

Jeremiah

Chapter 22

Thus says the LORD: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, 2 and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. 3 Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. 5 But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. 6 For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah: “‘You are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, yet surely I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city. 7 I will prepare destroyers against you, each with his weapons, and they shall cut down your choicest cedars and cast them into the fire. 8 “‘And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, “Why has the LORD dealt thus with this great city?” 9 And they will answer, “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and worshiped other gods and served them.”’” 10 Weep not for him who is dead, nor grieve for him, but weep bitterly for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land.

22:1 *Go down.* The palace was at a lower elevation than the temple (see 26:10; 36:10–12). (CSB)

From the temple area to the royal palace, situated on a lower level. (TLSB)

22:2 *king of Judah.* Probably Zedekiah (see 21:3, 7; compare v. 3 with 21:12), whose predecessors are mentioned in sequence later in the chapter (Josiah, vv. 10a, 15b–16; Jehoahaz/Shallum, vv. 10b–12; Jehoiakim, vv. 13–15a, 17–19; Jehoiachin/Coniah, vv. 24–30). (CSB)

David’s throne.† Though all the kings of the Davidic dynasty failed to a greater or lesser degree, the Messiah would someday appear as the culmination of David’s royal line (see 23:5 and NIV text note; 33:15; Eze 34:23–24; Mt 1:1). (CSB)

who enter these gates. The gates of the royal palace. (Kretzmann)

22:3 *justice and righteousness* – This was the fundamental principle of Jehovah's nation, cf. chap. 7, 6; 21, 12. (Kretzmann)

deliver from...oppressor – This was about rescuing those who were being systematically plundered by the mightier people of the nation. (Kretzmann)

violence...alien...fatherless...widow – This spoke about excessive taxation and other unjust exactions. (Kretzmann)

blood in this place – All of these transgressions having freely been committed by the later kings of Judah; for in the same measure as their standing among the nations lost in prestige, they practiced tyranny at home. (Kretzmann)

Even prophets were killed. (TLSB)

22:4 Repeated in part from 17:25 – (Repeated in part in 22:4. King David’s dynasty will last forever in the reign of David’s Son and Lord (see 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:15; 2Sa 7:12–17), and the new Jerusalem will be inhabited for all time (Zec 2:2–12; 8:3; 14:11). (CSB)

22:5 The promise of many descendants was made with an oath to emphasize its unchanging character (see Ge 22:16–18). Ordinarily the swearing of an oath belongs to our fallen human situation, in which a man’s word is not always trustworthy. God’s swearing of an oath was a condescension to human frailty, thus making his word, which in itself is absolutely trustworthy, doubly dependable. Note from Hebrews 6:13 – CSB)

become a desolation. Fulfilled in 52:13 (see 27:17). (CSB)

The splendid royal palace becoming a total ruin. (Kretzmann)

22:6–7 Even though the house of the king of Judah was as precious to God as the rich grazing territory of Gilead and the wooded heights of Lebanon were prized by the people, He would not hesitate to let it become a desolation. (TLSB)

22:6 *Gilead ... Lebanon.* Renowned for their forests. Lebanon in particular supplied cedar for the royal palace.. (CSB)

The point of comparison being the many pillars and ornaments of costly wood derived from the forests of Gilead and of Lebanon, which made the complex of buildings comprising the royal palace a veritable forest of oaks and cedars. (Kretzmann)

22:7 *prepare.* Lit. “consecrate” (see note on 6:4). (CSB)

Consecrated, as it were, to perform His will in bringing destruction upon Jerusalem and the palace of the king. (Kretzmann)

destroyers. The Babylonians. (CSB)

cut down ... cedar. Cf. Isa 10:33–34; cf. especially the vivid description of the Babylonian troops smashing the carved paneling of the Jerusalem temple with their axes and hatchets (Ps 74:3–6). (CSB)

As stately trees were felled on Mount Lebanon, so God would cut down the prominent men of state. (TLSB)

22:8 *why has the Lord* – Having seen the entire capital being destroyed with the Temple and the royal palace, people passing will wonder and be astonished over such utter desolation. (Kretzmann)

22:9 *forsaken the covenant ... and worshiped other gods.* A gross violation of the first and second stipulations of the Mosaic covenant. (CSB)

