

Jeremiah 4

part 2

The rest of Jeremiah 4 speaks of the coming judgment upon Judah. The sin of the people was so entrenched that they were not willing, under any circumstances, to turn back to God. So distraught was Jeremiah about the coming judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem that he even claimed that God was deceiving the people.

- 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.**
- 6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.**
- 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.**
- 8 For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.**
- 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.**

Vs. 5 Declare, publish, blow the trumpet, cry, and say are expressing the gravity of the situation for the nation.

Vs. 6 "retire" עָוָז ooz to be strong; causatively, to strengthen, i.e. (figuratively) to save (by flight):--gather (self, self to flee), retire.

The people are admonished to flee to safety.

Vs. 7 **the destroyer of the Gentiles** speaks of Babylon.

Vs. 8 Israel is called to repent as the anger of the LORD has not been turned away.

Vs. 9 The politicians, religious leaders, and the preachers (prophets), the three offices in ancient Israel, will be useless as the political leaders will perish and the priests will be stunned and the prophets in consternation.

- 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.**

Dr. Charles Feinberg comments on this verse:

"This verse has received more attention and occasioned more differences of interpretation than almost any passage in the book...at no time had Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would have peace."

"The solution lies in the way the Jews spoke of evil in a world ruled by a righteous, holy God. God is said to do what he permits."

Feinberg does comment, "Jeremiah was so emotionally moved at this point..."

Jeremiah is acting emotionally to what is coming upon the people. Notice his language, "**thou hast greatly deceived this people.**"

I see no need to "sugar coat" this statement. Jeremiah's claim is unsettling coming from a prophet. But **the message** of the prophets are infallible but the actions of a prophet (or apostle) is not always God-honoring or perfect.

Genesis 3:12 Adam blames Eve - "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Genesis 12 Abraham's lie to the Egyptian king that Sarah was his sister, and not his wife.

1 Samuel 15 Saul lies to Samuel

- 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:
- 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.
- 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.
- 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;
- 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.
- 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.
- 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.
- 27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
- 28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

"The view of orthodox Christianity [on the inspiration of the Bible], is the theory of plenary, verbal inspiration. The word plenary means 'complete or full,' and verbal means 'the very words of Scripture.' So plenary, verbal inspiration is the view that every single word in the Bible is the very word of God. It's not just the ideas or thoughts that are inspired, but the words themselves. Second Timothy 3:16-17 uses a unique Greek word, *theopneustos*, which literally means 'God-breathed.' Scripture is 'breathed out' of the mouth of God. The Bible's words are God's words."

"Also, the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration does not mean that God condones or encourages all the actions recorded in the Bible. For example, God states that murder is sinful, yet He also inspired historical records of people committing murder. So, the Bible contains true history as well as God's moral instructions. The Ten Commandments are inspired, and so is the written record of Absalom's murder of Amnon; both passages are instructive, and both passages are inspired. The interpretation and application of the Ten Commandments differs from that of Absalom's story and requires sound biblical hermeneutics."

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1. Jeremiah had prophesied that if Israel turned to God there would be peace and blessing.

Jeremiah 3:15-18

- 16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.
- 17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.
- 18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers

2. False prophets had told the people that they were not in trouble with the Lord. God allowed false prophets to come, speaking in the name of Jehovah, and promise peace when there was no peace.

Jeremiah 5:30-31

- 30 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;
- 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Jeremiah 14: 13 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.
 14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.
 15 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

3. By allowing these prophets to prophesy lies, perhaps Jeremiah is thinking God has deceived the people. This is not so in that God sent his messenger, Jeremiah, to proclaim the truth and the people rejected him for lies of false prophets, see Jeremiah 8. His message of peace was conditioned upon the nation's repentance.

4. God allows deception, false religion, etc. but has given His truth to those who are open, but will ultimately send a deception to those who reject the truth.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.
 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; **by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.**

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
 5 **Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**
 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.
 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**
 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

5. **The sword reaches into the soul** is the reality of the people. Destruction occurs both spiritually and physically.

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

When God's judgment comes there is no escape.

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

The rebellion of the people is great, yet, God in His mercy, still calls upon them to repent.

2 Peter 3:

- 1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:
- 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:
- 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
- 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
- 5 For this **they willingly are ignorant of**, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
- 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In light of the impending judgement, God asks how long will they continue with their thoughts of evil.

When a nation is set in her way, though repentance is possible, it is highly unlikely the nation will repent.

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

Once again, as in verse 5, "a voice declares," "publishes," (2x) "make mention," "watchers give out their voice" expressing the gravity of the situation.

Make ye mention to the nations -

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jeremiah 1:5

God's justice/judgment on His people because of their sins is a warning to the nations that God punishes all sin and rebellion against Him by all and any nation.

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

The sin of the people has produced:

1. Rebellion against the Lord
2. Wickedness
3. The acts of the people have brought upon them their troubles.
4. Bitterness in the heart

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

Jeremiah's anguish at the plight of the nation is immense.

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

Jeremiah asks how long until the judgment comes.

Jeremiah makes six statements about the people.

1. They are foolish
2. They have not recognized he was God's prophet
3. They are silly (sottish) children
4. They have no understanding
5. They are cunning (wise) in doing evil
6. They had no knowledge (יָבִינֵה בִנְיָ) of doing good -

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive (יָבִינֵה בִנְיָ) the words of understanding.

23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.
24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.
25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.
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.

Each of these verses begin with the phrase **I beheld**. The anger and punishment of the LORD is of such magnitude that words are seemingly insufficient to express it.

Charles Feinberg comments:

"For vividness, simplicity, directness, breadth of reference, and gravity of subject matter, the verses are unique in Scripture...Chaos engulfs the physical world. It is the story of Genesis 1 in reverse. It may be taken to describe the coming Day of the Lord. All nature is upheaved and no area of life - geological, terrestrial, celestial, human, ornithological, horticultural, and demographical - is left untouched. The apocalyptic overtone is unmistakable."

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

Once again, the judgment of God is irreversible at this point.

This passage is speaking of the coming Tribulation judgment but has overtones of the coming destruction of Judah by Babylon. There are some indicators of this speaking of the Tribulation period.

yet will I not make a full end (vs. 27) - the same phrase is used in the clearly Tribulation passage of Jeremiah 30:11

For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail (vs. 31) - this phrase is used in Jeremiah 30:6

For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black (vs. 28) -

Matthew 24:29

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."