The Corruption of Jerusalem
5: 1-31

During the reign of Josiah

This chapter consists of a series of indictments **(5:1-5, 10-13, 20-28)** followed in each case by a **therefore**, which introduces judgment oracles **(5:6-9, 14-17, 29-31)**. The interlude of **5:18-19** provides the question with which the chapter, indeed the book, is primarily concerned: **Why?** By means of its question and answer, these verses make clear that the judgment of **ADONAI** is not impulsive, but has its basis in the people's infidelity. At the same time, this interlude restates that **though the whole Land will be ruined, I will not destroy it completely (4:27).** [68]

The divine lament also finds its place in this chapter behind questions addressed to readers **(5:7, 9, 22, 29, and 31)**. These divine questions, which interact with human comments **(5:2, 4-5, 12, 19, and 24)**, are not simply rhetorical questions. The questions in **5:7, 9** and **29** reveal a **God** who has sincerely sought another outcome, but sadly, reluctantly came to the conclusion that an outcome without judgment was not possible. [68] The greatest judgment **YHVH** can send to disobedient people is to let them have their own way and reap the sad, painful consequences of their sins. [69]

These questions are also genuine questions for the exiles in Babylon. From their perspective of the destruction of their homeland and the Temple, do they think that **Ha'Shem** had been unfair for taking this course of action? Could they think of any other avenue that **the LORD** might have taken? **God's** question in **5:22** reveals divine wonderment at their indifferent attitude in the face of **the Eternal One** who created the world and provided boundaries for its destructive forces. Behind the question in **5:3** stands **the One True God** who asks what resources they will have available to them when the destruction falls. The mere asking of the question reveals that **the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** was deeply concerned with their future. [70]