

Jer. 21:11-14, Introduction to the Royal Oracles
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Overview

1. Outer structure of the overall section
 - a) 21:1-10 is Zedekiah's outlandish request.
 - b) 21:11-23:40 collects earlier oracles to show
 - 1) that the royal house was warned before of the coming judgment;
 - 2) that the nation was warned about the unreliability of the false prophets in whom Zedekiah trusted.
 - c) ch. 24 reports a vision, also earlier than the question, that is a direct answer to the question.

2. An important clue to the overall structure is the L+subject headings at 21:11 and 23:9, which could be translated "concerning the X."
 - a) These are headings to their entire sections, not just the verse in which they occur, as AV suggests.
 - b) This is the heading used for the oracles against the nations in 46:2; 48:1; 49:1,7,23,28. "Concerning" strictly would be (L; does L have the overtone of "against"?)
 - c) See 3by5 file "wordlord" for tsl+ headings. There are four complements of "thus saith the Lord":
 - 1) absolute
 - 2) (L, the usual way to indicate "concerning"
 - 3))L, 4x "to," 7x "concerning" (but several of these could be "to" also)
 - 4) L, 3x. twice "to," but 14:10 is more like (L.

3. Inner structure of the royal oracles
 - a) Note elaborate IF at 22:1-2, dividing the section into two uneven parts, 21:11-14 and 22:1-23:8. The shorter part is the seed from which the longer grows, through a rhetorical relation known as *amplification*.

 - b) Trace the relations:
 - 1) Call for justice in 21:12; cf. 22:3.
 - 2) The city personified as a woman in 21:13; cf. 22:20-23.
 - 3) Promise of judgment in 21:24; pervades ch. 22.
 - 4) "fire" language in 21:12,14 recurs in 22:7, and is also a keyword link to the previous section (21:1-10) through v.10.
 - 5) The larger section is an ABCBA chiasm, and thus has three kinds of sections (A, B, and C). The same three sections are in the seed, in order ACB, so that the center is the same in both cases.
 - a> A - Oracles of judgment that anticipate the possibility of restoration; 12.
 - b> C - Address to Jerusalem as a woman (2fs pronouns), 13.
 - c> B - Unconditional judgment, 14.

NOTE: Could the *waw*-consecutive that begins 14 continue the *pen* clause of 12? Then this would not be unconditional, but just ACA, with B added in the next section by way of intensification.

A. 11a, Section Heading

1. What is the "house of the king of Judah"?

Throughout this oracle, there is a subtle pun in the phrase "royal house." This can refer either to the physical palace (to which Jer. goes down in ch. 22), or to the family that lives there (v.12, "house of David," the dynasty); often, it seems we are to include both ideas.

In Ch. 7, we heard about the temple (ch. 7); now we hear about the palace. The two foci of the civilization are both condemned. What God established as a balance of power has failed to balance itself, and must be condemned.

2. "Concerning" is L. Literally, this means "to." We have already noted from the oracles against the nations that it seems to be used with an adversative force in Jer. As though God were saying, in an angry tone of voice, "You go tell that king ... !"

B. 12, Judgment with Possibility of Restoration

The primary focus of the verse is not judgment, but the righteousness that the king should do in order to avoid judgment. Judgment emerges in the motive.

1. The command: execute the role of the magistrate responsibly.

a) Rom. 13 shows beautifully how the civil magistrate is God's instrument for establishing and enforcing social justice. God takes social issues seriously, and has established civil rule to deal with them, even in the church age. But long ago, as now, rulers get corrupted.

b) "Execute judgment:" do this job of settling disputes and disagreements between people. Figure out who is the "oppressor" and who has been "robbed."

c) "in the morning," better, "every morning." This is the first item of business in each day. Whatever else falls off the end of the queue, this must not. It is the king's first responsibility.

2. The motive: same language as 4:4. Once God's anger is ignited, nothing can quench it. Better not to offend him--and if you learn that he has been offended, it's vitally important to make matters right *immediately*.

C. 13, Jerusalem as a Woman

The feminine pronoun and participle introduce the metaphor of the city and its court as a delicate woman, thus emphasizing the

ugliness of the judgment to fall.

1. Jerusalem is described in terms of her geographical situation, which would naturally give her military security.

a) "Inhabitant of the valley," more likely, "the one enthroned over the valley," emphasizing Jerusalem's position with natural moats all around.

b) "Rock of the plain," secure on its elevated position. No way to walk up to the gate and break it down, because the city is on the top of a natural steep hill.

2. As a result of her position, she thinks that no one can attack her.

The verb "come down" is unusual, since Jerusalem is elevated relative to its surroundings. Perhaps intended ironically. "Who is high enough that they can be in a position of military superiority over us?" Answer: God in his heaven!

D. 14, Unconditional Judgment

The sin of the people has a natural result: a visitation of God's anger against them. For 14bc, cf. 17:27. "The forest thereof" is a reference to 1 Kings 7:2, "the house of the forest of Lebanon," which acc. to 1 Kings 10:17,21 included the treasury. This prepares for the metaphor of 22:6. That which the people prize the most, their earthly treasure, will be torn from them.

Cf. those who lay up treasures on earth now. There is no way to keep them, and in the process we lose spiritual wealth.

Psalm:?

Analysis

21:11-23:8, Oracles against the Royal House. Ampl. p:
W./L:/B"YT MELEK: Y:HW.DFH

A. 21:11-14, text: quote p: Tell the king's house that judgment is inevitable apart from repentance.

1. quote f: 21:11 W./L:/B"YT MELEK: Y:HW.DFH

2. quote p

a) quote f:

1) \$IM:(W. D.:BAR-Y:HWFH

2) 21:12 B."YT D.FWID K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH

b) quote:

1) purpose p: judge rtsly lest I judge you

a> text:

1> D.IYNW. LA/B.OQER MI\$:P.F+

2> W:/HAC.IYLW. GFZW.L MI/Y.AD (OW\$"Q

3> purpose: reason p

a: text: my judgment

1: P.EN-T."C") KF/)"\$ X:AMFTIY

2: W./BF(:ARFH
3: W:/)"YN M:KAB.EH
b: reason: MI/P.:N"Y RO(A {MA(AL:L"Y/HEM}
[MA(AL:L"Y/KEM]

2) comment p: I am against you and will burn you
2fs section; cf. 22:20ff

comment p

a> text: 21:13 HIN/:NIY)"LAY/IK: YO\$EBET
HF/("MEQ CW.R HA/M.IY\$OR N:)UM-Y:HWFH

b> comment: HF/)OM:RIYM MIY-Y"XAT (FL"Y/NW.
W./MIY YFBOW) B.I/M:(OWNOWT"Y/NW.

3) Unconditional judgment? Or continuation of *pen* in v.12?

a> 21:14 W./PFQAD:T.IY (:AL"Y/KEM K.I/P:RIY MA(AL:L"Y/KEM
N:)UM-Y:HWFH

b> W:/HIC.AT.IY)" \$ B.:/YA(:R/FH.

c> W:/)FK:LFH K.FL-S:BIYBEY/HF S

B. 22:1-23:8 ampl: quote p (YHWH to Jer): The Lord sends Jer. to the King. This is chiasmic, and is outlined more fully in the next study.

1. 22:3-9, General royal oracle, with hope of restoration
2. 22:10-12, 13-18, Two oracles vs. specific kings (Shallum and Jehoiakim)
3. 22:19-23, Personification of Jerusalem as woman
4. 22:24-30, Specific oracle vs. Coniah
5. 23:1-8, General oracle vs. pastors, with promise of restoration