

Jeremiah Chapter 6

Jeremiah 6:1 "O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction."

The judgment prophesied against Judah and Jerusalem in the preceding chapters is vividly portrayed in chapter 6. The use of signal “fires”, especially in times of emergency, is well attested in the literature of the ancient Near East. To appreciate the imperative phrase “blow the trumpets”, see the note on 4:5.

“Tekoa ... Beth-haccerem”: Tekoa, the home of Amos, is 6 miles south of Beth-lehem. The location of Beth-haccerem (“vineyard house”), is unknown, but is probably near Tekoa. As the enemy came from the north, the people would flee south. For “North” see note on 4:6-7.

The city of Jerusalem was part of Benjamin. Benjamin was favored greatly of God, because the temple grounds were in Benjamite territory. The temple had been spared before, but this time even the temple will be attacked. Judah's land was on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is telling them to flee to the south for safety. If they were to leave immediately, they would have time to take possessions with them. You remember the trumpet blowing was to assemble the people. Tekoa was a town south of Jerusalem. The Babylonians will be coming from the north, so the road to the south is the way of escape. Beth-haccerem is about half-way to Tekoa from Jerusalem. The fire would delay the attackers. The people should gather to the trumpet blown.

Jeremiah 6:2 "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate [woman]."

That dwells at home and lives in pleasure, and elegance, in great peace and quietness, in entire ease and security, in no fear of enemies, or apprehension of danger; and so it describes the secure state of the Jews.

"Comely" means suitable or beautiful. God is the Father and it is not unusual for Him to call His own daughter or son, “comely”. "Zion", as we have seen before indicates Jerusalem, but also signifies the church. It would appear here that He is speaking of the church, since He says, “daughter”. The church is spoken of as a woman. The “daughter” could also be speaking of the God's people fleeing Jerusalem.

Verses 3-5: The “shepherds” and “flocks” that camp around Jerusalem sound pastoral but they represent military forces laying siege to the city.

Jeremiah 6:3 "The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch [their] tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place."

“Shepherds”: These were hostile leaders of the invading Babylonians, whose soldiers were compared with “flocks”.

God is still trying to help His people. The shepherds will gather around them to protect them if they will go to the south, as He has instructed them. The good Shepherd takes care of the sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and the Christians are His sheep. The "her" in this is speaking of God's children.

Jeremiah 6:4 "Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out."

Not only proclaim it, but prepare themselves for it. Get everything ready for the siege, and begin it. These are either the words of the Lord, calling upon the Chaldeans in His providence to act such a part against Jerusalem; or of the Chaldeans themselves, stirring up one another to it. Which the latter seems to be the best option; since it follows:

"Arise, and let us go up at noon": Scale the walls, and take the city. Which, though in the heat of the day, and not so proper a time, yet such was the eagerness of the army, and their confidence of carrying the place off at once. And concluding there was no need of waiting till the evening, or of taking any secret measures for the siege; they propose to go up at noon, in the heat of the day, and in the sight of their enemies, and storm the city.

"Woe unto us! for the day goes away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out": Which some take to be the words of the besiegers, lamenting they had lost time; had not proceeded according to their first purpose and had neglected going up at noontime. And now the evening was coming upon them. Or as being angry, and out of humor, that the city was not taken by them as soon as they expected. Though, according to Kimchi, they are the words of the prophet; and he may represent the besieged, mourning over their unhappy case and circumstances. The day of prosperity declining, and nothing but darkness and distress coming upon them.

This has given cause to the Babylonians urging them to prepare for war. We must remember in this, God is causing the Babylonians to come against Jerusalem and Judah. Noon time is generally a time of rest in Jerusalem. They would not be expecting anyone to come and attack them at that hour. This battle will go on until the evening.

Jeremiah 6:5 "Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces."

Or, this night. They were set upon it and they would lose neither day nor night; which shows that they were extraordinarily stirred up by God in this expedition.

"Let us destroy her palaces": This was the bait or motive that they propounded to themselves. In other words, to have the spoil of all the stately palaces and houses of the rich nobles and great ones.

It seems from this they will march at night, to keep from being seen.

