daughter of Zion – Verses 1-7

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

A. The tribe of Benjamin was always confederate with Judah as the other southern tribe.

B. Jerusalem was on the border of the two tribes, and it was the place all could retire to.

C. But God here warned them to flee out of His great city, for He intended to destroy it.
   1. He did not mean to ignore those of Judah, but rather used his tribe's name for all.
   2. All three measures were civil warnings of impending armies and national danger.
   3. Those inside the city should realize the walls and provisions were far insufficient.
   4. They should be gripped with terror and not think they could survive this king's siege.
   5. Tekoa, nearby, was a strong hold (II Chr 11:5-6,11-12), but should sound the alarm.
   6. Bethhaccerem, also nearby (Neh 3:14), was to use a fire signal (Judges 20:38,40).
   7. The three actions were not to fight but rather flee coming destruction, for the verb flee means retreat, and it was evil (trouble) and destruction coming, not just a fight.

D. The danger to flee was Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans of the Babylonian Empire, for it is this enemy that is the adversary of the whole book without any variation.

2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.

A. Here is an unusual simile – shown by likened – of the coming ruin of Judah/Jerusalem.

B. We love our Lord's expression, the virgin daughter of Zion (II Kgs 19:21; Isaiah 37:22).

C. Here the description is not affectionate but rather descriptive of a foolish, weak nation.
   1. Here is a comely woman, which means beautiful with no reference to her character.
   2. Here is a delicate woman, loving luxury (at least), not a virtuous, hardworking wife.
   3. She is pictures an effeminate, pampered, spoiled, weak woman unused to shepherds

D. The resulting conclusion from this verse and next is a city very vulnerable to war.

E. Women without very much to do are dangerous to themselves and to others as well.

F. Lesson: Each woman, keep your role and work (Pr 31:10-31; I Tim 5:13-14; Tit 2:3-5).

3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.

A. Continuing his short simile, plural shepherds with flocks would pitch tents against her.
   1. Why is such a beautiful, pampered woman out in the open? An exposed weak Judah!
   2. These are not friendly neighbors, but rather shepherds planning ways to violate her.

B. The verse is transitional from a vulnerable woman to military actions of the next verse.

1. The simile quickly shifts from shepherds, flocks, tents, feeding to armies besieging.
2. Each shepherd would feed in his place – each army commander in taking Jerusalem.

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

A. Jeremiah here declared the king's order to commanders – get armed to destroy this city.
   1. The orders are issued in the morning, get your soldiers ready for an assault at noon.
   2. Assaults might not ordinarily be in the heat of the day, but these men gladly would.
   3. So intent were they to destroy the Jews they then cried out about afternoon shadows.
   4. They regretted every delay or hindrance to execute their design – ruin of Jerusalem.

B. The ferocity of the Chaldeans here was more than ordinary zeal. It was stoked by God.

C. These are not words of the besieged, but rather besiegers, by union with the next verse.

D. Lesson: When God heals, it is complete and obvious. When He judges, He is the same.

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

A. Since the day got away from them, they would press the fight during night. Poor Judah!

B. They did not need the ordinary sleep of night. Though up all day, let us keep assaulting.

C. The purpose of this section is a blunt prophetic warning from God of Jerusalem's ruin.

D. Their zeal was not just ordinary zeal for the third expedition of 1000 miles, but by God.
   1. We thus embrace the coordinating conjunction next as explanation for the zeal here.
   2. It is the mighty LORD Jehovah of the Bible, a Man of War, at work (Exodus 15:3).
   3. What made Alexander great? His choler or a gift of dominion (Dan 7:16; 8:7)? Yes!

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

A. We saw and will see many times – God brought Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 1:15-16; 5:15).

B. Our glorious God is so intimately involved that He gave the specific orders to destroy.
   1. Though it takes much time and effort – besieging armies cut down trees for ramps.
   2. Engines to break down walls are not found here, but are elsewhere (Ezek 26:7-9).
   3. Josephus wrote there were no trees left for many miles around Jerusalem in 70 AD.

