

Jeremiah Chapter 9

Jeremiah 9:1 "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

“Waters ... tears”:

Jeremiah cared so deeply that he longed for the relief of flooding tears or a place of retreat to be free of the burden of Judah’s sins for a while.

We see from this why Jeremiah was thought of as “the weeping or mourning prophet”.

His body did not produce enough tears to be sufficient to take care of the grief he felt over Jerusalem and God's family.

These were people Jeremiah had prophesied to.

He felt close to their sorrow.

Jeremiah 9:2 "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they [be] all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

“A lodging place of wayfaring men”:

Simple square buildings with an open court were built in remote areas to accommodate caravans.

Though it would be lonely and filthy in the wilderness, Jeremiah preferred it to Jerusalem so as to be removed from the moral pollution of the people, which he described in verses 3-8; (see note on 6:11).

The LORD is tired of dealing with these sinful people.

It is as if He is saying, put them away from decent people.

Put all the sinners together out in the desert away from those people they might influence.

They are adulterers and treacherous men.

They should not be in the main stream of society.

Verses 3-6

God made a case to His people that their treatment of Him would inevitably affect their treatment of each other.

Failure to acknowledge God ("through deceit they refuse to know Me"), leads to a general lowering of all righteous behavior (Hosea 4:1-2).

Jeremiah 9:3 "And they bend their tongues [like] their bow [for] lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD."

Their tongues were like bows, and their lying words like arrows, which they directed against persons to their injury (see Psalm 11:2).

Or, "like their deceitful bow"; to which the Targum agrees.

"They teach their tongues words of falsehood, they are likened to a deceitful bow."

Most agreeably to the accents the words may be rendered, "they bend their tongues, their bow is a lie"; either deceitful, or carries a lie in it, and shoots one out of it.

"But they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth":

Which a man should do everything for, and nothing against.

And which he should earnestly contend for, and not part with or give up at any rate.

Not only for the truth of doctrine, for faith, as the Targum explains; for the doctrine of faith is the truth of the Gospel as it's in Christ; but for truth between man and man, for veracity, rightness, and integrity.

"For they proceed from evil to evil":

From one sin to another, growing worse and worse, as wicked men and deceivers usually do.

Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, as of evil works, so of the evil of punishment, from one evil of the enemy to another.

Or this year they are smitten with blasting, another with mildew, or with the locust, and yet they turn not from their evil ways.

"And they know not me, saith the LORD":

The God of truth, and without iniquity, and who will severely punish for it.

They did not serve and worship Him as the only LORD God.

The Targum says, "the knowledge of my fear they learned not" (see note on 5:10).

God has given up on changing them and says just let them lie to each other and cheat each other; put them away.

This reminds me of what society does to criminals today.

In a sense, at the end of the Gentile age, this is just what happens.

Jesus locks the devil up for a thousand years so he cannot deceive the people anymore.

Jeremiah 9:4 "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders."

Better rendered friend, or companion (as in 2 Sam. 16:17), here and in the next verse.

Showing the general corruption will be so malignant, that one friend will betray another; no faith in friends.

"Will utterly supplant":

Wholly given to it; Hebrew, supplanting means to take the place of, often in a sneaky way.

Will supplant; means replace.

Trampling them under their feet.

Noting their oppression, which they exercise in all manner of ways, as in the next verse, both by fraud and force.

Like the interpretation that Esau puts upon Jacob (Gen. 27:36).

Not only such as are near in habitation, pretending neighborhood and friendship, but near in relation, even a brother will circumvent.

No respect to blood, arguing them to be monstrous in nature, putting off humanity.

The word is here in allusion to Jacob, who had his name from supplanting; a metaphor taken from the sole of the foot (Gen. 25:26).

"Walk with slanders":

Carrying tales and reports up and down, whether true or false, disturbing the peace of neighborhood (Jer. 6:28).

And against the law of God (Lev. 19:16).

It was not only a dangerous thing then to put your trust in relatives and friends, but it is dangerous now as well.

Mankind will let you down.

The only One you can really trust is God.

Neighbors slander each other and brothers are jealous and hold their brothers back, afraid they will get ahead.

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Jeremiah 9:5 "And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, [and] weary themselves to commit iniquity."

In conversation, with lying words; and in trade and commerce, by art and trickery.

"And will not speak the truth":

With respect to facts they report, or goods they sell.

