

# UNDERSTANDING JEREMIAH

## CHAPTER 21

VERSION 1.00

### **Jeremiah 21-24: Introduction**

Jeremiah, left behind in a desolate city by the Babylonian captors, asked some pointed questions. How did it happen that a city once full of people, visited by kings and queens of other nations, now lay desolate and empty? There was no echo of people calling in its streets. Anything of value now rested in other homes, in other temples. How could it happen? Indeed, why do great men and women—like great cities—fail to maintain their greatness and fall short of their destiny?

Jeremiah had the answers to these questions. What he needed was someone to truly listen.

This chapter surveys Jeremiah's teachings and warnings to his people in the context of the impending Babylonian captivity. (see 2 Kings 24–25.) But Jeremiah was not just a prophet of doom, although it may seem so in this lesson. Like Enoch (see Moses 7:41–69), Jeremiah was allowed to see the coming of the Savior and the restoration of God's church and people in the latter days. (See chap. 25.)

As you read the historical chapters of Jeremiah, observe the correlation between a nation's righteousness and its long-term power, the correlation between a people's leaders and the righteousness of the people, and the relationship between a prophet and God's dealings with His children.

*(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 24: The Babylonian Captivity)*

## CHAPTER 21

*Jeremiah foretells the siege, captivity, and destruction of Jerusalem—Zedekiah is to be taken captive by Nebuchadrezzar.*

### **Jeremiah 21 (start)**

1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

### **Footnotes (b) Pashur**

Jeremiah 20

1 Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

Jeremiah 38:1

1 Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

3 Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

4 Therefore the princes [OR officers or rulers] said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you [OR cannot prevail against you in any matter].

6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech [HEB the king], that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

**To Protect the Craft:** When King Zedekiah sent priests to inquire of the Lord, it was not repentance he sought but relief without surrender, and the names betray the pattern: Pashur returns, again and again, as priest, governor, counselor, and finally conspirator, his circle swelling from temple office to royal court, until priestcraft hardens into secret combination and institutional power is welded against the living word of God (Jeremiah 21:1; Jeremiah 20:1; Jeremiah 38:1–4). This is the end of every priestcraft cycle foreseen and warned against in the Book of Mormon, where idolatry births priestcraft, priestcraft which demands/teaches/and justifies inequality and gain, and said inequality then necessitates conspiracies to preserve the spoils and silence truth/resistance, until the house is full of silver and blood alike (2 Nephi 26:29; Alma 1:16; Helaman 6:16–31). Jeremiah stands where Abinadi stood before Noah's priests and where Christ stood before Caiaphas, bearing covenant charges while the guardians of religion marshal scripture, office, and procedure to defend their positions, proving that the greatest enemies of prophetic warning are not pagans outside the walls but priests who have confused stewardship with ownership and authority with entitlement and consecration with personal gain (Mosiah 11:4–11; Mosiah 12:19; Matthew 26:3–5).

The justification never changes: the prophet “weakeneth the hands of the people,” threatens morale, endangers the institution, and must therefore be restrained for the common good, yet the Lord exposes this lie by naming its true motive—self-preservation masquerading as pastoral concern, fear of loss clothed in language of unity and stability (Jeremiah 38:4–6). Jeremiah's words did not weaken Judah; Judah's sins weakened Judah, and silencing the warning only sealed the destruction it claimed to prevent, just as the priests who condemned Abinadi ensured their own overthrow and the rulers who crucified Christ preserved their place only long enough to lose their nation (Mosiah 17:12–20; Matthew 27:25; 1 Nephi 1:18–20). The Doctrine and Covenants declares that when men exercise control or dominion in any degree of

unrighteousness, the Spirit withdraws and authority becomes hollow, leaving institutions standing but condemned, secure in form yet empty of heaven (Doctrine and Covenants 121:37–39). Modern prophets have warned that corruption most often enters under the banner of righteousness and that institutional survival can never justify silencing truth, for the Church exists to save souls, not to preserve reputations or positions (Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” April 1989 General Conference).