C. Like other places, the visit here is God's vengeance (Jer 5:9,29; 6:15; 9:9; 14:10; 23:2).

D. Why the fury against His city? She was completely oppressive in character and conduct.
   1. This sin of not protecting the weak is also elsewhere (Jer 2:34; 5:18-29; 22:15-17).
   2. Our holy God cannot stand external worship while mistreating people (Is 58:1-7).

3. The word oppression is strong and distasteful, but it is us when not helping others.
4. Judah's oppression here is next wickedness, violence, spoil, grief, and wounds.

E. Lesson: God measures your relationships as much as anything. Do not pick on anyone.

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

A. Fountains here are water under pressure that throw out their water rather than hold it.
   1. Judah was like a fountain, but instead of throwing out water, threw out wickedness.
   2. She was full of wickedness; it could not sit still in her; she violently engaged in sins.

B. The sin here is the same as the previous verse – oppression consumed her into violence.
   1. Judah spoiled those too weak to resist by harming them and taking things by force.
   2. God was witness to the grief and wounds of the poor and weak throughout Jerusalem.
   3. There is a God in heaven that does judge the fatherless and widows (Psalm 68:4-5).

C. We make a division here to attach instruction with rejectors of it (Jer 6:8 with Jer 6:10).

D. Lesson: God sees all offences to others of any kind, and He hates it. Repent. Be a lover.

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Each woman, keep your role and work (Pr 31:10-31; I Tim 5:13-14; Tit 2:3-5).

B. Lesson: When God heals, it is complete and obvious. When He judges, He is the same.

C. Lesson: God measures your relationships as much as anything. Do not pick on anyone.

D. Lesson: God sees all offences to others of any kind and hates them. Repent. Be a lover.

Desolation for Refusing Any Instruction – Verses 8-12

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

A. Here is Jehovah warning the Jews to do something that might slow or stop judgment.

B. What is the precious action God values so highly? Receive instruction. Obey preaching.
   1. The verb is passive, for those of Jerusalem to submit to teachers, listen, learn, repent.
   2. God had sent prophets for centuries. He now had sent Jeremiah and others to warn.
   3. He expects us to listen, learn, repent of sins, and turn fully to His ways for our lives.
   4. Because they had not, would not, and did not, He brought Babylon's fury on them.
   5. The history recorded in Chronicles declares this very plainly (II Chron 36:15-21).

C. The offer of truth and wisdom has consequences (Romans 1:19-32; Prov 1:20-33; 29:1).

D. For much more about truth, receiving it and obeying it … the Proverbs 1:26 commentary, Truth Is Not a

Right (5 Sermons), A Reprobate Mind, Noble Hearers, What Is Truth? (2 Sermons), etc.

E. Lesson: Love the opportunity to hear God's instruction, and exploit it mightily (Pr 18:1).

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

A. Who spoke here? LORD Jehovah of heaven's armies, and Lord of Sabaoth (Rom 9:29).

B. We think of gleaning fields due to the book of Ruth, but vineyards were also gleaned.

C. God here promised the Chaldeans would miss nothing – they would glean repeatedly.
   1. The simile here represents what is left of Israel (Judah) will be gathered like grapes.
   2. The Chaldeans are the grape gatherers, and they would make sure they missed none.
   3. The Chaldeans would pick the grapes, glean the vines, and then glean them again.
   4. The Bible has an interesting cross-reference of gleaning soldiers (Judges 20:45).
   5. They picked the best the first time, then gleaned some more, and then got the worst.

D. Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar had three expeditions: he picked, gleaned, gleaned again.
   1. In Jeremiah's 21st and Jehoiakim's 3rd, he took Daniel (II Kings 24:1; Daniel 1:1).
   2. In Jeremiah's 29th and Zedekiah's 1st, he took Ezekiel and Mordecai (Esther 2:5-7).
   3. In Jeremiah's 40th and Zedekiah's 11th, he destroyed Jerusalem (Jer 39:2; 52:6-7).
   4. There are three gleanings of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in this book (Jer 52:28-30).

E. It was a sin against the law of God to gather all grapes and not leave some (Lev 19:10), but God suspended His gracious laws in righteous judgment on these rebel sinners.

