

**Jer. 13:15-27, The Call to Repent**  
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**A. The overall chiasm of 11-13**

1. Outer layer: emphasizes their responsibilities to God, and how they have **failed** in them.
  - a) 11:1-15 The Covenant --> ch. 14-17 (cf. Deut. 28; Lev. 26)
  - b) 13:15-27 Call to Repent --> royal emphasis, ch.21-23
2. Second layer: Object lessons describing the coming **judgment**.
  - a) 11:16-17, Object Lesson: The Olive Tree
  - b) 13:1-12a Object Lessons: Loincloth--ok --> ch.24? effect of going to Mesopotamia
  - c) 13:12b-14 Object lesson: Bottle--ok --> ch.18-19, potter's
3. Third layer: God will **preserve** through suffering.
  - a) 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah: interchange p --> ch. 20 and *passim*
  - b) 12:7-17 God's Heritage--ok --> ch. 25
4. Detailed argument of the Call to Repent.
  - a) Syntax: Two cycles, following the same pattern.
  - b) Semantics: within each cycle, we see two movements.
    - 1) Each begins addressing the people in the plural, and ends addressing the city (Jerusalem) in the feminine singular; move from individual to the community.
    - 2) Each begins warning of judgment if they do not repent; each ends announcing judgment because they have sinned.
    - 3) **Application:** We thus contrast *individual repentance* with *corporate judgment*. The city as a whole will suffer for the sin of the people; restoration can only come through individual turning to the Lord.

**B. 13:15-22 First Cycle**

The first cycle has three steps: First the people as individuals, then the king and his mother as their leaders and representatives, and finally the city as a corporate unit.

1. 15-17 (to People, plural) Hear the Lord or suffer judgment. We begin with the people described in the plural, to emphasize their individual responsibility.

The warning is presented through a contrast. First, hear the Lord and honor him to avoid judgment. Second, if you will not hear this warning (feminine suffix, cf. 5:20), the Lord's flock will be scattered. The emphasis on "hear" and "your God" links us back to the covenant section at the beginning: 11:4,6,7,10

a) The positive exhortation: twice, each with its own motive.

1) 15, Listen, because the Lord has spoken.

a> The *exhortation* has three parts. **Application:** This same progression applies to us in being receptive to the Word of God.

1> "Hear." The most passive. "Did you hear that?" Does not involve any effort. We do this by sitting in sermons, just listening.

2> "Give ear." Now he exhorts them to pay close attention, to strain their ears. We do this when we diligently study the Scriptures for ourselves.

3> "Be not proud" or haughty. This is the great obstacle to our hearing from the Lord: the sense that we already know everything we need to know, and he has nothing to tell us.

b> The *motive* for listening in this close, attentive way is that "the Lord has spoken." These are not the words of some second-rate comedian we are being asked to receive, but the revelation of the living God.

2) 16, Honor the Lord, before judgment comes!

a> Now he *exhorts* the people to give honor to the Lord. It is not enough to receive what God says. That should lead us to worship and praise him, to glorify him for his excellence as revealed in his word.

b> The *motive* this time is the judgment that otherwise will irrevocably creep over them, described as darkness in which they stumble. Compare the words of the Lord Jesus: "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). The world, full of sin, is like a rough dark road that will make us fall if we try to walk on it. God is like a lantern, and his word is the light that comes from the lantern, to guide us and show us where we should go.

b) The negative exhortation: if you do not heed the warning that God is giving you, I will weep over the captivity that you, the Lord's sheep, will suffer.

2. 18-19 (to King and queen-mother) Your realm will be diminished and finally taken captive.

Here Jeremiah turns from individuals to the rulers, who represent the country as a whole.

a) The reference here is probably not to a queen as we think of her, the consort of the King, but rather to the king's

mother. Exx: Asa and Maacah (1 Kings 15:13); Jehoiachin and Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8,12,15; named first after the king). Perhaps a fulfillment of Isa. 3:12, "as for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." The latter kings of Judah never got out from under their mother's coattails.

- b) The prophet exhorts them to take a humble seat and watch their realm disintegrate. Note the progress of the enemy.
  - 1) First, they lose their headgear, their glorious crown, as the enemy subjugates Jerusalem, the capital.
  - 2) Then, even the cities in the south are besieged. These lie at the opposite end of the country from where the enemy entered. They can only be besieged if everything else is gone.
  - 3) Finally, the entire nation is taken captive.
- 3. 20-22 (to Jerusalem, singular feminine, cf. v.27) You will suffer greatly because of your great iniquity.

