***Jeremiah 10:14-25 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them. 15They are futile, a work of errors; In the time of their punishment they shall perish. 16The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The Lord of hosts is His name. 17Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress! 18For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will throw out at this time The inhabitants of the land, And will distress them, That they may find it so.” 19Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, “Truly this is an infirmity, And I must bear it.” 20My tent is plundered, And all my cords are broken; My children have gone from me, And they are no more. There is no one to pitch my tent anymore, Or set up my curtains. 21For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, And have not sought the Lord; Therefore they shall not prosper, And all their flocks shall be scattered. 22Behold, the noise of the report has come, And a great commotion out of the north country, To make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals. 23O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. 24O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing. 25Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, And on the families who do not call on Your name; For they have eaten up Jacob, Devoured him and consumed him, And made his dwelling place desolate.***

We’re continuing with Jeremiah tonight, as God warns the people of Judah of the coming destruction of their land. Jeremiah, in 605 BC, is speaking the word of the Lord. No one wants to hear it, yet we know it will all come to pass. In fact, 2 Chronicles 36:22 speaks of the word of the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, when the scripture describes King Cyrus ending the captivity and allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Scripture builds upon and supports scripture, as the Truth of Jesus is revealed from Genesis to Revelation. How blessed we are to have this Truth available to us. How wonderful to consume the word of God daily. Yet, many never read and many waste the gift of the Bible that’s been given. May we never waste our opportunities to consume the word of God.

Verse 14 *Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them.* Every man is brutish, dull-hearted, without knowledge. This is directed toward the metalsmiths. They are employed to take metal, craft it into an idol, and foolishly pronounce it to be a god. Then, they are foolish enough to fall down and worship the creation of their own hands. The maker of the image is put to shame, or confounded, by the image. The Hebrew used here has the idea of the idol having not ability to help. Of course, we know it neither hears, not sees, not breathes, no moves on it’s own. It’s a disgrace that the people are worshipping graven images. His image is a falsehood, a lie from this creator has cast a lie in his creation.

Verse 15 *They are futile, a work of errors; In the time of their punishment they shall perish.* They are futile. The idols bring no help to the worshipper. The very work of making the idols reveals the false beliefs and wrongheaded notions of man about the nature of God. Creation reveals the glory of God, but cannot capture the nature of God. In the time of punishment the idolators will die. This is part of the coming wrath of God. Idol and idol maker alike will be consumed.

Verse 16 *The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The Lord of hosts is His name.* God and the idols cannot be compared. The Portion of Jacob refers to God, the Creator of all things. God has chosen Jacob as His peculiar people. He has favored them above other nations. If they continued in His obedience, He promised to bless them, to shed His Grace and Favor upon them. Likewise, disobedience brought a promise of curse. Of course, Jeremiah is prophesying because the people have turned from God and disobeyed. Therefore, the curse of coming.

Verse 17-18 *Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress! 18For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will throw out at this time The inhabitants of the land, And will distress them, That they may find it so.* Jeremiah now appears to tell the people to gather their most valuable possessions and prepare to move. This move may be to flee the coming armies or to be carried into captivity. No place will be safe, though the people consider themselves secure in the walls of Jerusalem. In one action, God will remove the people. Babylon carried away the people and distressed them for 70 years – 605 BC to 536 BC. The people will come to understand that the words of the prophets had been true, but they realize this too late.

Verse 19-20 *Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, “Truly this is an infirmity, And I must bear it.” 20My tent is plundered, And all my cords are broken; My children have gone from me, And they are no more. There is no one to pitch my tent anymore,  
Or set up my curtains.* Jeremiah now laments – Woe is me. Again, he is seeing the coming overthrow and captivity as clearly as though it were currently happening. Plunder and desolation is the future. Jeremiah then reassures the people that, though this will be a grief, an infirmity, it will be bearable. Her affliction will be very great, but she has brought it upon herself by way of disobedience. God will be merciful though and deliver her from her affliction. My tents are plundered, meaning the houses of Jerusalem. My children, meaning the inhabitants of Judah, have gone into captivity. The children lead away will not return again. There is no one to pitch my tent anymore – in other words, those that worshipped idols and were lead away into captivity will have no hand in the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 70 years. The remnant that returns will be a faithful remnant that truly love God.

Verse 21 *For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, And have not sought the Lord; Therefore they shall not prosper, And all their flocks shall be scattered.* For the shepherds, the pastors, have become dull-hearted and brutish, just as the metalsmiths above. Jeremiah explains that the tents will be destroyed because the leaders, both civil and religious, have forgotten God and disobeyed their duty to Him. The leadership toward evil lead to the people following evil and the result is widespread ruin. They not only ruined themselves, but ruined their flocks, their followers, the people they are charged to care for, as well. The leaders did not seek God, did not seek peace with God, and did not direct their prayers and worship toward God. They have ignored His providence and failed His judgement. Therefore they shall not prosper – in anything. Safety will fail. Without God, there is no security, no matter how fortified the walls.

Verse 22 *Behold, the noise of the report has come, And a great commotion out of the north country, To make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals.* The noise of the report is the report of Babylon sweeping across the countryside and laying waste all the cities. They have swept is from the north. Their tactics, known through history, was to take the best and the brightest of the nations they conquered and bring them to Babylon to learn the ways of the Chaldeans. We witnessed this in Daniel. They left the cities desolate, a place for the jackals, foxes, and vipers to dwell.

Verse 23 *O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.* Jeremiah now turns his attention to God and speaks to the Almighty. The people have not heard, but God will. The way of a man is not in himself. God directs the pathways of men. It is by God’s Providence that we accomplish our purpose. This is true of person and nation alike. Wisdom of man fails. The wisdom of God never fails.

Verse 24 *O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.* None of us like chastisement or discipline. None of us look forward to being corrected when we’re wrong. Likewise, Jeremiah asks God to correct him, but to do so with perfect justice and judgement. Correct is perfect measure and perfect wisdom. Not in anger. Let the discipline be in love, to work good. Not to Jeremiah to nothing, but to build him up. Though our sin deserves utter destruction, Grace brings just correction so we are not utterly destroyed.

Verse 25 *Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, And on the families who do not call on Your name; For they have eaten up Jacob, Devoured him and consumed him, And made his dwelling place desolate.* Pour out Your justice on the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, who are not God’s people and don’t acknowledge God’s preeminence. Many scholars believe that this refers to Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and his refusal to acknowledge God. Of course, we remember that God humbled him and made him eat grass as the beasts of the fields. Other scholars believe that this is a prayer that found answer as the Medes and the Persians overran Babylon in 539 BC. We must remember that Jeremiah is not praying maliciously toward the Gentiles, but is highlighting that these people have hurt, devoured, Jacob, which God calls His people.

And so we leave Jeremiah again tonight. The Babylonians and Chaldeans are closing in on Jerusalem, but the people continue to trust in walls and idols, rather than turning and crying out to God for salvation. We see much of this in our own nation today. May we, as God’s faithful elect, trust in God and seek His deliverance, praying on behalf of our nation and world. God may yet stay His hand and mercifully deliver us from the destruction we have earned.