"They have taught their tongue to speak lies":

And become so accustomed to lying that they cannot do otherwise.

It is as if it was natural to them.

"And weary themselves to commit iniquity":

Spared no pains to come at it, nor any in it, and go on even to weariness; are more laborious and indefatigable in committing sin than good men are in doing good; which shows great folly and stupidity.

The Targum says, "they are become foolish, they have erred."

Verses 4 and 5 above, are both speaking of people who are not following after God.

God's people should be trustworthy.

This is speaking of a generation that is not interested in the principles God has taught, and are living worldly lives.

The world deceives to get ahead.

They cheat, steal and lie to further their own cause.

They are not interested in the golden rule: see Matt. 7:12.

This is speaking of a people far away from God and His teachings.

Jeremiah 9:6 "Thine habitation [is] in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD."

Here God speaks to the prophet, to inform him that there is no hope of this people's reformation (Jer. 8:5); therefore, He expresses a deceitful people by their refusal to know Him.

"Deceit":

I.e. No integrity/honesty among them but deceit one to another.

And hypocrisy towards Me (Psalm 109:2), and vanity for vain men (Job 35:13).

Or to caution and advise Jeremiah how to behave himself among such a people, that he be very wary he be not ensnared by them (Jer. 12:6).

"They refuse to know me":

Hoping to shift enough by several means they think will do, they refuse to turn to Me (Jer. 8:5).

Or by hearkening to their false prophets, who have all along deceived them, they obstinately reject My ways and counsels (Psalms 36:1-4; 82:5).

They lived in an area where they were all sinners.

It was a way of life to lie and cheat.

These people were far from God.

They were worshipping idols because they would believe a lie before believing the Truth.

It is a very dangerous thing to companion with those of unbelief.

Whoever you are around on a regular basis, you will be like.

"Habitation" is a place where you continually dwell.

Verses 7-9:

God "refines" or tries His people, first for correction and improvement, second for punishment.

Job understood this in the midst of his trials:

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

Jeremiah 9:7 "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?"

The prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, falls back upon the imagery of Jer. 6:28-30; Isa. 48:10.

The evil has come to such a point, that nothing is left but the melting of the fiery furnace of affliction.

"For how shall I do for the daughter of my people":

The phrase throws us back upon Jer. 8:21-22.

The balm of Gilead had proved ineffectual.

The disease required a severer remedy.

"Melting" has to do with refining.

It is well known if you melt silver or gold, the impurities come to the top.

The refiner skims the dirt/impurities off and then you have near pure metal.

This is what is being said here.

The heat is applied to them to purge their sins away.

All purging is done to help the one purged.

God loved them so much, He would cause them to suffer a while to purify them.

Jeremiah 9:8 "Their tongue [is as] an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: [one] speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait."

Before in Jer. 9:3, the tongue was compared to a bow, i.e. ready prepared, and furnished with materials contriving their wickedness (Psalm 11:2).

And here to an arrow shot out, actually executing what they have designed.

Some translate it a murdering arrow.

It speaks deceit; never speaking what they mean, that thereby they may easily deceive the credulous.

A double tongue, speaking fair words when they mean to destroy.

"It speaketh deceit":

Deceitful words, by which men are imposed upon, and are led into wrong ways of thinking and acting.

"One speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth":

Salutes him in a friendly manner; wishes him all health, peace, and prosperity.

Professes a sincere and cordial friendship for him, and feigns a strong affection to him.

"But in heart he layeth his wait":

To draw him into snares, and circumvent, trick, and defraud him.

We see from this that these people have evil hearts, out of which come deceitful words.

We are what is in our heart.

The tongue expresses the thoughts of the heart.

A wicked tongue then, means we have a wicked heart.

In the verse above, the neighbor pretends to be a friend, but in his heart, he hates.

This is a two-faced person.

Proverbs 26:23 "Burning lips and a wicked heart [are like] a potsherd covered with silver dross."

He appears from the outside to be pure, but he is just covering his deceit.

The tongue is a piercing weapon when used against someone.

Jeremiah 9:9 "Shall I not visit them for these [things]? Saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

The Targum adds, "To bring evil upon them."

"Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this":

The Targum explains, "or of a people whose works are such, shall I not take vengeance according to my pleasure?" (See Jer. 5:9).

The world does not see these sins.

The people cover them up, but God looks at the heart of man.

A nation of people like this should not be called by God's name.

They do not follow the ways of God, so they are not representing Him on the earth.

