

Jer. 12:7-17, God's Inheritance
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A. Overview

1. The overall chiasm of 11-13
 - a) Outer layer: emphasizes their responsibilities to God, and how they have **failed** in them.
 - 1) 11:1-15 The Covenant --> ch. 14-17 (cf. Deut. 28; Lev. 26)
 - 2) 13:15-27 Call to Repent --> royal emphasis, ch.21-23
 - b) Second layer: Object lessons describing the coming **judgment**.
 - 1) 11:16-17, Object Lesson: The Olive Tree
 - 2) 13:1-12a Object Lessons: Loincloth--ok --> ch.24? effect of going to Mesopotamia
 - 3) 13:12b-14 Object lesson: Bottle--ok --> ch.18-19, potter's
 - c) Third layer: God will **preserve** through suffering.
 - 1) 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah: interchange p --> ch. 20 and *passim*
 - 2) 12:7-17 God's Heritage--ok --> ch. 25
2. Here at the center, corresponding to the discussion of Jeremiah and his family in 11:18-12:6, we have a discussion of God and his family. The breach between Jeremiah and his family reflects the breach between God and his family, and might even be a parable of it! The difference is that Jer is rejected *by* his family, while God *rejects* his. A sovereign, holy God can initiate such a break righteously; we, in our sin, would only offend, and are thus usually the objects of such rejection.

Jer predicts first the coming of judgment, then the subsequent restoration. This is the first glimmer of hope in the midst of judgment that we have seen in the book.

B. 7-13 Judgment is coming on God's heritage

Verses 7 and 13 give a summary of the paragraph: God has forsaken his people, so that they cannot prosper. The intervening verses amplify this judgment with three images and a literal statement of the coming invasion, by means of which the judgment described in the outer verses will take place.

1. 7 Cause: God has forsaken his people. The description gets successively more precise, moving from his abandoning of the land to his rejection of his people.
 - a) "Forsaken my house." "My house" is the temple; 11:15; 23:11. The people have defiled it, and so God has abandoned it. See Ezekiel for a dramatic picture of the Glory of God leaving the temple. Yet there is a secondary echo here; one's

"house" can also be one's household (though I have not found the phrase "God's house" ever used of the nation).

- b) "Left mine heritage." One's heritage is one's land. God is abandoning not only the temple but the land of Israel. "God's heritage" can be used of the physical land (Jer. 2:7), but there also is a second sense, a bit stronger; Deut. 32:9 shows that the people are explicitly called God's heritage.
- c) "Dearly beloved of my soul" is a term of great personal endearment, and refers now exclusively to the people. Their sin is so great that he has abandoned them to the hand of their enemies.

2. 8-12 Means: We have three images of the nation's destruction, followed by a literal prophecy of the coming invaders. Cf. 8:16,17, for this device elsewhere.

- a) 8, Judah is a wild beast provoking the Lord, a lion in the forest roaring as it attacks him. His destruction of them is simply the expected result of this provocation.
- b) 9, Judah is a bird of prey, attacked by her peers. As a "speckled bird," she looks strange and foreign to them, so they attack her. "Come ye ..." is what the other birds cry out to the beasts of the field, summoning them against Judah.

Thus we continue with the notion of Judah as an aggressive animal of prey, but now even the other animals in the forest have marshalled themselves against her.

- c) 10-11, Judah is a vineyard, trodden down by careless shepherds. If you've ever had a garden, you know how destructive animals can be when they get into it. Imagine rabbits eating your lettuce, or turtles munching on the tomatoes. It's even worse when a whole flock of sheep comes through, trampling everything under foot. Here Judah is portrayed as a vineyard (cf. Isa. 5), and careless shepherds have allowed their flocks to ravage it. Cf. Ezek. 34 for further indictments of the shepherds, the civil leaders of Judah at this period. They allow the godless to trample down those who truly are God's portion and heritage.
- d) 12, Literal truth: the invaders are coming upon the "high places" (lit. caravan paths) in the wilderness, sent by the Lord as his sword of judgment.

3. 13 Result: The people have labored in vain. Nothing they undertake will prosper, because the Lord is against them.

C. 14-17 Promise of restoration

God will chase out the heathen as well as Israel, and will

rebuild Israel, and the heathen if they repent.

1. 14a. Note the ones against whom this is spoken: They are described as
 - a) "my neighbors": The land is God's possession; those who live in the adjoining countries are his neighbors.
 - b) "evil": they do not know or worship him.
 - c) "who touch": we are looking particularly at the Babylonians, who oppress God's people

Note the protective tone here. God has placed his people in this land. Those who oppose them will have to answer to him.

2. 14b-17. The prophecy is that he will destroy the heathen as well as Judah; then restore Judah and the heathen as well (if they turn to him). Structured chiastically: ABba-A, where Aa is heathen, Bb is Judah, upper case is uprooting, and lower case is restoration. Final A shows what will happen to the heathen if they do not obey the Lord. No such condition is placed on Israel; we'll see why in Jer. 31, the new covenant.
 - a) 14b, God will pluck up the heathen. The imagery is of uprooting a tree.
 - b) 14c, He will also pluck up Judah from the midst of the heathen. Probably draws on the "neighbor" image in 14; Judah dwells in the midst of the nations, and she will be plucked up and taken into captivity.
 - c) 15, Then God will restore Judah. The motive is his compassion, his sympathy for their suffering.
 - d) 16-17 anticipates the restoration of the heathen as well, but this (unlike the restoration of Judah) is conditional.
 - 1) Note the condition: they must learn to worship the Lord, just as they previously taught Judah to worship other gods. "To swear by:" when one takes an oath, one invokes the deepest truth as the foundation. Cf. Deut. 6:13.
 - 2) If they convert, they will "be built in the midst of my people." No longer is Judah to be a small nation surrounded by great powers. Now she will be dominant, and the other nations will be defined in relation to her.
 - 3) Those nations that do not turn to the Lord will be unconditionally and utterly destroyed.
 - 4) Note that this prophecy has never been fulfilled. The world does not consist of a dominant Israel (either spiritual or

physical), setting the context for other believing groups.

