

Jer. 16: Judgment and Restoration, for Judah and Gentiles
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A. Overview

There are two ways to approach the structure of this chapter.

1. Formally, it is another interchange between Jeremiah and the Lord. The last interchange (in ch. 15) had a little of the flavor of an argument; this one, by contrast, is almost a duet, with them responding in affirmation with one another.
 - a) 1-18 YHWH -> Jer: quote p: I will judge, then restore Judah.
 - b) 19-20 Jer -> YHWH: Then the Gentiles will come.
 - c) 21 YHWH -> Jer: Indeed they will.
2. Thematically, there are two parts rather than three.
 - a) The first is again 1-18, and describes God's dealings with the nation of Judah, both in judgment and in restoration.
 - b) The second is 19-21, and deals with the future salvation of the Gentiles.

B. 1-18 YHWH -> Jer: I will judge, then restore Judah.

The argument is chiasmic: Judgment/restoration/judgment. The theme of judgment has been with us throughout the book, but the theme of restoration, introduced for the first time in ch. 11-13, keeps popping up, and will ultimately dominate (in ch. 30-31).

Application: How gracious of the Lord never to leave us without hope. Even when the judgment cannot be averted, he leads them to anticipate the nation's future restoration.

1. 2-13, Judgment: The largest of the three sections, and indeed more than half of the entire passage. The Lord gives Jer. a command to live a symbolic life, one that will illustrate the coming disasters, and then tells him how to answer the people when they ask about it.
 - a) 2-9 The symbols: don't marry, mourn, or rejoice, for judgment is coming. Live in a way that makes sense given the truth of what I have revealed to you. *Structure: each of the three instructions is followed by a reason relating it to the coming judgment.*
 - 1) 2-4 Don't marry and have children, for they will die horribly. This is no time to be raising a family. Cf. the Lord's words concerning the time of judgment yet to come: Matt. 24:15-21.
 - 2) 5-7 Don't mourn, for this is my judgment. 5b is

particularly harsh: God is withdrawing his XESED and his RAXAMIYM, his covenant love and his tender compassion, from them. The judgment will be so harsh that they will no longer cut themselves or shave themselves for the dead, pagan practices of mourning forbidden by Deut. 14:1. v.17, "break [bread] and give cup," refers to the ancient custom of gifts of food to the mourning relatives.

- 3) 8-9 Don't rejoice, for the Lord is cutting off the normal joys of society, such as weddings.
 - 4) *Application:* At first blush, this seems unfair. Why shouldn't Jeremiah be able to enjoy a normal life? But our lives are not our own to live. We are called to be visible to those around us, not just as examples of obedience to the Lord, but as symbols, to draw them to inquire into spiritual matters.
- b) 10-13 The question and answer.
When people ask, tell them it's because they and their fathers have sinned.
- 1) 10, The question: What have we done? What is our iniquity, our sin? People are blind to their own faults.
 - 2) 11-13, The answer: He not only identifies their sin, but also emphasizes again the resulting judgment.
- a> 11-12, The Sin.
- 1> The sin is twofold: both their fathers and they have sinned. This is the nature of God's condemnation of our race in general. Our father Adam sinned, and we sin too. Both render us guilty before God.
 - 2> Jer. asserts that the sin of the sons is worse than the sin of the fathers. So we should carefully examine the verses to see how these sins are different.
 - a: Whereas the fathers walked after other gods, the sons walk after their own evil imaginations. Following a false god, however vile, is a manifestation (though badly perverted) of the reverence toward the creator that we as creatures should show. To follow only our own imaginations is to be utterly godless.
 - b: The fathers "served other gods, and forsook me." Two parallel actions; indeed, idolatry and serving God are mutually exclusive. But the sons walked after their own imaginations, "that they may not hearken unto me," as a deliberate means of fleeing God's authority.

b> 13, The Judgment. In exile, they will have all the false gods they want. Having chosen the idols, they will be constrained to serve them, and the true God will no longer show them favor. They will be outside of his protective care.

2. 14-15, Restoration.

Jeremiah looks ahead to the day of the Lord, when the Lord will return the people from exile to their own land.

a) He casts this description in the form of the oaths that the people will use. "As the Lord lives" is an oath: "What I am saying to you is as true as the proposition that the Lord lives." And what is characteristic about the Lord? To the nation from Exodus to Exile, it was that he had delivered them from captivity in Egypt. In the future age, it will be that he has brought them back from all the lands into which he has scattered them, and caused them to dwell once again in the land of promise.

b) *Application:* It is on promises such as these that the hope of Israel's restoration is based. The promise is not fulfilled in the return under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, for this is a return from "all nations," not just from the land of the north. It is also difficult to spiritualize, as a reference to Gentile conversion, for two reasons. First, it is explicitly described as a return to the land that was given to their fathers. Second, salvation of the Gentiles is described separately, and literally, in 19-21.

