

# Understanding Jeremiah

## Jeremiah 12

version 1.02

### CHAPTER 12

*Jeremiah complains of the prosperity of the wicked—If other nations learn the ways of Israel, they will be numbered with Israel.*

#### **3 Nephi 24**

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say: What have we spoken against thee?

14 Ye have said: It is vain to serve God, and what doth it profit that we have kept his ordinances and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

#### **Jeremiah 12**

1 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?

#### **Footnotes (a) wicked**

Mosiah 16

2 And then shall the wicked be cast out, and they shall have cause to howl, and weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; and this because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord; therefore the Lord redeemeth them not.

Doctrine and Covenants 1

9 Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure

#### **Doctrine and Covenants 84**

49 And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin.

50 And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me.

51 For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin.

52 And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me.

53 And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now.

54 And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

55 Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

56 And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

57 And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—

58 That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion.

59 For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay.

60 Verily, verily, I say unto you who now hear my words, which are my voice, blessed are ye inasmuch as you receive these things

**Is it Vain to serve God:** Jeremiah 12:1 begins with one of the most poignant questions of prophetic lament: *“Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?”* Here, Jeremiah acknowledges God's justice but wrestles with what appears to be a contradiction — that those who transgress His law not only succeed materially, but seem to *thrive emotionally*. Their lives seem filled with joy, pleasure, and contentment, as if happiness itself validates their wickedness. This question echoes through the generations because it probes a spiritual paradox: the wicked often appear to live in a state of continual satisfaction. Yet, Jeremiah — and the rest of scripture — reveal that such “happiness” is neither lasting nor godly. Rather, the fixation on personal pleasure and emotional gratification is itself a **sign of spiritual decay**, the very essence of hedonism condemned throughout the prophetic tradition.

This false “joy” of the wicked parallels what Jeremiah earlier described when the people said, *“We are lords; we will come no more unto thee”* (Jeremiah 2:31). In rejecting God's yoke, they mistook pleasure for freedom and comfort for holiness- an inversion of true “moral agency”.

This mindset defines the hedonistic heart that worships sensation and satisfaction over righteousness and self-restraint. Jeremiah 5:31 exposed the same inversion: *“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so.”*

The people's *love* for pleasurable deception — messages that flatter rather than correct — becomes the very evidence of their fall. Thus, when Jeremiah observes that *“they are all happy that deal very treacherously”* (12:1), he is not merely describing their state, but condemning it:

their delight in treachery is not a blessing, but the narcotic of sin numbing their spiritual senses.

The Book of Mormon reinforces this teaching with piercing clarity. In 2 Nephi 28:7–8 Nephi warns of those ‘saints’ who say, “*Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.*” This philosophy — a precise mirror of Jeremiah’s observation — presents pleasure as the purpose of life, and moral accountability as irrelevant. The same people claiming to “fear God” turn right around and deny His justice (v. 8), showing that their outward contentment simply masks their inward corruption. The Lord warns that this carnal security will end in destruction (v. 21–23). Similarly, Alma teaches that “*wickedness never was happiness*” (Alma 41:10), a principle that cuts through the illusion of the wicked’s apparent joy— for if the wicked didn’t ever appear happy or focus on their happiness, why then would Alma need to teach such a truth? What Jeremiah (and the prophets) are identifying as “happiness” is a counterfeit — a self-induced comfort that blinds the soul to its condition, not true peace born of righteousness.

Jeremiah’s lament also reflects the principle found in Proverbs 14:12: “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” The “happiness” of the wicked is the illusion that sin’s immediate gratification provides. As Paul later writes, “*they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh*” (Romans 8:5), and though such people may “rejoice” in the moment, their joy is flesh-bound — temporary, fragile, and dependent upon indulgence. This “joy” is not rooted in light, but in sensation; not in God, but in self. It is the same “fullness of bread and abundance of idleness” (Ezekiel 16:49) that defined Sodom before its fall. The Savior himself taught “*verily I say unto you [the wicked] have joy in their works* for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return” (3 Nephi 27: 11).

The prophets repeatedly show that this fixation on happiness and self-satisfaction is not a symptom of divine favor, but of divine withdrawal. When the Spirit ceases to strive with a people, they are “given up unto their own hearts’ lust” (Psalm 81:12; Romans 1:24). In this state, the wicked no longer feel guilt or spiritual yearning — and this *absence* of divine discomfort is mistaken for peace. As Nephi observed, “*Others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell... until he graspeth them with his awful chains*” (2 Nephi 28:22). The wicked’s joy is therefore evidence of captivity, not liberty; of blindness, not enlightenment. Their laughter is a mask over spiritual death — a “false peace” Jeremiah earlier lamented, saying, “*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace*” (Jeremiah 6:14).