Jeremiah 6:6 "For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this [is] the city to be visited; she [is] wholly oppression in the midst of her."

The erecting of an earth "mount" (probably a parapet), was a common siege operation in the ancient Near East (compare 2 Kings 19:32).

"Hew ye down trees": A besieging tactic is described in which trees were used to build up ramps against the city walls.

The city of Jerusalem has a wall surrounding it. If the gates were closed, they would need the trees felled to be able to mount the wall. God is going to bring great oppression to Jerusalem because of her great unfaithfulness to Him.

Jeremiah 6:7 "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually [is] grief and wounds."

A metaphor, to express how natural all manner of wickedness is to her. How full she is of it, and how incessant in it. Noting her impudence, a fountain being not able to retain its water; and the expression of "casting it out" seems to imply her violence in her filthiness. As it is said of the sea, that it casteth out mire and dirt (Isa. 57:20), and favored by the next clause.

"Violence and spoil is heard in her": This is all she busies herself about (Jer. 20:8). It is the general complaint of her inhabitants.

"Before me continually is grief and wounds": In other words, that the poor sustain: wherever I go or look, I can hear and see nothing but the sad complaints and grievances of the poor, lamenting over oppression and cruelties that are used against them (Psalm 69:26). This being so expressly against God's command (Exodus 22:22-24; Isa. 3:14-15; James 5:4). For this refers rather to their sin than to their sufferings from the enemy, as some would interpret it.

This is a very serious battle. The whole thing is happening to Jerusalem for her people to repent and cast their sins away. Their sin had been so great, the only way to rid them of it was for great loss of life to occur. This is a drastic act of God upon a people He loved, because their sin had been so drastic. There is much grief in this type of war.

Jeremiah 6:8 "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited."

Or "corrected". Receive discipline or instructions by chastisements and corrections, return by repentance, that the evils threatened may not come. This shows the affection of the Lord towards His people, notwithstanding all their sins. That their amendment, and not their destruction, was pleasing to Him; that it was with reluctance He was about to visit them in the manner threatened. And that even now it was not too late, provided they were instructed and reformed; but, if not, they must expect what follows:

"Lest my soul depart from thee": His Shekinah, or divine Presence, and all the tokens of His love, favor and good will. The Targum interprets it of the Word of the Lord. "Lest my Word cast thee off" (see Romans 11:1), or, "lest my soul pluck itself from thee"; or "be plucked". And separated from thee: the phrase denotes an utter separation, a forcible one, joined with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. In Ezek. 23:18, it is rendered, "my mind was alienated"; it denotes disunion and disaffection.

"Lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited": The Targum adds, by way of illustration, "as the land of Sodom;" so that not a man should dwell in it (see Jer. 4:25).

God is pleading with His people through the mouth of Jeremiah, to learn a lesson from this and not get back into sin. He is begging them to repent so He can stop this terrible suffering. If they do not repent after all of this, He will just destroy them all. God loves His family and He loves Jerusalem. He wants them to learn a lesson so further punishment will not be necessary.

Jeremiah 6:9 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets."

"Thoroughly glean": Unlike the benevolent practice of leaving food in the field for the poor to glean (Lev. 19:9-10, Ruth 2:5-18), the Babylonians will leave no one when they "harvest" Judah.

We learned in our lessons on Leviticus, that there were always a few grapes left after the gleaning. We see that a few of God's children are left here. He tells Babylon to leave a few. We saw in an earlier lesson that Jeremiah was one of the few spared.

Jeremiah 6:10 "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear [is] uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."

Here, the picture of an "uncircumcised ear" mocks the distinctive mark of Jewish heritage by mentioning it in relation with an "unwillingness to hear."

It is not so much who will Jeremiah speak this to, as it is of who will take heed to what he says. He is speaking, but very few will listen and understand what he is saying. They have trained their ears toward worldly things (uncircumcised). They are not interested in what God has to say. They have been seeking help from the world and the false gods of that world. They do not have high regard for the Word of God. They are disobedient to God. They find His Word of no importance to them.

Jeremiah 6:11 "Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with [him that is] full of days."