D. Conclusion

This is a common prophetic motif; cf. Isa. 10:5-19. God may use a pagan nation to punish his people, but that pagan nation will itself be judged for its savagery. God may chastise his people severely, but he will ultimately restore them to himself.

ANALYSIS

A. 7-13 chiastic Ampl p: Judgment is coming on God's heritage

1. text (God's role): God has forsaken his people.

- a) 7 (FZAB:T.IY)ET-B."YT/IY
- b) NF+A\$:T.IY)ET-NAX:ALFT/IY
- c) NFTAT.IY)ET-Y:DIDW.T NAP:\$/IY B.:/KAP)OY:BEY/HF

2. ampl: three images + literal

a) Judah is a wild beast provoking the Lord. result p

- 1) text:
 - a> 8 HFY:TFH-L./IY NAX:ALFT/IY K.:/)AR:Y"H BA/Y.F(AR
 - b> NFT:NFH (FL/AY B.:/QOWL/FH.
- 2) result: (AL-K."N &:N"(TIY/HF

b) Judah is a bird of prey, attacked by her peers

- 1) 9 HA/(AYI+ CFBW.(A NAX:ALFT/IY L/IY
- 2) quote p
 - a> quote f: HA/(AYI+ SFBIYB (FLEY/HF
 - b> quote:
 - 1> L:KW.
 - 2>)IS:PW. K.FL-XAY.AT HA/&.FDEH
 - 3> H"TFYW. L:/)FK:LFH

c) Judah is a vineyard, trodden down by careless shepherds
Chiastic result-reason

- 1) reason
 - a> 10 RO(IYM RAB.IYM \$IX:ATW. KAR:M/IY
 - b> B.OS:SW.)ET-XEL:QFT/IY
 - c> NFT:NW.)ET-XEL:QAT XEM:D.FT/IY L:/MID:B.AR \$:MFMFH
 - d> 11 &FM/FH. LI/\$:MFMFH
- 2) result
 - a>)FB:LFH (FL/AY \$:M"MFH
 - b> NF\$AM.FH K.FL-HF/)FREC
- 3) reason: K.IY)"YN)IY\$ &FM (AL-L"B

d) Literal truth: invaders are coming

- 1) 12 (AL-K.FL-\$:PFYIM B.A/M.ID:B.FR B.F)W. \$OD:DIYM
- 2) K.IY XEREB LA/YHWFH)OK:LFH
- 3) MI/Q:C"H-)EREC W:/(AD- Q:C"H HF/)FREC)"YN \$FLOWM
L:/KFL-B.F&FR S

3. text (People's role): They have labored in vain.
 - a) 13 ZFR:(W. XI+.IYM
 - b) W:/QOCIYM QFCFRW.
 - c) NEX:LW.
 - d) LO) YOW(ILW.
 - e) W./BO\$W. MI/T.:BW.)OT"Y/KEM M"/X:AROWN)AP-Y:HWFH S

- B. 14-17 quote p: God will chase out the heathen as well as Israel, and will rebuild Israel, and the heathen if they repent.
 1. quote f:
 - 14 K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH (AL-K.FL-\$:K"N/AY HF/RF(IYM HA/N.OG:(IYM B.A/N.AX:ALFH):A\$ER-HIN:XAL:T.IY)ET-(AM./IY)ET YI&:RF)"L
 2. quote: chiasm
 - a) pluck up the heathen: HIN:N/IY NOT:\$FM M"/(AL)AD:MFT/FM
 - b) pluck up Judah (from their captivity?): W:/)ET- B."YT Y:HW.DFH)ET.OW\$ MI/T.OWK/FM
 - c) restore Judah: seq p
 - 1) setting: 15 W:/HFYFH)AX:AR"Y NFT:\$IY)OWT/FM)F\$W.B
 - 2) bu-1: W:/RIXAM:T.IY/M
 - 3) bu-n: WA/H:A\$IBOTIY/M)IY\$ L:/NAX:ALFT/OW W:/)IY\$ L:/)AR:C/OW
 - d) restore/scatter heathen: contrast p
 - 1) thesis: conditional p
 - a> protasis: 16 W:/HFYFH)IM-LFMOD YIL:M:DW.)ET-D.AR:K"Y (AM./IY L:/HI\$.FB"(A B.I/\$:M/IY XAY-Y:HWFH K.A/):A\$ER LIM.:DW.)ET-(AM./IY L:/HI\$.FB"(A B.A/B.F(AL
 - b> apodosis: W:/NIB:NW. B.:/TOWK: (AM./IY
 - 2) antithesis: conditional p
 - a> protasis: 17 W:/)IM LO) YI\$:MF(W.
 - b> apodosis: W:/NFTA\$:T.IY)ET-HA/G.OWY HA/HW.) NFTOW\$ W:/)AB."D N:)UM-Y:HWFH S