Thus, Jeremiah 12:1 is not a cry of doubt but of discernment. He recognizes that what appears as the prosperity and joy of the wicked is in truth their spiritual anesthesia. Their outward “happiness” is a counterfeit of the divine joy promised to the righteous — the “fulness of joy” that comes only in God’s presence (Psalm 16:11; Doctrine and Covenants 93:33–34) and ultimately in the divine resurrection (Doctrine and Covenants 93: 33). True joy requires harmony with divine law, not its rejection. As Lehi declared, “*Men are, that they might have joy*” (2 Nephi 2:25) — but that joy is inseparably tied to righteousness and liberty through Christ. The “joy” of the wicked, therefore, is an inversion of purpose: they are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7), delighting in their illusions until judgment awakens them to the emptiness beneath their smiles.

In summary, Jeremiah’s question — “Why are all they happy that deal very treacherously?” — exposes a profound truth: when pleasure becomes the goal, wickedness follows. The apparent happiness of the wicked is not a mystery of divine injustice, but a manifestation of divine mercy delayed — God allowing them the fruits of their choice until their own pleasure turns to ruin. Their joy is the dim glow of a dying fire: bright for a moment, but destined to fade. The righteous, by contrast, may mourn, sacrifice, and plead, yet their joy — grounded in covenant faithfulness — endures eternally (John 16:20–22). Jeremiah thus teaches that the world’s obsession with pleasure is not evidence of success, but the mark of a people spiritually asleep, mistaking the comfort of sin for the peace of God.

### **“Is it vain?”**

*(Inspired by Jeremiah 12:1 & 3 Nephi 24:17)*

Why do the wicked prosper, Lord?  
Their laughter fills the tainted air;  
They feast on what the poor have sown,  
And call their theft a life of care.  
Their joy is shallow, bought with pain—  
A fleeting spark, a dying flame;  
They rise on backs of widowed hearts,  
And still they glory in their shame.  
Yet there walks One, the Man of Grief,  
Who bore the world’s deceit and scorn;  
He sought no gold, He owned no home,  
His crown was woven thick with thorn.  
He calls, “Come, follow Me, and live—  
Take up thy cross, forsake thy pride;

The joy you seek lies in sacrifice,  
The life you crave, when self has died.”  
For in His wounds the soul finds peace,  
In bearing burdens, hearts are healed;  
The meek inherit all the earth,  
The cross becomes the victor’s shield.  
So let the proud enjoy their night—  
Their mirth will fade, their wealth decay;  
But those refined through faith and fire  
Shall be His jewels in that day.

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

### **Footnote (a) thou**

Matthew 15

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

### **JSH 1**

19 I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”

### **2 Nephi 27**

24 And again it shall come to pass that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him:

25 Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men

**Authority Without Power:** When a people reach the end of the priesthood cycle—when religion becomes authority without power—the Lord declares that they “draw near unto [Him] with their

mouth, and with their lips do honour [Him], but have removed their heart far from [Him]" (Isaiah 29:13; 2 Nephi 27:25). Outwardly, such a society appears devout: temples still stand, prayers are uttered, and ordinances performed, but the heart—the seat of covenant loyalty—is estranged from God. Jeremiah mourned this same condition in his day: *"Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root... thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins"* (Jeremiah 12:2). In such times, religion drifts into priestcraft, wherein "men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world" (2 Nephi 26:29). The commandments of God are replaced by "the precepts of men" (2 Nephi 27:25), and true worship becomes mere ritual. Truth becomes subjective, and people's testimonies ungrounded- they don't even know what they believe. Christ Himself condemned this hypocrisy, saying, *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me"* (Matthew 15:8). In the latter days, this same pattern was revealed anew to Joseph Smith: that the churches of his time had "a form of godliness, but... deny the power thereof" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). Thus, at the climax of apostasy, the forms of faith remain but the Spirit is gone; religion is spoken but not lived, and worship has turned from covenant fidelity to cultural tradition—a people who praise God in word while walking far from His will. 2 Nephi 27 teaches us about yet another time, in the future from the 1800's, where the Saints of God would once again reach such a condition- it is then that "and again" the plates shall be delivered and *the* marvelous work and a wonder proceed.