At times Jeremiah is torn between proclaiming the Lord's righteous anger against His sinful people and expressing genuine concern and compassion for them (compare verses 26-30 with 3:21).

Jeremiah is wearied of these people also. God is speaking through Jeremiah, and the people are not heeding the warning. Everyone is to taste of the wrath of God in this Babylonian attack. The children, young men, and the old alike will be affected by this overthrow of Jerusalem. The young men will perhaps be captured and turned into slaves. All ages and all relationships will feel this terrible punishment coming on these unfaithful people.

Jeremiah 6:12 "And their houses shall be turned unto others, [with their] fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah uses the theme of the outstretched "hand" several times (21:5; 27:5; 32:17, 21). It is used in the Scriptures to dramatize God's omnipotence (32:17), especially concerning Israel's deliverance (Exodus 6:6), or God's judgment (21:5).

All they possess shall go to the captor. Their wives will be taken to the homes of the Babylonians. In many instances, the husbands will be slaves in another area. The captors will spoil the land of all they can carry. The things they cannot keep, they will destroy. Remember all of this happens because God has stretched out His hand against them.

Jeremiah 6:13 "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."

From the least in age to the oldest among them, or rather, from persons of the lowest class of life, and in the meanest circumstances, to those that are in the highest places of trust and honor, and are in the greatest affluence of riches and wealth. So that as men of every age and station had sinned, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, it was but just and right that they should all share in the common calamity.

"Every one is given to covetousness": Which is mentioned particularly, and instead of other sins, it being the root of evil, and was the prevailing sin among them.

"From the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely": The false prophet, as Kimchi interprets it, and so do the Septuagint and other versions. And the priest of Baal, as the same interpreter; both acted deceitfully. The one in prophesying lies to the people, the other in drawing them off from the pure worship of God. The Targum explains, "from the scribe to the priest;" from the lowest order of teachers to the highest in ecclesiastical office. Everything shows a most general and dreadful corruption.

God has raised His hand against them because they are all caught up in a sinful way of life. The sin has even reached into the house of God. The priests and prophets are guilty, as well as their followers. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Verses 14-15: Hurts that are "healed slightly" are not healed; the announcement of "peace" means nothing "when there is no peace" (Ezek. 13:10). Lack of healthy shame was frequently an indicator of impending judgment.

Jeremiah 6:14 "They have healed also the hurt [of the daughter] of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when [there is] no peace."

“Peace, peace”: Wicked leaders among the prophets and priests (verse 13), proclaimed peace falsely and gave weak and brief comfort. They provided no true healing from spiritual wounds, not having the discernment to deal with sin and its effects (verse 15). The need was to return to obedience (verse 16; compare 8:11).

The false prophets’ concept of “peace” (absence of war or calamity), was a far cry from the Old Testament’s teaching. The underlying idea of the Hebrew root and all its associated words is that of “wholeness” or “completeness.” Thus, to know true peace is both, to attain personal fulfillment and to enjoy full and healthy relationships with others. Ultimately, true peace is found in God Himself (33:6; Num. 6:26; Judges 6:23; Psalm 29:11).

Because Israel stood in covenant relationship with God it could know peace (compare Deut. 22:9-29). Its spiritual leadership was to be composed of men who know God’s peace (compare Num. 25:10-13; Mal. 2:1-9). Its citizens could enjoy fellowship with God through that sacrifice known as the peace offering (Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-38; compare 22:17-30), which expressed the joy and full communion of the believer with God. Moreover, by this, and by living out God’s revealed Word in absolute trust, they could experience genuine peace in their daily lives (Psalm 119:165; Prov. 3:1-4; Isa. 26:3-4). Someday God will send to Israel the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6-7), who will bring redemption and restoration to the land under a Covenant of Peace (33:6-9; Isa. 54:10; Ezek. 34:24-31; 37:26-28).

These leaders in the church had spoken peace to the people to gain their trust. There is no peace, and will not be any peace until the King of Peace (Jesus Christ), brings peace to the earth. We might take a lesson from this ourselves. Man cannot bring peace, only God brings peace.

Jeremiah 6:15 "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time [that] I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."