Jeremiah 9:10 "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through [them]; neither can [men] hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone."

Because of the desolation of them.

Because there is no pasture for them, nor flocks feeding there.

Or "concerning" them, as in the Arabic version; or "upon" them, in order to cause the lamentation to be heard further.

But the former sense seems best, as appears by what follows:

The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read it as an exhortation to others.

"Take up a weeping":

But they are the words of the prophet, declaring what he would do.

"And for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation":

For the cottages of the shepherds, erected for their convenience.

To look after their flocks, feeding on the mountains, and in the valleys.

For the wilderness does not denote barren places, but pastures.

"Because they are burned up":

By the fire of the Chaldeans, who burnt the cottages, and drove off the cattle.

"So that none can pass through them":

Or there is none that passes through; as no inhabitants are there, so none passes by that way; which shows how very desolate these places were.

"Neither can men hear the voice of the cattle":

The lowing of the oxen, or the bleating of the sheep, there being none to be heard, being all carried off.

And indeed, no men to hear them, had there been any.

"Both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone":

Or, "from the fowl of the heavens to the beasts", etc.

The places lying waste and uncultivated.

There were no seed for the fowls to pick up, which generally frequent places where there is sowing, and where fruit is brought to perfection.

And no pasture for the beasts to feed upon.

Kimchi says these words are a hyperbole.

The word "beast", being by geometry, or numerically, fifty two.

The Jews gather from this that for the space of fifty two years no man passed through the land of Judah.

Which they reckon from the time that Zedekiah was carried captive, to the commandment of Cyrus.

The punishment brought upon these people hurt God worse than anyone.

He is like a parent who has had to punish a child severely because of his sin.

The parent grieves more than the child at the punishment.

This punishment was so severe, there was nothing left.

Jeremiah 9:11 "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, [and] a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

That is, the walls and houses of Jerusalem shall be thrown down, and become heaps of stones and rubbish.

"And a den of dragons":

Only inhabited by wild beasts.

"And I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant":

So that the calamity would be universal.

Not only Jerusalem, but all the cities of the land would be destroyed, forsaken, and uninhabited.

Jeremiah is speaking this with his mouth, but we remember that the words in Jeremiah's mouth were put there by God.

It is actually God speaking through the mouth of Jeremiah.

This speaks of the desolation left in Jerusalem and all of Judah.

Verses 12-16

God answers the "why are we suffering" question with five grievances (9:13-14).

One consequence of persistent sin is always persistent suffering.

Jeremiah 9:12 "Who [is] the wise man, that may understand this? and [who is he] to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth [and] is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?"

Not the calamity, but the cause of it.

A man of wisdom would inquire into it, find it out, and understand it.

But the intimation is, that there was not a wise man among them.

At least very few.

There were scarcely any that took any notice of these things or were concerned about them.

"And who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken":

And foretold this desolation and destruction; meaning a prophet.

"That he may declare it":

As from the LORD, namely, what follows:

"For what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?":

That is, what were the sins of the inhabitants of the land, which brought such distress upon it, and for which it became such a ruinous heap; and like the heath in the wilderness, so that it had no inhabitant, nor even a passerby.

There must be some very great and abominable iniquities that were the cause of all this.

All of this was spoken by Jeremiah in time warning the people to leave before the trouble began.

They had time to repent and then leave, so they would not be caught up in the destruction.

Those who loved God believed Jeremiah.

They were the wise men that knew Jeremiah was telling the truth.

The mouth of God spoke this to all, but the great majority did not heed the warning.

They stayed and witnessed their land being totally destroyed.

It appears much of the damage came from fire.

Jeremiah 9:13 "And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;"

The Septuagint version adds, "To me".

There being no wise and understanding man, nor prophet to take up this affair, and look into the cause of it.

Therefore, the LORD undertakes it Himself.

The question was put to them, but they not answering it, the LORD does.

"Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them":

In a plain and easy manner, so as to be readily understood.

Yet this they attended not unto, but forsook it, neglected it, and cast it behind their backs.

Kimchi's note on the phrase, "before them", is "not in heaven is it, nor beyond the sea is it;" (see Deut. 30:11).

"And have not obeyed my voice":

In the law, and by the prophets.

"Neither walked therein":

According to it, as the LORD directed: They neither hearkened to the voice of the LORD, nor did as they were instructed by it.