F. Lesson: Never think you can hide from God. Never think He will miss you in judgment.

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

A. Here and many other places, it does not matter if Jehovah spoke or Jeremiah about Him.

B. The theme of this section has a further description of their rejection of God's warnings.
   1. Jeremiah asked, Who will listen to me? Who can I warn? Who will hear me?
   2. The Jews had uncircumcised ears and could not (in this verse) hear the warnings.
   3. The Jews were offended by Jeremiah preaching Jehovah's warnings to the nation.
   4. They had no delight in knowing the God of judgment and their Father warning them.
   5. What a terrible indictment of this backslidden church for their resentment of truth.

C. What was their remedy? Repent for their foolish stubbornness and beg for instruction.

D. Lesson: You must search whether you have circumcised ears that love to hear reproofs.

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

A. Here Jeremiah expressed God's holy and righteous anger and indignation at the Jews.
   1. One of the most disrespectful things you can do is to reject counsel from those wiser.
   2. But there is none as wise as God; neither is there another that loves like He does.

B. He was tired of holding back. God's men may regret teaching judgment until obvious.
   1. When Jeremiah tried to hold back, he could not due to the fire in his bones (Jer 20:9).
   2. Like God taking no pleasure in the death of the wicked, so are pastors (Ezek 33:11).
   3. Until they are pushed, like Elihu was, pastors may hold back intensity (Job 32:1-10).

C. He declared he would preach the full measure of wrath regardless of age or location.
   1. The coming judgment would not regard sex – both husband and wife would be killed.
   2. The coming judgment would not regard age – children, young men, aged, very old.

D. Lesson: Preachers must warn of judgment; it is part of the Bible; they dislike it as well.

E. Lesson: When a pastor is greatly agitated or intense, be warned; trust him; he has cause.

F. Lesson: When a pastor is hardly ever agitated or intense, he should resign or be fired.

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

A. Jeremiah's furious blast against them for rejecting warnings included assets and wives.

B. It will not matter to the Chaldeans to take houses, fields, or wives and give them away.

C. For this was the LORD God's righteous judgment on these rebellious, stubborn people.
   1. Recall His stretched out hand against Israel by the Assyrians (Is 9:12,17,21; 10:4).
   2. God's judgment is indiscriminate – He will take wives and children in fury for sin.

D. This judgment, like others through this book, is repeated transitionally (Jeremiah 8:10).

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Love the opportunity to hear God's instruction, and exploit it mightily (Pr 18:1).

B. Lesson: Never think you can hide from God. Never think He will miss you in judgment.

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Destruction for Several Shameful Sins – Verses 13-15

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.

A. We separate this section here to leave the previous sin of rejecting warnings the focus.

B. Here are at least four sins: covetousness, false dealings, lying sermons, abominations.

C. The sinners here, like in the last section, are of all ages and standings in Judah's society.

D. Covetousness is a terrible sin, for the New Testament calls it idolatry (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5).
   1. First, it is discontentment with what God has given you (ultimate ungratefulness).
   2. Second, it is desiring what God gave others or they earned over you (wicked envy).
   3. Third, it implies powerfully that God Himself is not enough for you (Heb 13:5-6).

E. Prophets and priests dealt falsely as noted elsewhere in scripture (Is 56:11; Mic 3:9-11).
   1. The false dealings of the prophets included abominations by the context following.
   2. Ministerial false dealings include corruption for gain and other sins due to *also*
   3. If same words are used without *also*, we fall back here and/or use *for* (Jer 8:10-11).

F. What a terrible indictment of the nation! They deserved judgment! Is America different?

G. Lesson: Hate covetousness. It is lose-lose-lose. You cannot have, enjoy, or please God.

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

A. The prophets primarily – preachers – lied against warnings of judgment (Jer 5:30-31), and the priests took advantage of the false doctrine to keep their jobs and take the tithes.

B. They promised peace to the people without repentance or reformation, which was a lie.

C. How did they heal the hurt of the Jews slightly? By false words, not required repentance.
   1. They provided no real healing, but rather slighted the grave danger and its remedy.
   2. They did it lying about national peace, for the coordinating explanation requires it.
   3. They did not deal thoroughly with the cause or the danger, but slighted both aspects.
   4. To understand these words fully – see slighting a wound and providing a slight cure.
   5. These lying imposters told the patients they were not that bad and all would be well.
   6. As an example, mothers sometimes blow on a peeled knee, though it fixes nothing.
   7. As an example, a doctor may treat symptoms but leave a dangerous infection intact.