This seems chiefly, and in the first place, to follow the false prophets and wicked priests; who when they committed idolatry, or any other sin, and led the people into the same by their doctrine and example. Yet, when reprov'd for it, were not ashamed, being given up to a judicial hardness of heart.

"Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush": They were men of impudent faces, they had a whore's forehead and there was not the least sign or appearance of shame in them. When charged with the foulest crimes, and threatened with the severest punishment, they were not moved by either. They had neither shame nor fear.

"Therefore they shall fall among them that fall": Meaning that the prophets and priests shall perish among the common people, and with them, who should be slain, and fall by the sword of the Chaldeans. The sacredness of their office would not exempt them; they shall fare no better than the rest of the people.

"At the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD": That is, when the city and temple would be destroyed by the Chaldeans, these would be cast down from their excellency, the high office in which they were, and fall into ruin, and perish with the rest.

We discussed in a previous lesson, how their conscience had been seared over with a hot iron. They had sinned so much that their conscience was not even operating. They were not even sorry for the sins they committed. Repetitious sin deadens the conscience. Those who blush, blush because their conscience tells them what they have done is wrong. Blushing has innocence connected with it. These are hardened to sin. "Saith the LORD", just reaffirms this punishment is from God.

Jeremiah 6:16 "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein]."

Here is the image of travelers who are lost, stopping to inquire about the right way they once knew before they wandered so far off it.

The people's stubborn refusal to walk in the traditional "ways" of true righteousness is often mentioned by Jeremiah (12:16; 18:15; 23:12; 31:21). Moving in their own "paths" and following their own way could lead only to Judah's destruction (compare Prov. 14:12). The contrast of the way of righteousness and life with the way of the ungodly and death is often made in the Scriptures (e.g., Psalm chapter 1, Matt. 7:13-14).

There is a straight and narrow path that leads to righteousness. There are few that find it, or even want to find it. I have said so many times that salvation is not a one-time happening, but a walk through life with the LORD. It is important to live saved. Sin should not be in the vocabulary of the saved. The LORD made the path for all of us as well as for them to walk in. That is the only way to heaven. When we walk in His Light, we find rest for our souls. These were a rebellious people who chose to walk in their own way, rather than in God's path. Their way leads to destruction.

Jeremiah 6:17 "Also I set watchmen over you, [saying], Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken."

The prophets were at times called "watchmen" for God on behalf of His people (compare Isa. 21:6, 11; Ezek. 3:17; 33:7-9; Hab. 2:1). For other terms relative to the prophet's office, see 1 Sam. 9:6-11.

The prophets were like "watchmen" who stood on the city walls and announced the approach of an enemy army (2 Sam. 18:24-27; Ezek. 3:16-21; 33:1-9), but the people did not pay attention to their warnings.

These watchmen gave warning of impending danger. Jeremiah and Isaiah were two of the watchmen. But these people would not answer the call to assemble when the trumpet blew. I can easily relate this to the time when the trumpet will blow in the sky to gather God's people. Jesus

is coming for those who are looking for Him. It would be terrible not to answer the call of the trumpet at that time.

Jeremiah 6:18 "Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what [is] among them."

Since the Jews refused to hearken to the word of the Lord, the Gentiles are called upon to hear it (as in Acts 13:45). This is a rebuke to the Jews that the Gentiles would hear, when they would not.

"And know, O congregation": Either of Israel, as the Targum and Kimchi explain it; or of the nations of the world, the multitude of them; or the church of God in the midst of them.

"What is among them": Among the Jews: either what evil is among them? What sins and transgressions are committed by them, which were the cause of the Lord's threatening them with sore judgments, and bringing these judgments upon them. So Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the words; to which agrees the Targum, "and let the congregation of Israel know their sins;" or the punishments the Lord inflicted on them. And the Vulgate Latin version says, "and know, O congregation, what I will do unto them"; which sense is confirmed by what follows in the next chapter.

God's people are spoken of as the congregation. He tells them, because you have been warned of what is to come, listen and respond. Not only must you listen, but understand.

Jeremiah 6:19 Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, [even] the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

The preceding verses note the ways God had urged faithfulness only to be met by willful rejection on the part of people for whom He had repeatedly done great wonders. They knew their responsibility before God, but they refused it.