Yet even as Jeremiah sinks into the mire, the Lord preserves a remnant, for covenant judgment is never God’s final word; it is His last invitation (Jeremiah 38:6; 2 Nephi 10:2). The Book of Mormon promises that secret combinations burst when exposed by truth and that those who humble themselves, come out of Babylon, and cleave to the word will be spared spiritually even if the walls fall around them (Ether 8:23–26; Doctrine and Covenants 133:5). This is the mercy hidden inside the warning: that repentance can still avert destruction, that prophets speak because they love, and that those who choose the word over the walls will find that God remembers His covenants long after priestcrafts collapse under the weight of their own gain (Helaman 15:7–8; Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” April 2020 General Conference).

### **Jeremiah 21 (cont.)**

2 Inquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

3 ¶ Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:

4 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without [OR outside] the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.

5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

### **Footnote (a) outstretched**

Deuteronomy 4:34

*They will be scattered among all nations when they worship other gods—They will be gathered again in the latter days when they seek the Lord their God*

24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

25 ¶ When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed [IE as a nation].

27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations [HEB among the Gentiles], and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn [HEB return, repent] to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

34 Or hath God assayed [OR attempted] to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations [HEB trials, tests], by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.

#### **Footnote Deuteronomy 4; 31 (b) covenant**

1 Nephi 22:6–10

6 Nevertheless, after they shall be nursed by the Gentiles, and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the Gentiles and set them up for a standard, and their children have been carried in their arms, and their daughters have been carried upon their shoulders, behold these things of which are spoken are temporal; for thus are the covenants of the Lord with our fathers; and it meaneth us in the days to come, and also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel.

7 And it meaneth that the time cometh that after all the house of Israel have been scattered and confounded, that the Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles, yea, even upon the face of this land; and by them shall our seed be scattered.

8 And after our seed is scattered the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders.

9 And it shall also be of worth unto the Gentiles; and not only unto the Gentiles but unto all the house of Israel, unto the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven unto Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

10 And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations.

11 Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel.

12 Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.

### **Footnote Deuteronomy 4; 34 (b) nation (d) wonders**

1 Nephi 17

26 Now ye know that Moses was commanded of the Lord to do that great work; and ye know that by his word the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground.

27 But ye know that the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, who were the armies of Pharaoh.

28 And ye also know that they were fed with manna in the wilderness.

29 Yea, and ye also know that Moses, by his word according to the power of God which was in him, smote the rock, and there came forth water, that the children of Israel might quench their thirst.

30 And notwithstanding they being led, the Lord their God, their Redeemer, going before them, leading them by day and giving light unto them by night, and doing all things for them which were expedient for man to receive, they hardened their hearts and blinded their minds, and reviled against Moses and against the true and living God.

31 And it came to pass that according to his word he did destroy them; and according to his word he did lead them; and according to his word he did do all things for them; and there was not any thing done save it were by his word.

32 And after they had crossed the river Jordan he did make them mighty unto the driving out of the children of the land, yea, unto the scattering them to destruction.

33 And now, do ye suppose that the children of this land, who were in the land of promise, who were driven out by our fathers, do ye suppose that they were righteous? Behold, I say unto you, Nay.

34 Do ye suppose that our fathers would have been more choice than they if they had been righteous? I say unto you, Nay.

35 Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God. But behold, this people had rejected every word of God, and they were ripe in iniquity; and the fulness of the wrath of God was upon them; and the Lord did curse the land against them, and bless it unto our fathers; yea, he did curse it against them unto their destruction, and he did bless it unto our fathers unto their obtaining power over it.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 113**

7 Questions by Elias Higbee: What is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52d chapter, 1st verse, which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion—and what people had Isaiah reference to?

8 He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost.

9 What are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; 2d verse?

10 We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 103**

16 Therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel.

17 For ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm.

18 And as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be.

19 Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers: Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence.

20 But I say unto you: Mine angels shall go up before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land.

21 Verily, verily I say unto you, that my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., is the man to whom I likened the servant to whom the Lord of the vineyard spake in the parable which I have given unto you.

