

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 56

“Coming To An End”

Study: 2 Ki 24:17-20, 2 Chr 36:10-16, Jer 52:1-2, 37:1-2 & 22:1-10

Reading: Proverbs 3:1-12

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

What Does the Bible Say?

After Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, the third son of Josiah, as king over Israel. He was a brother to Jehoiakim and uncle to Jehoiachin. Nebuchadnezzar changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah, which indicated that Nebuchadnezzar had the power over him. Zedekiah was the last king of Judah and he reigned 11 years before the final destruction of Jerusalem. He did not learn from his brother's or nephew's mistakes, but continued to practice evil in the sight of God. His evil caused God to bring the prophesied judgement on the land. This evil was not just practiced by the king, but the priests were highly active in leading the nation into unfaithfulness. The people willingly followed and they polluted the temple that was to be set apart to be holy unto the Lord (2 Ki 24:17-20, 2 Chr 36:10-14, Jer 52:1-2).

This judgement did not come without warning. God had persistently sent prophets to His people because He loved His people. The people did not receive the messengers well, but mocked them and the words they declared. The prophets were despised. Some of them were tortured and others were killed. There came a point where there was no longer hope for the land and they were beyond healing. God used the rebellion of Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar to bring about this judgement (2 Chr 36:15-16, Jer 37:1-2).

In following the Reese Chronological Study Bible, we will now look at the first part of Jeremiah 22. Why the author chose to place this passage at this point is not fully clear since we are not given any indication of who the “king of Judah” was that Jeremiah was sent to. What we do know is that Jeremiah was told to go to the king and challenge him to hear the word of God. The message given to the king was to do justice and righteousness. The king and the leaders were to stand up for those who were being oppressed. They were not to allow the people of the land to take advantage of the poor or the widows. Basically, God wanted all people to be dealt with fairly and honestly. It

is a little difficult for us to understand this in our first world countries where the majority of people are middle class and opportunities abound. God wanted His children to treat everyone as important, but society around them was full of cast systems where the rich ruled over the poor, using them only for their gain (vs Jer 22:1-3).

The king was told that if he chose to obey the words of God, he and his descendants would continue to reign in the land. If he chose not to obey, the house of David would become desolate. God compared his view of the line of David to the well watered plains of Gilead or the refreshing springs that come from the mountains of Lebanon. This would not always be the case if the king did not turn. God would turn them from a refreshing environment to a deserted desert. God would bring enemies against them that would cut down the best they had and destroy the land (Jer 22:4-7).

Many times the prophets declared that people would walk by Jerusalem shaking their heads at the great destruction that took place. When people would wonder what happened, the answer would be very clear. They turned against their God and the covenant they had made with him. The many people that would die during this process would actually have it better than those who would be exiled from their lands and have the memories of death and destruction etched in their minds (Jer 22:8-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

One thing that is very clear in Scripture is that God desires great things for His children. He doesn't give them a bunch of rules to make them miserable, but gives rules and guidelines for a greater purpose. God wants His children to be full of life and prosperous (not always financial) in all that they do. Yet, when you choose to step out of God's will and His plan for your life, you start the process of moving from a lush, fertile land to becoming a desert. This normally does not happen all at once, but will happen over time when you fail to listen to the continual warnings that God sends your way. The heart of God is not for you to fail or be miserable, but is for you to live with great joy, peace and security. This comes only by surrendering your ways and your desires to Him. When you choose to do things the way God desires things to be done, rather than the ways the people in the world around you live, you will find the life that God so desperately desires for you to have.

2 Chronicles 36

Who was made king of Judah (vs 10)?

Why was it significant that Nebuchadnezzar chose the king and that he changed the king's name (vs 10)?

How long did the last king of Judah reign (vs 11)?

How did Zedekiah live (vs 12)?

Why do you think we are told that he did not humble himself (vs 12)?

Why is humility so important as a follower of God?

What two things does it say that Zedekiah did in verse 13?

- 1.
- 2.