Not only would the houses of Judah and Benjamin notice what has happened to the unfaithful, but it is for all to see. This could be even be speaking to our generation. God is patient and long-suffering, but there is a time when He says it is enough. They had not only broken God's law, but kept their minds on evil things, as well.

Jeremiah 6:20 "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings [are] not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me."

"Not acceptable": Using imported fragrances in their offerings did not make them sweetly acceptable to God when the worshipers rejected His word (verse 19).

God does not want an outward show of their loyalty to Him. He will not accept sacrifices from them or from anyone else, when their hearts are not in the sacrifice. It is but a shallow gesture,

when they sacrifice from a sense of duty. God wants our love. God wanted His people to love Him as He loved them. Jesus said it this way:

Mark 7:6 "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with [their] lips, but their heart is far from me."

Jeremiah 6:21 "Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbor and his friend shall perish."

To "lay stumbling blocks" before the blind was forbidden (Lev. 19:14). However, Judah's spiritual blindness had caused them to erect stumbling blocks hewn from greed (Ezek. 7:19), and idolatry (Ezek. 14:4), that the Lord would turn to their own destruction (compare Isa. 8:14; Matt. 21:44; 1 Peter 2:8).

We can see from the Scripture above and the one following that they caused the stumbling block to be there because of their unfaithfulness to God.

Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Verses 22-23: A description of the Babylonians.

Jeremiah 6:22 "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth."

The Assyrians from Babylon, which lay north of Judea (as in Jer. 1:14).

"And a great nation shall be raised": That is, by the LORD, who would stir them up to this undertaking. The Targum explains, "many people shall come openly."

"From the sides of the earth": Afar off, as Babylon was (Jer. 5:15).

It seemed the enemy of God's people always came from the north. This, of course, is speaking of Babylon. Babylon was a great nation by world standards. We will see in a later lesson that Babylon is judged of God and is destroyed itself.

Jeremiah 6:23 "They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they [are] cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion."

That is, every one of them should be furnished with both these pieces of armor, that they might be able to fight their attackers, both near and far off. They had bows to shoot arrows at a distance, and spears to strike with when near. The Targum renders it, bows and shields.

"They are cruel, and have no mercy"; this is said, to strike terror into the hearts of the hardened Jews.

"Their voice roareth like the sea": The waves of it, which is terrible (Luke 21:25).

"And they ride upon horses": Which still made them more formidable, as well as suggests that their invasion would be quick and speedy, and they would soon be with them.

"Set in array as men for war": Prepared with all sorts of armor for battle. Or, "as a man"; as one man, denoting their action, enthusiasm, and agreement. Being not only well armed, but inwardly, resolutely bent, as one man, to engage in battle and conquer or die (see Judges 20:8).

"Against thee, O daughter of Zion": The hostilities being against her, and all the preparation made on her account. Which had a very dreadful appearance, and threatened with ruin. And therefore filled her with terror and distress, as follows (in verse 24).

This is just speaking of the fierceness of Babylon's attack on Jerusalem. "Their voice roareth like the sea", speaks of the large number of people who come against Jerusalem. The "sea" is many times, speaking of large numbers of people.

Jeremiah 6:24 "We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, [and] pain, as of a woman in travail."

Meaning not the prophet's report then, but the rumor of the enemy's coming from another quarter, at the time they were actually coming. These are the words of the people, of such a rumor spread. Or the words of the prophet, joining himself with them, describing their case. When it would be strongly reported, and they had reason to believe it, that the enemy was just coming, and very near.

"Our hands wax feeble": Have no strength in them, shake and tremble like men that have palsy, through fear and dread.

"Anguish hath taken hold of us": Tribulation or affliction; or rather anguish of spirit, on hearing the news of the near approach of the enemy.

"And pain, as of a woman in travail": Which comes suddenly, and is very sharp. And this denotes that their destruction would come suddenly upon them, before they were aware, and be very severe.

When a woman gives birth, her pain is severe and it comes on her quickly. This is what is spoken of here, the suddenness of the attack and the severity of the attack. The people have heard of the fame of Babylon, and are too weak to resist the onslaught.

