

# At This Time

## I Will Hurl Out Those Who Live in This Land

### 10: 17-25

**DIG:** What will happen to those who stay under siege? To those who flee the City? Since Jeremiah's name means *the Lord hurls*, what possible pun do you see? What is Jeremiah's incurable wound? What happened to the leaders? How does Jeremiah feel about himself in this time of crisis? For what **two reasons** is he angry with Judah's enemies? Who speaks in verses 19-22? Is this prayer (also see in Psalm 70:6-7) vengeful, or is it an appeal for God's justice? Why do you think so?

**REFLECT:** In what circumstances might YHVH allow His people to endure an illness or injury that is curable or preventable? Have you ever met a refugee? How would you feel if your home was destroyed and your country was at war? Which would you rather receive: God's justice or His anger? What determines who gets what? Do you believe that the fate of your country depends on whether the political leaders look to the LORD for guidance? Why or why not?

**609 BC during the three-month reign of Jehoahaz  
This near historical prophecy would be fulfilled in 586 BC**

Judah had abandoned ADONAI and therefore is told to get ready for exile. Here we see Jeremiah moving back and forth between public calamity and personal grief. He reflects on the foolishness of the shepherds who brought the calamity upon Y'udah. This leads to an anguished cry from the prophet from Anathoth that the foe from the north was at the gate. This section closes with a prayer for mercy.

The citizens of Judah and Jerusalem are told to gather up their belongings to leave the Land, those who lived under siege. The word belongings means *things that they had used to become wealthy in an illegitimate way*. It has the same root from which the word Canaanite comes because in their practice they had become what the Canaanites once were. As God once removed the Canaanites from the Land, He will now remove the Israelites from the Land. For this is what ADONAI says: **At this time I will hurl out those who live in this Land; I will bring distress on them so that they may be captured (10:17-18)**. The twin motifs of exile and devastation are thus sounded in these verses. Some will be carried away. Many will be killed. Both groups are under God's harsh judgment.

**The Babylonian captivity was a direct result of Jewish idolatry.** Now God would bring them into the very center of idolatry . . . Babylon. It was somewhat like the plagues of Egypt, "You want to worship frogs? I'll give you frogs" (see the commentary on **Exodus B1 - Stretch Out Your Hand and Make Frogs Come Up on the Land of Egypt**). After the Jews had their fill of idolatry for seventy years of Babylon rule, it would not be a problem again.

Then, on behalf of his countrymen, Yirmeyahu bemoans their fate and his own. Just as before (see Bq - **Since My People are Crushed, I am Crushed, I Mourn and Horror Grips Me**), Jeremiah lamented and expressed his grief. He cried out: **Woe to me because of my injury! My wound is incurable! Yet I said to myself, "This is my sickness (my prophetic calling), and I must endure it" (10:19).** Jeremiah so deeply identified with his people that his own lament could be equated with the lament of the nation.

Jeremiah gives **two reasons** for his grief. First, **My tent is destroyed; all its ropes are snapped.** Her reaction to her calamity is portrayed in the language of the tent dwellers whose tent has been uprooted. This was an affliction and she must bear it. Like the nomad, her tent (Jerusalem) is ruined, all the tent ropes have been snapped.<sup>104</sup> And secondly, **her children (citizens) are gone from me and are no more; no one is left now to pitch my tent or to set up my shelter (10:20).** The land is likened to a tent that has been overthrown. But the most severe disaster is that the children of the nation have gone into exile, so that there would be none to rebuild the shattered country until after their exile was completed (see Gu - **Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**).

Then the reason is given for the coming devastation. The shepherds, the leaders of the people, are foolish and do not inquire (Hebrew: *daras*) of the LORD but they did inquire of idols; so they do not prosper. And because the leadership of Y'hudah was not faithful to their duties all their flock was scattered. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel held the view that the kings through their sacred anointing were YHVH's representatives to guard the covenant and lead the people. It was their task as national leaders to continue the work of Moshe. But they were more interested in playing politics than in carrying out the will of ADONAI (see Bw - **The Message to the Evil Kings**). Listen! The report is coming - a great commotion from the land of the north (again no specific country is named)! It will make the towns of Judah desolate, a haunt of jackals (10:21-22). **Although the exile had not yet taken place, the prophet spoke of it as an accomplished fact.**

Then Jeremiah interceded for the people of Judah. Was there still some plea that the prophet could make on behalf of his nation? He recognized that it was God who was in control. I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps (10:23 NASB a variation of Proverbs 16:9). Two different Hebrew words are used here for the word man. The first emphasizes man in his weakness,

*his humanity, recognizing that he has come from the dust of the earth. Man in his weakness does not control his destiny. The second emphasizes man in his strength. But not even man in his strength can control his destiny. So neither in his weakness or his strength is man in control of his destiny (Psalm 37:23-24; Proverbs 16:9).*

Therefore, **Jeremiah** prays for himself and the nation that **God** would discipline them rather than punish them. **Discipline me, ADONAI, but only in due measure of judgment - not in your anger, or You will reduce me to nothing (10:24 a variation of Psalm 6:1).** But as for the **Gentiles**, the prophet prays for punishment rather than discipline.

Then **Jeremiah** quotes **Psalm 73:6-7** to emphasize his point. **Pour out Your wrath on the [Gentile] nations that do not acknowledge You, on the [Gentile] peoples who do not call on Your name. The Gentiles did not know God or call on His name . . . but this was also true of Isra'el. If that was a reason for punishing the Gentiles, it should be an even greater reason for punishing the Jews. So while Isra'el would be punished for disobeying the Torah and idolatry, the Gentiles would be punished for other reasons. Later (see De - [The Cup of God's Wrath Against the Nations](#)) this very judgment against the Gentile nations can be seen (see Dg - [Prophecies Concerning the Gentile Nations](#)), but not before Y'hudah and Yerushalayim are defeated. For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him completely and destroyed his homeland (10:25). In other words, the Gentiles would be punished because of their treatment of the Jews. The principle of the Abrahamic Covenant: I will bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you, I will curse (Genesis 12:3).**

This was **Jeremiah's** dilemma. His heart told him to plead for divine mercy, but logic pointed to the inevitability of judgment of **Judah** also (**Amos 5:18-20**). That **Y'hudah** should also need to be punished in the same way as the **goyim** was the tragic result of centuries of unrestrained apostasy and the rejection of **YHVH's** covenant and its demands. No matter how much the **Israelites** reasoned they were beyond divine judgment because **God** had chosen them as the **apple of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:10)** and given them the Torah, **He** could not overlook the sin and rebellion of His own people.<sup>105</sup>