

# Jeremiah 4-5 • My People Know Me Not

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier  
Life Bible Ministry

Verses 1 through 4 of this chapter is a call for the people of the Lord to return. Notice what God says as He begins chapter 4 by saying, *“If you return, O Israel, declares the Lord, to me you should return. If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver, <sup>2</sup> and if you swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.” (ESV)*

This is an interesting couple of verses. God once again reminds them that it's not too late and that's where we're at in these early stages of Jeremiah. You know, Jeremiah had a very, very difficult ministry in that he called the nation of Israel to repentance, but there was a point where he got to in this book where he said, now it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether, what happens with you, because this judgment is coming and there's no turning it back. But here early on here, he's still calling them back and he says, you know, if you should return, then you need to remove the detestable things from my presence, and don't waver on that, don't waver.

Do you know what that's like to get, you know. There's this double mindedness that James talks about in the New Testament and I think we've all been there before. Have you ever been in a situation where you were involved in some kind of sin and you felt conviction from the Lord, and so you got rid of it for a short period of time, and then went back to it later on, and that means you wavered. And what God is challenging them with, is putting these things away and not wavering; not going back, but making the determination, I'm not going to do this anymore.

And He goes on to say, *“<sup>2</sup> and if you (say or) swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’ (but do it) in truth, ...”* You see, the Jews are accused many times throughout the Book of Jeremiah and the other prophets for that matter with making religious sounding statements that are done with entirely the wrong attitude or with the wrong heart. And they would say things to project a religiosity and a devotion to the Lord, but God would constantly say to them, but you don't mean it. And so He's challenging them, if you will actually swear and say, as the Lord lives

and do it in truth and do it in justice and in righteousness, then good things can still happen.

Verse 3, *“For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: “Break up your fallow ground, and sow (or plant if you will) not among thorns.””* It's kind of a fruitless prospect to think of going into a field that's absolutely full of thorns and saying, I'm going to plant this field up with my crop before you've gone in there and done any kind of clearing away of the thorns. And that's what God is challenging them about here. He says, break up the fallow ground and don't sow among the thorns. In other words, get rid of the stuff that's only going to choke out the seed.

Breaking up the fallow ground is an interesting picture of kind of the spiritual landscape of Judah at that time. For those of us who are non farmers, land is called fallow when it's uncultivated and undeveloped. And what happens is it easily, quickly, becomes very hardened to the point where you have to get in there with a plow and you got to turn over the ground in order to be able to give the seed a fighting chance to get in, to get down into the soil, and to begin to grow. And so God challenges the people of Judah by saying, break up the hardness of your hearts so that the seed of my Word can actually begin to register.

Do you know, we don't even hear the Word of God. Do you remember, do you remember a time in your life when your heart was hard? Because I do. I remember when my heart was hard when I was younger, my early twenties, particularly. I remember even, you know, after I got married and I remember having a hard heart. I didn't want to hear, I didn't want to hear people talk about God. I didn't want to hear people praying in front of me, I didn't, it made me uncomfortable. I was intimidated because innately, I believe I knew I was not right with God. I knew it, I knew I wasn't right with God, so I didn't want to hear about it.

And that's why people don't want to hear you talk about the Lord either. It's because they're not, they know, they know they're not right with God. So, what happens often in many of our lives, what does God do to get us to start listening? He breaks up the fallow ground, but how does He do it? Well, in most of our lives, we're so thick headed, something really rotten has to happen, you know, to break up the ground.

And you guys have heard me say many, many times here at Calvary Chapel that for Sue and myself, it was our marriage. After 5 years of being married, we just, it just tanked and we both kind of looked at it like, what in the world has this

marriage become? It was awful, but that was one of the things that God used for me to, you know, in my life, to break up that hardness of heart. But when we talk about breaking up the hardness of heart, what are we specifically talking about? We say, break up the hardness of your heart, what do we mean? What is that practical means of breaking up the hardness of our heart?

Well, it's repentance, simple and you know, it's a big word in the Bible. God calls His people to repentance, why? To break up the fallow ground, to break up the hardness so that the Word can get in. Because when we repent, there's a softening that takes place. Do you guys remember, John the Baptist came to prepare people's hearts to hear Jesus, right? What was his baptism all about? It was a baptism of repentance, that's all it was. John didn't have a tough message, it was basically one word, I mean, it's not to say he didn't say more things.