Jeremiah 6:25 "Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy [and] fear [is] on every side."

Either for pleasure, or for business. To take a walk in the field for the air, or to till it, plough, sow, or reap. But keep within the city and its walls, there being danger.

"Nor walk by the way": In the high road from Jerusalem, to any town or village near it.

"For the sword of the enemy": Or "because there is a sword for the enemy"; or, "the enemy has a sword" that is drawn. The enemy is in the field, and "by the way", and there is no escaping him.

"And fear is on every side": All round the city, being encompassed by the Assyrian army. Or the enemy's sword "is fear on every side"; causes fear in all parts round the city. The Targum says, "because the sword of the enemy kills those who are gathered round about;" or on every side.

This is just saying, after the battle begins, it will be too late to run. There will be no place they can run and be safe.

Jeremiah 6:26 "O daughter of my people, gird [thee] with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, [as for] an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us."

For "sackcloth" and "ashes" as marks of mourning, grief, and penitence, see Esther 4:1, 3; Isa. 58:5; Matt. 11:21; Luke 10:13.

Again, it is too late to put on sackcloth and wallow in the ashes after the battle has started. They are mourning but they began to mourn too late to stop the battle. Their grief will be as bitter as it would be if they had lost their only son. God's grief is great in this also as He has lost His children to these false gods.

Verses 27-30: "I have set thee": God placed Jeremiah as a kind of assayer to test the people's obedience. He also was a "tester" who worked with metals. Their sin prevented them from being pure silver, but rather they were bronze, iron, lead, even impure silver, that they failed the test.

From time to time, Jeremiah's records of "Thus says the Lord" (6:6, 9, 12, 15-16, and 22), include instances when God refined His prophet's role. Here, God designated him an assayer, someone who determines the purity and value of metals, and a "founder" who had not yet "plucked away" the people's impurities.

Jeremiah 6:27 "I have set thee [for] a tower [and] a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way."

Here, God speaks by way of encouragement to the prophet, and tells him He had made him a fortified tower, that he might both discover the carriages of his people, which is one use of a high

tower (Isa. 21:5, 8; Hab. 2:1). And also, to assure him, though they shall make several attempts against him, yet he shall be kept safe, as in a castle or fortress (Jer. 15:20).

"That thou mayest know and try their way": Their courses, actions, and manners, and which way they stand affected. Thou mayest bring all to thy strict observation and scrutiny, as goldsmiths or refiners do metals; for so is the word "try" used (Psalm 66:10, and elsewhere). Hereby he shall be encouraged to reprove them more freely, and with authority, because God doth promise to defend him, that they shall not hurt him. God will give him prudence to see what is amiss, and be undaunted to oppose it.

Jerusalem was to have been a morally upright city. They were to be an example to all the rest. God had set Jeremiah on high to watch over His people.

Jeremiah 6:28 "They [are] all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: [they are] brass and iron; they [are] all corrupters."

Obstinate and refractory (Isa. 31:6; Jer. 5:3, 23).

"Walking with slanders": Being their main business to detract from Jeremiah and the other prophets (Jer. 18:18; 20:10). A sin expressly forbidden (Lev. 19:16).

"They are brass and iron": This to the end of the chapter is all metaphorical. Either they are impudent, as brass doth sometimes signify, or they are obstinate and inflexible, as iron denotes (Isa. 48:4). Or it signifies their corrupt state; they are not pure metal, as silver or gold, but base and mean, as brass and iron mixed together (Ezek. 22:18).

"They are all corrupters": This relates to their nature. They propagate corruption (Isa. 1:4); they strengthen one another in wickedness.

The leaders have gone bad. They have revolted against God who gave them their high positions. Those who were to lead were walking in darkness themselves. They were leading the people into evil and not good. Brass has to do with judgement. It appears they were judging others and needed to be judged themselves. Their judgement was hard (as iron). We are judged by the judgement we give others; they were too. Those who are corrupt themselves cannot lead others to righteousness. They have lost the path that leads to righteousness.

Jeremiah 6:29 "The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away."

