

TLATA DEPURANUTA & SHIVA DENECHMTA

Three Haftarat of Punishment,
Seven Haftarat of Consolation

WEEK TWO: Now Let's Actually Talk About Yirmiyahu

The first two weeks of Tlata Depuranuta are the first prophecies of Yirmiyahu

This means we actually read them not only out of order internally (we read part of Yeshayahu 54 the week before we read Yeshayahu 51) but also out of order in the broad chronological sense: Yirmiyahu lives about 100 years AFTER Yeshayahu but we read his visions of doom first.

Week One: "Divrei Yirmiyahu" - The visions of the almond branch and the boiling pot

Week Two: "Shim'u" - Judah's audacious disloyalty and the hopelessness of its reliance on anything but God

Yirmiyahu 1:4-10

The word of GOD came to me:

Before I created you in the womb, I selected you; Before you were born, I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations.

I replied:

Ah, my Sovereign GOD! I don't know how to speak, for I am still a boy.

And GOD said to me:

Do not say, "I am still a boy,"

But go wherever I send you and speak whatever I command you.

Have no fear of them, for I am with you to deliver you—declares GOD.

GOD reached out and touched my mouth, and GOD said to me: Herewith I put My words into your mouth.

See, I appoint you this day over nations and kingdoms:

To uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

Yirmiyahu 1:11-12

The word of GOD came to me: What do you see, Jeremiah?

I replied: I see a branch of an almond tree.

GOD said to me: You have seen right, for I am **hastening** to bring My word to pass.

SHAKEID שָׁקֵד - Almond as a noun, rapidity as a verb - intentional wordplay

Rashi: “This almond tree hastens to blossom before all other trees. I, too, hasten to perform My word. And the Midrash Aggadah (Ecc. Rabbah 12:8) explains: An almond tree takes twenty-one days from its blossoming until it is completely ripe, as the number of days between the seventeenth of Tammuz, when the city was broken into, until the ninth of Av, when the Temple was burnt.”

Yirmiyahu 1:13-16

And the word of GOD came to me a second time: What do you see?
I replied: I see a **steaming pot**, tipping from the north.

And GOD said to me:
From the north shall disaster break loose upon all the inhabitants of the land!
For I am summoning all the peoples of the kingdoms of the north—declares GOD.

They shall come, and shall each set up a throne
Before the gates of Jerusalem, against its walls roundabout,
And against all the towns of Judah.
And I will argue My case against them for all their wickedness:
They have forsaken Me and sacrificed to other gods
And worshiped the works of their hands.

Combine the visions thematically

All hell is about to break loose from the North
like a boiling pot that tips over and spills

And it's going to happen SOON

And it's Yirmiyahu's job to tell all the people in
authority about this oncoming calamity

Yirmiyahu 1:17-19

So you, gird up your loins, arise and speak to them all that I command you.
Do not break down before them, lest I break you before them.

I make you this day a **fortified city**, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls
Against the whole land—against Judah's kings and officers, and against its priests
and citizens.

They will attack you,
But they shall not overcome you;
For **I am with you—declares GOD—to save you.**

Yirmiyahu 2:1-3

The word of GOD came to me, saying,
Go proclaim to Jerusalem: Thus said GOD:

I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride—
How you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Israel was holy to GOD, the first fruits of God's harvest.
All who ate of it were held guilty;
Disaster befell them
—declares GOD.

Week 1 haftarah ends here.

These pesukim are read with the previous chapter. Why not read them with next week's haftarah?

**Because they reiterate God's protection. God promises to protect Yirmiyahu like a fortified city,
and then we read about how God protected the Israelites when they were vulnerable in the wilderness.**

Yirmiyahu 2:4-8

Hear the word of GOD, O House of Jacob, Every clan of the House of Israel!
Thus said GOD:

What wrong did your ancestors find in Me that they abandoned Me
And went after delusion and were deluded?

They never asked themselves, “Where is GOD, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness,
A land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and darkness, a land nobody had traversed, where no human being had dwelt?”

I brought you to this country of farmland to enjoy its fruit and its bounty;
But you came and defiled My land, you made My possession abhorrent.

The priests never asked themselves, “Where is GOD?”
The guardians of the Teaching ignored Me; The rulers rebelled against Me;
And the prophets prophesied by Baal and followed what can do no good.

Yirmiyahu 2:9-13

Oh, I will go on accusing you —declares GOD— And I will accuse your children's children!

Just cross over to the isles of the Kittim and look; Send to Kedar and observe carefully:
See if aught like this has ever happened:
Has any nation changed its gods even though the [replacements] are no-gods?
But My people has exchanged its glory for what can do no good.

Be appalled, O heavens, at this; Be horrified, utterly dazed! —says GOD.
For My people have done a twofold wrong:
They have forsaken Me, the Fount of living waters,
And hewed out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot even hold water.

Yirmiyahu 2:14-18

Is Israel a bondman? Is he a home-born slave? Then why is he given over to plunder?
Lions have roared over him, Have raised their cries.
They have made his land a waste, his cities desolate, without inhabitants.

Those, too, in Noph and Tahpanhes will break the crown of your head.
See, that is the price you have paid
For forsaking the ETERNAL your God Who led you in the way.