In any event, no deity, real or imagined, is to rival the one God in Israel’s heart and life. Because God has no visible form, any idol intended to resemble Him would be a sinful misrepresentation of Him. (CSB Notes on Ex. 20:3-5) (CSB)

22:10 *weep not for him.* Josiah, who was mourned long after his death (see 2Ch 35:24–25). (CSB)

Namely, Josiah, the last good king, who had stayed the doom pronounced upon the reprobate people. (Kretzmann)

who goes away. Jehoahaz/Shallum. In 609 B.C., Pharaoh Neco “carried him off to Egypt, and there he died” (2Ki 23:34). (CSB)

21:11–22:10 God challenges His people in Jerusalem to keep His covenant by helping other people, protecting the weak and vulnerable, and keeping Him first in their worship and their lives. Keeping the Law means not only avoiding the wrong thing but also includes doing the right thing, such as having mercy. Such compassion flows directly from a right relationship with God. Today, call on the Lord in repentance and prayer. Jesus redeemed you through His perfect life, death, and resurrection and has sworn to save you. • Father, lead us to treat other people as we want to be treated, loving them as You love us in Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

Message to the Sons of Josiah

11 For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went away from this place: “He shall return here no more, 12 but in the place where they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again.” 13 “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages, 14 who says, ‘I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms,’ who cuts out windows for it, paneling it with cedar and painting it with vermilion. 15 Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. 16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the LORD. 17 But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.” 18 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’ They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’ 19 With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem.” 20 “Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers are destroyed. 21 I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, ‘I will not listen.’ This has been your way from your youth, that you have not obeyed my voice. 22 The wind shall shepherd all your shepherds, and your lovers shall go into captivity; then you will be ashamed and confounded because of all your evil. 23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, nested among the cedars, how you will be pitied when pangs come upon you, pain as of a woman in labor!” 24 “As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off 25 and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. 27 But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return.” 28 Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he and his children hurled and cast into a land that they do not know? 29 O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! 30 Thus says the LORD: “Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.”

22:11 *Shallum.* The fourth son of Josiah (see 1Ch 3:15). “Shallum” was his personal name, “Jehoahaz” his throne name (the latter means “The LORD seizes”). (CSB)

Having been taken to Egypt by Pharaoh-Nechoh, who placed his older brother Jehoiakim on the throne, much to the dissatisfaction of the people. (Kretzmann)

went away. Shallum, aka Jehoahaz, was to be lamented bitterly because he would never again see his native land after Pharaoh Neco deposed him and brought him to Egypt (cf 2Ki 23:31–33). (TLSB)

22:12 *the place where they have carried him captive.* Egypt. (CSB)

It happened in just this way, as the sacred narrative informs us, 2 Kings 23, 34. (Kretzmann)

22:13–19 A scathing denunciation of King Jehoiakim, who is described in the third person (vv. 13–14), then rhetorically addressed in the second person (vv. 15, 17), then identified by name (v. 18), meaning “The LORD raises up.” Good King Josiah is referred to in vv. 15b–16 by way of contrast. (CSB)

22:13 *Woe to him who builds.* See Hab 2:9, 12. (CSB)

The Lord now proceeds to call out upon Jehoiakim. (Kretzmann)

by unrighteousness ... by injustice. Contrast v. 3; 21:12. (CSB)

By unjust measures, and in impressing people into work without right and compensation. (Kretzmann)

upper rooms. Rooms were built on the flat roofs of houses (2Ki 4:10–11) and palaces (Jer 22:13–14), and had latticed windows (2Ki 1:2) that provided comfort in the heat of summer. (CSB)

making his neighbor serve him for nothing. Contrary to the law (see Lev 25:39; Dt 24:14–15). Jehoiakim’s refusal to pay them may have been due partly to inability, since Judah was under heavy tribute to Egypt during the early part of his reign (see 2Ki 23:35). (CSB)

22:14 *great house.* Archaeologists at Ramat Rahel discovered such a home, with a large gateway, a lime-paved courtyard, fancy capitals, window balustrades, and ashlar masonry. (TLSB)

windows. The windows described here may well be the same as those found in the ruins of Beth Hakkerem by archaeologists in the early 1960s. (CSB)

paneling. Haggai similarly deplors the use of paneling as an extravagant and unneeded luxury in certain situations (see Hag 1:4). (CSB)

vermilion. Orange-red, made from kermes insects or cinnabar. (TLSB)

