

Literary Forms (Genres) of Old Testament Prophetic Literature



Prophecy

Prophetic Speeches

- Confirm Guilt
- Announcement Judgment

▪ Call to Repent

▪ Announcement Deliverance /
Restoration

Literary Form of the “Call to Repent”:

1) Exhortation to Repent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Grammatical Form: Imperative (command)♦ “Return” = Hebrew שׁוּב (šūb)
2) Motivation (Reason they should heed the Exhortation)	(a) Future Consequences of their Choice (a.1) <i>Promise</i> of what God will do <i>if</i> they Repent (Positive consequences of Heeding) (a.2) <i>Threat</i> of what God will do <i>if</i> they <i>not</i> Repent (Negative consequences for Not Heeding)
	(b) Character of God (Positive Divine Quality that should Motivate to Repent)

Calls to Repent in *Jeremiah*

Jeremiah

3:12-13

3:14-19

3:22a

4:1-2

4:3-4

4:14

7:1-7

18:7-12

26:3-6, 13

Jeremiah chs. 2-6

(A) ch. 2: Indictment / Accusations of Sin
(*Confirm their Guiltiness*)

(B) 3:1 – 4:4: Calls to Repent
(*Plea to Transition from
Condemnation / Judgment → Restoration*)

(C) 4:5 – ch. 6: Declarations of Judgment

Jeremiah 3:1 – 4:4

A.1. Accusation of Sin (3:6-11)

B.1. Call to Repent (3:12-13)

B.2. Call to Repent (3:14-19)

A.2. Accusation of Sin (3:20-21)

B.3. Call to Repent (3:22a)

C. Response (3:22b-25)

B.4. Call to Repent (4:1-2)

B.5. Call to Repent (4:3-4)

A.1. Accusation of Sin (3:6-11)

⁶ Moreover, Yahweh said to me in the days of Josiah the king,
“Have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done?
She has gone up on every high mountain
and under every green tree,
and has played the prostitute there.

⁷ I said after she [Israel] had done all these things,
‘She will **return** to me;’ but she did not **return**,
and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

⁸ I saw when, for this very cause, that backsliding Israel had committed adultery,
I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce,
yet treacherous Judah, her sister, had no fear;
but she also went and played the prostitute.

⁹ Because she took her prostitution lightly, the land was polluted,
and she committed adultery with stones and with wood.

¹⁰ Yet for all this her treacherous sister, Judah,
has not **returned** to me with her whole heart, but only in pretense,”
says Yahweh.

¹¹ Yahweh said to me, “Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous
than treacherous Judah.

A.1. Accusation (3:6-11)

¹⁰ Yet for all this her treacherous sister, Judah,
has not **returned** to me with her whole heart, but only in pretense,”

B.1. Call to Repent (3:12-13)

Exhortation		3:12 Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: “ Return , you backsliding Israel,” says Yahweh.
Motivation	Promise	I will not look in anger on you,
	Divine Character	for I am merciful,” says Yahweh.
	Promise	“I will not keep anger forever.
Exhortation		13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against Yahweh you God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice,” says Yahweh.

B.2. Call to Repent (3:14-19)

Exhortation		14 “ Return , backsliding children,” says Yahweh,
Motivation	Divine Character	for I am a husband to you.
	Promise	<p>I will take you, one of you from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.</p> <p>15 I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”</p> <p>(+ further promises of restoration, vv. 16-19)</p>

A.2. Accusation of Sin (3:20-21)

²⁰ “Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband,
so you have dealt treacherously with me, house of Israel,” says Yahweh.

²¹ A voice is heard on the bare heights,
the weeping and the petitions of the children of Israel;
because they have perverted their way,
they have forgotten Yahweh their God.

B.3. Call to Repent (3:22a)

Exhortation	3:22a “ Return , you backsliding children,
Motivation: Promise	and I will heal your backsliding.”

C. Response (3:22b-25)

^{22b} “Behold, we have come to you;
for you are Yahweh our God.

^{23b} Truly the salvation of Israel is in Yahweh our God.

²⁵ Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us;
for we have sinned against Yahweh our God, . . .

We have not obeyed Yahweh our God’s voice.”

B.4. Call to Repent (4:1-2)

Exhortation

4:1 “If you will **return**, Israel,” says Yahweh,
“if you will **return** to me,
and if you will put away your abominations
out of my sight;
then you will not be removed;
2 and you will swear, “As Yahweh lives!”
in truth, in justice, and in uprightness.

