Jeremiah 5-8

Not One Is Upright

**5**“Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem,
    look around and consider,
    search through her squares.
If you can find but one person
    who deals honestly and seeks the truth,
    I will forgive this city.
**2**Although they say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’
    still they are swearing falsely.”

**3**Lord, do not your eyes look for truth?
    You struck them, but they felt no pain;
    you crushed them, but they refused correction.
They made their faces harder than stone
    and refused to repent.
**4**I thought, “These are only the poor;
    they are foolish, for they do not know the way of the Lord,
    the requirements of their God.
**5**So I will go to the leaders
    and speak to them; surely they know the way of the Lord,
    the requirements of their God.”
But with one accord they too had broken off the yoke
    and torn off the bonds.
**6**Therefore a lion from the forest will attack them,
    a wolf from the desert will ravage them,
a leopard will lie in wait near their towns
    to tear to pieces any who venture out,
for their rebellion is great
    and their backslidings many.

**7**“Why should I forgive you?
    Your children have forsaken me
    and sworn by gods that are not gods.
I supplied all their needs,
    yet they committed adultery
    and thronged to the houses of prostitutes.
**8**They are well-fed, lusty stallions,
    each neighing for another man’s wife.
**9**Should I not punish them for this?”
    declares the Lord.
“Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?

**10**“Go through her vineyards and ravage them,
    but do not destroy them completely.
Strip off her branches,
    for these people do not belong to the Lord.
**11**The people of Israel and the people of Judah
    have been utterly unfaithful to me,”
declares the Lord.

**12**They have lied about the Lord;
    they said, “He will do nothing!
No harm will come to us;
    we will never see sword or famine.
**13**The prophets are but wind
    and the word is not in them;
    so let what they say be done to them.”

**14**Therefore this is what the Lord God Almighty says:

“Because the people have spoken these words,
    I will make my words in your mouth a fire
    and these people the wood it consumes.
**15**People of Israel,” declares the Lord,
    “I am bringing a distant nation against you—
an ancient and enduring nation,
    a people whose language you do not know,
    whose speech you do not understand.
**16**Their quivers are like an open grave;
    all of them are mighty warriors.
**17**They will devour your harvests and food,
    devour your sons and daughters;
they will devour your flocks and herds,
    devour your vines and fig trees.
With the sword they will destroy
    the fortified cities in which you trust.

**18**“Yet even in those days,” declares the Lord, “I will not destroy you completely. **19**And when the people ask, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all this to us?’ you will tell them, ‘As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own.’

**20**“Announce this to the descendants of Jacob
    and proclaim it in Judah:
**21**Hear this, you foolish and senseless people,
    who have eyes but do not see,
    who have ears but do not hear:
**22**Should you not fear me?” declares the Lord.
    “Should you not tremble in my presence?
I made the sand a boundary for the sea,
    an everlasting barrier it cannot cross.
The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail;
    they may roar, but they cannot cross it.
**23**But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts;
    they have turned aside and gone away.
**24**They do not say to themselves,
    ‘Let us fear the Lord our God,
who gives autumn and spring rains in season,
    who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.’
**25**Your wrongdoings have kept these away;
    your sins have deprived you of good.

**26**“Among my people are the wicked
    who lie in wait like men who snare birds
    and like those who set traps to catch people.
**27**Like cages full of birds,
    their houses are full of deceit;
they have become rich and powerful
**28**    and have grown fat and sleek.
Their evil deeds have no limit;
    they do not seek justice.
They do not promote the case of the fatherless;
    they do not defend the just cause of the poor.
**29**Should I not punish them for this?”
    declares the Lord.
“Should I not avenge myself
    on such a nation as this?

**30**“A horrible and shocking thing
    has happened in the land:
**31**The prophets prophesy lies,
    the priests rule by their own authority,
and my people love it this way.
    But what will you do in the end?