22 Therefore let my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., say unto the strength of my house, my young men and the middle aged—Gather yourselves together unto the land of Zion

**Literal, Physical, Inheritance and Nation:** When Zedekiah begged the Lord to act “according to all his wondrous works,” he invoked the memory of the outstretched arm while clinging to the sins that had always provoked that arm to strike, and Jeremiah answered with covenant precision: the same hand that once shattered Egypt would now turn Judah’s own weapons inward, for the Lord does not bare His arm selectively but consistently, either to scatter a nation ripened in idolatry or to gather a people refined by repentance (Jeremiah 21:2–5; Deuteronomy 4:24–27). From Moses to Jeremiah to Lehi, the pattern is fixed—when Israel corrupts itself, the arm of the Lord is revealed in destruction and scattering, and when a remnant seeks Him with their whole heart, that same arm is revealed in deliverance and nation-building, for the Lord is God and there is none else beside Him, and history bends not around sentiment but around covenant obedience (Deuteronomy 4:29–35; 1 Nephi 17:26–35). Judah wanted the miracles without the repentance, but the Lord answers such prayers by reminding His people that *He Himself becomes their adversary* when they demand salvation while defending the very idols that necessitate judgment (Jeremiah 21:5).

Yet the covenant does not end in scattering, for the Lord swore long before Babylon that tribulation in the latter days would be the crucible through which repentance would again summon His arm, not in fury only but in gathering power seen openly among the nations (Deuteronomy 4:30–31; 1 Nephi 22:6–12). This final making bare of the arm would eclipse even the Exodus, so marvelous that it would no longer be said, “The Lord liveth that brought Israel out of Egypt,” but that He brought them again from all lands to the lands of their inheritance, led by Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith, Jr., and culminating in the redemption of Zion and the building of the New Jerusalem (1 Nephi 22:11–12; Doctrine and Covenants 103:16–22). As Moses both destroyed Egypt and gathered Israel, so the Lord in the last days both judges the nations and forms a covenant people, and this dual work proceeds by the same arm, made bare in the eyes of all flesh, leaving no refuge in neutrality or delay (Doctrine and Covenants 133:2–3).

But the order of deliverance cannot be inverted, for gathering always requires the reversal of forgetfulness, sloth, and priestcraft that first brought scattering, and the promise to “find Him” is conditioned upon seeking with all the heart and all the soul (Deuteronomy 4:29). Zion cannot put on her strength while clinging to the bands of her neck (i.e. being okay with or even loving their “scattered condition amongst the Gentiles” nationless), for priesthood power lost through pride and unrighteous dominion is restored only through repentance, revelation, consecration, and labor for Zion rather than gain for self (Doctrine and Covenants 113:7–10; Mosiah 27:5). Like Gideon, the saints must tear down false gods before expecting divine deliverance, for the Lord has sworn that when His people cast off idolatry, reject priestcraft, and come together in fear to covenant to build Zion, He will again speak, lead, and redeem with a stretched-out arm, and this time the gathering will not be temporary, nor the inheritance lost again (Judges 6:25–26; Doctrine and Covenants 103:18–20).

### **Jeremiah 21 (cont.)**

6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.

7 And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

8 ¶ And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth [OR surrenders] to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

10 For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

## 1 Nephi 17

40 And he loveth those who will have him to be their God. Behold, he loved our fathers, and he covenanted with them, yea, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he remembered the covenants which he had made; wherefore, he did bring them out of the land of Egypt.

41 And he did straiten them in the wilderness with his rod; for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straitened them because of their iniquity. He sent fiery flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished.

## Elder L. Tom Perry

"The people of Alma were delivered from the hands of the Lamanites and safely made their way back to be united with the people of Zarahemla.

What was the difference between the people of Alma and the people of King Limhi? Obviously, there were several differences: the people of Alma were peaceful and more righteous; they had already been baptized and entered into a covenant with the Lord; they humbled themselves before the Lord *even before their tribulations started*. All these differences made it appropriate and fair that the Lord would deliver them quickly in a miraculous way from the hand which kept them in bondage. These scriptures teach us of the Lord's power of deliverance." (*The Power of Deliverance, Apr. 2012 General Conference*)

## Mosiah 21

1 And it came to pass that Limhi and his people returned to the city of Nephi, and began to dwell in the land again in peace.

