

Jeremiah Chapter 22

Verses 1-30

Following the death of godly Josiah, the last four kings of Judah (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah), did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

This chapter details their disobedience that brought judgment on the nation and cause for the LORD to remove the sons of David from the throne.

Verses 1-2

Chapter 22 is probably placed here because it, like chapter 21, contains messages that were addressed to the “house of the king of Judah” and concerned the “throne of David” (compare 21:11-12), and Jehoiachin (verses 24-30).

Chronologically, the events of this chapter precede those (of chapter 21).

Jeremiah 22:1 "Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,"

To the palace of Jehoiakim, who was now the reigning king.

The prophet is bid to go down to it, because, as Kimchi thinks, he was now upon the mountain of the house, or in the temple, from there to the king's house there was a descent.

"And speak there this word":

Of prophecy, relating to the several kings hereafter mentioned.

This prophecy was delivered some years before that in the preceding chapter.

Though it stands here, it is indeed by some thought to be repeated here on occasion of what is before said.

And for the confirmation of it, putting in mind of what he had prophesied in former times.

And they render the words, with which it begins, "thus hath the LORD said"; so he said to me years ago.

Which agrees with what is now delivered.

Word had been sent to them before, but this was to be said to their faces.

A great deal of the problems in the land could be traced to the leadership.

Now God tells Jeremiah, "Go to the king, and tell him to his face, the message I have for him".

Verses 2 and 4

“Throne of David”:

Refers to the Davidic Covenant (of 2 Sam. 7:3-17), in which God promised David that his heirs will rule over Israel.

Jeremiah 22:2 "And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:"

O Jehoiakim king of Judah, hear the word of the King of kings.

Listen to it, and obey it, as kings ought to do.

And it is for their good, as well as it is their duty to do so.

"That sittest upon the throne of David":

Whom he mentions, to put him in mind of his illustrious ancestor, whose successor he was.

That he might be prompted to follow his example.

"Thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates":

The king and his courtiers, his nobles and personal counsellors.

That were continually waiting upon him, and were frequently passing and repassing the gates of the palace.

For not the gates of the court in the temple are meant, as Kimchi suggests.

And all other people, that either waited on or came to the king on business, with their law suits, and to have their causes heard and tried.

Even though the message is spoken directly to the king, it still pertains to all of the people.

Jeremiah 22:3 "Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."

Judge righteous Judgment.

Give the cause to whom it belongs, without respect of persons, and without a bribe or corruption.

Do no unrighteousness to any, by withholding from them what is due unto them.

Which was what this prince was chargeable with (Jer. 22:13).

"And deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor":

That was robbed or wronged of his property by one superior to him in power or cunning (see Jeremiah 21:12).

"And do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow":

Who are not in a situation, and in such a condition and circumstances, as to defend themselves.

And whom God has a peculiar regard unto.

And therefore, they who are his deputies and those exercising delegated power, as kings and civil magistrates, ought to protect such persons, and neither grieve and injure them themselves.

Nor suffer others to do it.

"Neither shed innocent blood in this place":

To grieve and wrong the above persons is a very great evil, but to shed the blood of innocent is much greater still.

And this is aggravated by being committed by such who are set over men to secure and preserve their properties and their lives.

And such heinous sins as these the present reigning king of Judah was guilty of; which is the reason of their being mentioned (Jer. 22:17).

(See the note on 7:6).

To be earthly king over the family of God took on grave responsibilities.

The judgement of this king must be an example to all the heathen countries around them.

The king here had to be aware that he was king, because God put him there.

His judgement had to be righteous and just, because he represented God to the world.

They had to live the golden rule.

They were not to deal unfairly with anyone.

Jeremiah 22:4 "For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people."

Or, "in doing do this word".

Diligently and carefully attend to this word of exhortation, and constantly perform the duties required.

"Then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David":

Or, upon the throne for David.

In his room and stead, as successors of his; or of his lineage and descent, as the Vulgate Latin version.