Finally, he speaks in the singular, using the feminine to represent the nation as a woman. The real point of this is the metaphor of spiritual adultery that we have been observing since Jer 2.

The line of argument shifts here. In 15-17 the argument was, "Repent to avoid judgment." Here it is, "Judgment is coming because of your sin."

a) 20-21 describe the judgment.

- 1) 20, The flock that was given to her for safekeeping is scattered. She has failed in the single most important responsibility that a shepherdess has: "Little BoPeep has lost her sheep."

- 2) 21a, Her lovers become her lords.

Several technical points to note here before we get to the point.

- a> The word rendered "captains" in the AV has another, more common meaning, "intimate friend, lover." It is used to refer to a spouse in Prov. 2:17 and Jer. 3:4, and here probably refers to lovers, the foreign nations (Babylon and Egypt) to whom Judah had looked for help when she should have sought out the Lord.

- b> Syntax is difficult. I prefer to render thus: "What will you say when [the Lord] appoints those whom you have taught to be your lovers to be your head?"

c> Meaning: Judah has turned from the Lord and sought out other lovers. Now the Lord will appoint them as her lord.

d> **Application:** Judah's situation is surprisingly contemporary. She did not want the constraint of being submissive to her husband, as people today do not want the constraints of marriage. She thought she could avoid it, as people today go after other lovers. As then, so today, the relations that we think are so "liberating" end up enslaving us; those whom we have chosen to be our lovers end up ruling us.

3) 21b. As a result of these disasters, she is seized with pain, as a woman in childbirth.

b) 22a gives the reason for this judgment: "the greatness of thine iniquity."

c) 22b, a final metaphor for the judgment itself: she is stripped naked to her shame. Hos. 2:3 suggests that this was a judgment on adulterous women.

### C. 23-27, Second Cycle

This time, the king and queen-mother are represented only by the Lord speaking to them about the people in the third person.

1. 23 (to People, plural) You cannot change (but the implication is that this is their only escape). They have grown so accustomed to evil that it has become a part of their nature, like the black skin of the Ethiopian or the spots of the leopard.
2. 24 (to King and queen mother, about the nation) I will scatter them as the chaff (the hulls of the grain) is blown away by the wind.
3. 25-27 (to Jerusalem, feminine singular) You will be judged because of your sin.

Here we have the same argument presented twice, once literally and once using the adultery metaphor.

a) 25, literal. Their sin is forgetting the Lord, and trusting in The Lie. This refers to two things: the lying idols, false gods that can teach no truth; and the lying prophets who assured the people that all was well even as they sinned.

b) 26-27, illustration using the metaphor of adultery.

- 1) The judgment: again, she is stripped naked and ashamed, as in v.22.

- 2) The reason: her blatantly lewd behavior, "neighing" after her paramours like a wild ass in season (2:24).

D. **Application:** The shift from plural to singular along with the shift from discussion of repentance to judgment for sin is important. We can and do suffer for the sins of others. The whole body suffers if any part is ill, 1 Cor. 12; cf. Achan in the camp of Israel. But repentance must be individual. Each of us must receive Jesus Christ as God's savior to deliver us from our sin.

## ANALYSIS

### A. 13:15-22, First Cycle

1. 15-17 contrast p (pl): Hear the Lord, don't be proud, or the flock will be captured.
    - a) result p:
      - 1) reason p: Hear the Lord!
        - a> text:
          - 1> 15 \$IM:(W.
          - 2> W:/HA/):AZIY/NW.
          - 3> )AL-T.IG:B.FHW.
        - b> reason: K.IY Y:HWFH D.IB."R
      - 2) reason p: Honor the Lord, before judgment comes!
        - a> text: 16 T.:NW. LA/YHWFH ):ELOH"Y/KEM K.FBOWD
        - b> reason:
          - 1> B.:/+EREM YAX:\$IK:
          - 2> W./B:/+EREM YIT:NAG.:PW. RAG:L"Y/KEM (AL-HFR"Y NF\$EP
          - 3> W:/QIW.IYTEM L:/)OWR
          - 4> W:/&FM/FH. L:/CAL:MFWET
          - 5> \*YF\$IYT \*\*W:\$IYT LA/(:ARFPEL
    - b) condition: Otherwise I must mourn for you.
      - 1) if: 17 W:/)IM LO) TI\$:MF(W./HF
      - 2) then: reason p
        - a> text:
          - 1> B.:/MIS:T.FRIYM T.IB:K.EH-NAP:\$/IY MI/P.:N"Y G"WFH
          - 2> W:/DFMO(A T.ID:MA( W:/T"RAD ("YN/IY D.IM:(FH
        - b> reason: K.IY NI\$:B.FH ("DER Y:HWFH S
2. 18-19 quote p: to king and queen (plural): Your realm will be diminished and finally taken captive.
  - a) quote f: 18 ):EMOR LA/M.ELEK: W:/LA/G.:BIYRFH
  - b) quote: reason p: Sit and mourn, for the cities perish.
    - 1) text:
      - a> HA/\$:P.IYLW.
      - b> \$"BW.
    - 2) reason: progress of the enemy: K.IY
      - a> YFRAD MAR:):A\$OWT"Y/KEM (:A+ERET T.IP: )AR:T./:KEM
      - b> neg. ant. para
        - 1> 19 (FR"Y HA/N.EGEB SUG.:RW.
        - 2> W:/)"YN P.OT"XA
      - c> coordinate p