Jeremiah 9:14 "But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:"

What their own hearts devised, chose, and were best pleased with (see notes on Jer. 7:24).

"And after Baalim":

The idols of the Gentiles.

These they served and worshipped, and not the true God.

"Which their fathers taught them":

Which was so far from excusing them, that it was an aggravation of their sin that they had continued in their wicked ways and idolatrous practices, from age to age, from one generation to another.

This then was the cause of their calamity and destruction.

They had forsaken the law of the LORD, and had broken that.

They had chosen their own ways, and had been guilty of idolatrous practices.

Wherefore the LORD had shown much longsuffering and patience with them, and would now no longer forbear as He was just and righteous in His doings.

Over and over again, God gave them the reason for bringing about this destruction.

The worst thing they had done was to follow after false gods.

They had committed spiritual adultery.

They had left their love for God and been unfaithful to Him with these false gods.

Jeremiah 9:15 "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, [even] this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink."

"Wormwood ... water of gall":

The LORD pictured the awful suffering of the judgment with wormwood, which had very bitter leaves.

Their food would be bitterness, and their water as foul as gall, a poisonous herb.

The term “Wormwood” is also a symbolic representation of the bitterness that will fill the earth during troubled times.

Not only in the land where the destruction occurred would the water be bad, but when this people are captured and carried to a foreign land, the food and water seemed a bitter dose to take.

Jeremiah 9:16 "I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them."

Besides the bitter judgments of famine and pestilence during the siege, what remained of them should be carried captive out of their own land into foreign lands; nothing could be more distressing.

"Whom neither they nor their fathers have known":

A circumstance greatly aggravating their captivity.

"And I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them":

Or men that kill with the sword, as the Targum says.

It chiefly refers to those who were scattered among the Moabites and Ammonites, and especially those that went into Egypt (see Jer. 44:27).

At the time this was written, all the world except the Hebrews, were heathen.

The family of Israel were the only ones who had the law of God.

He had not revealed Himself to the rest of the world at this time.

They were sent into strange lands.

They, nor their fathers, had been acquainted with the people of these lands.

Those who do not believe in God will be destroyed.

Verses 17-22

Funeral ceremonies and processions were often attended by professional “mourning women” (2 Sam. 14:2; 2 Chron. 35:25; Matt. 9:23), as attested by the evidence throughout the ancient Near East.

So severe and widespread will be the death “scene”, that the female population at large will be needed in order that lamentations may be made for all the dead.

Death is pictured here as an unwelcome intruder, the Grim Reaper.

So numerous will be the dead that, unlike the situation in harvesting where the gatherers follow the reapers, the number of available men to bury the dead will be insufficient.

Therefore, the “carcasses of men” will lie unburied, a particularly loathsome sight to those in the ancient Near East (compare 8:2; 16:4, 6; 25:33).

The coming calamity on the people of Judah would be so great that individuals would be unable to grieve properly.

The call goes out for professional mourners (“cunning [women]”), who could help in the grieving.

Daughters should be taught to wail as part of their upbringing.

Jeremiah 9:17 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning [women], that they may come:"

The punishment that was just coming upon them, as Kimchi says; or the words that the LORD was about to say unto them, as follows:

"The mourning women":

Hired to attend funerals, and by their skilled wailings, aid the real mourners in giving vent to their grief.

"And send for cunning women, that they may come":

Such as were expert in this business, and could mimic mourning well, and had the art of moving emotions triggering sorrow with their voice and gestures.

There were people in those days (mostly women), who were paid mourners.

These professional mourners were called to mourn for the whole nation.

It appears there will be so much mourning needed, that there will not be enough of this group to do the job.

They will call all of the cunning women to come and help them mourn.

Jeremiah 9:18 "And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters."

Deliver out a mournful song, as mentioned in the Arabic version.

Setting forth their miseries and distresses, and affecting their minds with them.

The prophet puts himself among the people, as being a party included in their sufferings, and sympathizing with them.

As well as to show the certainty of, and how soon they would be involved in them.

"That our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters":

Or balls of the eye, as explained in the Targum and Kimchi; these hyperbolical expressions are used to express the greatness of the calamity.

And that no mourning was equal to it (see Jer. 9:1).

The main purpose of the mourning women was to stir up the emotions of the people.

They would wail and cry, until all the people were stirred up and began to cry as well.

Jeremiah 9:19 "For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast [us] out."