The meaning is, that should the kings of Judah do the duty of their office, before pointed at, there should never be any want of successors of the seed of David.

But there should be a race of kings descending from him, and sitting on his throne in all after ages.

Who should dwell in the royal palace, and go in and out at the gates of it.

And they should also live in great pomp and splendor, in royal dignity, answerable to their characters.

"Riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people":

The king, his nobles, and other of his attendants.

Some on one, and some on another, when they went out or came in (Jer. 17:25).

If they conduct themselves the way God would have them to, they could remain kings and their descendants after them could be kings.

God's blessings would be upon them as long as they were obedient to God.

Jeremiah 22:5 "But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation."

Will give no attention, and yield no obedience to them.

"I swear by myself, saith the LORD":

And by a greater he cannot swear.

And that is the reason why he swears by himself (Heb. 6:13).

And as, when he swears to a promise, it shows the immutability of it, the certainty of its performance, and that it is irreversible.

And never repented of, nor revoked.

So it is when he swears to a threatening.

The Targum is, "by my word I swear:"

"That this house shall become a desolation":

Meaning not the temple, nor the city, but the king's palace.

The LORD swore by Himself, because there was no greater.

If they live like the world and disobey God, they will be destroyed.

Jeremiah 22:6 "For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou [art] Gilead unto me, [and] the head of Lebanon: [yet] surely I will make thee a wilderness, [and] cities [which] are not inhabited."

That is, to the family of the king of Judah.

Though it may be rendered, "concerning the house of the king of Judah".

And so refer to his palace as before.

"Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon":

Or, though likened to Gilead (which was a very fruitful country), for wealth, riches, and all kind of valuable things.

And likened to the top of Mount Lebanon, being set with tall cedars, for stateliness.

So the Targum is, "although thou art beloved before me more than the sanctuary, which is high upon the top of the mountains:"

Or thou shall be as Gilead, and Mount Lebanon, which belonged to the ten tribes of Israel, and are put for the whole kingdom of Israel, which was wasted by the king of Assyria.

And in like condition should the royal palace at Jerusalem be, notwithstanding all its riches and grandeur.

And so the city and temple likewise; as follows:

"Yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited":

Though as fruitful as Gilead, yet shall become like a barren desert.

And though full of children, courtiers, princes, and nobles, yet shall be like cities quite depopulated.

Or, "if I do not make thee", etc. it is in the form of an oath, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe.

And to be supplied thus, if I do not do as I have said, let me never be believed.

Let me be reckoned a liar, or not thought to be God, and the like.

It shows the certain accomplishment of these things.

"Gilead ... Lebanon":

The beautiful high mountains of the land.

Gilead in the verse above, is a place and not a man.

It along with Lebanon, was covered with beautiful cedar trees.

On close inspection, you would find that Gilead had been a place of ruins at one time however.

In the sense it is used above, I believe it speaks of the beauty of the king's house made of cedar.

Even though these places are so physically beautiful, God will destroy them if they remain unfaithful to Him.

Jeremiah 22:7 "And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast [them] into the fire."

"Cut down ... choice cedars":

This could primarily refer to the palaces and great houses built from such timber (compare SOS 1:17).

Cedar is an almost indestructible wood, but it will burn if placed in the fire.

God says, even the beauty of the cedars will burn in the fire of His wrath.

Jeremiah 22:8 "And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?"

After it is burned down and destroyed.

That is, people out of many nations travelling that way.

"And they shall say every man to his neighbor":

As in company together, passing along the ruined walls of the city.

"Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?"

So fortified and so full of people.

The metropolis of the whole nation; the greatest city in the east.

Yea, the joy of the whole earth; a city peculiarly dear to the LORD.

Greatly honored by him with his presence, worship, and ordinances, and yet now in ruins.

How did this come to pass?

They see and acknowledge the hand of the LORD in it, having a better notion of things than the Jews themselves had.

Many people of other nations have come to see the beauty of the city, but after the destruction, they will realize God destroyed it.

They will be questioning what great sin they committed, to bring such anger from God?