He went around telling people, repent! repent! Turn away from your old junk, confess it to God and get right. Was his ministry effective? Luke chapter 7,

**Luke 7:29-30 (ESV)**

*When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*

*When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, (look at this) having been baptized with the baptism of John, (verse 30) but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*

You see it, you see it very clearly in those couple of verses in Luke's gospel, and that is that baptism has an effect to open the heart to hear God's Word, okay? It's always been that way, it's always been that way. That's why when Jesus started His earthly ministry, what was His first message? Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. That was a pretty simple message, too, until He started getting into some of His specific teachings. So, but, you know, baptism isn't magical in and of itself, the repentance that went along with John's baptism was the key thing here.

Now, in verse 4, we're going to change the imagery here a little bit to circumcision. Verse 4, the Lord says, "*Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.*" This is interesting because this is one of the

few places in the Old Testament where the spiritual meaning of circumcision is revealed.

Now it's given to us in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament, circumcision is usually treated in the physical sense, which was the covenant sign that God gave to the Jews, starting with Abraham, and that was circumcision. Crazy covenant sign as far as I'm concerned, but it was God's choice, but there was a meaning behind it that went far beyond the physical and He reveals it in these verses.

He says, "*Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your hearts, ...*" So circumcision was a picture of the cutting away of the flesh. We just have a new name for it in the New Testament, we call it dying to self. It's the same thing, it's cutting away the flesh. You'll remember, Jesus used some pretty radical pictures of cutting away the flesh.

Remember when He talked about if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, throw it away. (Matthew 5:30) If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. (Matthew 5:29) Obviously Jesus wasn't telling us to maim our bodies because sin doesn't come from the hand or the eye. He was basically using a word picture to describe what circumcision is a picture of as well; the cutting away of the flesh, the removal or the dying to self.

And this is an important statement that God is saying to the Jews here now of the southern kingdom, saying, do this, "*lest my wrath go forth like fire, (and He says) and (it will) burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.*" Now as we get into the rest of the chapter, it's essentially just kind of a warning of impending judgment that's hanging over the southern kingdom of Judah.

And we're going to mostly read these verses without a whole lot of comment because I think they really don't need that much. But just going into it, know this, God is going to speak to the southern kingdom of Judah about an impending judgment coming from the hand of the Babylonians, which will come into the land, not right away. These words are given as much as like 35 years before the actual event took place. God does that, He's very gracious about giving a word of judgment. He gives people lots of time to repent and to get right.

And it seems, I don't know, sometimes it seems like that, maybe that's not the best way to do it because we're so prone to forgetting. You know, when somebody comes along and says like, hey, do this or else, and then they take a

long time to bring or else to pass, we kind of tend to kind of go, eh, I guess that was a bunch of hot air, I don't think he's going to make good on that threat at all.

But we mistake God for acting like men sometimes. Men can forget when they make a threat, God never forgets and His delay of bringing this judgment to pass is because He is merciful and that's the reason. He is giving them time. Good grief, we read about the fact that even the Canaanites were given time to repent, even the Canaanites. There's a passage in the Old Testament that speaks about how the sin of the Canaanites has not reached its full measure. (Genesis 15:16) God gave them all kinds of time before He brought His people in to remove them from the land. Anyway, so here we go.

Verse 5 says, *“Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say, “Blow the trumpet through the land;...”* And you'll remember that the trumpet it's talking about that typical Jewish shofar and the shofar was blown for many different reasons. It could be getting together for a feast, it could be a real fun, enjoyable time, it could also sound the wartime and this is that sort of a situation.

And the Lord says, *“<sup>5</sup> ...cry aloud and say, ‘Assemble, and let us go into the fortified cities!’ <sup>6</sup> Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not, for I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction.”* Notice how the Lord is telling the Jews ahead of time to get, to leave. And because, those who would listen would be able to avoid this attack, they'd have plenty of time to do it. But He knew that there would be, the vast majority of the people would not listen at all.

He says in verse 7, *“A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone out from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant. <sup>8</sup> For this put on sackcloth, lament and wail, for the fierce anger of the Lord has not turned back from us.”* Wow.

*“In that day, (verse 9) declares the Lord, courage shall fail both king and officials. ...”* And it did. You'll remember that the king at the time, in the southern kingdom of Judah ran for his life when the Babylonians attacked, but they caught him. He didn't get very far, but there was nothing they could do, they had no answers, no way to defend themselves. *“<sup>9</sup> ...The priests shall be appalled and the prophets astounded.”*

And then this is interesting because in verse 10, Jeremiah has a bit of an outburst for the Lord here. He says, *“Then I said, “Ah, Lord God, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘It shall be well with*

*you,' whereas the sword has reached their very life.'"* Now, this is an interesting statement and I'll be honest with you, we're not sure why Jeremiah spoke it. I've read all kinds of interesting guesses, but honestly, we're not exactly sure what he's referring to when he claims that the Lord deceived His people.

