***Jeremiah 9:13-26 And the Lord said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, 14but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them,” 15therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. 16I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them.” 17Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come. 18Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water. 19For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: ‘How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.’ 20Yet hear the word of the Lord, O women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a lamentation. 21For death has come through our windows, Has entered our palaces, To kill off the children - no longer to be outside! And the young men - no longer on the streets! 22Speak, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, Like cuttings after the harvester, And no one shall gather them.’ ” 23Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord. 25“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised 26Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.”***

We are back with Jeremiah tonight, as he laments the coming judgement upon Judah. As we learned last time, the Chaldeans and the Babylonians are making quick work of the outlying cities. The people of Jerusalem still believe themselves untouchable, though the cities and the countryside is being conquered. They trust in the Temple building and their traditions rather than the God of the Temple. They have not done justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God. The judgement is coming. Jeremiah says – let the wailing begin.

 Verse 13 *And the Lord said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it,*Remember in verse 12, there was a question asked - *Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?* God answers – Because they have forsaken My law and have neither obeyed, nor walked with Me. They have broken relationship with God. This is why ANY land perishes.

Verse 14 *but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them,”* The people have imagined false gods and worshipped them, following the desires of their own hearts and making the gods that fit their needs. People try to do that with God even today, taking bits and pieces of the Bible and knitting it into a false religion based on their own imagination. Children have been taught to worship the god they imagine rather than the One true God.

Verse 15 *therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.* Listen asMoses, in Deuteronomy 29:18-19, 900 or more years before Jeremiah, warned of this same thing almost word for word - *so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; 19 and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart’—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.*  The Bible is so consistent and trustworthy. The wormwood here is very bitter, probably made from something like wolfsbane, which is very poisonous and will make a person sick or can kill. Gall is also made from a plant, something like hemlock and can be deadly. This suggests not just famine and thirst in the land, but an even greater calamity that poisons the people.

Verse 16 - *I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them.* I will scatter them among the Gentiles or the heathen nations. They’ve already corrupted themselves, worshipping foreign gods. Now, they will bow down to heathen gods that were not known in the land of Israel. God will give them over to their reprobate, debased minds, just as He says in Romans 1:28. They will be scattered among these nations. Of course, we recall the story of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego and the statue that they refused to worship. The sword will chase the people, until the land is consumed. This proved true in Jeremiah’s day, as well as in the time of Jesus. Even today, we see Jews being persecuted and killed. There will be no lasting peace in Israel until Jesus returns.

Verse 17 *Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come.* God now says - Consider the evil of your land and the mourning that this should bring. This calls for wailing and lamentation. In ancient Israel, there were women who wailed and lamented for a living. I’m not sure there aren’t some still in that profession today. The women were brought in to stir up the grief and emotion, sorrow of the funeral. God says – call for these women to stir up your sorrow as a nation. We saw this when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Even into 300 AD, we can read stories of this practice. It was considered a great honor to have a very public and emotional funeral, with lots of wailing and poetic speaking. It proved the deceased was greatly loved.

Verse 18 *Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water.* Let these women make haste and wail for both the people and the nation, for what is about to happen. The hope is that their sadness will pierce the coldness of the nation and the nation will weep.

Verse 19 *For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: ‘How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.’* How we are plundered. How we have forsaken our land, through our sin and evil. The verse has the idea that the people have cast themselves out of their own dwellings and are fully responsible for this situation. The Hebrew has the idea of “What have we done to ourselves and our land?

Verse 20 *Yet hear the word of the Lord, O women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a lamentation.* The wailing women were considered artists of sorts. The art of wailing and lamentation at funerals was a profession. Teach your daughters wailing. The wailing had certain musical and poetic tones, designed to evoke emotions. This verse further suggests that the coming calamities will be so great that mourners will be in very high demand.

Verse 21 *For death has come through our windows, Has entered our palaces, To kill off the children - no longer to be outside! And the young men - no longer on the streets!* Death here is seen as a physical pestilence, almost like locusts or flies. This horror will come in through windows and doors, to kill the children. No one will gather in the house or the streets to enjoy fellowship, because death will be present in the city. There will be no playing, as famine and the sword deliver death to the city.

Verse 22 *Speak, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, Like cuttings after the harvester, And no one shall gather them.’* Thus says the Lord – this indicates a change in direction and a new word from God to Jeremiah. Picture reapers in a field, gathering the wheat into hand using a sickle. Some of the harvest will inevitably fall to the ground. So shall it be with the carcasses or bodies of men. They’ll be scattered as trash left behind, with no one to bury them.

Verses 23-24 *Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.* Let not men value themselves for their wisdom or strength or riches. Take no pride in our humanness. The calamities will befall all, regardless of status. The only thing of value is relationship with God. Trusting in His mercy and His grace to save. Trusting His judgements to be perfect and just. Trusting His Truth. When we glory, we glory in God and in God alone. As Paul tells us – no man can boast in anything. We must give all Glory to our Lord and Savior. In Him alone is our salvation.

Verses 25-26*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised 26Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all the nations are uncircumcised and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.”* The Jewish people placed great value on the fact that they were a nation of circumcision, whereas as the heathen nations were uncircumcised. They believed this brought God’s favor. Here, God is saying – No. He will judge them with the heathen nations. One interesting thing to note – In verse 26, God places Judah in with the heathen nations – between Egypt and Edom. The Jews were circumcised in the flesh, but not in the Spirit. We know that God does not look upon the outward appearances of man, but He looks upon our hearts. We can worship with our lips, while our hearts are far from God. Relationship with God is our whole duty – Fear God, keep His commandments.

 And so we leave Jeremiah tonight, as the enemy is approaching the gates of the city. Judah will soon join Israel in captivity and the people will be scattered. God has called and no one listened. Likewise, let us mourn for our nation, as God continues to call us to repentance and the nation continues to love idols and filth. May we be found as Daniel, kneeling before our God and praying for hearts and souls to be changed.