

"Charles Swindoll has appropriately titled this chapter 'Words from the Woodshed.' The focus of Jeremiah's attention moved from the personified city of Jerusalem to the punishment inflicted by God. The first 10 verses depict the anger of God as He systematically dismantled the city in judgment. Verses 11-19 contain (a) Jeremiah's anguished cry as he wept over the destruction of the city he had loved and (b) his call for the people to cry out to God. Verses 20-22 give the people's response, in which Jerusalem again cried out for the Lord to see her plight".¹

The Judgment of God Had Finally Come.

After centuries of outright rebellion with prophet after prophet warning of coming judgment had finally come.

¹ How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion With a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth The glory of Israel, And has not remembered His footstool In the day of His anger.
Lamentations 2:1 (NASB)

"...**With a cloud...**" There is some reference to the glory of God while leading His People in the wilderness. The cloud was a reference to His Glory and leading His people through the wilderness.² Instead of this being a cloud of favor, Israel now faced quite a different cloud – the fierce anger of the LORD. To be cast down from heaven is a reference to the self-assurance / pride of Israel who would ascend to heaven in her rebellion.³ Finally, the LORD's footstool – the very Arc of the Covenant⁴ would hold no talisman's guarantee of safety – even the Temple was destroyed ([cf. vs. 2:7](#)).

The presumption of Israel was enormous! Just how long did She think the LORD would

¹ —Bible Knowledge Commentary. See commentary on Isaiah 40:27-31 later on in this lesson.

² **²⁰ Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.** Exodus 13:20-22 (NASB)

³ Lucifer thought in his pride to ascent to the very throne of God ([Isaiah 14:11-13](#)). Jesus made his headquarters in Capernaum – He performed many miracles there. It would seem that Capernaum was the most favored places on earth and yet they did not heed His message. Because of this He delivered a most damning of predictions – that city's residents would surely suffer the same or worse punishment as Sodom ([Matt. 11:23](#)).

⁴ Compare [1 Chron 28:2](#) with [Psalm 99:5; 132:7](#)

hold back on His warnings ([Lev. 26:16-25](#); [Deut 28:36-48, 53](#); [Jer 19:9](#))? So it was that judgment had finally come – Jeremiah knew full well that She deserved all of the judgments of God but nonetheless he could not dry his tears over Her.

The Lord's Judgment was Complete

² The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared All the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down The strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes. ³ In fierce anger He has cut off All the strength of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand From before the enemy. And He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire Consuming round about. ⁴ He has bent His bow like an enemy; He has set His right hand like an adversary And slain all that were pleasant to the eye; In the tent of the daughter of Zion He has poured out His wrath like fire. Lamentations 2:2-4 (NASB)

Not only was His anger directed against his People and their king but even the Temple was utterly destroyed. At this point Jeremiah goes back and forth between the people, the royalty and the temple – much like a kaleidoscope of wrath with pieces here and there. The point here is that His judgment was so complete that there was to be no surviving of Israel – at least from man's point of view. This passage describes the complete devastation that the LORD visited upon Israel. Here are some vivid pictures I see in this passage:

1. The Lord has swallowed up
2. He has thrown down
3. He has cut off
4. He has drawn back His right hand
5. He has burned ... like a flaming fire – consuming round about.
6. He has bent his bow like an enemy
7. He has poured out His wrath like fire.

Swallowed up is reminiscent of God's judgment of Korah and his sons who were swallowed up by the earth because they presumed to rebel against the Lord's choosing of Moses and Aaron ([Numbers 16:28-33](#)). The whole family and all their belongings were destroyed – or literally went to hell (sheol) that day.

To be **Thrown down** means to be completely destroyed. All infrastructure, way of life everything that brings remembrance of the former existence of Israel was torn down violently by the Lord. Here are some examples from the Scripture:

[Ezek 38:17-23](#) (esp vs 20). Here the LORD judges Gog – the mountains are said to be thrown down – certainly a vivid picture of violence

[Jer 50](#) (esp vs 15 – in KJV) Here Babylon is judged. Again, the imagery is vivid depicting the complete destruction of Babylon.

[Matt 24:2](#). Here Jesus predicts the complete tearing down of the temple which was

fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem and completely sacked the city including the fulfillment of Jesus' prophesy.

[Rev 18:21](#) Babylon is completely destroyed. In this vivid depiction a great millstone was thrown down into the sea and so Babylon will be no more.

Israel's strength was to be **cut off** – the largest part of OT references refer to the separation offenders from the people of Israel. In this case Israel was to completely lose all her influence, military strength and economic glory.

He has drawn back His right hand refers to the LORD's defending hand – of all the references to God's right hand I like Psalms 63:8 – **My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.** (NASB).

The last three I will leave for another time – is there any doubt that the judgment of the LORD is complete? I must say this – there is no reason for Israel to ever be heard again in the pages of history the destruction was that complete. But (as I have said before) we know the final chapter of history and that the LORD will not leave Israel a mere mention on history's pages.

The Lord Is Sovereign over His People and in History

¹⁷ **The Lord has done what He purposed; He has accomplished His word Which He commanded from days of old. He has thrown down without sparing, And He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the might of your adversaries.** Lamentations 2:17 (NASB)

But this is not the end of Israel. As complete as the LORD's judgment is we can read from other passages that He is not through. I must insert into this lesson a rather long passage:

²⁷ **Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"?** ²⁸ **Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.** ²⁹ **He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power.** ³⁰ **Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,** ³¹ **Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.** Isaiah 40:27-31 (NASB).

This passage really puts everything in perspective. One might think that Isaiah is asserting that the sins of Israel will not escape God's notice but please notice that this is the comfort chapter – this is referring to the broken in spirit the Israel – the crushed. The whole tone of this chapter is the RESTORATION of Israel. When Daniel prayed to the LORD his prayers were heard. This message is not just for those who weary in the LORD's work but for the child of God who has repented of his sin and now is looking for strength from Him.

The next passage needs a little context. Jeremiah is delivering the word of the LORD to Judah. God had warned Judah not to go to war with Egypt but they did not listen. Because of this Judah would be punished (the whole point of this lesson) but here's where the LORD's sovereignty comes in. Even though Judah (Israel) would be completely destroyed these words of comfort came from the LORD:

²⁷ "But as for you, O Jacob My servant, do not fear, Nor be dismayed, O Israel! For, see, I am going to save you from afar, And your descendants from the land of their captivity; And Jacob will return and be undisturbed And secure, with no one making him tremble. ²⁸ "O Jacob My servant, do not fear," declares the Lord, "For I am with you. For I will make a full end of all the nations Where I have driven you, Yet I will not make a full end of you; But I will correct you properly And by no means leave you unpunished." Jeremiah 46:27-28 (NASB)

"...But I will correct you properly And by no means leave you unpunished." rang in the ears of Jeremiah. So we see that He held His people accountable for their rebellion but did not utterly abandon them – even though it would seem so at the time.

What about Today? Has God Abandoned Israel Forever?

In a word – No! Paul the apostle wrestled with this question for Israel had committed the most grievous of sins – they had rejected their Savior – their Messiah – again a long passage:

¹ I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." ⁴ But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. Romans 11:1-5 (NASB)

Paul has already pointed out that only the heart that is saved is a true Israelite.⁵ So we see that God has never abandoned His People – but that His People are the redeemed in Christ.

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Peter 2:9 (NASB)

⁵ [Romans 9:6](#) ff.