Jeremiah 22:9 "Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them."

Or, "it shall be answered"; by some acquainted with the history of this people.

"Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God":

The LORD was the God of these people.

He chose them for his peculiar people, and distinguished them by his favors from others.

A covenant was made with them, in which many good things were promised them upon their obedience.

This was kept by him, but forsaken and broken by them.

They forsook their covenant God, his law and his worship.

And that was the cause of their ruin.

"And worshipped other gods, and served them":

The idols of the people, as the Targum.

They left the true God, who had done great and good things for them, and worshipped those who were only gods by name, and not by nature.

And served stocks and stones, the vanities of the Gentiles, who could not bestow one good thing on them.

Such were their stupidity and ingratitude, and therefore very justly given up to destruction.

This seems to refer, as Cocceius thinks, not to the first destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, when it had not so clear and full an accomplishment.

But to the second destruction of it by the Romans, and the times following that.

When the Gospel being preached among the Gentiles, they had a better understanding of the true God, and of his covenant.

And of the vanity of idolatry, and of the state of the Jewish nation, and the religion of it, and of the true causes of their ruin.

Even the outside world will know the reason for the great destruction, is because they have broken their covenant with God.

The specific sin they committed was the worship of false gods.

The first commandment God had given them was to have no other gods.

Verses 10-12

"Shallum" (or Jehoahaz), was taken captive to Egypt by Pharaoh-nechoh on his return from Haran (in 609 B.C.; see the Introduction to Jeremiah and the notes on 2 Kings 23:28-30).

Jeremiah 22:10 "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: [but] weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

"The dead":

Probably a reference to Josiah who died before the destruction (2 Kings 22:20; Isa. 57:1).

Dying saints are to be envied, living sinners pitied.

When Josiah died, and on each anniversary of his death, there was open public weeping in which Jeremiah participated (2 Chron. 35:24-25).

This is saying that death was merciful, because it was over and done with.

Those who were taken captive would look back with grief at the loss of the Promised Land.

Verses 11-12

“Shallum” (Jehoahaz) reigned for three months in 609 B.C. before being taken away as a prisoner to Egypt (2 Kings 23:31-33).

Jeremiah offered no hope for him, warning that he would die in captivity.

This was another name for King Jehoahaz (3 month reign, 609 B.C.; 2 Kings 23:31), the fourth son of Josiah (compare 1 Chron. 3:15).

It was given to him in irony, because the people called him Shalom (“peace”), but Shallum means “retribution”.

Jeremiah 22:11 "For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more:"

Not Shallum the fourth son of Josiah (1 Chron. 3:15); for it is not likely that he should immediately succeed his father.

Nor Zedekiah, as Jarchi; nor Jeconiah, as Kimchi; but Jehoahaz, as Aben Ezra.

Who seems to have had several names, as Johanan (1 Chron. 3:15); and Shallum here.

"The son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father":

The same is said of Jehoahaz (2 Chron. 36:1).

"Which went forth out of this place":

Out of Jerusalem, being put down there from his throne by Pharaoh-necho, and carried by him into Egypt (2 Chron. 36:3).

"He shall not return thither any more":

He died in Egypt, or however out of his own land.

But was alive when this prophecy was delivered out, which was in the reign of his brother Jehoiakim, as some following verses show.

Jeremiah 22:12 "But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more."

Even in Egypt, where Pharaoh-necho and his army carried him captive, as before observed.

"And shall see this land no more":

The land of Judah, where he was born, and over which he had been king.

This is repeated to show the certainty of it, and what reason there was for the above lamentation.

Since the people might have been in hopes of the return of him, but now they are assured they had no ground for it.

Who, though he was not a good prince, yet perhaps not as bad as his brother Jehoiakim, who succeeded him.

Who appears, by what follows, to have been a very unjust, tyrannical, and oppressive prince.

And therefore, there was great occasion for mourning on the account of Shallum, who very likely was more promising.

Shallum was the son of Josiah, who was taken into exile after reigning a very short time and did not take Josiah's place as king.

