**Jeremiah 17-20**

**17**“Judah’s sin is engraved with an iron tool,  
    inscribed with a flint point, on the tablets of their hearts  
    and on the horns of their altars.  
**2**Even their children remember their altars and Asherah poles  
beside the spreading trees and on the high hills.  
**3**My mountain in the land and your wealth and all your treasures  
I will give away as plunder, together with your high places,  
    because of sin throughout your country.  
**4**Through your own fault you will lose  
    the inheritance I gave you.  
I will enslave you to your enemies  
    in a land you do not know,  
for you have kindled my anger, and it will burn forever.”

**5**This is what the Lord says:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,  
    who draws strength from mere flesh  
    and whose heart turns away from the Lord.  
**6**That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;  
    they will not see prosperity when it comes.  
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,  
    in a salt land where no one lives.

**7**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,  
    whose confidence is in him.  
**8**They will be like a tree planted by the water  
    that sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes;  
    its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought  
    and never fails to bear fruit.”

**9**The heart is deceitful above all things  
    and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

**10**“I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind,  
to reward each person according to their conduct,  
    according to what their deeds deserve.”

**11**Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay  
    are those who gain riches by unjust means.  
When their lives are half gone, their riches will desert them,  
    and in the end they will prove to be fools.

**12**A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning,  
    is the place of our sanctuary.  
**13**Lord, you are the hope of Israel;  
    all who forsake you will be put to shame.  
Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust  
    because they have forsaken the Lord,  
    the spring of living water.

**14**Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed;  
    save me and I will be saved,  
    for you are the one I praise.  
**15**They keep saying to me, “Where is the word of the Lord?  
    Let it now be fulfilled!”  
**16**I have not run away from being your shepherd;  
    you know I have not desired the day of despair.  
    What passes my lips is open before you.  
**17**Do not be a terror to me;  
    you are my refuge in the day of disaster.  
**18**Let my persecutors be put to shame,  
    but keep me from shame;  
let them be terrified,  
    but keep me from terror.  
Bring on them the day of disaster;  
    destroy them with double destruction.

Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

**19**This is what the Lord said to me: “Go and stand at the Gate of the People,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+17-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19377c)]through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. **20**Say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates. **21**This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. **22**Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors. **23**Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline. **24**But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, **25**then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. **26**People will come from the towns of Judah and the villages around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin and the western foothills, from the hill country and the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the Lord.**27**But if you do not obey me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses.’”

At the Potter’s House

**18**This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: **2**“Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” **3**So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. **4**But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

**5**Then the word of the Lord came to me. **6**He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. **7**If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, **8**and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. **9**And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,**10**and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

**11**“Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.’ **12**But they will reply, ‘It’s no use. We will continue with our own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts.’”

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

“Inquire among the nations:  
    Who has ever heard anything like this?  
A most horrible thing has been done by Virgin Israel.  
**14**Does the snow of Lebanon  
    ever vanish from its rocky slopes?  
Do its cool waters from distant sources  
    ever stop flowing?   
**15**Yet my people have forgotten me;  
    they burn incense to worthless idols,  
which made them stumble in their ways,  
    in the ancient paths.  
They made them walk in byways,  
    on roads not built up.  
**16**Their land will be an object of horror  
    and of lasting scorn;  
all who pass by will be appalled  
    and will shake their heads.  
**17**Like a wind from the east,  
    I will scatter them before their enemies;  
I will show them my back and not my face  
    in the day of their disaster.”

**18**They said, “Come, let’s make plans against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the law by the priest will not cease, nor will counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophets. So come, let’s attack him with our tongues and pay no attention to anything he says.”

**19**Listen to me, Lord; hear what my accusers are saying!  
**20**Should good be repaid with evil?  
    Yet they have dug a pit for me.  
Remember that I stood before you  
    and spoke in their behalf  
    to turn your wrath away from them.  
**21**So give their children over to famine;  
    hand them over to the power of the sword.  
Let their wives be made childless and widows;  
    let their men be put to death,  
    their young men slain by the sword in battle.  
**22**Let a cry be heard from their houses  
    when you suddenly bring invaders against them,  
for they have dug a pit to capture me  
    and have hidden snares for my feet.  
**23**But you, Lord, know all their plots to kill me.  
Do not forgive their crimes  
    or blot out their sins from your sight.  
Let them be overthrown before you;  
    deal with them in the time of your anger.

**19**This is what the Lord says: “Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some of the elders of the people and of the priests **2**and go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. There proclaim the words I tell you, **3**and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah and people of Jerusalem. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Listen! I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. **4**For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned incense in it to gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. **5**They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal - something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. **6**So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

**7**“‘In this place I will ruin the plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, at the hands of those who want to kill them, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds and the wild animals. **8**I will devastate this city and make it an object of horror and scorn; all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds. **9**I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will eat one another’s flesh because their enemies will press the siege so hard against them to destroy them.’

**10**“Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, **11**and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter’s jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. **12**This is what I will do to this place and to those who live here, declares the Lord. I will make this city like Topheth.**13**The houses in Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah will be defiled like this place, Topheth - all the houses where they burned incense on the roofs to all the starry hosts and poured out drink offerings to other gods.’”

**14**Jeremiah then returned from Topheth, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the Lord’s temple and said to all the people,**15**“This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Listen! I am going to bring on this city and all the villages around it every disaster I pronounced against them, because they were stiff-necked and would not listen to my words.’”

Jeremiah and Pashhur

**20**When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the official in charge of the temple of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, **2**he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the Lord’s temple. **3**The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord’s name for you is not Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. **4**For this is what the Lord says: ‘I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. **5**I will deliver all the wealth of this city into the hands of their enemies - all its products, all its valuables and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. They will take it away as plunder and carry it off to Babylon.**6**And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.’”

Jeremiah’s Complaint

**7**You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived;  
    you overpowered me and prevailed.  
I am ridiculed all day long;  
    everyone mocks me.  
**8**Whenever I speak, I cry out  
    proclaiming violence and destruction.  
So the word of the Lord has brought me  
    insult and reproach all day long.  
**9**But if I say, “I will not mention his word  
    or speak anymore in his name,”  
his word is in my heart like a fire,  
    a fire shut up in my bones.  
I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.  
**10**I hear many whispering, “Terror on every side!  
    Denounce him! Let’s denounce him!”  
All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying,  
“Perhaps he will be deceived;  
    then we will prevail over him  
    and take our revenge on him.”

**11**But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior;  
    so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.  
They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;  
    their dishonor will never be forgotten.  
**12**Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous  
    and probe the heart and mind,  
let me see your vengeance on them,  
    for to you I have committed my cause.

**13**Sing to the Lord!  
    Give praise to the Lord!  
He rescues the life of the needy  
    from the hands of the wicked.

**14**Cursed be the day I was born!  
    May the day my mother bore me not be blessed!  
**15**Cursed be the man who brought my father the news,  
    who made him very glad, saying,  
    “A child is born to you - a son!”  
**16**May that man be like the towns  
    the Lord overthrew without pity.  
May he hear wailing in the morning,  
    a battle cry at noon.  
**17**For he did not kill me in the womb,  
    with my mother as my grave,  
    her womb enlarged forever.  
**18**Why did I ever come out of the womb  
    to see trouble and sorrow  
    and to end my days in shame?