3. 16-18, Judgment

Now we return to the threat of judgment, described under the figure of a hunt. We have, in order, a description of the hunt, then the reason for it, and finally its outcome.

a) 16, Description of the hunt. The people are like fish in the sea; the Lord will send many fishermen to catch them. They are like animals hiding among the rocks of the mountains; the Lord will send hunters to snare them. The image is that they will be rounded up in their land, and that no matter how carefully they try to hide, there will be so many people chasing them that they cannot escape.

b) 17, Reason for the hunt. God is not ignorant of their sinful ways.

c) 18, Outcome of the hunt.

Three details in the verse invite our attention.

1) What does it mean to recompense someone's sin "double"?

a> Is God unjustly giving someone more punishment than their sin deserves? No. In fact, nothing short of

eternal separation from God is even equal to our sin. Even in this particular case, Ezra 9:13, looking back on the exile, claims that "thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities."

b> Better to recognize this as a metonymy, Bullinger p. 585, where "double" stands for "full, abundant." Cf. Jer. 17:18, "destroy them with double destruction;" how can one destroy something twice? God is saying that he will pay them back abundantly for their sin.

2) What is the meaning of "first"? Sounds like "I will fish and hunt for them, but first of all, before I do that, I will punish them thoroughly." This is grammatically difficult; the construction of the verb "recompense" indicates that it follows "I will fish and hunt." In fact, other uses of "first" in the OT suggest that we should read this, "I will hunt them and fish them, and the first thing I will do when I get them is to repay their iniquity." That is, "first" does not look back to something before the present context, but identifies the first thing to do in this context. The "hunting and fishing" are thus distinct from the punishment. God hunts them out, so that he may then punish them thoroughly.

3) Note particularly the nature of their sin. They have defiled *my* land; filled *my* inheritance. If only the ecological movement would recognize these two things:

a> We must protect the land not out of selfish concern for ourselves, but because it is God's land.

b> The worst possible pollutant is not PCB, or CO2, or baby diapers, but sin.

C. 19-21 The Salvation of the Gentiles

1. Jeremiah's responds to this message of judgment.

Application: His response is appropriate for us.

a) First, he recognizes that the Lord is his protection, even in times of judgment. In this, he is perhaps responding to 15:10-14, the Lord's promise to care for him through the time of coming suffering.

b) Second, he recognizes that God will bring good out of evil. The statement about the Gentiles may be better rendered as jussive: "Let the gentiles come ... and let them say" If such judgment is to come on Israel because of their idolatry, let the Gentiles see it and take a lesson from it.

2. In 21, the Lord confirms this request. The Gentiles will indeed see his might in his dealings with Israel, and as a result will turn to him.

3. This theme, that through God's dealings with Israel the Gentiles come to faith, appears elsewhere in the Bible:
 - a) Ezek. 36:16-23
 - b) Rom. 11, perhaps building on these OT passages!
4. *Application*: We as Gentiles should praise God for his grace in making room for us in his salvation, and at the same time not harbor ill-will against Israel, through whom we have been brought to faith.

Analysis

- A. 16:1-18 YHWH -> Jer: quote p: I will judge, then restore Judah.
1. quote f: 16:1 WA/Y:HIY D:BAR-Y:HWFH)"L/AY L"/)MOR
 2. quote: chiasitic: Judgment/restoration/judgment
 - a) Judgment:
 - 1) 16:2-9 coord p: don't marry, mourn, or rejoice, for judgment is coming.
 - a> reason p: Don't marry and have children, for they will die horribly.
 - 1> text:


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a: 2 LO)-TIQ.AX L/:KF )I$.FH
b: W:/LO)-YIH:YW. L/:KF B.FNIYM W./BFNOWT B.A/M.FQOWM
HA/Z.EH
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 - 2> reason: quote p


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a: quote f: 3 K.IY-KOH )FMAR Y:HWFH (AL-HA/B.FNIYM
W:/ (AL- HA/B.FNOWT HA/Y.IL.OWDIYM B.A/M.FQOWM
HA/Z.EH W:/ (AL- )IM.OT/FM HA/Y.OL:DOWT )OWT/FM
W:/ (AL- ):ABOWT/FM HA/M.OWLIDIYM )OWT/FM B.F/)FREC
HA/Z.O)T
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 - b: quote:


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1: 4 M:/MOWT"Y TAX:ALU)IYM YFMUTW.
2: LO) YIS.FP:DW.
3: W:/LO) YIQ.FB"RW.
4: L:/DOMEN (AL-P.:N"Y HF/):ADFMFH YIH:YW.
5: W./BA/XEREB W./BF/RF(FB YIK:LW.
6: W:/HFY:TFH NIB:LFT/FM L:/MA):AKFL L:/ (OWP
HA/$.FMAYIM W./L:/BEH:EMAT HF/)FREC S
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 - b> quote p: Don't mourn, for this is my judgment.
 - 1> quote f: 5 K.IY-KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - 2> quote: reason p:
 - a: text:


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1: )AL-T.FBOW) B."YT MAR:Z"XA
2: W:/)AL-T."L"K: LI/S:P.OWD
3: W:/)AL- T.FNOD L/FHEM
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 - b: reason:


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1: K.IY- )FSAP:T.IY )ET-$:LOWM/IY M"/)"T
HF/(FM-HA/Z.EH N:)UM- Y:HWFH )ET- HA/XESED
W:/)ET-HF/RAX:AMIYM
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 - 2: 6 W./M"TW. G:DOLIYM W./Q:+AN.IYM B.F/)FREC
 HA/Z.O)T
 - 3: LO) YIQ.FB"RW.
 - 4: W:/LO)-YIS:P.:DW. L/FHEM

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5: W:/LO) YIT:G.ODAD
6: W:/LO) YIQ.FR"XA L/FHEM
7: 7 W:/LO)- YIP:R:SW. L/FHEM (AL-) "BEL
   L:/NAX:AM/OW (AL-M"T
8: W:/LO)-YF$:QW. )OWT/FM K.OWS T.AN:XW.MIYM
   (AL-)FB/IYW W:/ (AL-)IM./OW
c> reason p: Don't rejoice
1> text: 8 W./B"YT-MI$:T.EH LO)-TFBOW) LF/$EBET
   )OWT/FM LE/):EKOL W:/LI/$:T.OWT S
2> reason: quote p
   a: quote f: 9 K.IY KOH )FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
     ):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L
   b: quote:
     HIN:N/IY MA$:B.IYT MIN-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH
     L:/("YN"Y/KEM W./B.I/YM"Y/KEM QOWL $F$OWN
     W:/QOWL &IM:XFH QOWL XFTFN W:/QOWL K.AL.FH
2) 16:10-13 temporal p 10 W:/HFYFH When people ask, tell them
   it's because they and their fathers have sinned.
a> time: K.IY
   1> sequence p
     a: TAG.IYD L/F(FM HA/Z.EH )"T K.FL- HA/D.:BFRIYM
       HF/)"L.EH
     b: quote p
       1: quote f: W:/)FM:RW. )"LEY/KF
       2: quote: coordinate p
         A. (AL-MEH DIB.ER Y:HWFH (FL"Y/NW. )"T
           K.FL-HF/RF(FH HA/G.:DOWLFH HA/Z.O)T
         B. W./MEH (:AWON/"NW.
         C. W./MEH XA+.F)T/"NW. ):A$ER XF+F)NW.
           LA/YHWFH ):ELOH"Y/NW.
b> text: quote p
   1> quote f: 11 W:/)FMAR:T.F ):AL"Y/HEM
   2> quote: reason-result p
     a: reason: (AL ):A$ER-
       1: Fathers: contrast p
         A. text: sequence p
           1. (FZ:BW. ):ABOWT"Y/KEM )OWT/IY
             N:)UM-Y:HWFH
           2. WA/Y."L:KW. )AX:AR"Y ):ELOHIYM
             ):AX"RIYM
           3. WA/Y.A(AB:DW.M
           4. WA/Y.I$:T.AX:AWW. L/FHEM
         B. contrast:
           1. W:/)OT/IY (FZFBW.
           2. W:/)ET-T.OWRFT/IY LO) $FMFRW.
       2: You:
         A. 12 W:/)AT.EM H:AR"(OTEM LA/(:A&OWT
           M"/):ABOWT"Y/KEM
         B. purpose p
           1. text: W:/HIN./:KEM HOL:KIYM )IY$ )AX:AR"Y
             $:RIRW.T LIB./OW-HF/RF(
           2. purpose: L:/BIL:T.IY $:MO(A )"L/FY
     b: result: prophetic sequence p
       1: setting: comment p