D. Compare what the people wanted to hear at another time – smooth things (Is 30:8-11).

E. Lesson: Preachers must not slight the danger of sin or the degree of repentance for it.

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

A. We take this primarily of prophets and priests, who boldly committed sins beside lying.
   1. We make this choice of ministers by the plural pronoun and the recent antecedent.
   2. We make this choice of ministers by a distinct group falling with the general people.
   3. We make this choice of ministers by them being cast down from an exalted office.

B. These brazen ministers had no shame and were guilty of abominable sins before God.
   1. Telling lies about the condition and peace of Judah against the truth was abominable.
   2. But these wretches were also guilty of other sins like Eli's son (Mic 3:9-11; 7:2-4).

C. The God they claimed to represent and preach for would come and throw them down.

D. They would not be exempt from judgment; they would be cast down from their offices.

E. Lesson: Ministers first and then people must cultivate repugnance for abominable sins.

F. Lesson: Ministers first and then people must hate any compromise of revealed truth.

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Hate covetousness. It is lose-lose-lose. You cannot have, enjoy, or please God.

B. Lesson: Preachers must not slight the danger of sin or the degree of repentance for it.

C. Lesson: Ministers first and then people must cultivate repugnance for the sins of men.

D. Lesson: Ministers first and then people must hate any compromise of revealed truth.

Destruction for Rebellion and Hypocrisy – Verses 16-20

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

A. The mighty God, the LORD Jehovah, revealed His message to Jeremiah for Jerusalem.

B. He told the man of God to preach to the people to search for the right way to worship.
   1. Here is one of the most crucial duties clearly stated for men by the God of judgment.
   2. This is what each and every Jew and the whole nation should have done carefully.
   3. Examine their way of worship and conduct of lifestyle to be right and obtain peace.
   4. The ways here are not roads of Judah or streets of Jerusalem, but for right worship.
   5. The whole verse is a metaphor – the way to walk in life to please God for His peace.

6. They should have used a map of Moses, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc.
7. First, they needed to stand still, see what was done, and ask for the old, right way.
8. Second, they needed to embrace the old way they thus found and actually do it only.
9. Third, only then would they gain the benefit designed by God for perfect peace now.

C. They already knew His way to be too strict for their comfort, so they refused to do so.
1. This kind and gentle exhortation with promised blessing was not enough for rebels.
2. Read the promised blessings and curses Moses wrote (Deut 28:1-68; Lev 26:1-46).

D. Here is the great message of God to all men, but especially His elect children on earth.
1. Because the father of lies has been active since Eden, life and worship are corrupted.
2. This powerful advice from an inspired preacher is what ought to get utmost effort.
3. What is the right way to live before God? What is the right way to worship Him?
4. All men with a conscience must examine everything to flush error and embrace truth.
5. Jesus taught a strait gate and narrow way for rest for a few (Matt 7:13-14; 11:28-30).
6. Paul's apostolic order was to prove all things and hold fast the good (I Thess 5:21).
7. The noble Bereans received doctrine readily but then proved it to be so (Acts 17:11).
8. Fathers must train children, especially sons, to test all against the Bible (Ps 119:128).

E. What exactly are the old paths and the good way in this metaphor used by Jeremiah?
1. He will refer to the old paths as the *ancient paths* in a coming chapter (Jer 18:15).
2. For the Jews, it was the law of God, the only good way (Jer 6:19; 7:23; Psalm 19:7-11; 119:35,105,128; Prov 3:17; 4:11,18; 6:23; Isaiah 2:3; 8:20; 25:7-9; Deut 4:5-8; 32:1-14; I Kings 18:21; Ezekiel 36:27; Malachi 4:4; Luke 16:29; Hebrews 11:4-31).
3. It was the law of God that Josiah had recently turned toward (II Kgs 22:8-20; 23:25).
4. What your grandfather did is old, but time is no evidence of truth at all (Job 22:15).
5. For us today, it is still God's scriptures as above, but with a glorious New Testament perspective (II Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25; II Peter 1:19-21; Jude 1:3; Rev 12:17).