It could be that he's speaking of the prophecies of the blessings to come in the millennial kingdom and that he was applying them to the more current situation. But honestly, we really, don't know for sure, but the Lord continues speaking in verse 11 saying, *“At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse, <sup>12</sup> a wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them.” <sup>13</sup> Behold, he comes up like clouds; his chariots like the whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles— woe to us, for we are ruined!”*

Now remember, this is 35, maybe 40 years before this is going to happen, a whole generation perhaps. And yet, notice how the Lord speaks of this, as if this is happening present tense, you know. “<sup>14</sup> *O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you (look at this) may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?*” You know, that's an interesting statement.

God was able to keep anyone from this invasion of the Babylonian army if they were just right with Him. You know, Jeremiah lived to see this invasion, he was there, but you know what? He didn't get carried away. He had an assistant that was a very godly man who lived to see this Babylonian invasion and he did not get carried away because they trusted the Lord. So, you know, God's saying here, wash your heart that you may be saved. Notice there, that appeal, once again, He's still holding out hope.

Verse 15, “*For a voice declares from Dan and proclaims trouble from Mount Ephraim.*” And the reason He's talking about Dan is that's the farthest tribe in the northernmost part of Israel and you notice He said earlier that this enemy is going to come from the north. And so Dan is going to be the first one to kind of shout the warning, if you will, saying that he proclaims this trouble coming down from the north.

Verse 16, “Warn the nations that he is coming; announce to Jerusalem, “Besiegers come from a distant land; they shout against the cities of Judah. <sup>17</sup> Like keepers of a field are they against her all around, because she has rebelled against me, declares the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you.” I want you to notice there what He says in verse 18,

*“Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you.”* In other words, it's your fault. We say that and usually it's like not the correct, it's not always the correct thing, we like to blame other people.

I remember when my kids were little, Aaron, you know used to, he'd like be throwing a ball in the house, knock over a lamp and then yell out his sister's name, you know, like, what did you do that for? We knew it was him, but it's just, it's somehow just in a kid to do that, you know, to blame somebody else.

But God says here to the southern kingdom of Judah, *“Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you.”* And what were their ways and their deeds? They rejected the Lord, they took His word and they threw it behind them and they said, and you're going to see this later on in these chapters. They said, we don't care, we don't care, we don't want to hear what God says, we don't care. How many ways do we need to say that, we don't care, we don't need God, all right, so just don't talk to me anymore about God.

Now, why do I bring that up? God says here, when all this happens, I want you to know something, this all came about because of your ways and your deeds, and it still happens that way today. We here, we live in a country that has systematically kicked God to the curb. We've kicked Him out of just about every useful place and people have said in large numbers, we don't care and we don't want to hear God's Word.

You know, what's interesting though, is that when life gets bad for them, one of the first things they do is shake their fist at God and they say, how could you do this? How could you let this happen? And God, you know, has the same thing to say to them that He said to the kingdom of Judah, what do you expect? *“Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you.”* You have said over, and over, and over again, that you don't care. You don't want to hear my Word, you don't have any time for anything related to the Bible, or God, or heaven, or hell, and now that life has turned upside down, now you're mad at me? Are you joking? And that's kind of what God is doing here.

Look what He goes on to say in the rest of the verse, verse 18. He says, *“This is your doom, and it is bitter; it has reached your very heart.”* And that's kind of what Jeremiah said just earlier. Now as we get into verse 19 and following, Jeremiah kind of takes on the voice of the nation that bemoans the trouble that has come upon them. Now remember, it hasn't happened yet, but this is a prophetic expression of anguish.

Verse 19 starts with, *“My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent, for I hear the sound of the trumpet, (and that’s the enemy’s trumpet, not our army) the alarm of war.”*<sup>20</sup> *Crash follows hard on crash; the whole land is laid waste. Suddenly my tents are laid waste, my curtains in a moment.*<sup>21</sup> *How long must I see the standard ...”* And that refers to the standard of the enemy.

When an enemy came into a land they had these standards and the standard was kind of like the symbol of the nation. And they'd have them on poles and they would, the Romans had a standard and other armies, and they would show whose army, who they were of by their standard. And so, he's saying here, *“<sup>21</sup> How long must I see the standard (meaning of the enemy) and hear the sound of the trumpet?”* Again, the enemy's trumpet.