Shallum was spoken of in Chronicles as Jehoahaz.

Jehoiakim took over as king.

The comparison is, he shall not return anymore.

Verses 13-23

Jehoiakim's renovations of the palace by conscripting his people during the Babylonian crisis reflected his misplaced priorities, attending to personal comfort rather than fulfilling his royal duty to care for "the cause of the poor and needy".

Jehoiakim would not only die, which happened before the Babylonians captured the city of Jerusalem (in 597 B.C.), but there would not even be lament over his death and he would not receive a proper burial.

Jeremiah 22:13 "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; [that] useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;"

This respects Jehoiakim, the then reigning king.

Who, not content with the palace the kings of Judah before him had lived in, built another.

Or however enlarged that, and made great alterations in it.

But this he did either with money ill gotten, or perverted to a wrong use, which ought to have been otherwise laid out.

Or by not paying for the materials of whom they were bought, or the workmen for their workmanship.

And perhaps this may be the reason why so much notice is taken of the king's house or palace in the former part of the chapter.

And why it is threatened with desolation (Jer. 22:1).

"That useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work":

Or, "that serves himself of his neighbor freely"; or, "makes him serve freely", "and giveth him not for his work".

Makes him work for nothing.

Gives him no wages for it, but keeps back the hire of the laborers.

Which is a crying sin in any person, and much more in a king (see James 5:4).

Jehoiakim did not follow in the footsteps of Josiah who did right in the sight of God.

He was greatly responsible for the introduction of false worship.

Everything he did indicated his unrighteousness.

Everything he built was deceitfully built.

God will greatly punish him.

Jeremiah 22:14 "That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and [it is] ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion."

Literally, a house of extensions.

"Large chambers":

The Hebrew specifies "upper chambers", the principal rooms in ancient houses.

"Cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar":

Rather, his windows, roofing it with cedar.

(This involves no change of letters, but a very slight rearrangement, and the alteration of one point; grammar gains greatly by the change).

"Cutteth out" is, literally, rentest; it is the word used (in Jeremiah 4:30), of the apparent enlargement of the eyes by putting a powdered brittle silvery-white silicon upon the eyelids.

Windows are, as it were, the eyes of a building (Graf compares Ecclesiastes 12:3).

Beams of cedar wood were used for the roof of the palace, as being the most costly and durable (compare Isa. 9:10).

And painted with vermilion":

A taste derived from the Egyptians rather than the Babylonians, who seem to have had a difficulty in procuring red.

This tells of the magnificence.

Nothing was spared in the building of it.

It appears it was quite large and had beams of cedar wood.

This was the most expensive wood a person could use.

Vermilion is red, so it was painted red.

Jeremiah 22:15 "Shalt thou reign, because thou closest [thyself] in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, [and] then [it was] well with him?"

Better, thine ambition is in cedar.

The verb means strictly as in (Jer. 12:5), "to vie with" or "to contend."

And Jehoiakim is reproached for endeavoring to outdo the magnificence even of his greatest predecessors.

A various reading, followed by the LXX gives, “thou viest with Ahaz,” or “Ahab.”

Probably, in this latter case, with reference to the ivory palace built by that king (1 Kings 22:39).

"Did not thy father eat and drink?":

The words are obviously those of praise, and paint a healthy, blameless enjoyment like that of (Eccl. 2:24).

Like those, we may add, which the Son of Man used to describe the outward portion of His own life (Matt. 11:19).

Josiah was not an ascetic, devotee king, but lived his life happily, and did his work, the true kingly work of judgment and justice, well.

There was a truer greatness in that than in the stateliness of Jehoiakim's palaces.

"And then it was well with him":

Or, "therefore it was well with him".

He was blessed of God, and was prosperous and successful.

He was happy himself as a prince, and his people under him, both enjoying peace and prosperity.

There are never better times than when justice is done.

By it the throne is established.

Just the fact he had an expensive mansion made with cedar wood, did not make him a king.

Josiah, the father of Jehoiakim, was a good king.