Was the destruction of Judah only the fault of an ungodly king (vs 14)?

What had God done for the people (vs 15)?

How did they treat the messengers of God (vs 16)?

Jeremiah 22

Where was Jeremiah instructed to go (vs 1)?

Who was the king to stand up for (vs 3)?

Why do you think this was so important to God?

What can you learn about the way God wants you to treat others?

What did God promise (vs 4)?

What did God compare His people to (vs 6)? What would they become?

Why was God going to forsake His people (vs 8-9)?

“Good and Evil Shepherds”

Study: Jeremiah 23:1-12

Reading: Matthews 20:20-28, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

Once talked with a sports reporter who covered many different local high school sports. I asked him what he thought the difference was between teams that seemed to win year in and year out and teams that struggled to have a winning record. He quickly responded with a one word answer - “Coaching.” He went on further to explain how every team would have ups and downs with the ebs and flow of talent levels and injuries. Though it was not always the case, in his opinion, the main difference in high school sports was the coaching.

Today, we are going to be reminded about the importance of biblical and godly leadership. God rebuked the leaders in Israel because they were highly responsible for the wickedness in the land.

What Does the Bible Say?

Over and over again the Bible describes the importance of leaders and many times they are referred to as “shepherds.” This was an illustration that everyone in the Bible days could understand because shepherding was a common practice. Without a shepherd, the sheep would have a hard time surviving since they counted on the shepherd to lead them in the right direction for food and for safety. In this passage great judgement is proclaimed against the leaders of the land because they had neglected their duties to lead and guide the people into what was good for the flock. This neglect would cause God to drive the flock away and scatter them to different parts of the world (vs 1-2).

One day, God will gather the flock back together and bring them back to the land of Israel. There, they will be fruitful and multiply once again. God will give them proper leaders who will care for their followers. They will no longer have to live in fear, wondering who was going to invade and attack next. None of them would be lost or neglected. It would be a time that was much different than the period the Israelites were experiencing during the life of Jeremiah (vs 3-4).

A new king from the line of David will assume the throne in Israel.

He will be a “righteous Branch” and will lead the land into righteousness. The name of this ruler would be Jehovah Tsidkenoo which means “The Lord is Our Righteousness.” Safety and security would be a normal part of their lives. They would no longer look back to the day where God delivered them from the land of Egypt, but would remind themselves of the day that God returned them from their exile to live in their own land. This was a reference to the millennial kingdom that is still to come when Jesus returns (vs 5-8).

Though the Great Shepherd would one day come, the shepherds that were currently leading the land were breaking the heart of Jeremiah. The emotions that were stirred up when he saw the evil in the land caused him to tremble and feel like a staggering drunk. It wasn’t just the sin of the land that caused this, but he also knew the great pain they were going to experience because of this sin. The land was full of people who were committing physical and spiritual adultery. Their sin and wickedness caused the land itself to suffer problems. Their evil was ruining everything around them (9-10).

It wasn’t just the governmental leaders that had failed them, but their spiritual leaders had failed them as well. Awful things were taking place in the Temple of God that were despicable in God’s sight. As a result, the people would become like those chased in the dark through slippery rocks. They would fall and bring disaster upon themselves because of their evil choices (vs 11-12).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Though people make their own choices in life and leaders are not 100% responsible for all that their followers do, there is great emphasis placed in the importance of godly leaders. If you are a leader, you have a great responsibility to those who you have been called to lead. It is vital for all leaders to follow the biblical guidelines for leaders given by God. In today’s society, you also have a choice of who you allow to be your leaders, especially when it comes to spiritual matters. You have the privilege of having God speak directly to you through His Word and are given His Word to help you evaluate which leaders are living the way His Word describes. There are many people who follow spiritual leaders because of their personal charisma or the popularity they gain. These should not be the criteria for who you follow. Scripture makes it clear that the godly leader is one who humbly serves his followers, sharing the truth of God’s Word with them.

What were the leaders called (vs 1)?