Now the Lord Himself begins to speak. He says, *“<sup>22</sup> “For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. ...”*” Obviously, that refers there to moral and spiritual ignorance, okay? But notice what they're good at. He says, oh but, *“<sup>22</sup> “...They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.”*”

Can you imagine if you said that about your child, those of you who are parents? Can you imagine saying that about your child, your son or your daughter? Saying they are, my child is immoral and ignorant and knows nothing of God, but they're really smart at sinning. I got to tell you something, that's heartbreaking to say, to say about your own child? God is saying it about His people and His heart is broken and we need to remember that.

Now, the prophet goes on here in verse 23, begins to speak of the extent of the coming desolation, he says, *“I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.”*<sup>24</sup> *I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.*<sup>25</sup> *I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled.*<sup>26</sup> *I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger.”* Do you hear anything in those verses that sounds familiar? Because I do.

Beginning in verse 23, you start hearing about the earth without form and void, where do you read that? Genesis chapter 1, right? And what do you see in Genesis chapter 1? You see a world that is kind of in chaos, it says without form and void and God began to speak into it and bring order out of the chaos. So there's kind of a play on words going on here where the Lord is telling His people that He's going to take their order, and it's going to become chaos.



It's kind of, almost like a reverse of creation, if you will, moving into this time of judgment. And once again, the Lord speaks in verse 27, *“For thus says the Lord, ‘The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.’”* And that's an interesting statement that shows mercy. What God is saying here is that, I'm going to, even though the whole land is going to be a complete desolation, it's not going to be fully thrown away, I'm not going to make a full end.

Verse 28, *“‘For this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above be dark; for I have spoken; I have purposed; I have not relented, nor will I turn back.’”*<sup>29</sup> *At the noise of horseman and archer every city takes to flight; (people are running away) they enter thickets; they climb among rocks; all the cities are forsaken, (Jeremiah is seeing this in this prophetic eye) and no man dwells in them.”*

So the cities are emptied when they hear of the Babylonians coming, some of these outlying cities. Now, Jerusalem wouldn't have been empty because they would have considered their walls to be a protection against the enemy. But these little outlying towns, you know, they're just out in the open, but he says that as the enemy approaches, they literally emptied and the people just go running and hiding. They're just like, in the rocks and caves and wherever they can find a place to hide.

Verse 30, *“And you, O desolate one, what do you mean that you dress in scarlet, that you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, that you enlarge your eyes with paint? In vain you beautify yourself. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life.”* Now, this is another reaction to the coming Babylonians. Some people are going to scatter from the towns, but some of the really wicked people are going to actually put on the dog. They're going to, and what I mean by that is they're going to dress up, and even kind of, you get the idea of some of the women who think that, we can probably turn this attack away by just charming our invaders.

We're just going to dress up, we're going to put on lots of makeup and dress up and we're going to just soften this thing because we'll go out to them, when they come, we'll just go and we'll just go make friends and we'll charm them and that's what we're going to do.

Look what Jeremiah sees instead of them charming their enemy. *“<sup>31</sup> For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, ‘Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers.’”* And that's the Lord's way

of saying, when He says, in vain, you beautify yourself, you can try to charm your enemy, but that's not going to work because he is coming to destroy.

Chapter 5. Chapter 5 speaks of the challenge of the Lord to find one righteous individual, look at this. And you'll notice this is kind of similar language to an event that occurs in the Book of Genesis. It says, *“Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her.”*

And then we go to a feminine gender reference there because her refers to the southern kingdom of Judah. In other words, what God is saying is, if I can, I'm going to go through the city and look for one man who's righteous, and if I find one, I'll pardon her, whether Judah or Jerusalem.

*“<sup>2</sup> Though they say, “As the Lord lives,” yet they swear falsely.”* And here's where He confronts them and says, essentially, you have no shortage of religious people, they speak as if they're godly people. And look what He goes on to say, *“yet they swear falsely.”* So, *“<sup>2</sup> Though they say, “As the Lord lives,””* but that's not what's really going on, they swear falsely.

Jeremiah now prays, *“<sup>3</sup> O Lord, do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent. <sup>4</sup> Then I said, “These are only the poor; they have no sense; for they do not know the way of the Lord, the justice of their God. <sup>5</sup> I will go to the great and will speak to them, for they know the way of the Lord, the justice of their God. ...”*

So Jeremiah is like, you know, these people, they just don't get it, but he goes, you know what though? I've been talking to all these people that are kind of uneducated, they don't really know much about anything or the Word of God, they're just your basic common laborer. So I'm going to go to the educated and the civilized people, and I'm going to go talk to them. And here's his result, he says, *“<sup>5</sup> ...But they all alike had broken the yoke; they had burst the bonds.”* So what did Jeremiah find among the educated? He found educated sinners, so much for education being the solving of all of our problems.