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

**3** But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

**4** How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

### **(23-24) Jeremiah 12:1–4. Why Do the Wicked Prosper?**

Jeremiah raised age-old questions: Why do the wicked sometimes prosper while the righteous do not? (see Jeremiah 12:1). How much time will pass before their wickedness will be punished? (see v. 4; Malachi 3:13–18).

"The enmity experienced by Jeremiah at the hands of his countrymen at Anathoth excites his displeasure at the prosperity of the wicked, who thrive and live with immunity. He therefore begins to expostulate with God, and demands from God's righteousness that they be cut off out of the land (vers. 1–4) (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 8:1:219.)

*(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 23: As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap)*

## Doctrine and Covenants 121

1 O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

2 How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?

3 Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?

4 O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol—stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavilion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered; let thine ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us.

5 Let thine anger be kindled against our enemies; and, in the fury of thine heart, with thy sword avenge us of our wrongs.

6 Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

**Lament, but Lose Not Faith:** In Jeremiah 12:3–4, the prophet’s lament deepens as he expresses both personal anguish and collective concern over the unchecked wickedness around him. He pleads with the Lord, acknowledging that God knows and has tested his heart, and petitions that the wicked be “pulled out like sheep for the slaughter” and prepared for the day of reckoning. The lament emphasizes the tangible consequences of sin: the land mourns, vegetation withers, and even beasts and birds suffer because of human wickedness, for the evildoers arrogantly declare, “*He shall not see our last end*” (Jeremiah 12:4). This mirrors the enduring human question: how long will the righteous endure while the wicked prosper? A similar plea is echoed centuries later in Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–6, where Joseph Smith cries out to God in the midst of oppression and suffering, asking how long the righteous must wait for divine justice. Both texts highlight the tension between God’s omniscience and human perception of delay in judgment. They also underscore a key principle: the righteous may witness suffering and injustice, but God sees all and will ultimately act. The petitions in both passages reflect not only the desire for retribution against the wicked, but also a profound reliance on God’s mercy and righteousness to vindicate the afflicted, assuring that the day of the Lord’s judgment will indeed come.

## Jeremiah 12 (cont.)

5 ¶ If thou hast run with our footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

**(23-25) Jeremiah 12:5. “How Canst Thou Contend with Horses?”**

To Jeremiah’s question about why the wicked prosper, the Lord gave a vivid answer that has helped many to build up their courage. Clarke wrote: “If the smallest evils to which thou art exposed cause thee to make ... complaints, how wilt thou feel when, in the course of thy prophetic ministry, thou shalt be exposed to much greater, from enemies much more powerful? *Footmen* may here be the symbol of *common evil events*; *horsemen*, of evils much more terrible. If thou have sunk under small difficulties, what wilt thou do when great ones come?”

“I believe the meaning is this, ‘If in a country now enjoying peace thou scarcely thinkest thyself in safety, what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? in the time when the enemy, like an overflowing torrent, shall deluge every part of the land?’

“The overflowing of Jordan, which generally happened in harvest, drove the lions and other beasts of prey from their coverts among the bushes that lined its banks; who, spreading themselves through the country, made terrible havoc, slaying men, and carrying off the cattle.”  
(*Commentary*, 4:287.)

(*Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 23: As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap*)

**Strength for Tomorrows Battles:** In Jeremiah 12:5, the Lord responds to the prophet’s lament over the apparent prosperity of the wicked with a vivid metaphor: if the difficulties of running alongside footmen have wearied Jeremiah, how will he endure when contending with horses, or when the swelling of the Jordan brings far greater danger? Clarke explains that the footmen symbolize minor trials, while horsemen represent more formidable adversaries; the overflowing Jordan, which drove predators into the countryside, illustrates the intense pressures that arise when wickedness runs rampant and society is in turmoil.

This pattern is not merely historical. President Russell M. Nelson has warned of a coming day in which the world will experience a time of similar upheaval, comparable to the days of Jeremiah, Noah, etc.- the end of Priestcraft Cycles. In his April 2020 Ensign article, “*The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming*,” he states:

*“Remember that the fulness of Christ’s ministry lies in the future. The prophecies of His Second Coming have yet to be fulfilled. We are just building up to the climax of this last dispensation—when the Savior’s Second Coming becomes a reality.”*

President Nelson emphasizes that such trials are part of the Lord’s preparation for His purposes and the ultimate redemption of Zion. In this future day, just as in Jeremiah’s time, the faithful will be tested through opposition, betrayal, and persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Yet, those who anchor themselves in pure doctrine, keep their covenants with increasing precision, and faithfully

defend the Church will be strengthened and refined. This endurance is necessary because the climax of this period will be the building of New Jerusalem and the return of the Lord as its Lord and lawgiver, when the faithful will be gathered and preserved as jewels in His crown (3 Nephi 24:17). Thus, the principle of progressive trials that Jeremiah experienced becomes a pattern repeated in latter-day prophecy, preparing God's people for ultimate triumph and divine redemption.