Jerusalem Under Siege

**6**“Flee for safety, people of Benjamin!
    Flee from Jerusalem!
Sound the trumpet in Tekoa!
    Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem!
For disaster looms out of the north,
    even terrible destruction.
**2**I will destroy Daughter Zion,
    so beautiful and delicate.
**3**Shepherds with their flocks will come against her;
    they will pitch their tents around her,
    each tending his own portion.”

**4**“Prepare for battle against her!
    Arise, let us attack at noon!
But, alas, the daylight is fading,
    and the shadows of evening grow long.
**5**So arise, let us attack at night
    and destroy her fortresses!”

**6**This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Cut down the trees
    and build siege ramps against Jerusalem.
This city must be punished;
    it is filled with oppression.
**7**As a well pours out its water,
    so she pours out her wickedness.
Violence and destruction resound in her;
    her sickness and wounds are ever before me.
**8**Take warning, Jerusalem,
    or I will turn away from you
and make your land desolate
    so no one can live in it.”

**9**This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Let them glean the remnant of Israel
    as thoroughly as a vine;
pass your hand over the branches again,
    like one gathering grapes.”

**10**To whom can I speak and give warning?
    Who will listen to me?
Their ears are closed[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+5-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19100a)]
    so they cannot hear.
The word of the Lord is offensive to them;
    they find no pleasure in it.
**11**But I am full of the wrath of the Lord,
    and I cannot hold it in.

“Pour it out on the children in the street
    and on the young men gathered together;
both husband and wife will be caught in it,
    and the old, those weighed down with years.
**12**Their houses will be turned over to others,
    together with their fields and their wives,
when I stretch out my hand
    against those who live in the land,”
declares the Lord.
**13**“From the least to the greatest,
    all are greedy for gain;
prophets and priests alike,
    all practice deceit.
**14**They dress the wound of my people
    as though it were not serious.
‘Peace, peace,’ they say,
    when there is no peace.
**15**Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?
    No, they have no shame at all;
    they do not even know how to blush.
So they will fall among the fallen;
    they will be brought down when I punish them,”
says the Lord.

**16**This is what the Lord says:

“Stand at the crossroads and look;
    ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
    and you will find rest for your souls.
    But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’
**17**I appointed watchmen over you and said,
    ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’
    But you said, ‘We will not listen.’
**18**Therefore hear, you nations;
    you who are witnesses,
    observe what will happen to them.
**19**Hear, you earth:
    I am bringing disaster on this people,
    the fruit of their schemes,
because they have not listened to my words
    and have rejected my law.
**20**What do I care about incense from Sheba
    or sweet calamus from a distant land?
Your burnt offerings are not acceptable;
    your sacrifices do not please me.”

**21**Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“I will put obstacles before this people.
    Parents and children alike will stumble over them;
    neighbors and friends will perish.”

**22**This is what the Lord says:

“Look, an army is coming
    from the land of the north;
a great nation is being stirred up
    from the ends of the earth.
**23**They are armed with bow and spear;
    they are cruel and show no mercy.
They sound like the roaring sea
    as they ride on their horses;
they come like men in battle formation
    to attack you, Daughter Zion.”

**24**We have heard reports about them,
    and our hands hang limp.
Anguish has gripped us,
    pain like that of a woman in labor.
**25**Do not go out to the fields or walk on the roads,
for the enemy has a sword,
    and there is terror on every side.
**26**Put on sackcloth, my people,
    and roll in ashes;
mourn with bitter wailing as for an only son,
for suddenly the destroyer
    will come upon us.

**27**“I have made you a tester of metals
    and my people the ore,
that you may observe and test their ways.
**28**They are all hardened rebels, going about to slander.
They are bronze and iron; they all act corruptly.
**29**The bellows blow fiercely
    to burn away the lead with fire,
but the refining goes on in vain;
    the wicked are not purged out.
**30**They are called rejected silver,
    because the Lord has rejected them.”

False Religion Worthless

**7**This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: **2**“Stand at the gate of the Lord’s house and there proclaim this message:

“‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. **3**This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. **4**Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!”**5**If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, **6**if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, **7**then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. **8**But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

**9**“‘Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+5-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19129b)] burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, **10**and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe” - safe to do all these detestable things? **11**Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the Lord.