Motivation: Promise

The nations will bless themselves in him,
and they will glory in him.

B.5. Call to Repent (4:3-4)

Exhortation

4:3 For thus says Yahweh
to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem,
Break up your fallow ground,
and do not sow among thorns.
4 Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh,
and take away the foreskins of your hearts,
you people of Judah
and inhabitants of Jerusalem;

Motivation: Threat

lest my wrath will go forth like fire,
and burn so that one can quench it,
because of the evil of your doings.”

Jeremiah 4:14 (WEB)

Exhortation	14 Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness
Motivation -- Promise	that you may be saved. How long will your evil thoughts lodge within you?

Jeremiah 7:1-7 (WEB)

- 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,
- 2 “Stand in the gate of Yahweh’s house, and proclaim this word there, and say,
Hear the word of Yahweh, all you of Judah,
who enter in at these gates to worship Yahweh.
- 3 Thus says Yahweh (the Commander) of (the Heavenly) Hosts, the God of Israel:

Exhortation	Amend your ways and your doings,
Motivation: Promise	and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
Exhortation	4 Do not trust in lying words, saying, ‘The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, are these.’
Exhortation	5 For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute justice between a person and their neighbor; 6 if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and do not walk after other gods to your own hurt;
Motivation: Promise	7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave your ancestors from of old even forever more.”

Jeremiah ch. 26 (WEB)

- ² Thus says Yahweh,
“Stand in the court of Yahweh’s house,
and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in Yahweh’s house,
all the words that I command you to speak to them. Don’t omit a word.
- ³ It may be they will listen, and every person turn from their evil way;
that I may relent (change my mind) from the evil
which I intend to do to them because of the evil of their doings.’

Call to Repent (26:4-6)

Exhortation	<p>⁴ You shall tell them, “Yahweh says: ‘If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, ⁵ to listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I send to you, even rising up early and sending them, but you have not listened;</p>
Motivation: Threat	<p>⁶ then I will make this house [a devastation] like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.’ “</p>

► Priests' & Prophets' Response (26:7-11)

⁷ The priests and the prophets and all the people
heard Jeremiah speaking these words in Yahweh's house.

⁸ When Jeremiah had finished speaking
all that Yahweh had commanded him to speak to all the people,
the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying,
"You shall surely die!

⁹ Why have you prophesied in Yahweh's name, saying,
'This house will be like Shiloh,
and this city will be desolate, without inhabitant?'"

All the people were crowded around Jeremiah in Yahweh's house.

¹⁰ When the princes of Judah heard these things,
they came up from the king's house to Yahweh's house;
and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Yahweh's house.

¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets spoke
to the princes and to all the people, saying,
"This man is worthy of death;
for he has prophesied against this city,
as you have heard with your ears."

► Jeremiah's Response (26:12-15)

¹² Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and to all the people, saying,
“Yahweh sent me to prophesy against this house
and against this city
all the words that you have heard.

Call to Repent (26:13)

Exhortation	^{13a} Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Yahweh, your God;
Motivation: Promise	^{13b} then Yahweh will relent (change his mind) from the evil that he has pronounced against you.

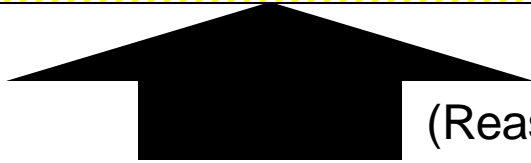
¹⁴ But as for me, behold, I am in your hand.

Do with me what is good and right in your eyes.

¹⁵ Only know for certain that, if you put me to death,
you will bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants;
for in truth Yahweh has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

► Princes' & People's Response (26:16-17)

¹⁶ Then the princes and all the people said
to the priests and to the prophets:
“This man is not worthy of death;
for he has spoken to us in the name of Yahweh our God.”



(Reason for that verdict)

¹⁷ Then certain of the elders of the land rose up,
and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying,

¹⁸ “Micah the Morashite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah;
and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying,
‘Yahweh (the Commander) of (the Heavenly) Hosts says:

“Zion will be plowed as a field,
and Jerusalem will become heaps,
and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.’