2 And it came to pass that after many days the Lamanites began again to be stirred up in anger against the Nephites, and they began to come into the borders of the land round about.

3 Now they durst not slay them, because of the oath which their king had made unto Limhi; but they would smite them on their cheeks, and exercise authority over them; and began to put heavy burdens upon their backs, and drive them as they would a dumb ass—

4 Yea, all this was done that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.

5 And now the afflictions of the Nephites were great, and there was no way that they could deliver themselves out of their hands, for the Lamanites had surrounded them on every side.

6 And it came to pass that the people began to murmur with the king because of their afflictions; and they began to be desirous to go against them to battle. And they did afflict the king sorely with their complaints; therefore he granted unto them that they should do according to their desires.

7 And they gathered themselves together again, and put on their armor, and went forth against the Lamanites to drive them out of their land.

8 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did beat them, and drove them back, and slew many of them.

9 And now there was a great mourning and lamentation among the people of Limhi, the widow mourning for her husband, the son and the daughter mourning for their father, and the brothers for their brethren.

10 Now there were a great many widows in the land, and they did cry mightily from day to day, for a great fear of the Lamanites had come upon them.

11 And it came to pass that their continual cries did stir up the remainder of the people of Limhi to anger against the Lamanites; and they went again to battle, but they were driven back again, suffering much loss.

12 Yea, they went again even the third time, and suffered in the like manner; and those that were not slain returned again to the city of Nephi.

13 And they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage, submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and burdened, according to the desires of their enemies.

14 And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions.

15 And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities

### **Doctrine and Covenants 101**

1 Verily I say unto you, concerning your brethren who have been afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance—

2 I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions;

3 Yet I will own them, and they shall be mine in that day when I shall come to make up my jewels.

4 Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son.

5 For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.

6 Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.

7 They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

8 In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.

### **Mosiah 23**

21 Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.

22 Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day.

Yea, and thus it was with this people.

23 For behold, I will show unto you that they were brought into bondage, and none could deliver them but the Lord their God, yea, even the God of Abraham and Isaac and of Jacob.

24 And it came to pass that he did deliver them, and he did show forth his mighty power unto them, and great were their rejoicings.

25 For behold, it came to pass that while they were in the land of Helam, yea, in the city of Helam, while tilling the land round about, behold an army of the Lamanites was in the borders of the land.

26 Now it came to pass that the brethren of Alma fled from their fields, and gathered themselves together in the city of Helam; and they were much frightened because of the appearance of the Lamanites.

27 But Alma went forth and stood among them, and exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them.

28 Therefore they hushed their fears, and began to cry unto the Lord that he would soften the hearts of the Lamanites, that they would spare them, and their wives, and their children.

29 And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the hearts of the Lamanites. And Alma and his brethren went forth and delivered themselves up into their hands; and the Lamanites took possession of the land of Helam.

#### **Mosiah 24**

8 And now it came to pass that Amulon began to exercise authority over Alma and his brethren, and began to persecute him, and cause that his children should persecute their children.

9 For Amulon knew Alma, that he had been one of the king's priests, and that it was he that believed the words of Abinadi and was driven out before the king, and therefore he was wroth with him; for he was subject to king Laman, yet he exercised authority over them, and put tasks upon them, and put task-masters over them.

10 And it came to pass that so great were their afflictions that they began to cry mightily to God.

11 And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

12 And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

13 And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.

14 And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.

15 And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease,

and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.

16 And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 58**

26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

27 Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

28 For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

29 But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned.

30 Who am I that made man, saith the Lord, that will hold him guiltless that obeys not my commandments?

31 Who am I, saith the Lord, that have promised and have not fulfilled?

32 I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing.

33 Then they say in their hearts: This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But wo unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above.