**12**“‘Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. **13**While you were doing all these things, declares the Lord, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. **14**Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your ancestors. **15**I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your fellow Israelites, the people of Ephraim.’

**16**“So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you. **17**Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?**18**The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to arouse my anger. **19**But am I the one they are provoking? declares the Lord. Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?

**20**“‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: My anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place - on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the crops of your land - and it will burn and not be quenched.

**21**“‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! **22**For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, **23**but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. **24**But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. **25**From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. **26**But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their ancestors.’

**27**“When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer. **28**Therefore say to them, ‘This is the nation that has not obeyed the Lord its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips.

**29**“‘Cut off your hair and throw it away; take up a lament on the barren heights, for the Lord has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath.

The Valley of Slaughter

**30**“‘The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. **31**They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. **32**So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. **33**Then the carcasses of this people will become food for the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away. **34**I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride and bridegroom in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, for the land will become desolate.

**8**“‘At that time, declares the Lord, the bones of the kings and officials of Judah, the bones of the priests and prophets, and the bones of the people of Jerusalem will be removed from their graves. **2**They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens, which they have loved and served and which they have followed and consulted and worshiped. They will not be gathered up or buried, but will be like dung lying on the ground. **3**Wherever I banish them, all the survivors of this evil nation will prefer death to life, declares the Lord Almighty.’

Sin and Punishment

**4**“Say to them, ‘This is what the Lord says:

“‘When people fall down, do they not get up?
    When someone turns away, do they not return?
**5**Why then have these people turned away?
    Why does Jerusalem always turn away?
They cling to deceit; they refuse to return.
**6**I have listened attentively,
    but they do not say what is right.
None of them repent of their wickedness,
    saying, “What have I done?”
Each pursues their own course
    like a horse charging into battle.
**7**Even the stork in the sky
    knows her appointed seasons,
and the dove, the swift and the thrush
    observe the time of their migration.
But my people do not know
    the requirements of the Lord.

**8**“‘How can you say, “We are wise,
    for we have the law of the Lord,”
when actually the lying pen of the scribes
    has handled it falsely?
**9**The wise will be put to shame;
    they will be dismayed and trapped.
Since they have rejected the word of the Lord,
    what kind of wisdom do they have?
**10**Therefore I will give their wives to other men
    and their fields to new owners.
From the least to the greatest,
    all are greedy for gain;
prophets and priests alike,
    all practice deceit.
**11**They dress the wound of my people
    as though it were not serious.
“Peace, peace,” they say,
    when there is no peace.
**12**Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?
    No, they have no shame at all;
    they do not even know how to blush.
So they will fall among the fallen;
    they will be brought down when they are punished,
says the Lord.

**13**“‘I will take away their harvest,
declares the Lord.
    There will be no grapes on the vine.
There will be no figs on the tree,
    and their leaves will wither.
What I have given them will be taken from them.’”

**14**Why are we sitting here? Gather together!
Let us flee to the fortified cities and perish there!
For the Lord our God has doomed us to perish
    and given us poisoned water to drink,
    because we have sinned against him.
**15**We hoped for peace
    but no good has come,
for a time of healing
    but there is only terror.
**16**The snorting of the enemy’s horses
    is heard from Dan;
at the neighing of their stallions
    the whole land trembles.
They have come to devour
    the land and everything in it,
    the city and all who live there.

**17**“See, I will send venomous snakes among you,
    vipers that cannot be charmed,
    and they will bite you,”
declares the Lord.

**18**You who are my Comforter in sorrow,
    my heart is faint within me.
**19**Listen to the cry of my people
    from a land far away:
“Is the Lord not in Zion?
    Is her King no longer there?”

“Why have they aroused my anger with their images,
    with their worthless foreign idols?”

**20**“The harvest is past,
    the summer has ended,
    and we are not saved.”

**21**Since my people are crushed, I am crushed;
    I mourn, and horror grips me.
**22**Is there no balm in Gilead?
    Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no healing
    for the wound of my people?