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- A. text: 13 W:/H"+AL:T.IY)ET/:KEM M"/(AL HF/)FREC HA/Z.O)T (AL-HF/)FREC
 B. comment)RC:):A\$ER LO) Y:DA(:T.EM)AT.EM WA/):ABOWT"Y/KEM
- 2: bu-n: reason p
 A. text: WA/(:ABAD:T.EM-\$FM)ET-):ELOHIYM):AX"RIYM YOWMFM WF/LAY:LFH
 B. reason:):A\$ER LO)-)ET."N L/FKEM X:ANIYNFH S
- b) restoration: comment p
 1) text: 14 LFK"N HIN."H-YFMIYM B.F)IYM N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 2) comment (YMYM): reason p
 a> text: quote p
 1> quote f: W:/LO)-Y")FM"R (OWD
 2> quote: contrast p
 a: text: comment p
 1: text: XAY-Y:HWFH
 2: comment:):A\$ER HE/(:ELFH)ET-B.:N"Y YI&:RF)"L M"/)EREC MIC:RFYIM
 b: contrast: comment p
 1: text: 15 K.IY)IM-XAY-Y:HWFH
 2: comment:):A\$ER HE/(:ELFH)ET-B.:N"Y YI&:RF)"L M"/)EREC CFPOWN W./MI/K.OL HF/):ARFCOWT):A\$ER HID.IYX/FM \$FM.FH
 b> reason: WA/H:A\$IBOTIY/M (AL-)AD:MFT/FM):A\$ER NFTAT.IY LA/):ABOWT/FM S (perfect here epexegetical of LO)-Y")FM"R ? BKW 32.2.3a, but wrong preceding tense)
- c) judgment: prophetic sequential
 1) setting: reason p.
 a> text: prophetic sequential p
 1> 16 HIN:N/IY \$OL"XA *L:/DAW.FGIYM **L:DAY.FGIYM RAB.IYM N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 2> W:/DIYGW./M
 3> W:/)AX:AR"Y-K"N)E\$:LAX L:/RAB.IYM CAY.FDIYM
 4> W:/CFDW./M M"/(AL K.FL-HAR W./M"/(AL K.FL-G.IB:(FH W./MI/N.:QIYQ"Y HA/S.:LF(IYM
 b> reason: 17 K.IY
 1> ("YN/AY (AL-K.FL-D.AR:K"Y/HEM
 2> LO) NIS:T.:RW. MI/L.:/PFN/FY
 3> W:/LO)-NIC:P.AN (:AWON/FM MI/N.EGED ("YN/FY
- 2) bu-n: reason p
 a> Puzzle: the discontinuous force of RI)\$OWNFH is counter to the consecutive force of the preceding *waw conversive*. Study other occurrences of this adverb with converted perfects.
 1> Gen. 33:2, "foremost." Could this mean, "prominently" rather than "first of all"?
 2> Lev. 5:8, not discontinuous, but first in a series of intended actions.
 3> Num. 10:13?
 4> 1 Kings 18:25, the first thing to be done.
 5> 1 Kings 20:17
 6> cf. Isa. 65:7, where R. is adverbial. Could this be apposition: "I will repay the former thing, that is, the

double of their iniquity and their sin"? Or even, with slight change of accents, "I will repay the former thing double, even their iniquity and their sin"

7> Zech. 12:7, first among an anticipated sequence

8> 1 Chr. 11:6, first among a sequence

b> "I will hunt them and fish them, for I know their sin, and the first thing I will do when I get them is to repay their iniquity."

c>

1> text: 18 W:/\$IL.AM:T.IY RI)\$OWNFH MI\$:N"H
(:AWON/FM W:/XA+.F)T/FM

2> reason: (AL

a: XAL.:L/FM)ET-)AR:C/IY

b: B.:/NIB:LAT \$.Q.W.C"Y/HEM W:/TOW(:ABOWT"Y/HEM
MFL:)W.)ET-NAX:ALFTIY S

B. 16:19-20 Jer -> YHWH: Then the Gentiles will come.

1. 19 Y:HWFH (UZ./IY W./MF(UZ./IY W./M:NW.S/IY B.:/YOWM CFRFH

2.)"LEY/KF G.OUYIM YFBO)W. M"/)AP:S"Y-)FREC

3. quote p

a) quote f: W:/YO)M:RW.

b))AK:-\$EQER NFX:ALW.):ABOWT"Y/NW. HEBEL W:/)"YN-B.FM MOW(IYL

c) 20 H:A/YA(:A&EH-L./OW)FDFM):ELOHIYM W:/H"M.FH LO)

):ELOHIYM

C. 21 YHWH -> Jer: Indeed they will.

1. 21 LFK"N HIN:N/IY MOWDIY(/FM B.A/P.A(AM HA/Z.O)T)OWDIY(/"M
)ET-YFD/IY W:/)ET-G.:BW.RFT/IY

2. W:/YFD:(W. K.IY-\$:M/IY Y:HWFH S