**Seek Him Early and Humbly:** When the Lord set before Jerusalem the way of life and the way of death, He exposed the scandal of unbelief: salvation required surrender, and because the way was simple, many refused it and chose slaughter instead, mistaking resistance for faith and pride for courage (Jeremiah 21:8–10; 1 Nephi 17:40–41). Jeremiah’s command to fall to Babylon was no betrayal but mercy, just as Alma’s counsel to yield to bondage preserved every soul among his people, while Limhi’s refusal to submit led to repeated wars, widows without number, and a heaven slow to hear their cries (Mosiah 21:8–15; Mosiah 23:21–24). The Lord has always required His people to relinquish false strength before receiving real deliverance, and those who reject the ease of obedience inevitably inherit the agony of resistance, for the rod that heals is refused until the wound festers beyond measure (1 Nephi 17:41).

The difference was not circumstance but timing, for repentance delayed multiplies suffering without increasing sanctification, and heaven is never unjust when it allows pain to teach what humility would have spared (Doctrine and Covenants 101:2–8). Alma’s people were preserved without the loss of a single life because they submitted early and completely, while Limhi’s people suffered long because they would not yield until crushed, and even then their deliverance came slowly, measured out according to the depth of their former iniquity (Mosiah 24:13–16; Mosiah 21:15). The Lord has sworn that He is slow to hear those who esteemed His counsel lightly in days of peace, not because He is cruel, but because chastening is the last mercy left to a people who would not learn by faith (Doctrine and Covenants 101:7–8; Mosiah 23:22).

This is the warning to a latter-day people half in and half out, feasting in Babylon while claiming Zion in word only: when the whirlwind comes, many will cry that the promises have failed, not realizing that the failure was theirs long before the judgment arrived (Doctrine and Covenants 58:32–33). The Lord delivers early seekers quickly and late seekers painfully, yet always justly, for He will not hold guiltless those who obey not His commandments nor reward slothfulness masquerading as patience (Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–31). Woe unto those who refuse the simple path of repentance and surrender and then accuse God when suffering follows, for their expectations were forged beneath and not from above, and the way of life they despised still stands open only to those willing to walk it when first it is offered (Jeremiah 21:8; Mosiah 24:16).

### **Joseph Smith Jr.**

#### Zion to Suffer Affliction

I cannot learn from any communication by the Spirit to me, that Zion has forfeited her claim to a celestial crown, notwithstanding the Lord has caused her to be thus afflicted, except it may be some individuals, who have walked in disobedience, and forsaken the new covenant; all such will be made manifest by their works in due time. I have always expected that Zion would suffer some affliction, from what I could learn from the commandments which have been given. But I would remind you of a certain clause in one which says, that after much tribulation cometh the blessing. By this, and also others, and also one received of late, I know that Zion, in the due time of the Lord, will be redeemed; but how many will be the days of her purification, tribulation, and affliction, the Lord has kept hid from my eyes; and when I inquire concerning this subject, the voice of the Lord is: Be still, and know that I am God; all those who suffer for my name shall reign with me, and he that layeth down his life for my sake shall find it again.

#### The Righteous Suffer with the Guilty

When I contemplate upon all things that have been manifested, I am aware that I ought not to murmur, and do not murmur, only in this, that those who are innocent are compelled to suffer for the iniquities of the guilty; and I cannot account for this, only on this wise, that the saying of the Savior has not been strictly observed: “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; or if thy right arm offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.” Now the fact is, if any of the members of our body is disordered, the rest of our body will be affected with it, and then all are brought into bondage together; and yet, notwithstanding all this, it is with difficulty that I can restrain my feelings when I know that you, my brethren, with whom I have had so many happy hours—sitting, as it were, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and also, having the witness which I feel, and ever have felt, of the purity of your motives—are cast out, and are as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, exposed to hunger, cold, nakedness, peril, sword—I say when I contemplate this, it is with difficulty that I can keep from complaining and murmuring against this dispensation; but I am sensible that this is not right, and may God grant that notwithstanding your great afflictions and sufferings, there may not anything separate us from the love of Christ.

