***Jeremiah 22:15-30 “Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, And do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. 16He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?” says the Lord. 17“Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence.” 18Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, my brother!’ or ‘Alas, my sister!’ They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, master!’ or ‘Alas, his glory!’ 19He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem. 20“Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, And lift up your voice in Bashan; Cry from Abarim, For all your lovers are destroyed. 21I spoke to you in your prosperity, But you said, ‘I will not hear.’ This has been your manner from your youth, That you did not obey My voice. 22The wind shall eat up all your rulers, And your lovers shall go into captivity; Surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated For all your wickedness. 23O inhabitant of Lebanon, Making your nest in the cedars, How gracious will you be when pangs come upon you, Like the pain of a woman in labor? 24“As I live,” says the Lord, “though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return. 28“Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol
A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know? 29O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord! 30Thus says the Lord: ‘Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days;
For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.’***

In the last verses of Jeremiah 22, we find that Jeremiah continues his prophetic warning to the king of Judah. Jehoiakim, and all of the officials and people of the land. God warns them to return to justice and love mercy. In Micah 6:8, we read what Jeremiah is telling the king and all the people. God has shown us - *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?* Through Jesus, we have the perfect example of this. But, the people of that time did not heed God’s word and most people today don’t heed God’s word.

 Verses 15-16 *Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, And do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. 16He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?” says the Lord.* Though the king builds a luxurious house of cedar and provides the finest of worldly things, this will not be a fortress or a protection from the enemies that are to come. Did not your father, referring to Josiah, enjoy comforts, such as good food and drink, yet he did not enrich himself at the expense of his people. He enjoyed God’s gifts, but did not worship them. He praised God for his plenty and was obedient to God. He did justice and righteousness. He acted rightly both in private and in public. He did not oppress the people of saddle them with hardship. He considered himself a servant of the Most High God and this made him a servant of the people. He judged the cause of the poor and needy with justice. God blessed Josiah. God blessed his integrity and his obedience. Josiah knew God and he demonstrated this through service and worship. His faith came out in the everyday walk. And so it must in our everyday walk as well.

 Verse 17 *“Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence.”* Now, the focus shifts to Jehoiakim. His eyes are not like Josiah’s, but are covetous and violent, oppressing and shedding innocent blood. Ezekiel compared Jehoiakim to a violent lion, attacking helpless prey. When there is covetousness in our hearts, we pursue with our all. 1 John 2 speaks of the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh. We’re told to flee temptation, youthful passions. Too often, people are willing to risk temptation to obtain some worldly wealth or status, but 1 Corinthians 10:13 warns us that temptation will overtake us when we fail to flee.

Verses 18-19 *Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, my brother!’ or ‘Alas, my sister!’ They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, master!’ or ‘Alas, his glory!’ 19He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.* Jeremiah now speaks of Jehoiakim’s coming funeral. They shall not lament – Jeremiah recalls a common funeral song that mourners sang in that time. This song was sung at solemn funerals like kings. In 2 Chronicles 35:25, we know that Jeremiah lamented and the men and women sang over Josiah when he died. Not so for Jehoiakim. He will not be buried or remembered in honor, like Josiah and others before him. No one will sing of how Jehoiakim’s honor has departed. This is like saying, “He will be missed today.” No one will say that Jehoiakim will be missed. Instead, he will be discarded without honor, like the carcass of a donkey. He will be cast out as refuse, left for dogs and animals to scavenge. We know that Jehoiakim was installed by the king of Egypt. When Egypt fell to Babylon, Jehoiakim was imprisoned. Later, Nebuchadnezzar reinstalled him as a vassal king, but Jehoiakim rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar returned and destroyed Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was cast out by the highway and never buried according to ancient historians. This is consistent with how a donkey would have been left for the scavengers.

Verse 20 *Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, And lift up your voice in Bashan; Cry from Abarim, For all your lovers are destroyed.* The focus now shifts and the one being told to go up and cry is Jerusalem. Go to the high mountains and the edges of the territory and cry out to the neighboring countries to help! But the cry is in vain, because all the foreign powers that had been trusted in are now destroyed. Only God could have helped, but Jerusalem did not cry to Him.

Verse 21 *I spoke to you in your prosperity, But you said, ‘I will not hear.’ This has been your manner from your youth, That you did not obey My voice.* Now God speaks. He says – I spoke through my prophets and servants. I admonished and called. But you said, “I will not hear.” This has the idea of blocking the ears and refusing to hear. The conduct of the nation demonstrated this refusal. When prosperity comes, too often pride and self reliance comes with it. People refuse to hear the word of God. They become wise in their own eyes. Puffed up with pride and confident in worldly things. Jerusalem did not obey, which has been it’s way since it's youth.

Verse 22 *The wind shall eat up all your rulers, And your lovers shall go into captivity; Surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated For all your wickedness.* All the kings, princes, priests, false prophets that have been the rulers will be destroyed in God’s judgement, like dry plants before a rushing wildfire. They lovers, or thy allies, will be made captives as well. They will have their own issues and have no time to help Jerusalem.

Verse 23 *O inhabitant of Lebanon, Making your nest in the cedars, How gracious will you be when pangs come upon you, Like the pain of a woman in labor?* O inhabitant of Lebanon. Remember that Lebanon referred to the people living in houses built from the cedars of Lebanon. They make their nest or live in the finest houses in great comfort. How gracious or how humble will you be when affliction comes? Before, pride kept the people from coming humbly to God. Will it be the same when calamity strikes?

Verses 24-28 *“As I live,” says the Lord, “though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return. 28“Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know? As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah were the signet, or, rather, the ring, upon my right hand**yet would I pluck thee thence –* Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah), Jehoiakim’s son, will find no favor with God either. He won’t even find the favor that a man may show a signet ring. Jehoiakim has forfeited all favor from God by his wickedness. God will give the house of Jehoiakim into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. We know from 2 Kings 24:15 that Coniah, also known as Jehoiachin, was taken captive to Baylon, along with his mother and his wives. Coniah is a despised and broken vessel. This holds the idea that he was contemptible in God’s sight, as well as the sight of others. He is a vessel in which God finds no delight.

Verse 29-30 *O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord! 30Thus says the Lord: ‘Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.’* O earth, earth, earth – the repeating three times is a way of emphasizing what is being said. Jeremiah speaks of the land of Judah. He commands that the following predictions be written down: Jehoiachin will not have children that sit on the throne of David. As stated in verse 28, his descendants will be cast out. The children will be as though they never existed. Some theologians believe that this means that he died childless because all of his children preceded him in death. Regardless, none were honored to assume the throne of David.

So, we leave Jeremiah tonight. He has faithfully pronounced the coming judgement on Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. The prophecy will be fulfilled in 11 years. God always provides generous time for a nation and a people to repent and return to Him, but prosperity and security cloud the need for God and many never see the need until disaster strikes. Let’s continue to witness to others, even in our time of prosperity and security. Let’s keep sharing the word of God, acting with integrity in private and in public. Jerusalem refused to turn. May we pray that our nation will turn before it is everlasting too late.