*“As I have stated before, the gathering of Israel is the most important work taking place on earth today. One crucial element of this gathering is preparing a people who are able, ready, and worthy to receive the Lord when He comes again, a people who have already chosen Jesus Christ over this fallen world, a people who rejoice in their agency to live the higher, holier laws of Jesus Christ. I call upon you, my dear brothers and sisters, to become this righteous people. Cherish and honor your covenants above all other commitments. As you let God prevail in your life, I promise you greater peace, confidence, joy, and yes, rest. (President Nelson, Oct 2022, Overcome the World and Find Rest)*

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

**6** For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

**7** ¶ I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.

### **Mark 10**

**22** ¶ And Jesus looked round about and said unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of my Father!

**23** And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus spake again and said unto them, Children, how hard is it for them who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

**24** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

**25** And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

**26** And Jesus, looking upon them, said, With men that trust in riches, it is impossible, but not impossible with men who trust in God and leave all for my sake; for with such, all these things are possible.

**27** ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

**28** And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

29 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

**A Hundred Fold:** Jeremiah laments in 12:7 that God’s heritage has been abandoned and handed into the hands of enemies, a situation often brought about by priestcraft—the corruption of those who claim to serve God while seeking personal gain. Such leaders exploit the faithful, using religion as a vehicle for wealth, influence, or honor, leaving the covenant people vulnerable. This stands in stark contrast to the true followers of Christ, as taught in Mark 10:22–29, who forsake houses, lands, and even family ties to preach the gospel and serve God without dependence on worldly reward. Where priestcraft seeks praise, power, and temporal security, Christ’s disciples embrace sacrifice, trusting in God alone. 2 Nephi 26 makes this principle explicit: the Lord commands that there be **no priestcrafts**, declaring that all men are to labor for the welfare of Zion, not for personal gain, and that the gospel is freely offered “without money and without price” (vv. 25, 29). True ministry, therefore, is marked by charity, selflessness, and obedience, focused entirely on the salvation and benefit of others, while priestcraft is defined by selfish ambition and the pursuit of gain at the expense of the Lord’s people (v. 29–31). The contrast could not be sharper: the priestcraft leader hoards, manipulates, and betrays, leaving God’s heritage in peril, whereas the faithful disciple surrenders all for Christ and becomes a channel of divine blessing, preservation, and eventual eternal reward.

The corruption and exploitation condemned in 2 Nephi 13—“*ye have eaten up the vineyard and the spoil of the poor in your houses... ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor*”—perfectly illustrates the essence of priestcraft: claiming authority to serve God while preying on the vulnerable. Such leaders, like the “evil servant” in Matthew 24:50–55, are unprepared and self-indulgent, complacent in their authority, and blind to the coming judgment, leaving the Lord’s household exposed to destruction. In stark contrast, the good shepherd, as described in John 10:11–15, lays down his life for the sheep, intimately knowing and protecting them, even at great personal cost and sacrifice. True ministry is defined by vigilance, selflessness, and devotion to the welfare of others, ensuring the flock is preserved and “fed in due season with meat” (Matthew 24:52–53). The contrast is clear: priestcraft pursues gain and shirks responsibility while teaching soft sophistries, leaving God’s people scattered and vulnerable, while the faithful disciple sacrifices personal comfort, guards the flock, and aligns entirely with God’s purposes, thereby participating in the eventual preservation and gathering of Zion. This reinforces the recurring scriptural principle that worldly security, wealth, or position cannot substitute for obedience, vigilance, and genuine charity; only those who labor selflessly for the Lord will be found faithful when He comes.

## Jeremiah 12 (cont.)

8 Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

9 Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field (IE Babylon and others), come to devour.

### (23-26) Jeremiah 12:9. How Is Judah like a “Speckled Bird”?

Thompson explained the symbol of the speckled bird in this way:

“Israel with her proud plumage has attracted the attention of birds of prey (enemies) who move in to attack her. An alternative translation arises from rendering *sabua* as a noun, ‘hyena,’ which is possible. This understanding of the word combined with the [Septuagint] substitution of the word ‘cave’ for ‘bird of prey’ leads to the translation:

“‘Is this land of mine a hyena’s lair

“‘With birds of prey hovering all around it? (NEB)’

“The picture that results is of a hyena’s lair with vultures hovering around waiting to swoop down on what is left of a carcass after the hyena has eaten. In either case the people and land are under attack from foes. There is a feast prepared for all the wild beasts (lit. ‘beasts of the field’). The destruction of Judah will provide pickings for all.” (*Book of Jeremiah*, p. 358.)

