

God judges a nation  
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Page 1 of 4

**Text:** Jeremiah 7, 15, 52; Lamentations 1–3

Since the death of Solomon, the promised land was divided. In B.C. 722, the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel, the ten lost tribes. Babylon assailed the Southern Kingdom of Judah over a hundred years later. Jeremiah had been attempting to warn Judah for forty years. The message of repentance was rejected, and Judah's doom was sealed.

Three primary sins led to Judah's downfall. Indictments of Judah.

1. The first indictment of Judah is that they did not hear. The people were deaf to the truth (Jeremiah 7). False prophets were feeding people what they wanted to hear. Jeremiah was tossed into a pit because he preached what was deemed offensive. Consider the issue of homosexuality in our culture. Our country is celebrating something God has condemned. People, especially leaders, do not accept the Word of God, and are attempting to ostracize opposition and censure those speaking against sin. Yet the truth must continue to be spoken.
2. The second indictment of Judah is that they had progressed to the point where God's judgment was inevitable. They waited too long to repent. The Lord said that even Moses and Samuel could not avert their doom; then said Jehovah unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind would not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. (Jeremiah 15:1 ASV). Plunging further into idolatrous behavior, they did not fear the consequences.
3. The third indictment of Judah is their political leaders rejected divine guidance. In the course of three meetings with Jeremiah, the king of Judah, Zedekiah, merely asked for prayer,

unresponsively heard warnings about coming judgment, and ignored advice that could have spared him and Jerusalem. Spurning God, he sought the assistance of foreign countries. His spiritual blindness led to the death of his sons in his presence, and then Zedekiah's eyes were gouged out.

Jerusalem fell, and Judah was carried off to Babylon. The tragedy is difficult to fathom. The suffering was unbelievable. Jeremiah recorded the pain and starvation of children. Every prediction about God's judgment spoken by Jeremiah came to pass.

### Lamentations

Jeremiah composed the book of Lamentations as a remembrance of the slaughter and enslavement of Jerusalem. It contains five funeral dirges for the devastated city: four of twenty-two verses and one of sixty-six verses. Acrostically arranged, these were not random comments; Jeremiah penned these sad words for the purpose of worship among God's people. In these songs, you can visualize the destruction, children fainting in the streets, longing for sustenance. A city once filled with people and alive with activity is now lonely and desolate. A proud Judah is finally a broken nation. No more could they assume that God would preserve them, for destruction had come. Jeremiah even personifies the city. He puts tears into the eyes of Jerusalem, as she recounts how the false prophets and foreign lovers abandoned her in her distress. Chapter 2 in Jeremiah is clear: God caused Jerusalem's downfall. Jerusalem had transgressed, and God punished.

What does the story of Judah mean for the United States of America, as we experience assaults against Christianity?

1. Our present situation is not new. Many Christians in many

countries have suffered in the past. The history of the church is littered with martyrs. Even now, we should be thankful for our freedom.

2. Standing for truth and righteousness can be lonely. Out of hundreds of prophets, only Jeremiah spoke the truth.
3. The faithfulness of a few is no guarantee that a nation is going to turn back to God. We must pray for revival even though we do not know if the United States of America can be saved.
4. A nation can reach a point of no return at some point. Prayer will not hold back the inevitable. Is this the fate of the United States of America? We do not know, but a part of God's judgment is here. We are already reaping the consequences of our sins as our families continue to fragment.
5. When a nation is judged, the righteous suffer with the wicked. Godly people like Daniel were carted off to Babylon.
6. God uses evil nations to judge His own people, as God proclaims in the book of Habakkuk. We should not be surprised to see certain foreign agents, who are seemingly more evil than ourselves, be the means by which God judges us.

Jerusalem suffered a direct hit from God, and Jesus took a direct hit of God's judgment. Though the hands of evil people crucified Jesus, God caused it. God demanded a sinless sacrifice to quench His wrath, and God incarnate made the payment. For all those who believe in Jesus, there is no more condemnation. No matter how terrible our sins are, Christ has a greater supply of mercy and grace for us. The judgment of God need not rest upon us eternally; hope is found in Jesus, regardless of the rise and fall of our beloved nation.

The good news is this: God gives us promises that we can trust as we dwell within a pagan culture. Even though we may suffer the

consequences of our nation's rebellion, God always stands with His people through hardship. Jesus is truly the only ship that can weather life's storms. As we rely on Christ, we must not be passive because we have work to do. God placed us at this time with a purpose, to share the good news! While our country may fail, let us point others to the eternal city of God.

The Church in Babylon (5 of 5 parts), Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer, Pastor, Moody Church, Chicago, IL