***Jeremiah 15:1-9 Then the Lord said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2And it shall be, if they say to you, ‘Where should we go?’ then you shall tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.” “And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,” says the Lord: “the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. 5“For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who will bemoan you? Or who will turn aside to ask how you are doing? 6You have forsaken Me,” says the Lord, “You have gone backward. Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am weary of relenting! 7And I will winnow them with a winnowing fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children; I will destroy My people, Since they do not return from their ways. 8Their widows will be increased to Me more than the sand of the seas; I will bring against them, Against the mother of the young men, A plunderer at noonday; I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them suddenly. 9 “She languishes who has borne seven; She has breathed her last; Her sun has gone down While it was yet day; She has been ashamed and confounded. And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword Before their enemies,” says the Lord.***

We’re back with Jeremiah tonight, as the Chaldeans and the Babylonians creep ever closer. Famine, sword, pestilence, and captivity are on the horizon, but the people will not hear it. They continue to sin and accept sin. They live as though they’ll live forever, even as death is breathing hot upon their necks. And so it is with many in the world today, living as though death will never come to call. Yet, we know, short of the Rapture, each of us will one day pass from this world – believers into the Presence of God, unbelievers into everlasting darkness. The choice is made while we’re yet alive.

Verse 1 *Then the Lord said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.* Chapter 15 is a continuation of Chapter 14 and this answer is with regards to the last for verses of Jeremiah 14 – *Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name’s sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.*God now answers these four verses. Even if Moses and Samuel, two great intercessors between the people and God, stood before me. No matter the words or sacrifice, God’s mind would not be inclined to the people. The time for intercessory prayers has passed. We know God told Jeremiah to no longer pray for this people. He has provided every opportunity, and the time for judgement has arrived. We remember that, in Exodus 32:34, Moses interceded for the people when they sinned with the golden calf. In Numbers 14:20, Moses interceded after the people complained and despised the Promised Land. Samuel interceded with a sacrifice in 1 Samuel 7:9 and God heard him and delivered the people from the Philistines. If they were here with Jeremiah and standing before Him, crying out, even their prayers would not turn aside the wrath to come. Cast them out of My sight – this is a declaration that the people will be cast out of the sight of God. It carries the idea that the people have become so sinful and offensive in the sight of God that He will now judge them. His displeasure has reached fulness.

Verse 2 *And it shall be, if they say to you, ‘Where should we go?’ then you shall tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.”* God now gives Jeremiah the answer to the question the people will surely ask – Where should we go? The answer – the people will go forth into the judgement, as God assigns. Ruin and destruction will fall. But not all will perish in the same way. Each will die in the way God has appointed. Some will perish by pestilence, some by famine, and some by sword. But some will go into the Babylonian captivity that will last for 70 years. God appoints and God executes. This is similar to Revelation 6:8 and the opening of the Fourth Seal – *So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.*

Verse 3 *“And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,” says the Lord: “the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.* There will be four destroyers of Judah. Sword, and those slain will not be buried, which is an affront to the Jewish people. Instead, they will be the food of beasts, birds, and dogs. These will tear at both the people left to die and the dead.

Verses 4-5 *I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. 5“For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who will bemoan you? Or who will turn aside to ask how you are doing?* The people will of course be carried into captivity to Babylon. We’ve studied Daniel and know the story of the captivity. Many others self exiled as they saw the misery coming. Many went to Egypt, Ethiopia, and surrounding kingdoms. God is handing them over. In Deuteronomy 28:25, Moses wrote in the curses for disobedience – *The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.* The people were warned early and often. Because of Manasseh- 2 Kings 21 tells us what Manasseh did to hasten this judgement. He rebuilt the high places, built altars to Baal, made wooden images, worshipped the host of heaven, built altars in the Temple for false gods, practiced witchcraft, consulted mediums, and placed a carved image of Asherah in the Temple of God. Manasseh led the people away from God and was disobedient. He led the people and the people chose to follow. It wasn’t for his sins alone, but the sins of the people over a long period of time. Who will pity Jerusalem for what has happened to them. The answer is – no one. They’ll know that Judah deserved this judgement and many will rejoice to see the day of Jerusalem’s downfall.

Verses 6-7 *You have forsaken Me,” says the Lord, “You have gone backward. Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am weary of relenting! 7And I will winnow them with a winnowing fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children; I will destroy My people, Since they do not return from their ways.* Judah has forsaken God. A choice has been made. Therefore, God will stretch out His hand and discipline the nation. ***I am weary of relenting –*** God has been so very long suffering and patient, but no longer. Judgement will come. God will not be silent forever. He will fan them with a winnowing fan, which is a scattering fan used in threshing wheat or barley. This is not to blow away the worthless chaf, but to spread the grain. He will scatter the people to the winds and this will scatter them to all nations. God will deprive them of comforts and good things, including the blessing of children. This may allude to the sons and daughters dying by sword, famine, pestilence, and being taken in captivity. I will destroy My people – they will no longer be given the privilege of being called the people of God. God will not protect them while they pursue sin and rebelliousness.

Verse 8 *Their widows will be increased to Me more than the sand of the seas; I will bring against them, Against the mother of the young men, A plunderer at noonday; I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them suddenly.* The number of widows increased as war, famine, and pestilence took their tolls. Jeremiah is looking forward and, indeed history records that in the time of King Zedekiah and the besieging of Jerusalem, the number of widows did increase as soldiers died. When we read “Against the mother” we understand this to mean Jerusalem or the mother city of the Jewish people. Nebuchadnezzar, the spoiler, is sent against her. He didn’t sneak in. He came openly and boldly, as a plunderer. He didn’t wait to attack by night, but attacked openly at noon. God chose him, not because he was a follower of God, but because God raises up armies for his purposes. Such was Babylon.

Verse 9 *She languishes who has borne seven; She has breathed her last; Her sun has gone down While it was yet day; She has been ashamed and confounded. And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword Before their enemies,” says the Lord.* Seven is a perfect number used often in the Bible. This represents the multitude of people living in Jerusalem, the mother city. She is now feeble and is no longer bearing children. The children she has are fleeing the miseries of the pressure Babylon is applying. The people of Jerusalem, once very numerous, are decreasing and the city is breathing it’s last. Her sun is going down represents that, in the time of the height of her prosperity, she will be reduced to misery through the calamities befalling her. Jerusalem falls into the lowest places from being a mighty and well respected city. God’s coming wrath will confound and make her ashamed, a laughingstock among the cities that once pandered to her. And the remnant God will deliver to the sword of the Chaldeans and Babylonians. The destruction will be complete.

And so we leave Jeremiah tonight as God makes clear that He has set in motion the judgement of Judah. God will judge through calamity, war, pestilence, famine, and captivity. Even Moses and Samuel can not avert the coming wrath. Next week, we’ll see Jeremiah respond and how God will take care of him, even as Judah goes into captivity, Jeremiah has been faithful and followed God, in spite of the fact that the people have hated and rejected him. Likewise, we must follow our Lord Jesus Christ, even when people despise and reject us. If we are to become more like Jesus as we grow and Jesus was hated, rejected, and persecuted, how will we become more like Him unless we too are hated, rejected, and persecuted? We are never above our Master. We continue to intercede for the lost, pray for the nation, even as the nation and the lost despise our witness. Like Jeremiah, we will be protected when we are following the will of God.