1> HFG:LFT Y:HW.DFH K.UL./FH.  
2> HFG:LFT \$:LOWMIYM S

3. 20-22 reason p: singular feminine (the city? the country?). You will suffer greatly because of your great iniquity.
- a) text: result p
- 1) cause-1: awareness p: The flock is scattered
- a> quote f
- 1> 20 \*&:)IY \*\*&:)W. ("YN"Y/KEM  
2> \*W.R:)IY \*\*W.R:)W. HA/B.F)IYM MIC.FPOWN
- b> quote: )AY."H HF/("DER NIT.AN L/FK: ZO)N T.IP:)AR:T./"K:
- 2) cause-2: comment p: Former allies become lords
- a> text: 21 MAH-T.O)M:RIY K.IY-YIP:QOD (FLAY/IK: {X} L:/RO)\$
- b> comment (X): W:/)AT.: LIM.AD:T.: )OT/FM (FLAY/IK: )AL.UPIY
- 3) result: H:A/LOW) X:ABFLIYM YO)X:EZW./K: K.:/MOW )"SET L"DFH
- b) reason: reason p
- 1) text: quote p
- a> quote f: 22 W:/KIY TO)M:RIY B.I/L:BFB/"K:
- b> quote: MAD.W.(A Q:RF)U/NIY )"L.EH
- 2) reason: B.:/ROB (:AWON/"K:
- a> NIG:LW. \$W.LAYIK:
- b> NEX:M:SW. (:AQ"BFY/IK:

#### B. 23-27, Second Cycle

1. 23-24 result p (pl): You cannot change, so I will scatter you.
- a) text: illustration p
- 1) illustration: 23 H:A/YAH:APOK: K.W.\$IY (OWR/OW W:/NFM"R  
X:ABAR:B.UROT/FYW
- 2) text: G.AM-)AT.EM T.W.K:LW. L:/H"Y+IYB LIM.UD"Y HFR"(A
- b) result: 24 WA/):APIYC/"M K.:/QA\$-(OWB"R L:/RW.XA MID:B.FR
2. 25-27 illustration p embedding reason p (singular fem): You will be judged because of your sin.
- a) text: reason p: You will be judged because you have forgotten me.
- 1) text: 25 ZEH GOWRFL/"K: M:NFT-MID.AY/IK: M"/)IT./IY  
N:)UM-Y:HWFH
- 2) reason: ):A\$ER
- a> \$FKAXAT.: )OWT/IY
- b> WA/T.IB:+:XIY B.A/\$.FQER
- b) illustration: reason p: You will be shamed because of your uncleanness.
- 1) text: result p: I will strip you so that you are shamed.
- a> text: 26 W:/GAM-):ANIY XF&AP:T.IY \$W.LAY/IK:  
(AL-P.FNFY/IK:
- b> result: W:/NIR:)FH Q:LOWN/"K:
- 2) reason: conclusion p
- a> evidence: ... RF)IYTIY \$IQ.W.CFY/IK:
- 1> 27 NI)UPAY/IK:
- 2> W./MIC:H:ALOWTAY/IK:
- 3> ZIM.AT Z:NW.T/"K: (AL-G.:BF(OWT B.A/&.FDEH
- b> conclusion:

1> )OWY L/FK: Y:RW.\$FLAIM  
2> LO) TI+:H:ARIY )AX:AR"Y MFTAY (OD P