*(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 23: As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap)*

**Wherefore Art Thou Watchman:** In Jeremiah 12:6–9, the prophet laments the treachery not only of foreign powers but also of his own kin, observing that even his brethren and the house of his father have acted deceitfully, calling multitudes with flattering words yet harboring betrayal. This treachery extends to the Lord’s heritage, which Jeremiah mourns as forsaken and vulnerable, given into the hands of enemies (v. 7). Verse 9 employs the vivid symbol of the “speckled bird” to describe Judah’s precarious situation: Thompson explains that Israel, adorned with proud plumage, has drawn the attention of birds of prey—her enemies—who circle in readiness to attack. Alternatively, the term may suggest a hyena’s lair, with scavengers hovering to feed on what remains, reflecting the devastation awaiting the land and people. In either case, the imagery conveys that Judah’s pride, disobedience, and covenant unfaithfulness have made it a target, and that the destruction wrought by Babylon and surrounding nations will leave the people exposed, “a feast prepared for all the beasts of the field” (Jeremiah 12:9). The metaphor underscores both the inevitability of divine judgment and the vulnerability that comes when God’s people abandon His protection, leaving themselves open to the consequences of treachery and sin.

The imagery of Judah as a “speckled bird,” vulnerable to predators and scattered among enemies (Jeremiah 12:9), reflects a recurring pattern in God’s dealings with His covenant people: when societies reach the end of a cycle of wickedness and apostasy, destruction comes swiftly and decisively. As Luke 17:26–38 teaches, the days of the Son of Man will mirror the days of Noah and Lot, when people went about their daily lives—eating, drinking, marrying, building—yet were suddenly overtaken by judgment: the flood destroyed all in Noah’s day, and fire and brimstone consumed Sodom. Similarly, Matthew 24:29–31 emphasizes that after tribulation, the Lord will appear in power and glory, and His angels will gather His elect from across the earth, just as Jeremiah’s scattered “speckled bird” would face predators while the righteous are preserved. Both accounts highlight that in the final days, the proud and unrepentant are swept away like prey, while the faithful are gathered and protected, symbolizing the preservation of the Lord’s covenant people. This principle reinforces the warning implicit in Judah’s downfall: temporal security, outward appearances, or worldly prosperity cannot prevent divine judgment, and only alignment with God—faithful obedience, covenant fidelity, and adherence to His word—ensures ultimate protection and inclusion in the coming redemption of Zion.

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

**10** Many pastors (TG False Prophets) have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

### **Footnote (b) vineyard**

Jacob 6

2 And the day that he shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea, even the last time, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh.

**Cut Short His Work- the End Soon Cometh:** The Lord repeatedly warns that the work of His people can fail when they neglect His commandments, embrace priestcraft, and allow corruption to grow unchecked. In Jeremiah 12:10, He mourns that “many pastors... have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness,” describing the devastation caused by leaders who take strength unto themselves rather than nurture the flock. Jacob 5-6 and Doctrine and Covenants 101 expand on this, illustrating that the Lord’s vineyard—the Church and the House of Israel—has often been corrupted by natural and wild branches that bring forth bitter fruit (Jacob 5:39–47; D&C 101:44–54). The loftiness of branches overcoming the roots symbolizes pride, self-interest, and the rise of priestcraft among those meant to nourish the vineyard (Jacob 5:48). The Lord’s sorrow is evident: “What could I have done more for my vineyard?” (Jacob 5:41), emphasizing His tireless efforts and long-suffering toward His people. Yet, when the branches continue to corrupt the

roots, the Lord must act decisively to preserve what remains of the righteous, as he has promised to do (Doctrine and Covenants 117: 16).

This corrective action is what the Apostle Paul described as “cut short in righteousness”: “For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth” (Romans 9:28). Joseph Smith similarly taught that the Church could fail unless it received the fulness of the scriptures, because corruption and neglect could otherwise undermine the work entirely (TPJS, p. 9). Brigham Young reinforced this, declaring that the Lord would “gather out His people from the wicked, and He is going to cut short His work in righteousness” (JD 13:170). Harold B. Lee likewise instructed that the righteous must prepare for a Savior who will cut short the reign of wickedness, rescuing the faithful while the unrepentant are swept away (1956–O:60). The Lord’s intervention is therefore not arbitrary; it is motivated by mercy and prudence, like amputating a rotting limb to save the body, preserving the righteous remnant for future blessings.