Why do you think God compared the leaders to shepherds (vs 1)?

Why were the leaders rebuked (vs 2)?

Why do you think leaders would do this?

What was going to happen to the leaders (vs 2)?

What was God planning to do (vs 3)?

How were things going to be different in the future (vs 3)?

Who is God going to place as leaders (vs 4)?

How will the people live (vs 4)?

What was predicted in verse 5?

What was this new king going to be called (vs 6)?

Why do you think He was given this name?

How would the people dwell (vs 6)?

What would the people no longer refer to (vs 7)?

What will the Israelites talk about (vs 8)?

How did Jeremiah feel when thinking about the leaders of the land (vs 9)?

How did Jeremiah describe what was taking place (vs 10)?

Who were ungodly, wicked men (vs 11)? Why was this so dangerous?

What was going to happen to the people of the land (vs 12)?

How do you think this great judgement could be avoided (vs 13)?

“The Source of Truth”

Study: Jeremiah 23:13-22

Reading: Acts 17:10-15, 2 Timothy 2:14-26

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

When I first became a pastor, another older pastor moved into town to pastor another local church. I met him for lunch one day and came home excited about working together with this man. He had a great passions and excitement for the role he was taking on and I thought I had found a great mentor and partner for Christ in our community. It wasn't long until my impression began to change. This man, though he had great charisma and was a very expressive and interesting preacher, was very shallow when it came to spiritual truths. Though he was eloquent in his speech, my heart broke as I realized the message He delivered was not a message from God.

Today, we are going to see how the prophets were rebuked because they spoke their own messages instead of God's.

What Does the Bible Say?

The northern tribes of Israel had been destroyed over 100 years before because their prophets led the people deeper and deeper into the worship of Baal. The prophets of Judah based in Jerusalem should have learned from this, but they chose to walk in the same path. They declared lies and aided those who did what was evil. Instead of prophesying to turn men from evil, they actually assisted in turning them towards greater evil. Their wickedness was compared to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. God did not spare those wicked cities and He would not spare the nation of Judah. He was going to cause the inhabitants to become like people who ate and drank poison. Instead of being nourished and helped by the prophets, the prophets were giving them poisoned messages that led to great ungodliness (vs 13-15).

God told the people that they should not listen to what these false prophets were declaring. They were coming up with their own thoughts and passing those off as God's truth. They were extremely hurtful to the people because they declared no judgement would come which allowed the people to follow their stubborn, selfish hearts. The message of the

prophets should have been calling people to repent, instead, it was encouraging them to go deeper into sin (vs 16-17).

The main problem with these prophets is that they didn't stand in the presence of God and hear His Words. They didn't follow what had already been given by God, nor were they hearing what God was saying to them. As a result of this failure, God was gathering clouds to prepare to unleash a great storm on the people. It was going to be a violent storm in which God would pour out His anger for their sin. Though what God was declaring through Jeremiah could not be fully understood in their present situation, they would be able to look back at these words after destruction came and it would all make sense (vs 18-20).

God made it clear that many of the prophets of the land were not sent by Him. He did not speak to them and they were not speaking His words. If they had been in the presence of God, their message would have been completely different. They would have encouraged the people to repent and turn back to God. They would have led the people in a completely different direction than the people were currently headed (vs 21-22).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What message are your prophets declaring? There are many "spiritual leaders" who you have an opportunity to listen to. Through radio, internet and tv you have more options than just listening and following your local spiritual leaders. Even spiritual leaders have other spiritual leaders that help guide and direct them. You are not called to blindly follow spiritual leaders, but are challenged in the New Testament to test your leaders to compare what they are saying to the Word of God. There are many false prophets today who declare "spiritual truths," but don't derive them from the Word of God. They mix human thinking with Scripture to create their own narrative rather than simply proclaiming the truth of God's Word. They are often very appealing to listen to because of their personal charisma, yet if they are not hearing from God through His Word, they will not be speaking God's Word to you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for spiritual leaders who speak the truth of God's Word.*
- * *Ask God to help you follow the correct spiritual leaders.*
- * *Praise God because He is the only source of truth.*

Where was Samaria (vs 13)?

