

#### Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 4

In Chapter 5, Yahweh adds other charges to the initial indictment of idol worship and contamination of legitimate worship:

1. atheism and obduracy (verses 3, 12-13)
2. sexual immorality (verses 7-8)
3. exploitation of the poor (verses 26-29)

God places responsibility for these abuses on the ruling classes (verse 5), on the prophets and the priests (verses 13, 31).

All the people, from the poor and uneducated to the wealthy classes, have defied Yahweh's call to repentance:

1. Not even one righteous man can be found (verse 1).
2. There is promiscuous sexual indulgence, even among the married (verses 7-8).
3. The people ridicule the prophet's warning (verse 12).
4. They are dedicated to deceit, oppression, and robbery (verses 26-29).
5. They are satisfied with the deceit of the ruling class and spiritual leaders (verses 30-31).

The verses of the oracle poem in 5:1-9 are divided into five stanzas in which Yahweh and Jeremiah alternate as speakers:

1. Yahweh speaks to a search party (verses 1-2).
2. Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh (verse 3).
3. Jeremiah speaks to himself (verse 4-5b).
4. Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh (verses 5c-6).
5. Yahweh speaks to the people (verses 7-9).

Yahweh's appeal in 5:1 to find at least one righteous person is reminiscent of Abraham's petition to Yahweh to spare the city of Sodom if His emissaries could find ten righteous men (Gen 18:16-33). The Sodom story in Genesis chapters 18-19 becomes the backdrop for the oracle in Jeremiah 5:1-19. In Scripture, Sodom became the symbol for the proverbial city of wickedness. The prophet Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, said that Jerusalem was far worse than Sodom (Ez 16:46-52). Jesus said it will be more tolerable on the Day of Judgment for Sodom than for Capernaum (Mt 11:23-24), or for any city that does not welcome His missionaries (Mt 10:15; Lk 10:12).

Yahweh continues His oracle in 5:10-11, and in 5:12-13 Jeremiah, using the symbolic Vineyard imagery, says the detractors have denied Yahweh in three ways:

1. They say God does not exist.
2. They say since He doesn't exist that He doesn't have the power to punish them.
3. They say the prophets do not speak the word of God.

The "Because of this" in 5:14 is what the detractors have denied about Yahweh and His sovereignty over them. Yahweh lists the six consequences of their judgment in verses 14-17:

1. A foreign nation will conquer Judah and Jerusalem.
2. The foreigners will eat the fruits of the harvest.

→ over

3. The foreigners will take the people's sons and daughters.
4. The foreigners will take possession of flocks and herds.
5. The foreigners will destroy all the vineyards and fruit trees.
6. The foreigners will destroy the fortified towns and kill the inhabitants.

The four invasions of Judah and Jerusalem between 609 and 587 BC:

- The Egyptians make Judah a vassal state after the death of Josiah at the Battle of Megiddo in 609 BC.
- In 605 BC, the Babylonians invaded Judah and King Jehoiakim became a Babylonian vassal king.
- The Babylonians invaded Judah when Jehoiakim rebelled in 598 BC; they carried the king and thousands of citizens into exile.
- When King Zedekiah of Judah rebelled against the Babylonians and formed an alliance with Egypt, the armies of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC and took the remaining population into exile.

In Chapter 6, Yahweh commands Jeremiah to “pour out My wrath” upon a people who will not hear and will not repent. Jeremiah gives a vivid description of the advancing Babylonian army in 6:22-26.

Michal E. Hunt Copyright © 2016 [www.AgapeBibleStudy.com](http://www.AgapeBibleStudy.com)