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Judah’s Invasion from a Distant Nation

5: 10-19

Judah’s invasion from a distant nation 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, 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? 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 God 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, to see link click [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 **YHWH** 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.