F. Lesson: We have been, and we must be a church seeking the old paths of Bible religion.

G. Lesson: It can only happen by questioning everything and accepting only Bible answers.

H. Lesson: We cannot accept any creed one hundred years old or four, but two thousand.

I. Lesson: Let us always – men, women, marriages, families, church – follow this process.

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

A. Beyond what all men should do by instinctive consciences (from God), God did more.
1. He sent preachers to them, whose warnings of coming war should have been heeded.
2. He set preachers over them to whom they should have submitted by office from God.
3. What is the sound of the trumpet? The warning of war as given (Jer 6:1; 4:5,19,21).

B. They already knew His way to be too strict for their comfort, so they refused to do so.
    1. This kind and gentle exhortation with promised blessing was not enough for rebels.
    2. Read the promised blessings and curses Moses offered (Deut 28:1-68; Lev 26:1-46).
C. Lesson: The Bereans were noble first and foremost for receiving the preaching readily.
D. Lesson: Paul warned even an excellent church of Thessalonica to not despise preaching.

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

A. Our dramatic God now appealed to the neighboring nations to witness Jerusalem's ruin.
B. The congregation here is not the Jews, but rather the nations as witness against Judah.
C. We make this choice for the context preceding and following the word for an assembly.
D. What did the prophet mean by *what is among them?* The sins of Judah for punishment.
    1. First, we see the change in person from the second for nations to the third for Judah.
    2. Second, context is our master, and the crime before and after is refusal of warnings.
    3. As assembled nations gathered to a great spectacle, they can know the reason why.

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

A. Continuing His appeal to the earth for this great international event, He gave sentence.
B. He would bring evil. Yes, the true LORD God makes peace or creates evil (Isaiah 45:7).
C. Their thoughts are against me. They will not listen to me. They reject my laws for them.
    1. Your thoughts have fruit, or results. Either for your good or for your punishment.
    2. Every word of God is pure. Preaching is what builds faith. They needed His doctrine.
    3. Their law was the greatest set of laws ever; even pagans recognized it (Deut 4:5-8).
D. Lesson: Our God and His Son Jesus know every thought and intent you have (Heb 4:12).
E. Lesson: The preacher's calling is to make war against your thoughts (II Cor 10:4-6).

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

A. God then mocked their ceremonial religion in the temple restored and revived by Josiah.
B. He said their external religion had no purpose, not acceptable, and no delight to Him.
    1. Sheba, in Arabia, had a queen in Solomon's time that brought spices most abundant.
    2. Sweet cane, calamus in the anointing oil (Exodus 30:23), was from India by Sheba.

3. Burnt offerings, in which the sacrifice was entirely consumed, was a sacrificial gift.
4. Other sacrifices Judah made, like peace offerings, made no different to a holy God.
5. Sweet cane does have psychoactive chemicals, but this is not God's approval of weed, for this product was not smoked or ingested but used as perfume (Song 4:14).

C. Prophets frequently blasted trusting external rites or things (Jeremiah 7:1-15; Psalm 50:7-17; Isaiah 1:10-20; 58:1-7; 66:1-4; Ezekiel 20:39; Amos 5:21-22; Micah 6:6-8).
D. This is hypocrisy – a pretense of fearing and loving God by rituals but not obedience.
E. Lesson: Never trust attendance, baptism, communion, or any external worship of God.
F. Lesson: God's religion in either testament was truly of the heart, but specially the N.T.

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: We have been, and we must be a church seeking the old paths of Bible religion.
B. Lesson: It can only happen by questioning everything and accepting only Bible answers.
C. Lesson: We cannot accept any creed one hundred years old or four, but two thousand.
D. Lesson: Let us always – men, women, marriages, families, church – follow this process.
E. Lesson: The Bereans were noble first and foremost for receiving the preaching readily.
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Babylon's Army Will Destroy Cruelly – Verses 21-26

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

A. We love the opening words of the verse, for it is the only source of truth in the universe.
B. God promised to make life difficult and impossible for the Jews in the coming war.
   1. **Stumblingblock** = A thing or occasion that causes men to fall into calamity or ruin.
   2. Due to context, these are not temptations, as often, but rather a cause of destruction.
   3. These stumblingblocks would cause men to perish as fathers and sons fell on them.
   4. What was put in the path of Jerusalem and Judah that caused such? The Chaldeans!
   5. How do we know? See the next verse, for it is our context, and it is Nebuchadnezzar.
C. Lesson: Do not play with God. Do not slight His ways. His stumblingblocks are terrible.

