

Judah's Invasion from a Distant Nation

5: 10-19

DIG: What limitation did the LORD place on the destruction of Judah? What answer to God's rhetorical questions in the previous file is answered here in 5:10? How did the people deceive themselves about God and His prophets in these verses? How was YHVH going to punish Judah? What had become the prevailing attitude about God (5:12, also see 5:22-24)? What did ADONAI say Jeremiah's words would be to the people of Judah? How did Ha'Shem specify the manner in which He would punish Y'hudah? In what way did Judah's punishment fit the offense? How will the words of Elohim differ from the words of the false prophets? Why won't the destruction be final?

REFLECT: If Judah is not lost because of her sins, what does that say to us today (see my commentary on The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer)? How does this discredit Replacement Theology? While it is true that bad things can happen to good people, sometimes we can bring bad things on ourselves because of our own sinful, fallen actions. So when we catch ourselves saying, "Why has the LORD done this to me?" we need to check to see if we had a hand in it! Repent of it and move on.

During the reign of Josiah

Judah will be invaded from the north and it will be a sign of judgment. This may be read as YHVH's struggle to decide how to act toward Tziyon. The facts call for **destruction**, but the LORD resists the final conclusion. In that struggle, Y'hudah hung in the balance between vengeance and forgiveness. Like us, her only hope of salvation lay in ADONAI, not herself.

The call to destroy Tziyon: Go through her vineyards and (see the commentary on Isaiah Ba - The Song of the Vineyard) ravage them . . . but do not destroy them completely. Isra'el (both the northern and southern Kingdom's) will not be completely destroyed because of her sins. God has a covenant relationship with the Jewish people. Like a good Father, He will discipline her, but He will never allow her to be destroyed completely. Those who say that the Church has replaced Isra'el in the covenant (Replacement Theology) ignore Romans Chapters 11-13. However, she will be disciplined. His invaders will go through Judah's vineyards and strip off her dead branches, for these people do not belong to ADONAI (5:10). Since the Israelites had thrown off their allegiance to YHVH, He summoned the Gentile nations to come and attack them.

God spells out the reasons: The people of Yisra'el (the northern Kingdom) and the people of Y'hudah (the southern Kingdom) have been utterly unfaithful to Me. Not only

that, the people of Judah thought because God would never violate His Temple, they could do no wrong (see Cc - [False Religion is Worthless](#)). They became arrogant, and took their relationship with Ha'Shem for granted. They have lied about ADONAI; they said: He will do nothing! No harm will come to us; we will never see sword or famine. The words of the prophets that the people do not believe will be the very words that condemn them. The prophets are but wind and the word is not in them; so let what they say be done to them (5:11-13). The word of God will be fulfilled. Because the Israelites had been unfaithful to God, lied about God, and treated the prophets like windbags - God was going to make those very words like fire.

The invasion itself: Therefore this is what ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot says: Because the people have spoken these words (through My prophet Jeremiah) I will make My words in your mouth a fire and the people the wood it consumes (5:14). As a fire burns wood until it is consumed, so will this prophecy destroy this people (but not completely). The true prophetic word in the mouth of Yirmeyahu was like a destroying fire.

Then the invasion is described. People of Y'hudah, declares the LORD, I AM bringing a distant nation (so far unnamed at the time of the prophecy) against you - an ancient nation, pointing to the distant past of the Babylonians with their long record of military prowess. And an enduring nation: The adjective enduring describes a stream whose waters do not fail; it is perennial, ever flowing and permanent. Here it describes the enemy as one that will not fail in what it starts.

But reading this scroll in Babylon, the exiles knew exactly who it was. This nation went all the way back to Genesis. The city was founded by Nimrod (see the commentary on Genesis Di - [The Line of Ham](#)). It was the first place of full-scale rebellion against God's authority (see the commentary on Genesis Dm - [Let Us Build a City and Make a Name for Ourselves](#)). A people whose language you do not understand (see the commentary on Isaiah Fm - [With Foreign Lips and Strange Tongues God Will Speak to This People](#)).

The purpose is described in military terms - it is a nation of warriors. Their quivers are like an open grave (Proverbs 30:16); their arrows are deadly (Psalm 5:10). All of them are mighty warriors (5:15-16). They were expert bowmen and they would find their mark. They were experienced in warfare and they knew how to fight. The enemy's insatiable hunger for plunder and robbery and murder will spare neither the necessities of life, nor their sons and daughters, nor their flocks and herds, nor the tasty fruits, nor their cities on whose strong fortifications they had placed their trust instead of confiding in their LORD. All that they cherished would be taken from them.⁷⁴

The marauding actions of **the army** is caught in the fourfold use of the word **devour**. **They will metaphorically devour, devour, devour, and devour: your harvests and food, your flocks and herds, your vines and fig trees, and not only that, they will kill your sons and daughters (Deuteronomy 28:51)**. The items listed here for consumption by **an occupying army** are closely paralleled to those listed in **First Samuel 8:11-17** concerning **what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights (5:17a)**.

With the sword they will destroy the fortified cities in which you trust (5:17b). With the destruction of the walls, the coming of social chaos would not be far behind. In Amos's oracle against the *Gentile* nations, the burning of the fortresses is targeted (**Amos 1:7, 10, 12 and 14, 2:2 and 5**). In the savage announcement of **Hosea 2:9-13** there is an end to the public activities of an ordered community, **Judah**, like every other community, had **trusted** in its social order, but that social order was then being jeopardized as **YHVH** unleashed judgment against the covenant-breaking community. The world that **Judah** had experienced was under threat and sure to end, gobbled up ruthlessly by the greedy invader said to be the agent of **ADONAI-Tzva'ot**.⁷⁵

Yet even in those days, declares **ADONAI**. When **Jeremiah** (under the direction of **the Holy Spirit**) uses the phrase **in the days to come; the days are coming; in those days; in that day, at that time; or for the time will surely come**, the context points either to the **near historical future** or the **far eschatological future** and which one should be used. This is the third of twenty-five times that **the Holy Spirit** uses one of **these phrases**. **In those days, I will not destroy you completely (5:18, also see 4:27 and 5:10)**. The context is the **near historical future**. The sentence was not death for **the nation**, but exile.

And when the people ask, "Why has the LORD our God done all this to us? You will give them this answer [Jeremiah], "As you have abandoned Me and served other gods in your own Land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own" (5:19). **So the Babylonian captivity was prophesied** (see **Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**). The exile is derived and linked to spiritual adultery. The word **abandoned** helps to connect the whole image to the marriage metaphor. **Judas'** devotion to a "second lover" (3:1) leads to life in a "second land," the land of captivity.