A costly paint made of sulphur and quicksilver. All this oppressing of poor workmen and the proud show of splendor that went with it was characteristic of the reign of Jehoiakim. (Kretzmann)

22:15 *compete in cedar?* Neco appointed Jehoiakim to rule in his brother Shallum’s place. Jehoiakim would be punished for the violence he instigated in order to compete with Solomon’s building program. As a result, circumstances at Jehoiakim’s death were such that a decent burial was impossible (36:30; cf 2Ki 23:36–24:6). (TLSB)

Making a show of wealth which he did not in reality possess and had no right to parade. (Kretzmann)

your father. Josiah. (CSB)

eat and drink. Enjoy life (see Ecc 2:24–25; 3:12–13). (CSB)

do justice and righteousness. Like his ancestor David (see 2Sa 8:15); contrast v. 13. (CSB)

Exercising these two virtues according to the demands of righteousness. (Kretzmann)

22:16† James defines religion in similar terms (see Jas 1:27); contrast 5:28. (CSB)

poor and needy. By Jeremiah's time, "poor/needy" had become virtually synonymous with "righteous." (CSB)

Those who are poor in spirit, not necessarily poor of economic means (cf. Matt 5:3). Jeremiah is one who is "needy" because he is dependent on the Lord. He is not helpless or hopeless in the face of his enemies' attacks, but his rescue is from Yahweh. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

to know me.† To love God fully and to respond to his love results in living a pious life and serving those in need (see Dt 10:12–13; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:8). (CSB)

22:17 *your.* Jehoiakim's. (CSB)

dishonest gain. Being directed only to the gaining of his own advantage, regardless of the rights of other people. (Kretzmann)

shedding innocent blood. For an illustration of Jehoiakim's cruelty in this regard see 26:20–23. (CSB)

oppression. Jehoiakim thus proving himself a tyrant in every sense of the word. (Kretzmann)

22:18 Contrast 2Ch 35:24–25. (CSB)

They will not lament for him: "Ah, my brother!" Contrast 1Ki 13:30. (CSB)

None of the mournful cries such as relatives make at the death of those near and dear to them being heard in this instance. **They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, lord! or, Ah, his glory!** that is, "Alas, His Majesty!" his subjects also declining to show any grief over his end. Unpraised, unhonored, and unsung he would pass away from among the living. (Kretzmann)

22:19 *burial of a donkey.* Tantamount to no burial at all (see 36:30); fulfilled in 2Ki 24:6, where no burial is described and where it says that Jehoiakim "rested with his fathers," a euphemism for dying. (CSB)

dragged and dumped. They were not interred, but dragged forth and left as carrion to the birds and beasts of prey. (Kretzmann)

22:20–23 The Lord speaks to Jerusalem, which is personified as a woman (see v. 23). (CSB)

Inhabitants of Jerusalem are dispersed. Misled by false leaders (shepherds), they will suffer the consequences of their evil. (TLSB)

22:20 *Lebanon ... Bashan ... Abarim.* Mountainous regions (see v. 6; Nu 27:12; 33:47–48; Dt 32:49; Jdg 3:3; Ps 68:15), the first two in the north and the third in the south, suitable heights from which the whole land of Israel could be rhetorically addressed. (CSB)

lovers. Here referring to nations joined together by treaty. Judah's onetime allies included Egypt, Assyria (see 2:36), Edom, Moab, Ammon and Phoenicia (see 27:3), all of whom had been—or soon would be—conquered by Babylonia (see 27:6–7; 28:14). (CSB)

destroyed. Namely, all the kings of the allied nations, upon whom Judah depended for help, together with their people, not only Egypt, but the smaller kingdoms of Syria and of Northern Arabia as well. All of these were brought into subjection by Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. (Kretzmann)

22:21 *not listen ... not obeyed me.* While the country was enjoying prosperous, secure, peaceful relations. (Kretzmann)

your youth.† The days of Israel's early history. (CSB)

22:22 *wind... shepherds ...all your evil.* The Hebrew root is the same for the first two words, and that of the third is very similar. The initial fulfillment of this verse took place in 597 B.C. (see 2Ki 24:12–16). (CSB)

wind...into captivity. Babylonians would blow away Judah's corrupt leaders. (TLSB)