Brethren, when we learn your sufferings, it awakens every sympathy of our hearts; it weighs us down; we cannot refrain from tears, yet, we are not able to realize, only in part, your sufferings: and I often hear the brethren saying, they wish they were with you, that they might bear a part of your sufferings; and I myself should have been with you, had not God prevented it in the order of His providence, that the yoke of affliction might be less grievous upon you, God having forewarned me, concerning these things, for your sake; and also, Elder Cowdery could not lighten your afflictions by tarrying longer with you, for his presence would have so much the more enraged your enemies; therefore God hath dealt mercifully with us. O brethren, let us be thankful that it is as well with us as it is, and we are yet alive and peradventure, God hath laid up in store great good for us in this generation, and may grant that we may yet glorify His name. *(TPJS, p.34-35)*

Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens. *(TPJS, p.323)*

### **Doctrine and Covenants 105**

6 And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be [meaning if they give me no other choice], by the things which they suffer."

**If Thy Left Eye Offend Thee, Cast it Out, or Suffer:** Zion suffers not because the Lord delights in affliction, but because sin is harbored rather than cast out, and the sin that refuses to die always matures into priestcraft, forcing the righteous to suffer alongside the guilty until the body is healed by excision or broken by chastening (Doctrine and Covenants 105:6). Joseph Smith discerned this law with anguish, acknowledging that innocents are “compelled to suffer for the iniquities of the guilty” because the offending member is not removed, and when one part is diseased the whole body is brought into bondage together (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 34–35; Matthew 18:8–9). This truth is written plainly in Alma’s bondage, where Amulon—the very head of Noah’s priestcraft—became the rod in the Lord’s hand, so that those who once tolerated priestcraft in peace were later humbled under its lash, learning too late that reverence for corrupt authority always ripens into captivity (Mosiah 23:30–35; Mosiah 24:8–11).

The escape from this pattern has never been obscure, only costly, for seeking the Lord early requires obedience severe enough to sever cherished sins, favored friends/family/leaders, and profitable arrangements that offend God, exactly as the Savior commanded when He said to pluck out the eye and cut off the arm rather than lose the whole body (Matthew 18:8–9). Joseph Smith lamented that Zion’s afflictions were prolonged because this law was not strictly observed, even while he testified that Zion had not forfeited her celestial crown and would surely be redeemed after much tribulation, though the days of her purification were known only to God (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 34–35). Alma’s people submitted sooner than Limhi’s, yet even they suffered because repentance followed Abinadi’s blood rather than preceding it, and the early Saints likewise endured expulsions and loss because contention, and covenant-breaking were not cut off quickly enough to spare the innocent (Mosiah 24:13–16;

Doctrine and Covenants 101:2–8) and we today are kept at bay because we are riddled in priestcraft; we are making the choice today to listen to Abinadi or fall in with the priestcraft ranks of Amulon and our pain tomorrow will be directly proportional to that choice.

However the silver lining is that final and terrible mercy is suffering become teacher- when no other will be received, for the Lord has declared that His people “must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer” (Doctrine and Covenants 105:6). Joseph Smith therefore spoke without illusion that “men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens,” not because suffering redeems, but because it finally breaks the pride that repentance would not surrender (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 323). How long Zion tarries, how many tears precede redemption, and how long the New Jerusalem waits upon its builders depends not on heaven’s reluctance but on our refusal to repent fully, for the Lord stands ready, the covenant is intact, and only our unwillingness to cast out priestcraft, tear down the idols as Gideon and make the choice to obey early prolongs the night before deliverance (Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–33; Doctrine and Covenants 103:15–20).

### **Jeremiah 21 (cont.)**

11 ¶ And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

12 O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

13 Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

### **Footnote (a) who**

2 Nephi 28

21 And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

22 And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.

23 Yea, they are grasped with death, and hell; and death, and hell, and the devil, and all that have been seized therewith must stand before the throne of God, and be judged according to their works, from whence they must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment.

24 Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

25 Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well!

### **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*

### **Ezra Taft Benson**

Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake cannot happen here. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, *or they do not believe them*. Those who smugly think these calamities will not happen, that they somehow will be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion.

