

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

This section of prophecy, extending to the end of the eighth verse of the next chapter, is addressed to the king of Judah and his people. It enjoins on them the practice of justice and equity, as they would hope to prosper, Jeremiah 22:14; but threatens them, in case of disobedience, with utter destruction, Jeremiah 22:5-9. The captivity of Shallum, the son of Josiah, is declared to be irreversible, Jeremiah 22:10-12; and the miserable and unlamented end of Jeconiah, contemptuously called Coniah, is foretold, Jeremiah 22:13-19. His family is threatened with the like captivity, and his seed declared to be for ever excluded from the throne, Jeremiah 22:20-30.

Verse 1

Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word - This is supposed by Dahler to have been published in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah.

Verse 2

O king of Judah - thou, and thy servants - His ministers are here addressed, as chiefly governing the nation; and who had counselled Zedekiah to rebel.

Verse 6

Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon - Perhaps in allusion, says Dahler, to the oaks of Gilead, and the cedars of Mount Lebanon, of which the palace was constructed. Lebanon was the highest mountain in Israel, and Gilead the richest and most fertile part of the country; and were, therefore, proper emblems of the reigning family. Though thou art the richest and most powerful, I, who raised thee up, can bring thee down and make thee a wilderness.

Verse 7

They shall cut down thy choice cedars - The destruction of the country is expressed under the symbol of the destruction of a fine forest; a multitude of fellers come against it, each with his axe; and, there being no resistance, every tree is soon felled to the earth. "These destroyers," God says, "I have prepared, I have sanctified - consecrated, to this work. They have their commission from me."

Verse 8

Many nations shall pass - These words seem borrowed from Deuteronomy 29:22, etc.

Verse 10

Weep ye not for the dead - Josiah, dead in consequence of the wound he had received at Megiddo, in a battle with Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt; but he died in peace with God.

But weep sore for him that goeth away - Namely, Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, called below Shallum, whom Pharaoh-necho had carried captive into Egypt from which it was prophesied he should never return, 2 Kings 23:30-34. He was called Shallum before he ascended the throne, and Jehoahaz afterwards; so his brother Eliakim changed his name to Jehoiakim, and Mattaniah to Zedekiah.

Verse 13

Wo unto him that buildeth his house - These evils, charged against Jehoiakim, are nowhere else circumstantially related. We learn from 2 Kings 23:35-37, that he taxed his subjects heavily, to give to Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt: "He exacted the silver and gold of the people of the land, and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." The mode of taxation is here intimated; he took the wages of the hirelings, and caused the people to work without wages in his own buildings, etc.

Verse 15

Shalt thou reign, etc - Dost thou think thou art a great king, because thou dwellest in a splendid palace?

Verse 18

They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! - These words were no doubt the burden of some funeral dirge. Alas! a brother, who was our lord or governor, is gone. Alas, our sister! his Queen, who has lost her glory in losing her husband. "x"x"x" (hodah) is feminine, and must refer to the glory of the queen.

The mournings in the east, and lamentations for the dead, are loud, vehement, and distressing. For a child or a parent grief is expressed in a variety of impassioned sentences, each ending with a burden like that in the text,

â€œAh my child!â€• â€œAh my mother!â€• as the prophet in this place: x"x"x™ x"x—x™ (hoi achi), â€œAh my brother!â€• x"x"x™ x"x—x"xª (hoi achoth), â€œAh sister!â€• x"x"x™ x"x"x"xŸ (hoi adon), â€œAh lord!â€• x"x"x™ x"x"x" (hoi hodah) â€œAh the glory.â€• Mr. Ward, in his Manners and Customs of the Hindoos, gives two examples of lamentation; one of a mother for the death of her son, one of a daughter for her departed mother. â€œWhen a woman,â€• says he, â€œis overwhelmed with grief for the death of her child, she utters her grief in some such language as the following: -

Ah, my Hureedas, where is he gone? - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
My golden image, Hureedas, who has taken? - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
I nourished and reared him, where is he gone? - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Take me with thee. - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
He played round me like a golden top. - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Like his face I never saw one. - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
The infant continually cried, Ma Ma! - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Ah my child, crying, Ma! come into my lap. - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Who shall now drink milk? - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Who shall now stay in my lap? - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~
Our support is gone! - â€¹Ah my child, my child!â€~

â€œThe lamentations for a mother are in some such strains as these: -
Mother! where is she gone? - â€¹Ah my mother, my mother!â€~
You are gone, but what have you left for me? - â€¹Ah my mother, my mother!â€~
Whom shall I now call mother, mother? - â€¹Ah my mother, my mother!â€~
Where shall I find such a mother? - â€¹Ah my mother, my mother!â€~â€•

From the above we may conclude that the funeral lamentations, to which the prophet refers, generally ended in this way, in each of the verses or interrogatories.

There is another intimation of this ancient and universal custom in 1 Kings 13:30, where the old prophet, who had deceived the man of God, and who was afterwards slain by a lion, is represented as mourning over him, and saying, x"x"x™ x"x—x™ (hoi achi), â€œAlas, my brother!â€• this being the burden of the lamentation which he had used on this occasion. Similar instances may be seen in other places, Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 6:11; Joel 1:15; and particularly Amos 5:16, Amos 5:17, and Revelation 18:10-19.

Verse 19

With the burial of an ass - Cast out, and left unburied, or buried without any funeral solemnities, and without such lamentations as the above.

Verse 20

Go up to Lebanon - Probably Anti-Libanus, which, together with Bashan and Abarim, which we here translate passages, were on the way by which the captives should be led out of their own country.

Verse 21

I spake unto thee in thy prosperity - In all states and circumstances I warned thee by my prophets; and thou wilt only be ashamed of thy conduct when thou shalt be stripped of all thy excellencies, and reduced to poverty and disgrace, Jeremiah 22:22.

Verse 22

The wind shall eat up all thy pastors - A blast from Godâ€™s mouth shall carry off thy kings, princes, prophets, and priests.

Verse 23

How gracious shalt thou be - A strong irony.

Verse 24

Though Coniah - Called Jeconiah, probably on ascending the throne. See on Jeremiah 22:10 (note).

The signet upon my right hand - The most precious seal, ring, or armlet. Though dearer to me than the most splendid gem to its possessor.

Verse 26

I will cast thee out, and thy mother - See all this fulfilled, 2 Kings 24:12, 2 Kings 24:13. All were carried by Nebuchadnezzar into captivity together.

Verse 28

Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? - These are probably the exclamations of the people, when they heard those solemn denunciations against their king and their country.

Verse 29

O earth - These are the words of the prophet in reply: O land! unhappy land! desolated land! Hear the judgment of the Lord!

Verse 30

Write ye this man childless - Though he had seven sons, 1 Chronicles 3:17, yet having no successor, he is to be entered on the genealogical tables as one without children for none of his posterity ever sat on the throne of David.