I.e. Jerusalem, spoken in the present tense, after the prophetic style, being a frequent way of the prophet's expressing the certainty of a thing.

How are we spoiled! How great is our misery!

Or, how come we're in such a desolate condition?

Possibly expressions of the artificial mourners, or rather their real sense of it.

Now it is all too late.

"We are greatly confounded":

Whether this is the complaint of the people forced to flee from their habitation to Jerusalem for shelter, or of Jerusalem itself, that could expect no less, it filled them with great consternation; that they who thought their houses should have continued for ever, because of God's promise (Psalm 132:10), must now forsake them (Lev. 18:25).

Either their persons carried out into captivity, or have them utterly demolished by the enemy.

"Zion" here, could be speaking of Jerusalem.

The people who are left standing after the battle, have no homes to return to.

This would be true mourning for their loss.

Jeremiah 9:20 "Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation."

Not the mourning women, but others who had lost their husbands and their children, and had just reason for real mourning.

And therefore, they are called upon to it, not only because they were more tenderhearted than men, as Kimchi observes; or because they were more attentive to the hearing of the word of God than men.

But because of the lack of men, such numbers being slain in the siege, and by the sword.

And of the loss the women had sustained (see Jer. 9:22).

"And let your ear receive the word of His mouth":

By His prophets; so the Targum says / paraphrases, "let your ear hearken to the words of His prophets:"

"And teach your daughters wailing":

The Arabic version, "a mournful song"; not referring to the daughters of the mourning women; but the real daughters of those who had lost their fathers, husbands or children; since it follows:

"And everyone her neighbor lamentation":

Signifying that the mortality among them would be universal, not a family escaping; which is described in the next verses.

This wailing and lamentation was made by responses, according to the Jews; for they say: "what is lamentation?"

When one speaks, and all the rest answer after her, as it is written in Jer. 9:20."

It appears this is a warning of how great the destruction will be.

It is saying, grief will reach every family, so teach them all to mourn.

Jeremiah 9:21 "For death is come up into our windows, [and] is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, [and] the young men from the streets."

"Death is come up":

The unavoidableness of the ruin is expressed metaphorically (Ezek. 21:14; Jer. 6:5).

Most likely alluding to the violent and universal storming of a city (Jer. 5:10), wherein there is no respect had to sex or age.

The Chaldeans are here understood by “death”, as bringing death wherever they come; a substitute of the effect.

"To cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets":

No safety within or outside.

The enemy shall cut off / slay all, not only those at home, but even those that are conversing or playing in the streets, which are mostly young men and children (Jer. 6:11).

The death toll from this destruction is not just the men as it is in most battles.

This death reaches the children as well as the adults.

It is not just at the battlefield either.

Many of the deaths occur in their homes.

The mention of the palace means that even the children of the rulers are not safe.

Jeremiah 9:22 "Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcases of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather [them]."

How galling to the Jews to hear that their corpses will be trampled upon contemptuously.

This is speaking of the vast number who die and are not buried.

They will be just left in the field where they die, to decay and return to the earth.

Verses 23-24

Having lamented the folly of his faithless people, Jeremiah turns their attention to the true “source” of wisdom – the LORD Himself (9:23 – 10:25).

True wisdom was to be found in the consistent following of the three central qualities of spiritual life:

“Loving-kindness” (the exercise of true covenant loyalty; compare the note on 1 Sam. 20:14-17), “judgement” (the consistent application of true justice for all), and “righteousness” (the maintenance of what was right in the sight of the LORD in all of life).

Two directives God gives as He uses people in His service:

- (1) That they not “glory” in themselves or any personal achievement; and
- (2) That they give the glory to God (Psalm 33-18).

The apostle Paul references this passage in 1 Cor. 1:31, to recommend glorying, or boasting, in God.

A person who “understandeth and knoweth” God does not stop at accumulating information about God but pursues a personal relationship with Him.

Jeremiah 9:23 "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise [man] glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty [man] glory in his might, let not the rich [man] glory in his riches:"

The long prophecy of judgment had reached its climax.

Now comes the conclusion of the whole matter that the one way of salvation is to renounce all reliance on the wisdom, greatness, and wealth of the world, and to glory only in knowing Jehovah.

The “wise man” is, (as mentioned before in Jer. 8:9; 9:12) the scribe, or recognized teacher of the people.

“Neither let the mighty man glory in his might”:

Not in his natural might or strength; this is of God, and is greater in some of the brutes than in men.