The Lord has warned and forewarned us against a day of great tribulation and given us counsel, through His servants, on how we can be prepared for these difficult times. *Have we heeded His counsel?* (*Prepare for the Days of Tribulation, 1980*)

### **Orson Pratt**

It seems that this is a dispensation peculiar in its nature, differing from former dispensations. It is a dispensation of mercy and of judgment—of mercy to those who receive [p. 329b] the message of mercy, but of judgment to those who reject that message. In other words it is a dispensation in which the Gospel has been revealed from heaven, the servants of God called to labor in the vineyard for the last time, (Jacob 5:62 D&C 43:28-29) and in which the Lord intends to pour out great and terrible judgments upon the nations of the wicked (D&C 109:45) after they have been warned by the sound of the everlasting Gospel. (D&C 84:114) We are told in the revelation I have just read, that vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth; that it is a day of wrath, burning, desolation, weeping, mourning and lamentation, and that as a whirlwind these things shall come upon the inhabitants of all the earth. (D&C 112:24)

Where shall these great and severe judgments begin? Upon what people does the Lord intend to commence this great work of vengeance? Upon the people who profess to know his name and still blaspheme it in the midst of his house. (1 Pet. 4:17 D&C 112:25-26) They are the ones

designated for some of the most terrible judgments of the latter days. This should be a warning to the Latter-day Saints; and not only those who are parents, but those who are children should diligently consider whether they are numbered among those who are mentioned in the 10th [p. 330a] paragraph, which I have read. Upon my house, saith the Lord, shall it begin, first upon those among you who have professed my name and have not known me (Matt. 7:33) and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house. (*JD 15:329*)

### **3 Nephi 21**

21 And I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

**Rue the Day:** When the Lord cried to the house of David to “execute judgment in the morning,” He exposed the fatal lie of priestcraft security, for secret combinations always preach peace to preserve power, whispering “Who shall come down against us?” while fire already kindles at the foundation (Jeremiah 21:11–13). Thus it was in Jeremiah’s day, when false priests soothed the city with assurances of safety as Babylon sharpened its sword, and thus it is again when watchmen cry repentance while institutional guardians soothe with “All is well in Zion,” a lullaby Nephi named a cheat of souls and a careful descent into hell (2 Nephi 28:21–25). Priestcraft cannot warn of judgment without indicting itself, so it must deny the storm, ridicule the prophets, and promise immunity, even as the Lord declares Himself against the valley that trusts its walls, wealth, and reputation more than covenant obedience (Jeremiah 21:13).

The Lord has sworn that this final whirlwind will not begin among the heathen but in His own house, upon those who profess His name yet do not know Him, and the revelation is explicit that vengeance, burning, desolation, and lamentation shall commence there before going forth to all the earth (Doctrine and Covenants 112:23–26). Elder Ezra Taft Benson warned that Saints who imagine war, famine, and calamity cannot reach them are deceived and will rue the day they trusted complacency over revelation, for the Lord has forewarned and the only question is whether His counsel has been heeded (Ezra Taft Benson, “Prepare for the Days of Tribulation,” April 1980 General Conference), not if it will come to pass. Orson Pratt testified that this dispensation is one of mercy and judgment, and that the most terrible judgments of the latter days are designated first for those who blaspheme God in the midst of His house, fulfilling the decree that judgment must begin at the house of God (Journal of Discourses, Orson Pratt, vol. 15, p. 329–330; Doctrine and Covenants 112:24–26).

Therefore the abomination of desolation yet to come will fall with unprecedented severity upon the covenant people, including the latter-day self-proclaimed “Zion” that boasts of strength while neglecting justice, and the Lord Himself has declared that the vengeance executed will be “such as they have not heard,” equal to that poured out upon the heathen (3 Nephi 21:21). Those who endure that suffering will not be victims of chance or cruelty but witnesses against themselves, for the warnings were plain, the calls to repent early were clear, and the lie of institutional invulnerability was chosen over the voice of the Lord (Jeremiah 21:12; Doctrine and Covenants

58:32–33). Woe, then, unto those who cried peace to protect priestcraft and gain, for the fire they denied will burn unquenched, and the whirlwind they mocked will testify that God is not mocked and that covenant judgment, once delayed by mercy, never fails to arrive (2 Nephi 28:24–25; Doctrine and Covenants 112:24).