Isaiah 1 underscores the necessity of such decisive action: “Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5–6). The corruption is pervasive, affecting every level of society, and the Lord recognizes that without intervention, it will only worsen. Even within His Church, there is only a remnant to remain faithful: “Except the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha” (Romans 9:29; Isaiah 1:9). Doctrine and Covenants 101 illustrates how the Lord’s servants, despite diligence, fail when His people become slothful, neglect the tower, and fail to produce the fruit meet for their Father’s Kingdom (D&C 101:50–51, 53–54). Cutting short His work in righteousness is therefore both protective and salvific—it preserves the roots while removing the corrupting branches.

Jacob 5-6 and D&C 101 present the Lord’s vineyard as a living illustration of this principle. Corrupted branches overtake the good ones, necessitating pruning, grafting, and sometimes removal of branches bringing forth bitter fruit (Jacob 5:52–66; D&C 101:52–54, 61–66). The Lord spares the vineyard when possible, grafting in new branches and working patiently, but the end draws near when corruption threatens to destroy all (Jacob 5:62–69). By pruning the bad, preserving the roots, and grafting faithful branches, He ensures that a righteous remnant remains to fulfill His purposes. This is precisely the essence of “cutting short His work in righteousness”: He acts decisively to stop irreparable damage and to preserve the covenant people, ensuring that they can be refined, gathered, and ultimately rewarded.

Ergo, the Lord's act of cutting short His work is an expression of both judgment and mercy. Without it, the pervasive corruption, priestcraft, and rebellion—even within the Church—would leave nothing but destruction, and the righteous remnant would be lost. As Isaiah, Jacob, and Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly testify, the Lord intervenes to save the faithful, prune the corrupt, and protect the roots of His vineyard, ensuring that His work is complete and that the righteous can inherit the blessings He has prepared for Zion and the New Jerusalem (Jacob 5:61–69; D&C 101:50–58). Cutting short His work in righteousness is not an increase in temples, baptisms, etc.; it is the gathering and preserving of the remnant directly before the end.

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

11 They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart (IE pays attention).

### **Doctrine and Covenants 101**

47 And while they were yet laying the foundation thereof, they began to say among themselves: And what need hath my lord of this tower?

48 And consulted for a long time, saying among themselves: What need hath my lord of this tower, seeing this is a time of peace?

49 Might not this money be given to the exchangers? For there is no need of these things.

50 And while they were at variance one with another they became very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord.

51 And the enemy came by night, and broke down the hedge; and the servants of the nobleman arose and were affrighted, and fled; and the enemy destroyed their works, and broke down the olive trees.

### **Joseph Smith Jr.**

#### **The Treasure Hid in a Field**

But to illustrate more clearly this gathering: We have another parable—“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hid in a field, the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field!” The Saints work after this pattern. See the Church of the Latter-day Saints, selling all that they have, and gathering themselves together unto a place that they may purchase for an inheritance, that they may be together and bear each other's afflictions in the day of calamity.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” The Saints

again work after this example. See men traveling to find places for Zion and her ... remnants, who, when they find the place for Zion, or the pearl of great price, straightway sell that they have, and buy it. (TPJS 101-102)

**No Man Layeth the Tower to Heart:** The scriptures make clear that neglecting the tower—a symbol of Zion, the New Jerusalem, and the Celestial Laws upon which it is founded—brings desolation upon the land and the people (D&C 101:47–51; Jeremiah 12:11). As the servants in the parable of the vineyard hesitated, questioning the need for the tower and wasting the resources of their lord, the enemy came by night and destroyed their works, breaking down the hedge and ravaging the olive trees (D&C 101:51). This neglect mirrors the spiritual condition described in Jeremiah: “the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart” (Jeremiah 12:11). Joseph Smith further explains this principle in his parables of the treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great price, showing that the Saints must sell all they have and gather themselves to purchase the inheritance of Zion, so they can labor together, bear each other’s afflictions, and secure the land and its blessings (TPJS 101–102). When hearts are not fully devoted to the tower, or to Zion, priorities shift—resources are spent elsewhere, attention is scattered, and the desolating work of the enemy is permitted, damaging even the good olive trees (stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) planted by the Lord. Thus, the spiritual principle is clear: the safety, preservation, and blessing of Zion depend upon complete devotion, willingness to sacrifice, and faithful labor in its cause, or the desolation foretold in both Old and New Testament prophecy will overtake the land.