And is what God can take away, and does often weaken it by diseases, and at last destroys it by death.

Nor in moral strength, or in the power of free will; which is very weak and insufficient to do anything that is spiritually good.

Nor even in spiritual strength; this is from Christ.

It is only through Him strengthening His people that they do what they do.

And all supplies and increase of it are from Him; and therefore, there shall be no room for self-glorification.

“Let not the rich man glory in his riches”:

These come from the hand of God and are what He can take away at His pleasure.

They are very uncertain and precarious things.

These cannot profit in a day of wrath, nor deliver from death, corporeal, spiritual, or eternal.

And the intention of the words here is to show, that neither the wise man with all his art and cunning, nor the mighty man by his strength, nor the rich man through his riches, could save themselves from the destruction before prophesied of.

The Targum paraphrases them this way: "thus saith the LORD, let not Solomon the son of David, the wise man, praise (or please) himself in his wisdom.

Nor let Samson the son of Manoah, the mighty man, please himself in his might.

Nor let Ahab the son of Omri, the rich man, please himself in his riches."

This just says that worldly wisdom, strength, or wealth will not save them from destruction.

They will all die together.

Jeremiah 9:24 "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I [am] the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these [things] I delight, saith the LORD."

"Understandeth and knoweth me":

Nothing but true knowledge of God can save the nation.

Paul refers to this passage twice in 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17.

There is only one help and He is the LORD.

If the people heed the message sent to them by Jeremiah and do the things God has told them to do, they will be spared.

God's nature is not to punish.

His nature is lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness.

Because He is just, He must bring correction on this people.

There will, however, be a remnant saved, even in this terrible time.

Jeremiah 9:25 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all [them which are] circumcised with the uncircumcised;"

Or, "are coming".

It seems to refer to the time after the Babylonian captivity, when the punishment being threatened took place, and not before.

"That I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised":

Jews and Gentiles alike.

The circumcised Jews trusting in their circumcision, and being, as is said in the next verse, uncircumcised in heart, were no better than the uncircumcised Gentiles.

Wherefore, both being transgressors of the law and despisers of the Gospel of Christ, are threatened with destruction (see Rom. 2:12).

Just because they were descended from Abraham and have been circumcised to prove it, will not save them.

They have been living like the uncircumcised world, and they will be punished the same as them.

This says to me, just because you claim to be a Christian is not enough.

You should live the Christian life.

Christ must indwell you to the extent that your whole being, inside and out, is Christ-like.

Jeremiah 9:26 "Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all [that are] in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all [these] nations [are] uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel [are] uncircumcised in the heart."

"Egypt ... wilderness":

A preview of God's judgment of the nations is detailed in chapters 46-51.

"Uncircumcised in the heart":

See note on 4:4.

Jeremiah announced God's word that physical circumcision had no value unless it was accompanied by "circumcision of the heart" (Rom. 2:25-29).

To belong to God is not a flesh experience, it is a heart experience.

The people of all the heathen lands mentioned above, were not even circumcised in the flesh.

These Hebrews were circumcised in the flesh but they had not had a change of heart, which is necessary to be saved.

I call it a heart transplant.

Salvation occurs in the heart regardless of who you are.

My favorite Scriptures on this are the following:

Romans 10:9-10

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Jew or Gentile, this is the way to heaven.

Jeremiah Chapter 9 Questions

1. What is Jeremiah saying in verse 1?
2. Why was the LORD so disappointed in His people?
3. Their tongues are like what?
4. What happens to the devil at the end of the Gentile age?
5. Who could they trust?
6. What does "supplant" mean, in verse 4?
7. What kind of people are verses 4 and 5 speaking of?
8. Their habitation is in the midst of _____.
9. What does habitation mean?
10. Describe a two-faced person.
11. What is different about the way the world looks at you, and the way God looks at you?

12. Who does the punishment that God sends upon them, hurt the worst?
13. Jeremiah speaks this with his mouth, but the message is from _____.
14. Who were the wise men of verse 12?
15. What explanation does God give for punishing them?
16. What does "wormwood" mean?
17. Who were the heathen?
18. Who were the mourners they called?
19. Why did they call the cunning women?
20. What was the main reason for the mourning women?
21. Why were they wailing from Zion?
22. The carcasses of men shall fall as _____.
23. What was the only thing to glory in?
24. What is the nature of God?
25. What must all do to be saved?