22 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.

A. Note the doubling of the source of the truth with the previous verse, *thus saith the Lord*.
   1. People from the north were the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, and confederate nations.
   2. There is no doubt about this specific stumblingblock; the whole book is about them.

B. The singular nation should not trouble any – it began as one nation and ruled the others.

C. Love the passive voice of the second clause – God would raise them up (Jer 25:29-33).

D. Warning of such terrible national judgment began with Moses (Deut 28:49; Isaiah 5:26).

E. Lesson: Like many other places, there is no nation or army on earth outside His control.

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

A. Let God by Jeremiah briefly describe the Chaldean army coming with Nebuchadnezzar.
   1. Regarding their weapons, they would be efficient and proficient in archery and spear.
   2. Regarding their character, they were cruel without mercy against their adversaries.
   3. Regarding their zeal and might, they were an army like one giant roar of ocean water.
   4. Regarding their speed and maneuverability, they used horses that Judah had none of.
   5. Regarding organization and coordination, they had perfect formations for assaults.

B. Why this description? To put terror in the hearts of the Jews for any wise to repent, now.

C. God wrote these words. He is a man of war (Ex 15:3). He designed this terrible army.

D. He again referred to Jerusalem and the Jews as the daughter of Zion, a helpless woman.

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

A. If the description was not enough, Jeremiah reminded Judah of their earned reputation.
   1. Judah was not their first war; they had already vanquished others to unite the empire.
   2. They had taken the very great Assyrian capital of Nineveh (Nah 1:1; Habakkuk 1:6).

B. The effect of the description and reputation by design – fear, weakness, anguish, pain.

C. Lesson: If you are frustrated by the lack of punishment for crimes, learn about this God.

D. Lesson: Hear again that our holy God is very creative to cause you great fear and grief.

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

A. When an army comes to besiege a city, there is really no place to go, for they are there.

B. Fear is a metonym of effect for cause – the danger of the enemy's sword causing fear.

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

A. Jeremiah here included the first person twice as he closed the section including himself.
B. Sackcloth – like a burlap bag to us – lying in ashes was a traditional act of repentance.
C. How would a mother mourn if her only son were killed? It would be most bitter indeed.
D. Why mourn? Because this dreadful army is coming quickly and in surprise to spoil us.
E. In some places like this, there is no mention of repentance, like at Nineveh (Jonah 3:4).

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Do not play with God. Do not slight His ways. His stumblingblocks are terrible.
B. Lesson: Like many other places, there is no nation or army on earth outside His control.
C. Lesson: If you are frustrated by the lack of punishment for crimes, learn about this God.
D. Lesson: Hear again that our holy God is very creative to cause you great fear and grief.

Jeremiah's Charge to Assay the Jews – Verses 27-30

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

A. Learn the word describing this section – the verb assay – an investigative procedure in mining to assess the quality or quantity of a precious metal in ore or the refining process.
B. God chose Jeremiah before birth to be his main warning prophet in Jerusalem and Judah.
    1. God first ordained him to the ministry of prophet as the book opened (Jer 1:4-10).
    2. Then God told him that it would be tough but He would be with him (Jer 1:17-19).
    3. A tower and fortress in a context of war are military buildings for national protection.
    4. See the earlier description of God's protection of him against the Jews (Jer 1:17-19).
    5. There will be more such descriptions, for this rebel nation hated him (Jer 15:20).
C. There was a reason why God chose Jeremiah and protected him – to expose their sins.
    1. Consider the charge to Isaiah, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins* (Is 58:1).
    2. From Anathoth, a small town, Jeremiah witnessed and learned Judah's wickedness.
    3. It is much more than discovery here – there is public condemnation, as it follows.
    4. He did not learn anything for his private knowledge but rather to expose to all men.
D. With God's help, Jeremiah did something hated – expose sins and promise judgment .
    1. This of course brought the wrath of kings, princes, priests, prophets, and the people.