Why was Samaria significant (vs 13)?

What did the prophets of Samaria do (vs 13)?

Why do you think God referenced these prophets?

What prophets were being talked about in verse 14?

What had these prophets done (vs 14)?

Why was this so dangerous?

What had the land become like (vs 14)?

What was the message of the false prophets compared to (vs 15)?

What was going to be the end result (vs 15)?

What did God say not to do (vs 16)? Why not?

Why is it so dangerous when spiritual leaders focus on opinions (vs 16)?

What were these prophets declaring (vs 17)?

What had these prophets not done (vs 18)?

What was God's wrath compared to (vs 19)?

What was not going to be turned back (vs 20)?

How would the people eventually find out who was true and who was false (vs 20)?

What had God made clear (vs 21)?

How would the prophets have been different if they had listened to God (vs 22)?

“What Is the Lord Saying”

Study: Jeremiah 23:23-40

Reading: 1 John 4:1-6, 2 Peter 2:1-22

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

When I travel to places and visit museums I have found that my wife and I tend to read information differently. I will often skim through the things that are written to get an overview or general idea of what is being said, while my wife takes a little more time to read all of it. This allows me to move much quicker through an exhibit and see more, but I have found that I do tend to miss some information. Occasionally, I will make a comment about something that I thought I understood about the place we visited, and then my wife will correct me because she read something different than what I said. I have learned that if I really want to know the facts, I have to read what the facts are.

Today, we are going to read how the people failed to ask God what He wanted. Instead, they made up their own thoughts and ideas about what God planned and desired for their lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

In an interesting question, God asked if the people only viewed Him as a God who was close to them. This probably was referring to the view that many people had about regional gods who had limited power. God was declaring that He was not only near, but also far way. This statement meant that He could be everywhere at once. There was not a place that anyone could go to hide themselves from Him. His territory was not limited but extended to the whole world. This idea of God being everywhere is referred to as the “omnipresence of God.” (vs 23-24)

One thing that was clearly not hidden from God was the way that the false prophets had declared lies to the people. They would tell the people dreams they had, claiming that these dreams were from God. These prophets were full of deceit, only declaring what would help them gain popularity with the people. Just as straw was useless when it came to food for the people, so the dreams that their false prophets declared were useless. They needed real wheat to be able to survive, just like they

needed the truth that was given directly from God. The messages of the false prophets didn't stop, but daily pulled people from God and the true message that He wanted the people to hear. This was nothing new, but had been happening over and over again (vs 25-28).

God compared His words to fire and a hammer. Both of the objects had the ability to produce great damage, but that could also have great results. They represented the power that God had in His words. The words of the false prophets were powerless and God declared that He was against them. Their words did not help the people at all. Though these words might have relieved their fears, they were setting the people up for great disaster (vs 29-32).

If Jeremiah was asked what new burden God had given him to deal with, he was to declare that the people were the burden. This was because God was going to abandon them. If a person claimed they had a new prophecy and declared they had a message from the Lord, they and their families would be punished by God. The question they should have been asking was “What does God say?” God was disgusted with people using His name to promote their own ideas (vs 33-36).

Those who were found guilty of not listening to God, but declaring they had a message from Him would not be dealt with lightly. God was going to bring great destruction to these men and their families. This destruction would also extend to all the people of Judah who chose to listen to them (vs 37-40).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Where do you get your spiritual direction from? Do you tend to listen to the messengers who make up their own ideas and concepts or do you listen to those who are speaking the Word of God? False prophets were not just in existence in those days, but there are many who exist today. They make up thoughts and ideas about the Bible which sound good and appeal to men, but they are not what God says. They promote themselves and the religion they want others to follow, but fail to ask God what God wants. Some of these people are well meaning and have the good of others on their mind, but they have things backwards. They use Bible verse to support their thoughts or mission rather than letting God's Word be the source of their thoughts and mission. The Bible is full of warnings about false teachers because they are around everywhere. Make it a practice to ask yourself what God wants in every situation.