Which Kimchi interprets of the mouth and throat of the prophets, which, through reprovng the people, were dried up, and become raucous and hoarse, and without any profit to them. And so does the Targum, "lo, as the refiner's blower that is burnt in the midst of the fire, so the voice of the prophets is silent. Who prophesied to them, turn to the law, and they turned not;" or the judgments and chastisements of God upon the Jews may be meant, which were inflicted upon them to no purpose.

"The lead is consumed of the fire": Lead being used formerly, as is said, instead of quicksilver, in purifying of silver; which being consumed, the refining is in vain. Or it may be rendered, out of the fire it is perfect lead; or wholly lead, a base metal, no gold and silver in it, to which the Jews are compared.

"The founder melteth in vain": To whom either the prophet is likened, whose reproofs, threatening and exhortations, answered no end. Or the Lord Himself, whose corrections and punishments were of no use to reform this people.

"For the wicked are not plucked away": From their evil way, as Jarchi explains; or from good men, they are not separated the one from the other; or, "evils (sins), are not plucked away" from sinners. Their dross is not purged away from them; neither the words of the prophet, nor the judgments of God, had any effect upon them. The Targum of the latter part of the verse is, "and as lead which is melted in the midst of the furnace, so the words of the prophets which prophesied to them were nothing in their eyes. And without profit their teachers taught them and they did not leave their evil works."

There is no purification coming from this fire. The lead just melts instead of being separated. The trash is not removed from the metal. It is melted in the metal.

Jeremiah 6:30 "Reprobate silver shall [men] call them, because the LORD hath rejected them."

Or, "call ye them", as the Targum explains. So do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; by whom are meant the Jews, who thought themselves of some account, as silver; being the seed of Abraham, and having the law, the covenant and promises, and service of God. When those that tried them, as the prophets, found them to be nothing but dross; and therefore, if they must be called silver, they could call them none other than "reprobate silver". Or what is of no account and value; which is confirmed by the following reason, which contains the judgment and conduct of Him that cannot err.

"For the Lord hath rejected them": From being His people; and therefore cast them out of their own land, and caused them to go into captivity.

"Reprobate" here, means to spurn, disappear, cast away, condemn, or reject. All of these meanings fit this silver. Silver is purified by heating and then skimming the dross from the top. Silver symbolically means redemption. In the Scripture above, God has rejected salvation for them because of their impure life. Even the world will call them castaways, because it is obvious that God has spurned them.

Jeremiah Chapter 6 Questions

1. Who, in verse 1, did God speak to specifically?

2. Where were they to blow the trumpet?
3. What was the trumpet blown for?
4. Where was Beth-haccerem located?
5. What had He likened the daughter of Zion to?
6. What does "Zion" indicate?
7. What does "comely" mean?
8. Verse 3 says, the _____ shall come unto her.
9. Who is verse 4 speaking to?
10. What were they to do to cast a mount against Jerusalem?
11. Why is this happening to Jerusalem?
12. What does verse 8 tell Jerusalem to do?
13. What is the remnant likened unto in verse 9?
14. What kind of ear did God say they had?
15. Where had they been seeking help from, instead of God?
16. Who is verse 11 speaking of, who was full of the fury of the LORD?
17. What will happen to the wives of those of Jerusalem?
18. How many of the people had been guilty of covetousness?
19. They had said _____, when there was no _____.
20. Why were they not ashamed of their sins?
21. Repetitious sin deadens the _____.
22. What was the good way?
23. The straight and narrow path leads to _____.
24. What should not be in the vocabulary of the saved?
25. Who had God put over them, to try to get them to listen for the trumpet?
26. They were not only to listen to the warning but to _____, as well.

27. Why were their sacrifices unacceptable?
28. What did God lay before the people?
29. The enemy of God's people came from the _____.
30. What is said about the character of the Babylonians in verse 23?
31. The "sea", many times, is speaking of what?
32. What is he saying, in verse 24, when he compares the trouble to child birth?
33. What were signs of mourning in verse 26?
34. Jerusalem was to have been a _____ city.
35. What had happened to their leaders?
36. "Reprobate" in verse 30, means what?