All their rulers and leaders, as the hot desert wind singed off the meadows. (Kretzmann)

22:23 *Lebanon ... cedars.* The king and his nobles felt themselves as secure as birds in their nest high in the cedars of Lebanon. (TLSB)

This picture being chosen because, as the birds of Lebanon make their nests in the cedars, so the princes of Judah built their homes of the cedars of Lebanon. (Kretzmann)

22:24–30 A prophecy against King Jehoiachin (fulfilled in 24:1; 29:2), who was also known as Coniah, a shortened form of Jeconiah. All three forms of the name mean "The LORD establishes." (CSB)

Coniah (Jeconiah; aka Jehoiachin) ruled only three months before he and his mother were taken to Babylon. (TLSB)

22:24 *were a signet ring.*† The curse is reversed in Hag 2:23 – A kind of seal that functioned as a signature (see Est 8:8) and was worn on one's finger (Est 3:10). Like other seals (cf. Ge 38:18) it could be used as a pledge or guarantee of full payment. Its mention here probably reverses the curse placed on King Jehoiachin in Jer 22:24 (cf. Jdg 17:2). Zerubbabel would then be a guarantee that someday the Messiah descended from David will come (cf. Mt 1:1, 12). In 2Co 1:22 the Holy Spirit is the seal guaranteeing the believer's future inheritance (cf. Eph 1:13–14). (CSB)

A most costly and valued ornament, which one guards with great care. (Kretzmann)

I WILL PULL YOU OFF – This being affirmed with a solemn vow, God's most impressive formula of oath, by His own life!

22:25 *give you into the hand of those who seek your life.* Deliberately delivering him into the power of his enemies everywhere. (Kretzmann)

22:26 Fulfilled in 597 B.C. (see 29:2; 2Ki 24:15). (CSB)

hurl ... into another country. Send into exile in Babylonia (see 7:15; 16:13; Dt 29:28). (CSB)

you and the mother who bore you into another country. Jehoiachin and Nehushta (see note on 13:18). (CSB)

Namely, Nehushta, the daughter of Einathan, 2 Kings 24, 8. (Kretzmann)

22:27 *shall not return* – By the change to the third person these two were put out of sight, as unworthy to be addressed directly any longer. The prophet now addresses the country as such with reference to the fate of this favorite king, whom the people idolized. (Kretzmann)

22:28 A rhetorical question, answered in v. 30. (CSB)

broken pot ... hurled and cast. Jehoiachin and his descendants, like Judah itself (see 19:10–11), are under God's judgment. (CSB)

he and his children. Though Jehoiachin was only 18 years old at the time of his exile (see 2Ki 24:8), he already had more than one wife (see 2Ki 24:15) and therefore probably one or more children. (CSB)

22:29 *land, land, land.* The repetition implies the strongest possible emphasis and intensit. (CSB)

The threefold repetition serving to lay particular stress upon the contents of this warning. (Kretzmann)

22:30 *as childless.* † Not in the sense of Jehoiachin's having no children at all (he had at least seven; see 1Ch 3:17–18), but of having none to sit on the throne of David in Judah. Jehoiachin's grandson Zerubbabel (1Ch 3:17–19; Mt 1:12) became governor of Judah (see Hag 1:1), but not king. Zedekiah was a son of Josiah (see 37:1), not of Jehoiachin, and he and his sons died before the latter (see 52:10–11). Jehoiachin therefore was Judah's last surviving Davidic king. (CSB)

No descendant would bear the royal title, though he was to have children (1Ch 3:17–18), and his grandson Zerubbabel was to play a prominent role after the Babylonian exile (Ezr 3; Hg 1:1; 2:2).

22:11–30 Jeremiah condemns Israel's leaders for their obsession with wealth and power and, at the same time, neglect and abuse of the needy. God tells these powerful people that they will not enjoy their dishonest gains. People worship the same things today, sacrificing integrity and compassion for temporary riches. Jesus, having all things, avoids the deceit of wealth and power (Mt 4:8–10), remaining faithful to the plan of salvation by going to the cross to save us from our sinful deceptions. • Lord, faithful Shepherd, lead us to treasure people more than things. Amen. (TLSB)