“Blessings and Cursings”

Study: Jeremiah 24:1-10

Reading: Deuteronomy 28:1-68

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

What Does the Bible Say?

The time line for this prophecy places it around 597 B.C. shortly after Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah for the second time and took Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) back to Babylon with him. He had also taken many skilled craftsmen with him as well to help with his many construction projects.

Zedekiah was noqt king over Judah and had been placed there by Nebuchadnezzar (vs 1a).

God showed Jeremiah two baskets that were full of figs and were placed in front of the temple of the Lord. One of the baskets was full of wonderful looking figs of the highest quality. The other basket contained figs that were rotten to the point that no one would be able to eat them.

God asked Jeremiah to tell Him what he saw. After Jeremiah described the figs, God compared the good figs to the exiles that were taken from Judah and were sent away to Babylon. God was not going to allow them to rot, but was going to use this group of individuals to come back to the land of Israel and rebuild Jerusalem. This group



Baskets of figs

of people would have a greater love for God than the current Israelites and He would once again be proud to be called their God. They would choose to follow Him from their hearts (vs 1a-7).

On the other hand, the bad figs were those who were left in Judah under the reign of Zedekiah. God would treat them like rotten figs would

What did God say about being near and far (vs 23)?

Why do you think He said this?

What two questions did God ask in verse 24?

What are the answers to these questions?

What did the prophets emphasize about their dreams (vs 25)?

****The focus was not on God, but on themselves.*

What did God call their prophesies (vs 26)?

What were these prophesies doing to the people (vs 27)?

What did God say should be done (vs 28)?

What did the illustration of the straw and hay mean (vs 28)?

What two things did God compare His Word to (vs 29)? Why?

What did God say the prophets were doing (vs 30)?

What was God's attitude towards the false prophets (vs 31)?

What had God not done (vs 32)?

What did God say His burden was (vs 33)? What do you think this meant?

What questions should the people have been asking (vs 34)?

How were they perverting the Word of God (vs 35-36)?

What was God going to do to those who failed to listen (vs 37-38)?

How do you think this passage can be applied today?

be treated and compared His treatment of these wicked Israelites to His treatment of the pagan Egyptians. He was not going to protect them or care for them as His chosen people, but instead, the nation of Israel would become like a symbol of disgrace to all the other nations. People would not think about Israel with high regard, but instead it would become synonymous which places were destroyed and uninhabitable. God was going to accomplish this through war, famine and pestilence. All these things would take a great toll on the land leaving it completely devastated (vs 8-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God does not forget about those who seek after Him? We are not told how many of those who were taken captive had a love for God, but it appears that many of them did or eventually would have this love. Of course, it would be 70 years until they would come back to Israel and many would be dead by that time, but they would learn from their deportation and the destruction of Jerusalem. They would choose to follow the Lord and would be allowed to rebuild. Once again you are reminded how God will take care of those who choose to follow Him. This doesn't mean the captives did not experience times of suffering, but does help us see that God sustained them and helped build them during this time they were away from their homeland. No matter what circumstances you are going through, you can trust God that He will never abandon you. He will be helping you each step of the way as long as you choose to continue to submit to His plan for your life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank the Lord for choosing not to abandon you.*
- * *Ask the Lord to help you live in obedience to Him.*
- * *Praise the Lord because He has the power to sustain you.*

Thought for the day

When was this prophecy given (vs 1)?

Who had been taken to Babylon (vs 1)?

Why had these people been taken?

What did Jeremiah see in his vision (vs 1)?

What was the major difference between the two baskets (vs 2)?

Why do you think God asked Jeremiah what he saw (vs 3)?

How did he describe the figs (vs 3)?

What did the good figs represent (vs 4-5)?

What do you think the beginning of verse 6 meant?

What was God going to do with these exiles (vs 6)?