He ate and drank and had parties, but he was fair with all mankind.

Jehoiakim would have done well to be like his father.

He thought only of himself.

He was an evil king.

It does not mean that God would forbid him to eat and drink, it just means he needed to be more aware of the needs of his people.

He also needed to worship God.

Jeremiah 22:16 "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then [it was] well [with him: was] not this to know me? saith the LORD."

By himself in person, for the kings of Israel and Judah often sat personally to judge causes.

Or by setting such judges as did it, administering justice impartially.

Particularly to such as in respect of their low condition were most exposed to the power of others.

And doing thus he prospered.

"Was not this to know me? saith the LORD":

This was for him truly to own and acknowledge me.

They only truly know God who obey him.

And men vainly pretend piety who are notoriously defective in duties of justice and charity.

We see the fairness that his father judged with.

The reason the father judged fairly, was because of his relationship with God.

God blessed him mightily.

Jeremiah 22:17 "But thine eyes and thine heart [are] not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do [it]."

He was wholly intent upon gratifying that lust.

His heart was meditating, contriving, and forming schemes for that purpose.

And his eyes were looking out here and there for proper objects and opportunities to seize them.

"And for to shed innocent blood":

In order to get their money, goods, and possessions into his hands.

Extreme greed for wealth or material gain often leads to murder.

"And for oppression, and for violence, to do it":

By making incursions, and seizing upon the properties of men, and converting them to his own use.

So true it is, that covetousness, or the love of money, is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).

Jehoiakim was a greedy man.

He wanted other people's possessions.

If anyone got in his way, he just killed them.

He was not just in his judgements.

He ruled the people with violence.

Verses 18-19

“Jehoiakim”:

Ruling from (609 to 598 B.C.), he was also wicked in taxing the people (2 Kings 23:35), and making them build his splendid palace without pay, violating God’s law (in Lev. 19:13 and Deut. 24:14-15; compare Micah 3:10; Hab. 2:9; James 5:4).

He was slain in Babylon’s second siege and his corpse dishonored, being left like a dead donkey on the ground for scavengers to feed on.

Jehoiakim appears to have died in disgrace (compare 36:30-31 also note on 2 Kings 24:10-16).

Jeremiah 22:18 "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!"

Boldly by name is the judgment at length pronounced upon Jehoiakim.

Dreaded by all around him, he shall soon lie an unheeded corpse, with no one to lament for him.

No loving relative shall make such wailing as when a brother or sister is carried to the grave; nor shall he have the respect of his subjects.

"Ah my brother! or, Ah sister!" given as the usual formulae in lamenting a death (see 1 Kings 13:30).

The lamentations of subjects and friends, those outside his family.

"They shall not lament for him":

The words contrast the death as well as the life of Jehoiakim with that of Josiah.

For him there should be no lamentation such as was made for the righteous king (See 2 Chronicles 35:25).

Either from kindred mourning, as over a brother or a sister (perhaps, however, as "sister" would not be appropriate to the king, the words are those of a chorus of mourners, male and female, addressing each other).

Or from subjects wailing over the death of their "lord" and the departure of his "glory."

For the funeral ceremonies of Israel, (see 1 Kings 13:30; Matt 9:23; Mark 5:38).

He was an evil king, and no one would grieve when he was gone. He had been trouble for all who knew him.

Jeremiah 22:19 "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Have no burial at all, or no other than what any brute creature has; which, when it dies, is cast into a ditch, and becomes the food of dogs, and the fowls of the air.

The "ass" is mentioned, as being a sordid stupid creature; and such a one was this king.

"Drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem":

As the carcass of a beast is dragged about by dogs.

Or as a malefactor, when executed, is dragged and cast into a ditch.

This perhaps was done by the Chaldeans, who, when he was slain, dragged him along and cast him outside the gates of Jerusalem.

So Josephus says, that when Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem, he slew the most robust and beautiful with Jehoiakim their king, and ordered him to be cast without the walls unburied.

And so, though he is said to "sleep with his fathers", yet not to be buried with them (2 Kings 24:6).