### **Jeremiah 12 (cont.)**

**12** The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.

**13** They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain (OR taken pains), but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

**14** ¶ Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 64**

**30** And he hath set you to provide for his saints in these last days, that they may obtain an inheritance in the land of Zion.

31 And behold, I, the Lord, declare unto you, and my words are sure and shall not fail, that they shall obtain it.

32 But all things must come to pass in their time.

33 Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

35 And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land.

36 For, verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, wherefore they shall be plucked out.

**Abomination of Desolation:** Conditions of desolation, born of abomination and wickedness, were to occur twice in fulfillment of Daniel’s words. The first was to be when the Roman legions under Titus, in A.D. 70, laid siege to Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15; JS—M 1:12). The fourth-century Church Fathers Eusebius of Caesarea and Epiphanius of Salamis cite a tradition that before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the early Christians had been warned to flee to Pella in the region of the Decapolis across the Jordan River. Speaking of the last days, of the days following the Restoration of the gospel and its declaration “for a witness unto all nations,” our Lord said: “And again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled” (JS—M 1:31–32). (Bible Dictionary)

### **Doctrine and Covenants 112**

23 Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

24 Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

25 And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

26 First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.

27 Therefore, see to it that ye trouble not yourselves concerning the affairs of my church

**And Again Shall the Desolation Be Fulfilled:** The prophetic warnings of desolation found in Jeremiah 12:12–14 find a clear typological and literal fulfillment in both ancient and latter-day events, pointing toward the second coming and the final purification of the Lord’s work. Jeremiah describes a land devastated by spoilers and divine judgment: “The spoilers are come

upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace” (Jeremiah 12:12). Those who sowed with effort and expectation of profit “shall reap thorns” and their labors will bring shame, revealing that human industry apart from divine sanction is futile in the face of God’s wrath (Jeremiah 12:13). The Lord then declares judgment not only upon Israel’s neighbors but upon His own covenant people, emphasizing that those who touch or defile His inheritance will be “plucked out of their land” (Jeremiah 12:14).

This pattern of judgment is repeated in the latter days as foretold in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Saints are commanded to pursue the land of Zion and warned that the rebellious will be “cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land” (D&C 64:30–36). The principle is the same as the wheat and the tares: the Lord distinguishes between those who are faithful and those who are corrupt, and judgment begins with those in His house who profess knowledge of His name (or worse to represent Him) yet blaspheme against Him in the midst of His house (D&C 112:23–26). This will mark the second fulfillment of the Abomination of Desolation.

In the latter-day fulfillment, the Lord’s wrath will begin “first upon his own house” (D&C 112:25), signifying that the Church itself will experience purification before the judgment extends outward, and in Doctrine and Covenants 117 the Lord specifically proclaims “Let all my servants . . . remember the Lord their God, and mine house also, to keep and preserve it holy, *and to overthrow the moneychangers in mine own due time*” (verse 16), making clear that it is in fact priestcraft within His Holy temples that will bring this down.

The wicked and rebellious among the covenant people will be “plucked out” of the land in preparation for the establishment of Zion, echoing the imagery of wheat and tares (D&C 86) and the language in Jeremiah. The prophecy emphasizes that this pruning is both necessary and merciful: it preserves the roots—the righteous remnant—so that the Lord’s purposes can be fulfilled and the vineyard, the land, and the inheritance of Zion will be secured. Like the desolation described in Jeremiah, this latter-day abomination of desolation is a direct consequence of widespread neglect, pride, and rebellion primarily in the form of priestcraft, demonstrating that God’s judgments are precise, righteous, and begin among those closest to Him and it is the widespread effects of priestcraft which ultimately cause “the cup of iniquity to runneth over” (Doctrine and Covenants 101: 11).

This dual fulfillment underscores the certainty and continuity of the Lord’s dealings: ancient patterns and cycles of judgment foreshadow the latter-day purifying work, showing that the

principles of divine pruning, separation of the wicked from the righteous, and preparation of Zion are eternal cycles (Jeremiah 12:11–14; D&C 64:30–36; D&C 112:23–27; D&C 87). Those who heed the warnings and labor faithfully in the vineyard, providing for the Saints and supporting the foundations of Zion, participate in a work that is both redemptive and preparatory, ensuring that the “few” righteous will survive and flourish, even amid sweeping judgment.