What, then, is the good of your going to Egypt
To drink the waters of the Nile?
And what is the good of your going to Assyria
To drink the waters of the Euphrates?

What's going on with Egypt and Assyria here?

Leslie C. Allen

Commentary on Jeremiah →

The point is, in v18, that it is

folly to turn away from God

but then depend on Egypt and

Assyria to protect against the

Babylonians

[16] This reference to defeat at Egyptian hands, citing two cities in northern Egypt, is a historical enigma, if it is read in conjunction with vv. 14–15. The Hebrew imperfect verb can refer to the future, as REB takes it. If the verse belongs to one of Jeremiah's early oracles, it represents a premonition of Josiah's defeat at Pharaoh Neco's hands in 609 and Judah's subsequent spell of vassalage to Egypt.⁸ Then not only do Assyrian and Egyptian defeats correlate with Judah's overtures to those powers in v. 18,⁹ but the Egyptian defeat gives an objective definition of Judah's future punishment in v. 19.

[17] Both defeats are traced back to the outworking of divine providence in Judah's affairs, in reprisal for unfaithfulness to its covenant God. Here is the right answer in place of the wrong answers of v. 14 as to why Judah incurred its political failures in the past and would do so again in the future.

[18] Rivalry among pro-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian political parties in Judah may be in view. Since already by 616 Egypt and Assyria were allied against the Neo-Babylonians and Medes, a situation earlier in Josiah's reign may be envisioned.¹⁰ Condemnation of Judah's vacillation between Assyria and Egypt echoes that of the northern kingdom in Hos 7:11. The depiction of the goal as a quest for a plentiful supply of water indicates a search for political and economic survival at a time when Judah's own resources were at a low ebb.

Yirmiyahu 2:19-24

Let your misfortune reprove you, Let your afflictions rebuke you; Mark well how bad and bitter it is
That you forsake the ETERNAL your God, That awe for Me is not in you—declares my Sovereign GOD of Hosts.

For long ago you broke your yoke, tore off your yoke-bands, and said, “I will not work!”
On every high hill and under every verdant tree, you recline as a harlot.
I planted you with noble vines, all with choicest seed; Alas, I find you changed Into a base, alien vine!

Though you wash with natron and use much lye, your guilt is ingrained before Me —declares my Sovereign GOD.

How can you say, “I am not defiled, I have not gone after the Baalim”?
Look at your deeds in the valley, consider what you have done!
Like a lustful she-camel, **restlessly running about**,
Or like a wild ass used to the desert,
Snuffing the wind in her eagerness, **whose passion none can restrain**,

(None that seek her need grow weary—**In her season, they’ll find her!**)

Yirmiyahu 2:25

Save your foot from going bare, and your throat from thirst.

But you say, "It is no use. No, I love the strange gods and after them I must go."

This verse goes with what precedes.

LC Allen: "The second animal metaphor bears a sexual import. It develops the camel's aimless chasing around into a fuller image of the sniffing of the female ass in heat to pick up a male scent and track it down. The scathing application to a human search that is ready to wear out sandals and endure thirst uncovers a passionate obsession."

God says, You love the false gods so much that you would wear out your shoes and go thirsty like fixated animals in heat in pursuit of the false gods.

But what happens to an animal in due time after mating season? "None that seek her need grow weary—In her season, they'll find her!" God says, You will ultimately be easy pickings for your enemies, like an animal at the end of gestation is vulnerable to predators and hunters.

Yirmiyahu 2:26-28

Like a thief chagrined when caught, so is the House of Israel chagrined—
They, their kings, their officers, and their priests and prophets.

They said to wood, “You are my father;” to stone, “You gave birth to me,”
While to Me they turned their backs and not their faces.

But in their hour of calamity they cry, “Arise and save us!”
And where are those gods you made for yourself?
Let them arise and save you, if they can, in your hour of calamity.

For your gods have become, O Judah,
As many as your towns!

What to append?

After 2:28, the haftarah continues, but there are different practices as to what comes next:

Ashkenazim append 3:4

הָלוֹא מֵעַתָּה קִרְאתִי [קָרָאתָ] לִי אָבִי אֱלֹהִים נִעְרִי אֶתָּה:

“Just now you called to Me, “Father! / You are the Companion of my youth.”

Sephardim and others append 4:1-2

אִם-תָּשׁוּב יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹאמֶה-ה' אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב וְאִם-תִּסָּר שְׁקוּצֶיךָ מִפְּנֵי וְלֹא תִנּוּד:

וְנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ חַי-ה' בְּאֵמֶת בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבְצִדְקָה וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בּוֹ גּוֹיִם וּבּוֹ יִתְהַלְלוּ:

“If you return, O Israel —declares GOD— If you return to Me, If you remove your abominations from My presence And do not waver, And swear, “As GOD lives,” In sincerity, justice, and righteousness— Nations shall bless themselves by you And praise themselves by you.”

Both practices invoke a note of hope in return

“Just now you called to Me, “Father! / You are the Companion of my youth.”

Counterbalances calling the idols father and mother. It may be too little too late... but it may be a chance at reconciliation.

“If you return in sincerity and justice... and remove the abominations...”

The Jews can return to a state of blessedness and blessing if they turn away from idolatry and injustice as sharply as they once turned away from God