There will be no funeral for him.

He will be treated no better than an animal that dies.

He acted like an animal so he would die like an animal.

Jeremiah 22:20 "Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed."

"Go up to Lebanon":

Sinners dwelling in the northwest in Lebanon's cedar land and others to the northeast beyond the Sea of Galilee in Bashan will suffer in the invasion.

The entirety of the land will come under judgment as Abarim in the southeast.

"Lovers" here probably refers to nations that they had made war agreements with.

It appears, they will be of no help at all.

They are defeated, too.

Jeremiah 22:21 "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; [but] thou saidst, I will not hear. This [hath been] thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice."

Or "prosperities", or "tranquilities"; when in their greatest affluence, in the height of it.

This he did when he sent to them his servants the prophets, as the Targum, and by them exhorted, reproved, and advised them.

"But thou saidst, I will not hear":

This was the language of their hearts and actions, though not of their mouths.

"This hath been thy manner from thy youth":

From the time they came out of Egypt, and first became a church and judicious body.

While they were in the wilderness; or when first settled in the land of Canaan.

This was the infancy of their state; and from that time, it was their manner and custom to reject the word of the LORD, and turn a deaf ear to it.

"That thou obeyedst not my voice":

In his law, and by his prophets.

We see from this, that these people had always been the same.

Jacob's family, who became Israel, had never called on God in the good times.

They strayed away from God when times were good.

The only time they sought God, was when they were in terrible trouble.

God tried to tell them of the terrible punishment that was coming, if they did not give up their false gods and return to Him, but they would not listen.

When they disobeyed God, the curses came upon them.

Jeremiah 22:22 "The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness."

King, nobles, counsellors, priests, prophets, and elders of the people.

They shall be carried away as chaff before the wind, or perish as trees and fruits are blasted with an east wind.

To which Nebuchadnezzar and his army are sometimes compared (see Jer. 18:17).

The Targum is, "all thy governors shall be scattered to every wind".

"And thy lovers shall go into captivity":

The Assyrians and Egyptians, as before (see Jer. 52:31).

"Surely then thou shalt be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness":

Being disappointed of all protection from their governors at home, and of all help from their allies abroad.

And will then, when it's too late, be convinced of all their wickedness, and ashamed of it.

It is almost as if God is saying, "What will it take to get you to repent?"

The wind will destroy the pastors (shepherds).

Those who have been your partners will go into captivity.

Surely, they will be wise enough to see what is happening and return to God.

They have sinned so much they know no shame.

Jeremiah 22:23 "O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!"

Jerusalem is meant, and the inhabitants of it, so called, because they lived near Lebanon, or in that land in which Lebanon was.

Or rather because they dwelt in houses made of the wood of Lebanon; and which stood as thick as the trees in the forest of Lebanon.

And where they thought themselves safe and secure, according to the next clause.

"That makest thy nests in the cedars":

In towns, palaces, and houses, covered, ceiled, raftered, and wainscoted with cedars.

Here they lived at ease and security, as birds in a nest.

How gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail?"

That is, either thou wilt seek grace and favor at the hand of God, and make supplication to him.

Thou wilt then be a humble supplicant, when in distress, though now proud and haughty.

Or what favor wilt thou then find among those that come to waste and destroy thee?

This refers to the calamity coming upon them by the Chaldeans, as the following verse shows.

Lebanon means the buildings made with cedar wood.

This is really speaking of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The destruction will come on them quickly without warning as the pains of a woman about to give birth.

How will they feel when the battle begins? Will they turn to God then, or die in their sin?

Verses 24-30

"Coniah":

A short form of Jeconiah, ruled only 3 months and 10 days (2 Chron. 36:9; in 598-597 B.C.), and was taken into captivity, where he lived out his life.

Jeremiah 22:24 "[As] I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;"

The young “Coniah” (or Jehoiachin), the son of Jehoiakim, was carried away captive in Nebuchadnezzar’s second campaign against Jerusalem (598 / 597 B.C.; compare 2 Kings 24:8-16, but lived on in captivity beyond his captor’s death (in 562 B.C.; see the note on 2 Kings 25:27-30.