### **Jeremiah 12 (fin)**

**15** And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

**16** And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.

**17** But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

### **(23-27) Jeremiah 12:14–17. Can the Spoilers of Judah Ever Be Blessed of the Lord?**

“The spoilers of the Lord’s heritage are also to be carried off out of their land; but after they, like Judah, have been punished, the Lord will have pity on them, and will bring them back one and all into their own land. And if the heathen, who now seduce the people of God to idolatry, learn the ways of God’s people and be converted to the Lord, they shall receive citizenship amongst God’s people and be built up amongst them; but if they will not do so, they shall be extirpated [pulled out by the roots; wiped out]. Thus will the Lord manifest Himself before the whole earth as righteous judge, and through judgment secure the weal [health or prosperity] not only of Israel, but of the heathen peoples too. By this discovery of His world-plan the Lord makes so complete a reply to the prophet’s murmuring concerning the prosperity of the ungodly (vers. 1–6), that from it may clearly be seen the justice of God’s government on earth.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 8:1:228.)

*(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 23: As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap)*

### **3 Nephi 9**

**12** And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations.

**13** O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?

### **3 Nephi 10**

11 And thus far were the scriptures fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophets.

12 And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared

**Ye Who Are More Righteous Than They:** The conclusion of Jeremiah 12:15–17 emphasizes the merciful yet conditional nature of the Lord’s dealings with both His covenant people and the surrounding nations. After the initial judgment and plucking of the wicked and rebellious from the land, the Lord promises to return in compassion, restoring those who repent to their inheritance and land (Jeremiah 12:15). This restoration, however, is contingent upon their willingness to learn the ways of God, to turn from idolatry, and to swear by His name rather than Baal, demonstrating that mercy is always connected with obedience and diligence in righteousness (Jeremiah 12:16). The commentary of Keil and Delitzsch clarifies this principle further: the spoilers of Judah, like the surrounding heathen who seduce God’s people into idolatry, will either be converted and incorporated into God’s people or “extirpated” if they refuse, showing that divine judgment is both corrective and protective (Keil & Delitzsch, 8:1:228).

This theme resonates strongly with the latter-day teachings on the Restoration and the gathering of Israel. The Lord’s work is “cut short in righteousness” (Romans 9:28), not arbitrarily, but to preserve a righteous remnant and to prevent corruption from spreading beyond repair. As in Jeremiah, the principle is both judicial and redemptive: judgment removes the rebellious and preserves the faithful, providing a foundation for Zion and the New Jerusalem (D&C 101:47–51; D&C 64:30–36). The warnings of desolation, the pruning of the vineyard, and the removal of wicked branches all prefigure this ultimate separation of wheat and tares (D&C 86), emphasizing that divine mercy is always conditional upon repentance and willingness to obey.

Thus, the spoilers and rebellious among both the covenant people and the nations are given opportunities for repentance and restoration, but those who persist in rebellion will be cut off. The Lord’s compassion is real and active, yet it is administered within the framework of justice, ensuring that His purposes for His people, His vineyard, and His covenant lands are fulfilled. This harmonizes the themes of plucking and grafting from Jacob 5 and D&C 101–112 with the prophetic vision of Jeremiah: the Lord’s judgments are precise, measured, and ultimately designed to secure the righteous, while the wicked face the consequences of their persistent rebellion. The balance of justice and mercy is therefore not only a characteristic of ancient Israel’s history but also of the Lord’s ongoing plan in the latter days, preparing the faithful for the inheritance of Zion while removing corruption from the land.

## **Moses 7**

60 And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of

wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah;

61 And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve;

62 And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

### **The Great and Dreadful Reward**

The vineyard groans beneath the night,  
Its branches choked, no fruit in sight,  
The priests have bowed to gold and gain,  
Their hearts enslaved, their souls betrayed.  
The temple reeks with greed's foul blight,  
And innocence and truth decayed.

Desolation rides the midnight wind,  
The spoilers come, their rage unpinned,  
The hedge is shattered, the tower gone,  
The money changers scattered wide.  
The earth shall quake, the heavens thinned,  
And none shall in false shelter hide.

Yet Zion gleams, a city fair,  
Her walls upheld by loving care,  
The righteous gathered, hearts made strong,  
Their loins are girded, eyes awake.  
From heaven's truth and earth's bright song,  
A holy flood the darkness breaks.

The wicked pruned, the roots endure,  
The saints rejoice, their hearts secure,  
The fruit restored, the vineyard green,  
The righteous triumph, evil gone.  
"Do ye still say it is vain to serve the Lord?"  
They ask with joy at breaking dawn.