*“Therefore (verse 6) a lion from the forest shall strike them down; a wolf from the desert shall devastate them. A leopard is watching their cities; everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are great.”* And the mention of wild animals could very

much be referring to the fact that they'll be overrun. You know, when people leave an area, the wild animals just move in.

Now God speaks. *“<sup>7</sup> How can I pardon you? Your children have forsaken me and have sworn by those who are no gods. When I fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the houses of whores. <sup>8</sup> They were well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife. <sup>9</sup> Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the Lord; and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?”*

Now I want to remind you these references that He makes in these verses about their actions refer to how they took hold of the religious ceremonial practices of the pagans. And you know, we have uncovered archaeological evidence from the area of Canaan, Palestine, that shows these practices or talks about these practices, even has remains. These people, the Canaanites, would sacrifice their children regularly to the gods, alive, in hideous, painful, tormenting ways and the Jews took those practices on.

And not long after days of righteousness. We think of David as probably the greatest king that Israel ever had, the very next king, Solomon, sacrificed his children in the fire. That's how long it can take between a time of righteousness to a time of pagan idolatry that is absolutely horrific in the eyes of God. And this is the thing, these are the things that the people were doing.

Verse 10, *“Go up through her vine rows and destroy, but make not a full end; (again, the Lord says He's not going to destroy completely and again, shows His mercy) strip away her branches, for they are not the Lord's. <sup>11</sup> For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly treacherous to me, declares the Lord. <sup>12</sup> They have spoken falsely of the Lord and have said, ‘He will do nothing; no disaster will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine.’”*

This is what the prophets were saying by the way, and that's why He goes on to verse 13 to say, *“The prophets will become wind; (in other words, they prophesy lies and empty promises) the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them!”* So they prophesy falsely, the sword will not come against you, so God says, the sword will now come against them.

*“<sup>14</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts: “Because you have spoken this word, behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall consume them. <sup>15</sup> Behold, I am bringing against you a nation from afar, O house of Israel, declares the Lord. It is an enduring nation; it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know, nor can you*

*understand what they say. <sup>16</sup> Their quiver is like an open tomb; they are all mighty warriors. <sup>17</sup> They shall eat up your harvest and your food; they shall eat up your sons and your daughters; they shall eat up your flocks and your herds; they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; your fortified cities in which you trust they shall beat down with the sword.*

*<sup>18</sup> “But even in those days, declares the Lord, I will not make a full end of you. <sup>19</sup> And when your people say, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?’ you shall say to them, ‘As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.’”*

*<sup>20</sup> Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah: <sup>21</sup> “Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. <sup>22</sup> Do you not fear me? declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. <sup>23</sup> But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away.” Do you see what He's saying in the end of verse 22 and 23?*

God is saying, I want you to think about my power. I created a world where I made a boundary for the ocean and the ocean can't get past it and it's not a wall, it's just sand and yet although the waves crash against it repeatedly, it does not go any further than that, that's my power. The sea obeys my every command, the sea respects me and does what I tell it to do. But He says here in verse 23, but my people, they won't do what I say, they won't respect my power. The elements of the world respect and obey me, but not my people, they have a stubborn, rebellious heart.

Verse 24, *“They do not say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.’”*<sup>25</sup> *Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you.”* And He's saying again, don't blame me because it's your iniquities.

Verse 26, *“For wicked men are found among my people; they lurk like fowlers...”* You know what a fowler is? He catches birds, he's a bird catcher. So He says, the wicked are found, they're *“<sup>26</sup> ... like fowlers lying in wait. They set a trap; they catch men. <sup>27</sup> Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and rich;*

<sup>28</sup> *they have grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy.* <sup>29</sup> *Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the Lord, and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?* <sup>30</sup> *An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land:”*

And you'll notice that the Lord ends the chapter by naming 3 things, 3 things that He calls appalling and horrible. One, <sup>31</sup> *the prophets prophesy falsely,* (two) *and the priests rule at their direction; ...*” And what that means is, they don't follow the wisdom of the Lord, they simply do what's right in their own eyes. And thirdly, <sup>31</sup> *...my people love to have it so, ...*” But then He asks a question, He says, but let me ask you this, <sup>31</sup> *...but what will you do when the end comes?”*

So, 3 things I have against you: The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests rule according to what they think is best without consulting me or my Word and my people love it just the way it is and they don't see any need to change it in any way. My question to you is, *“...what are you going to do in the end comes?”* That's a great question, isn't it?