What was going to be different about their hearts (vs 7)?

Does this mean the people didn't have a choice? Explain your answer.

What did God say the people would do (vs 7)?

What does this indicate about God's desire for you?

What were the bad figs compared to (vs 8)?

How was God going to treat them (vs 8)?

What was going to happen to these people (vs 9)?

What does this reveal about the great judgement of God?

What was their fate going to be (vs 10)?

What lesson can you learn from this reading today?

“God Is The Authority”

Study: Jeremiah 27:1-11

Reading: Ezra 1:1-4, Daniel 5:1-30

Memory: Isaiah 40:26

What Does the Bible Say?

When Zedekiah took over as king, God sent a message to Jeremiah. God told Jeremiah to make himself a yoke and straps, like those which were used for teams of oxen, except that he was supposed to put the yoke on himself. This was to be an illustration of how the nations would become servants of the king of Babylon. It appears that Jeremiah was to wear this as he went to see the ambassadors who had gathered in Jerusalem to talk to Zedekiah. These men were from nations that surrounded Judah and they apparently were attempting to plan how to escape the heavy hand of Babylon. The map shows where all these nations were located. This message declared that it was the all powerful God of Israel who had given power to the Babylonians. All the nations that had gathered to try to solve the problem of Babylon would not be successful because this was the will of God. God was going to allow three generations of Babylonians to rule over the region until it was time to punish Babylon and the Babylonians would become the slaves of other nations (vs 1-7).

The nations were warned not to rebel



Judah and the Nations around them

because the Babylonian conquest was God’s plan. If they rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, God was going to punish them by bringing famine and pestilence which would cause destruction to their lands. The false prophets of all these countries would give their leaders different advice, but Jeremiah told them to choose not to listen to these men and women. No one would want to serve Babylon, but it was the only way for a nation to survive without being crushed by them. If they failed to listen to the words of God, many would die and those who remained would be removed from their homelands and scattered into foreign lands. God promised that He would spare any of the nations that chose to go along with Babylon and their desires. In the end, those who chose to listen to God and submit to Babylon would keep their land and would one day be released from the bondage of Babylon (vs 8-11).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God is in control of the authorities of this world? God sent a clear message to Judah and the surrounding territories stating that He was the one who allowed Babylon to prosper. He also declared that Babylon’s time was limited, which history reveals was true. The point that He was making was that they needed to choose to obey Him and part of obeying God meant that they needed to put themselves under the authority of Babylon. This is a great reminder for you today in a society where you may have leaders over you that you don’t like. You must remember that God placed those leaders there. It is interesting to note that God told them if they submitted to this pagan leader, they would be spared. God was challenging them to trust Him and submit to His plan which meant submitting to the Babylonians. Sometimes, the plan of God is for you to submit to others, even others who you strongly disagree with. It is important for you to pray and be directed by God to know when He wants you to submit and when He wants you to stand against. The key to remember is that He is in control and obedience to God is far more important than earthly freedom or obeying men.

Thought for the day

When was this message given (vs 1)?

What was Jeremiah supposed to make (vs 2)?

What was this a symbol of (vs 2)?

What was significant about the nations mentioned in verse 3?

Why do you think they were in Jerusalem to meet with Zedekiah (vs 3)?

How did God describe Himself (vs 4)? Why?

What did God say He did (vs 5)?

Why is believing God is the Creator essential to believing God (vs 5)?

What did God declare about His power over the nations (vs 5)?

What did God say He chose to do (vs 6)?

Why do you think God called Nebuchadnezzar “my servant” (vs 6)?

How long would the nations have to serve the Babylonians (vs 7)?

How does history record that this was true?

What would happen to those nations who chose not to submit to Babylon (vs 8)?

Why do you think God was telling them to obey and submit to a pagan king?

Who were they not to listen to (vs 9)?

What would these people try to say (vs 10)?

What would God do if they believed the lies of the false prophets (vs 11)?

What would God do if they submitted to Him?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.