2. Later, Paul was protected in many dangers and from Nero in Rome (II Tim 4:16-18).

E. Lesson: Pastors must never fear men but blast away against sin; God will protect them.

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

A. What did he find and expose in Jerusalem and Judah? All were rebels and slanderers.
   1. **Revolt** = To cast off allegiance; to rise against rulers or constituted authority.
   2. An excellent synonym is to rebel, which we have already learned earlier (Jer 5:23).
   3. God's word condemns slander – telling lies to hurt others (Prov 10:18; I Tim 3:11).
   4. Basic Christian charity and brotherly love means we carefully protect reputations.
   5. Slander is lying to defame; backbiting, talebearing, and whispering tell true secrets.
   6. When God's inspired prophet examined the nation, consider the little sins he blasted.
   7. Slander is grievous revolt or rebellion, for it is oppressive and painful against others.
   8. When you sin against the authority of God in His word, you are a grievous revolter, for your sin in most cases, especially here, will cause harm to one or more near you.

B. His assay exposed the batch of ore called Judah to be base metals – only brass and iron.
   1. **Brass** = A varied alloy of copper and zinc that has been used for thousands of years.
   2. Though sounding special, brass is not a precious metal like gold and silver still are.
   3. When you buy jewelry claiming to be gold or silver, you do not want it to be brass.

C. He summarized his findings as metallurgically base metals and corrupters of morality.

D. Lesson: God's elect should be opposite corrupters; let them be defenders and promoters.

E. Lesson: Preachers have one foundation to add precious metals, not wood, hay, stubble.

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

A. Here is a summary of the refining process of the prophets against Jerusalem and Judah.

B. Three refining efforts are described here, but as the text admits, they did not work at all.
   1. **Bellows** = an instrument or machine to furnish a strong blast of air, such as to a blast furnace or refiners fire in order to refine metals or help other metallurgical processes.
   2. But these bellows were burned out by working so hard and so close to the fire, which we understand to be the efforts of the prophets (vaguely compared to their lungs)
   3. **Lead** = was used in silver smelting for it has a lower melting point and other features, but more helpful is that silver is found in copper and lead mineralization from God.
   4. Though God's efforts by His prophets melted all the lead away, there was no silver.
   5. **Founder** = One who founds or casts metal, or makes articles of cast metal = smelter.
   6. God's efforts to find precious metals were done, but only base metals were found.

C. Jeremiah's assay report is that all the prophetic efforts had not removed Judah's sins.
    1. Only base metals were found. Diligent smelting efforts could not find gold or silver.
    2. The wicked still persisted in their wickedness – all ages, sexes, and classes of society.
    3. The prophetic office should result in repentance and the repudiation of wickedness.

D. We take this verse to be God's efforts through His prophets by its opening (Jer 6:27).

E. Lesson: Preaching has two results – life unto life or death unto death (II Cor 2:14-17).

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

A. What was the result of assaying Jews of Jerusalem and Judah? They were rejected junk.
    1. **Reprobate** = Rejected or condemned as worthless, inferior or impure. Depraved, degraded, morally corrupt. Rejected by God; lost or hardened in sin. See the text.
    2. They might have looked like silver by ceremonies, but they were not precious at all.
    3. What should have been silver turned out to be nothing but dross and refuse – trash.

B. His people had presumed against His blessings and law, so God rejected them as junk.

C. Reprobation is opposite of election. Consider it. God chose some and rejected others.
    1. Election is God's choice to save some in spite of their great depravity and sinfulness.
    2. Reprobation is God's choice to reject the rest for their great depravity and sinfulness.
    3. He owes salvation to none, and the gift of it to any sinner is all of grace; it is not fair.
    4. Rather than think why did He not save all, you should think, why did He save any.
    5. We use Arthur Pink's, The Sovereignty of God, which includes reprobation chapter.
    6. For much more about election and reprobation, check these out … Is Election Fair?, What If Election Is True?, Chart #1, Election & Conversion.

D. Lesson: You should know the doctrine of election and reprobation to teach and defend.

E. Lesson: You must examine yourself to make sure you are not a reprobate (II Cor 13:5).

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Pastors must never fear men but blast away against sin; God will protect them.

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