

# God's Determination to Punish Judah

## 14:1 to 17:27

609 to 598 BC during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim

The section of 14:1 to 15:21 is bound together by the theme of drought; physical drought that illustrates spiritual drought. First comes the heartbreaking picture of drought so severe that even the **wild donkeys** cannot find any **grass**. In other words, **Y'hudah** was experiencing a spiritual drought (see Cj - **Judah's Terrible Drought**). Once again **Jeremiah** is commanded by the **LORD** not to pray for the Judeans. The prophet interceded three times with **ADONAI** responding three times. Finally, God sent four destroyers to make **the Jews abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth** (see Ck - **Jerusalem's Judgment Inescapable**). God's pain is profound. **Judah** kept turning **her** back on **Him** and **He** describes **her** demise. God's love lasts forever, but **His** patience does not. **Yerushalayim's** destruction is described as if it had already occurred (see Cl - **You Have Rejected Me, I am Tired of Relenting**). The prophet was despondent and wishes **he** were never born. **YHVH** encourages **His servant** (see Cm - **Woe to Me, Mother, That You Gave Me Birth**).

The sixteenth chapter balances judgment and hope. More than half of the chapter (see Co - **You Must Not Marry and Have Sons and Daughters**) is a reflection on **Jeremiah's** celibacy, which is a warning of the deprivation that would come to **Y'hudah**. This is followed by the promise of a return from exile (see Cp - **Judgment Before Final Restoration to the Land**). A warning that **YHVH** will send **fishermen** and **hunters** to search out **Jewish** idolaters from **the Land** is followed by the hope that finally the Gentile nations will be converted.

Chapter seventeen contrasts between life with **ADONAI** and life without **Him**. God chronicles **Judah's** indelible sin and the contrast between trust in man and trust in God. **The human heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure**. Then a parable is directed specifically to King **Jehoiakim** (see Cr - **Blessed is the One Who Trusts in the LORD, Whose Confidence is in Him**). Then **Jeremiah** issues his fifth complaint. **Jeremiah** asks **God** to **save him**, to **rescue him**, to **vindicate him**, from any situation because **the prophet** was being attacked and accused of being a false prophet (see Cs - **Heal Me, ADONAI, and I Will Be Healed, Save Me and I Will Be Saved**). **God** is always ready to forgive a repentant sinner (26:2-3). And it was **the prophet's** duty to indicate the remedy for the current evils of the people. It was therefore natural that **Yirmeyahu** should stress the importance of **Shabbat**, a basic institution of Judaism. Making **the Sabbath holy**, with its intensive spiritual influence, would tend to wean the people from other abuses and effect a reformation (see Ct - **The Sabbath and National Survival**).