“Signet”: A ring with a personal insignia on it (compare Hag. 2:23).

The signet ring was a sign of having the power of that person.

The signet was used many times to seal a deal.

Joseph was given the signet in Egypt, when he was given power and authority next to the king.

This perhaps is saying the king would not be able to stop this even with all of his power and authority.

Jeremiah 22:25 "And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand [of them] whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans."

Cruel and bloodthirsty enemies, whom nothing would satisfy but his life.

Such were the persons following.

"And into the hand of them whose face thou fearest":

Being a terrible savage people, to be dreaded both for their number and their cruelty.

A strange change was this, to be removed out of the hand of God into the hand of such an enemy.

"Even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (Jer. 21:2).

"And into the hand of the Chaldeans":

Who were the merciless and formidable people before mentioned.

And this was fulfilled a little over three months after Jeconiah or Jehoiachin began to reign, and when he was but eighteen years of age (2 Kings 24:8).

This leaves no doubt at all of their outcome.

God has given Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Chaldeans, the power and authority to destroy them.

This destruction will be from the king of the land down to the poorest person.

It is God who has placed them in their hands to carry out His judgement.

Jeremiah 22:26 "And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die."

Out of his palace, out of the city of Jerusalem, and out of the land of Judea.

"And thy mother that bare thee":

Who very probably was a bad woman, and had brought up her son in an evil way.

And had led him on and encouraged him in it, by her own example.

And had been a partner with him in his sins.

Her name was Nehushta, a daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

And as it was predicted here of her, so it was accomplished (2 Kings 24:8).

It is very likely Jeconiah had no children before the captivity, since no mention is made of them, only of his mother that was cast out with him.

"Into another country, where ye were not born":

The land of Chaldea, which was not the native place neither of him nor his mother.

"And there shall ye die":

Both he and his mother.

And so the Arabic version expresses it, "and there shall ye both die".

As no doubt they did, though we have no particular account of their death.

As for Jeconiah, he lived a long time in captivity.

It was in the "thirty seventh" year of his captivity that Evil-merodach king of Babylon showed favor to him above all the captive kings that were with him, and continued it to his death.

But how long after that was is not known (see Jer. 52:31).

This is all of Judah and Benjamin that will be given over to the Babylonians.

Those who live will be captive slaves in Babylon.

Many will die in the foreign land.

Jeremiah 22:27 "But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return."

Or, "lift up their soul to return":

Either by making supplication to God for it (Psalm 25:1); or buoying up themselves with vain hopes, founded upon the declarations of the false prophets, that they should return.

And to which no doubt they had a natural desire, and comforted themselves with the hopes of it.

But all in vain.

"Thither shall they not return":

For they were to die, as before predicted.

In another country, as they did, and never saw their own any more.

When God slams the door shut, it is shut until He opens it.

No one else can open it.

Their heart's desire will be to come home, but they will not be allowed to.

Jeremiah 22:28 "[Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol? [is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?"

Questions the people who idolized Jeconiah were asking.

Or like an idol that is nothing in the world, and like a broken one.

That, whatever worship before was paid to it, has now none at all, but is despised by its advocates?

He is such a one; though he was idolized by his people when he first came to the throne.

But now his power and government being broken, and he carried captive, was despised by all.

As his being called Coniah, and "this man" show.

Which are used of him in a way of reproach and contempt.

"Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure?"

He is!

He is like a vessel made for dishonor, or is used for the most contemptible service.

Or like one that is cracked, or broken, or defiled, that no use can be made of it, or any delight taken in it.

It is not fit to set up, to be looked at, or to be made use of.

"Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed":

Which were in his loins, and were begotten by him in captivity (see 1 Chron. 3:17).

And so said to be cast out with him, when he was cast out of the land of Judea.

Just as Levi paid tithes in Abraham before he was born (Heb. 7:9).