### **Jeremiah 21 (fin)**

14 But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

#### **(24-4) Jeremiah 21; 22:1–9. Will the Lord Do What He Has Said?**

King Zedekiah sent Pashur to inquire of the Lord through Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem. Jeremiah's response had three parts: (1) The answer to the king's hope that the Lord would intervene to save Jerusalem from the Chaldeans (see Jeremiah 21:4–7) was clear: there was no hope. (2) Counsel on how the people and the royal family could preserve their lives by surrendering to the Chaldeans rather than fighting them (see vv. 8–10). (3) A prophecy concerning the house of David (see 21:11–14; 22:1–9), to which Jeremiah gave an alternative: If the king and his people would turn back to righteousness, the throne of David would be preserved (see Jeremiah 22:4), but if not, it would “become a desolation” (Jeremiah 22:v. 5).

Gilead symbolized the richest soil Israel knew, and Lebanon the highest mountain and the finest trees (Jeremiah 22: v. 6). But the Lord sent His destroyers, and the finest lands were desolated. The reason is given in verse 9.

*(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 24: The Babylonian Captivity)*

**His Word Is Sure, His Promises Secure:** The Lord closes His warning with a question answered by fire: “I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings,” not according to intentions, explanations, or professions, and the forest He kindles will devour everything round about because covenant violation always produces covenant consequence (Jeremiah 21:14). Zedekiah hoped the Lord would intervene despite sustained rebellion, yet Jeremiah answered without ambiguity that there was no hope unless repentance preceded rescue, for God does not revoke His word to preserve our comfort, and the throne of David itself would become a desolation if righteousness were not restored (Jeremiah 21:4–14; Jeremiah 22:4–5). This is the heart of the spirit of prophecy—whether we actually believe the Lord will do what He has said He will do—or whether we secretly assume He will soften, delay, reinterpret, or excuse His own declarations, an assumption history repeatedly proves false when the richest soil becomes wasteland and the finest trees are reduced to ash because the covenant was broken (Jeremiah 22:6–9; Old Testament Student Manual, Religion 302, Chapter 24).

Our behavior answers the question of “our heart” that our lips avoid (or worse, defend), for if we truly believed the Lord's words were immovable, our lives would reflect urgency rather than

ease, repentance rather than rationalization, and obedience rather than delay (Doctrine and Covenants 58:32–33). Those who preach peace in the face of explicit warning demonstrate not faith but unbelief, trusting institutional stability, prosperity, or numbers to override revelation, while the remnant order their lives as if the word of the Lord is already unfolding before their eyes (2 Nephi 28:21–25; Doctrine and Covenants 112:23–26). Scripture never portrays disbelief as atheism alone but as the presumption that God will not actually do what He said, a presumption shattered every time judgment begins exactly where He said it would—at His own house, among those who professed His name but did not know Him (Doctrine and Covenants 112:25–26).

My testimony, and the testimony of all holy prophets, is that the Lord surely will do what He has spoken, for heaven and earth may pass away, but His word shall not pass away until all is fulfilled (Matthew 24:35). The only variables left to us are not outcomes but costs: how much suffering we choose to endure by delaying repentance, and which company we will keep when the fire passes through the forest—whether with the masses who trusted reassuring lies or with the few who feared the Lord and acted accordingly (Jeremiah 21:8–10; 3 Nephi 21:21). The broad road fills itself without effort, but the remnant is formed by belief made visible through obedience, and when the whirlwind has finished its work, it will be unmistakably clear who believed God enough to take Him at His word (Doctrine and Covenants 105:6; 2 Nephi 28:23–25). What great company, though few in numbers, shall those who fear the Lord keep— for His reward cometh with him, and he cometh to them, for they are his jewels.

### **His Word Is Sure, His Promises Secure**

His word does not wobble with nations or years;  
It stands when the proud dismiss warnings as fears.  
Though forests ignite and false comforts decay,  
What He has spoken will finish its way.

We gamble with mercy, delaying the knife  
That severs our idols from covenant life;  
Yet fire remembers what mouths choose to doubt,  
And truth keeps its course till the lie is burned out.

Choose early the narrow, surrender and live,  
For grace is not lessened by what you must give.  
The remnant walks on while the multitudes fall—  
His word is still sure; it will answer us all.