

## Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

*Part 288 – If Thou Wilt Return Through Woe Is Me Now (Jeremiah 4:1-31)*

### 1. What did Judah have to do to prevent God's fury from coming upon them?

Return to God, swear of His truth and judgment, and open their hearts: *“(1) If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove. (2) And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. (3) For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. (4) Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings” (Jeremiah 4:1-4).*

- He sought their return (**Nehemiah 1:9**, **Jeremiah 3:22**, and **Hosea 14:1**).
- Their problem was that their return most often was not to God (**Hosea 7:14-16**).
- He wanted their abominations put away (**Genesis 35:2**, **Joshua 24:14**, and **Proverbs 16:17**).
- Then they would not remove (**Jeremiah 25:5**).
- The Lord in truth (**Psalms 25:10** and **Psalms 86:15**).
- The Lord in Judgment (**Psalms 37:28**).
- The Lord is righteous (**Psalms 11:7**).
- Nations bless themselves in Him (**Psalms 72:17**).
- Break up your fallow [untilled ground] ground (**Hosea 10:12-13**).
- Don't sow among the thorns (**Mark 4:7**).
- They needed to uncover their hearts (**Deuteronomy 10:16** and **Acts 7:51**).

### 2. Did God want peace declared in Judah?

No: *“(5) Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities. (6) Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. (7) The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant. (8) For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us. (9) And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder” (Jeremiah 4:5-9).*

- The trumpet blown is a warning that causes fear (**Amos 3:6-8**).
- Against the land, from the north, was coming an evil (**Jeremiah 25:9**).
- The predators (**II Kings 24:1-3**).

- Howl (**Ezekiel 21:12**) because God is not done (**Isaiah 5:25; 9:12; 9:17; 9:21; 10:4**).
- The rulers and leaders, their hearts perish (**Isaiah 22:1-3**).

### 3. Did God lie to the people of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah said this: *“Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul”* (**Jeremiah 4:10**).

- The prophet saying “Ah, Lord” (cf. **Ezekiel 11:13**).
- We know God does not lie (**Numbers 23:19**) and cannot lie (**Titus 1:2**).
- Jeremiah could have been mistaking promises God made (i.e. **Leviticus 26:6**) that always had qualifiers (**Deuteronomy 11:26-28**).
- Therefore, we have to use some deductive reasoning here. Here are some other Scriptures to consider in explanation of this text (**Romans 1:24-28** and **II Thessalonians 2:9-12**). **Consider verse 28!**
- God did allow, even in the sense of giving permission, a false spirit upon those who CHOOSE to rebel against Him (**I Kings 22:1-23**).
- However, He will not be the source by which prophets tell lies (**Jeremiah 14:13-14**).

### 4. Whose fault was it that a sentence was given against Jerusalem?

It was their fault because of their way and doings: *“(11) At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse, (12) Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them. (13) Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled. (14) O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? (15) For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim. (16) Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. (17) As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD. (18) Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart”* (**Jeremiah 4:11-18**).

- The winds of Judgment (**Hosea 13:15-16**).
- Swift judgment (**Malachi 3:5**).
- God wants clean hearts from His people (**Psalms 24:3-4, Psalms 73:1, and Ezekiel 18:31**).
- They needed also to change their thinking (**Isaiah 55:7-9**).
- Voices against Judah (**II Kings 17:13**).
- Their rebellion is the causes of these things (**Proverbs 1:30-31, Isaiah 1:20, Jeremiah 6:19, Lamentations 1:8, and Galatians 6:7-9**).

5. When God beheld His Creation and His people, was He full of joy?

No, He was full of pain: *“(19) My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. (20) Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. (21) How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? (22) For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. (23) I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. (24) I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. (25) I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. (26) I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger” (Jeremiah 4:19-26).*

- God was in internal pain over what He saw (**Genesis 6:5-6**, **Psalms 78:40**, **Psalms 95:10**, **Isaiah 63:10**, **Ezekiel 33:11**, and **Luke 19:41-44**).
- Destruction upon destruction (**Leviticus 26:23-25**).
- His tents (**II Chronicles 31:2**).
- How long (**Psalms 4:2** and **Proverbs 1:22**).
- His people (**I Kings 6:13**) were foolish (**Deuteronomy 32:28-29**, **Psalms 74:18**, and **Hosea 4:1-6**).
- They were wise to do evil (**Romans 16:19**).
- His beholding the earth without form, void, light, or inhabitants shows us this is God talking (**Genesis 1:2**). He likened the emptiness of the earth at the beginning of creation to what He foresees at this point when His judgment went forth on Judah (**Zephaniah 1:1-3**).

6. Was God going to reconsider making the whole land desolate?

No: *“(27) For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. (28) For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it” (Jeremiah 4:27-28).*

- For one, He was not going to make a full end of the land (**Isaiah 1:9**).
- His promise (**Genesis 22:18**) was not yet fulfilled. This would be done through the tribe of Judah (**Hebrews 7:14**).
- Once He pronounced certain judgment He was not going to change His mind at that point (**Isaiah 14:24**, **Isaiah 46:10-11**, and **Ezekiel 24:9-14**).

7. Would Zion retain her population, safety, glory, appeal, and joy?

NO: *“(29) The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein. (30) And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life. (31) For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers” (Jeremiah 4:29-31).*

- The whole city fled (**Jeremiah 39:4-5**).
- The city was so desolate it needed rebuilt (**Ezra 9:9**).
- Though they'd try to be appealing for help from other nations, none would help (**Lamentations 4:17**).
- They cried (**Jeremiah 8:14-22**).