***Jeremiah 6:1-15 “O you children of Benjamin, Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, And set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; For disaster appears out of the north, And great destruction. 2I have likened the daughter of Zion
To a lovely and delicate woman. 3The shepherds with their flocks shall come to her. They shall pitch their tents against her all around. Each one shall pasture in his own place.” 4“Prepare war against her; Arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe to us, for the day goes away,
For the shadows of the evening are lengthening. 5Arise, and let us go by night, And let us destroy her palaces.” 6For thus has the Lord of hosts said: “Cut down trees, And build a mound against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished. She is full of oppression in her midst. 7As a fountain wells up with water, So she wells up with her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Before Me continually are grief and wounds. 8Be instructed, O Jerusalem, Lest My soul depart from you; Lest I make you desolate, A land not inhabited.” 9Thus says the Lord of hosts: “They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel;
As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches.” 10To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it. 11Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. “I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days. 12And their houses shall be turned over to others, Fields and wives together; For I will stretch out My hand Against the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord. 13“Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. 14They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’
When there is no peace. 15Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the Lord.***

We’re back with Jeremiah tonight. Again, we are hearing a prophecy of the coming destruction by Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. The people continue to ignore the warnings, instead embracing their wickedness and covetousness. They continue to listen to the false prophets saying – Peace – rather than Jeremiah saying – Repent. Jeremiah 6 would have been taking place around 630 BC, still 25 years before Babylon conquered Jerusalem the first time and 40 years before it’s final destruction. To put this in context, the prophet Daniel has not been born yet. Yet Jeremiah foretells so much of what we learned in the Book of Daniel.

Verse 1*“O you children of Benjamin, Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, And set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; For disaster appears out of the north, And great destruction.* Many of the people of Jerusalem belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, which Joshua 18:28 tells us was part of their inheritance. Jeremiah was part of the tribe of Benjamin and, being a teacher of Israel, refers to the people as children. He instructs them to flee the city. Tekoa is a city 12 miles away from Jerusalem. Flee there. Beth-Haccerem was a village built on the mountains between Jerusalem and Tekoa. This was a prime place for signal fires to be used. We remember that signal fires were used to communicate long distances. Though resistance of the Chaldeans is pointless, a signal fire lets the people know of the approaching enemy. Jeremiah confirms that the enemy will come from the north and the destruction will be great. Of course, we know that is exactly the way the army of Nebuchadnezzar came 25 years later.

Verse 2 & 3 *I have likened the daughter of Zion To a lovely and delicate woman. 3The shepherds with their flocks shall come to her. They shall pitch their tents against her all around. Each one shall pasture in his own place.”* The daughter of Zion has been understood as meaning a woman, described here as a delicate woman. The generals of the coming army will overcome Jerusalem as easily as a brute may overcome a delicate woman, like leading soldiers as though flocks through a wide open pasture. Shepherds will later find open and fine pasture, where once a great city stood with fortifications and housing all around. It will be desolate and they will pitch their tents there.

Verse 4-5 *Prepare war against her; Arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe to us, for the day goes away, For the shadows of the evening are lengthening. 5Arise, and let us go by night, And let us destroy her palaces.”* Jeremiah now speaks God’s commission to the Chaldeans plainly - Prepare war against her. Arise and let us go up at noon, meaning to waste no time, but go up quickly. Arise, let us go up by night, meaning do not wait for the coming next day, but do God’s bidding immediately. Let us destroy her palaces, meaning to take captive and master the wealth found in them. The Chaldeans are eager to take control of the riches found in every palace and nobleman’s house.

Verse 6-7 *For thus has the Lord of hosts said: “Cut down trees, And build a mound against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished. She is full of oppression in her midst. 7As a fountain wells up with water, So she wells up with her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Before Me continually are grief and wounds.* God makes it clear that He is using the Chaldeans as an instrument to punish for sin. Use the trees to build a siege mound, and dig the trench about the city. The city is to be punished, which in the original Hebrew means visited. The city will be visited by the punishers that God has ordained because of the oppression in her midst. Her wickedness wells up in her like a bubbling fountain or artesian spring. Wickedness and violence have become her natural state. God hears the complaints continually as they rise before him from those that have been wronged.

Verse 8 *Be instructed, O Jerusalem, Lest My soul depart from you; Lest I make you desolate, A land not inhabited.”* Be instructed or take warning, O Jerusalem. The continued wickedness is alienating God and He may soon cast the city off altogether.
Verse 9 *Thus says the Lord of hosts: “They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel; As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches.”* The conquerors will utterly devastate Israel, gathering all the best and brightest and taking them captive to Babylon. The people of Judah had harbored many Israelites that had fled the Assyrians. Now, these too will be led away to captivity in Babylon. The captivity will be complete. **Put your hand back into the branches.** We know that this happened. The Babylonians came in 597 BC and returned again to finish the job of destruction in 586 BC, because Zedekiah revolted against their rule.

Verse 10 *To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.* Jeremiah now wonders who will hear him and take heed of the warnings. An uncircumcised ear is a figure of speech meaning that they refuse to hear and have a rebellious heart. Jeremiah is wondering who will believe his words or even give him a fair hearing. They will not heed nor hearken to his words. The word of God has become a reproach to the people. They have no delight in it, which carries the idea of that they are ready to openly resist and threaten anyone that speaks reproof or correction to them. This sounds like today.

Verse 11 – 12 *Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. “I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days. 12And their houses shall be turned over to others, Fields and wives together; For I will stretch out My hand Against the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord.* I am full of the wrath of the Lord. Jeremiah was ready to pour out the whole truth of God’s coming judgement, unlike the prophets that kept crying peace, peace. He is willing to endure the people that have no delight in him in hopes that they will repent and return to God. He has labored to hold in the whole prophecy, not wanting to pour it out all at once, but now he is weary of that. I will pour it out. This seems to be God commanding Jeremiah to pour it all out, so all will hear. The people must know the fullness of the coming judgement. The judgement will be on the streets where the children used to play, upon the children and the young men caught in casual conversation. Husbands and wives alike will fall prey to the enemy. The young full of days and the aged will fall prey. No one will escape the coming judgement. Their houses will become the possession of others.

Verses 13-15 *Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. 14They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace. 15Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the Lord.* Everyone will be punished because everyone is given to greed and covetousness. From prophet to priest, everyone dealt falsely. This has more to do with hypocrisy. They kept an outward form of piety and goodness, but inside they were dealing falsely and living a lie. To men they appeared good, but they were an abomination in God’s all seeing eye. They healed the hurt slightly, meaning like a wound that has barely healed over with skin. They give soft speeches when the people need reproof and correction that cuts deeply. Were they ashamed? Their hearts were hardened and they were past shame, as long as their greed and lusts were satisfied. They weren’t ashamed at all, neither could they blush. They gloried in their wickedness and were not humbled by conviction. Therefore, these prophets and priests will fall among those that fall. Their lies and deception led to others being destroyed. Now they will be destroyed as well.

And so we leave Jeremiah tonight as he pours out on the people what the other prophets were unwilling to say. He faces hatred, rejection, imprisonment, and even death. His words are not a delight to the people. Yet, God has His hand over Jeremiah until the end. And so it is today with all that speak God’s Truth in a world gone mad with greed and covetousness. God walks with us and, if God be for us, who can be against us.