"And are cast into a land which they know not?"

Where they had no friends or acquaintance.

Doubtless it was for his sins and transgressions, and those of his people.

Coniah was believed to be another name for Jehoiachin.

It appears from this that he thought of himself as a god.

He spent 36 years in captivity in Babylon.

He was very evil.

Jeremiah 22:29 "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD."

By earth he either means the land of Judah, to which he calls thrice, to signify the deafness of this people, and unwillingness to hear and believe what God spake by him.

Or else he calls to the whole earth, as he calls heaven and earth to witness (Deut. 30:19; 32:1; Isa. 1:2; 34:1; Jer. 6:19).

This is a sorrowful saying, showing the seriousness of their transgressions.

God perhaps was sorrowful that He had made the earth.

Jeremiah 22:30 "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man [that] shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

“Write ... childless”:

Jeconiah did have offspring (1 Chron. 3:17-18), but he was reckoned childless in the sense that he had no sons who would reign (“Sitting on the throne”).

The curse continued in his descendants down to Joseph, the husband of Mary.

How could Jesus then be the Messiah when His father was under this curse?

It was because Joseph was not involved in the blood line of Jesus since He was virgin born (Matt. 1:12).

Jesus’ blood right to the throne of David came through Mary from Nathan, Solomon’s brother, not Solomon (Jeconiah’s line), thus bypassing this curse (Luke 3:31-32) Compare 36:30.

“Childless” means that none of Jehoiachin’s seven sons (1 Chron. 3:17-18) would succeed him on the throne of “Judah”, nor would any of his natural descendants succeed him.

Although Jesus’ paternal ancestors through Joseph include Jehoiachin (Matt. 1:11-16), the line of descent is thus recorded only to show Jesus’ legal right to the “throne of David”.

Because Jesus was virgin-born (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:34-36), hence not the natural son of Joseph, the pronouncement against Jehoiachin’s line is not contradicted.

Although Jehoiachin’s grandson Zerubbabel was governor of Judah (Ezra 3:2; Neh. 12:1), he was never Israel’s king.

Thus, the human kingship of Israel and Judah ended with sixth century B.C.

Note also that Jesus’ human descent is apparently traced through Mary, a descendant to David’s throne though both parents, as the virgin-born son of Mary, Christ did not abrogate the prophetic curse against Jehoiachin’s line.

Rather, the great accuracy and trustworthiness of the Scriptures are again demonstrated.

The judgement against Jehoiachin was not just for him, but for his seed as well.

He would have no children who would ever reign.

God goes so far as to say, that no one even like him will ever reign in Jerusalem again.

Jeremiah Chapter 22 Questions

1. Where did God send Jeremiah in verse 1?
2. Whose throne did the king sit upon?
3. Who else was the message for?
4. What instructions did Jeremiah give him in verse 3?
5. Why was it so important for him to be just in his judgements?
6. If he does what God says, what will happen?
7. What will happen to this house, if they do not heed God's warnings disobey Him?
8. Why did the LORD swear by Himself?
9. What did the LORD call the king's house of Judah?
10. Gilead in verse 6, is a _____ not a _____.
11. Cedar is an almost indestructible _____.
12. The people of other nations passing by will ask what question about the destruction?
13. Why had God done this?
14. Weep ye not for the _____.
15. Who should they weep for?
16. Who was Shallum?
17. What was another name for Shallum?
18. Who is verse 13 speaking woe to?
19. How long did Jehoiachin reign?
20. Who was his father?
21. What had he said he would build?
22. What were the beams of the house made of?
23. Just because he had a mansion, did not make him _____.

24. His father reigned _____.
25. Jehoiakim is so evil no one will _____ for him when he dies.
26. He shall be buried with the burial of an _____.
27. Who does verse 20 say to cry for?
28. God spoke to them in their prosperity, did they listen?
29. When was the only time they would seek God?
30. Who was Coniah?
31. Who had God given power to destroy them?
32. How long was Coniah in captivity?
33. The judgement against Jehoiachin extended to who?