Micah 3:12

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death?
Did not he fear Yahweh, and entreat the favor of Yahweh,
and Yahweh relented (changed his mind) of the disaster
that he had pronounced against them?
We would commit great evil against our own souls that way!”

THEOLOGY OF "REPENTANCE" in *Jeremiah*

A. Effectiveness of REPENTANCE

► God will Relent (Change His Mind) re: Judgment, in response to human repentance

- ◆ 18:8 – “and that nation **turns** from its evil,
which I spoke against it,
then I will **relent (change my mind)** concerning the evil”
- ◆ 26:3 – “It may be they will listen,
and every person **turn** from their evil way;
that I may **relent (change my mind)** from the evil
which I intend to do to them
because of the evil of their doings.”
- ◆ 26:13 – “Now therefore amend your ways and your doings,
and obey the voice of Yahweh, your God;
then Yahweh will **relent (change his mind)** from the evil
that he has pronounced against you.”
- ◆ 26:19 – “and Yahweh **relented (changed his mind)** of the evil
that he had pronounced against them”

THEOLOGY OF "REPENTANCE" in *Jeremiah*

B. Motivations for REPENTANCE

1. Nature of God:

(a) His Covenant Relationship

◆ Jer 3:14 – “for I am a husband to you”

(b) God's Mercy

◆ Jer 3:12 – “for I am merciful,”

B. Motivations for REPENTANCE

2. Promised Divine Action

(a) Deliverance, both spiritual & physical,
from the current judgment

- ◆ 3:12 – removal of his anger
- ◆ 3:22 – healing (forgiving) the sin
- ◆ 4:14 – will be delivered

(b) Future Restoration

- ◆ 7:3, 7 – continue to dwell in land
- ◆ 3:14-19 – future restoration of his people

(c) Positive Impact on other Peoples

- ◆ 4:2 – Nations will glory in Yahweh

B. Motivations for REPENTANCE

3. Threatened Divine Action:

(a) Continuance of his wrath

◆ 4:4 – continue his wrath against them

(b) Physical destruction

◆ 26:6 - Temple be destroyed

(c) Shaming of His People among nations

◆ 26:6 - Jerusalem become a curse
among the nations

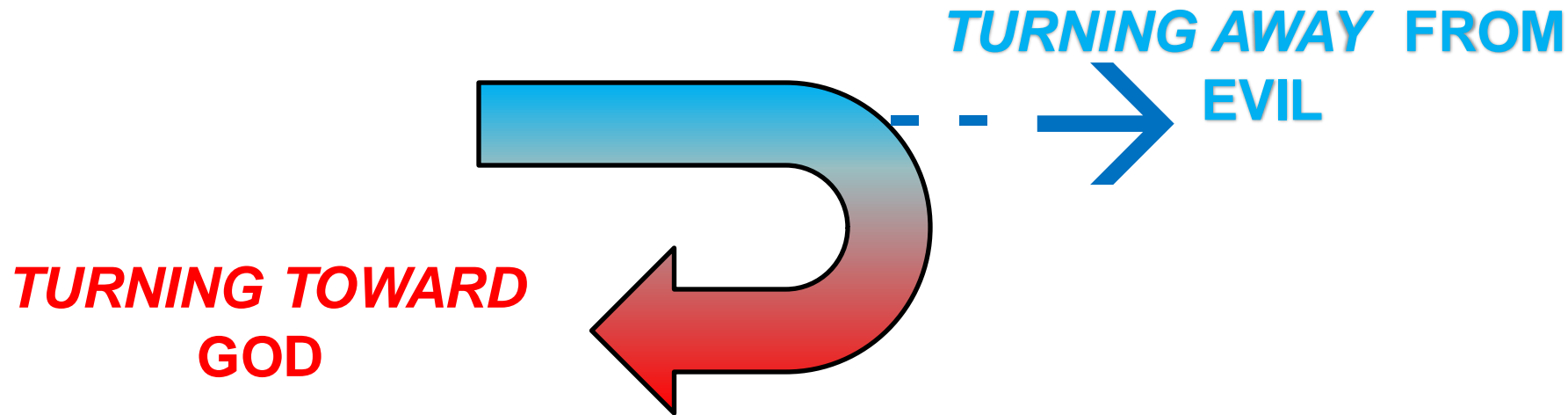
THEOLOGY OF "REPENTANCE" in *Jeremiah*

C. Content of Repentance

* Technical Hebrew Term for “Repent”

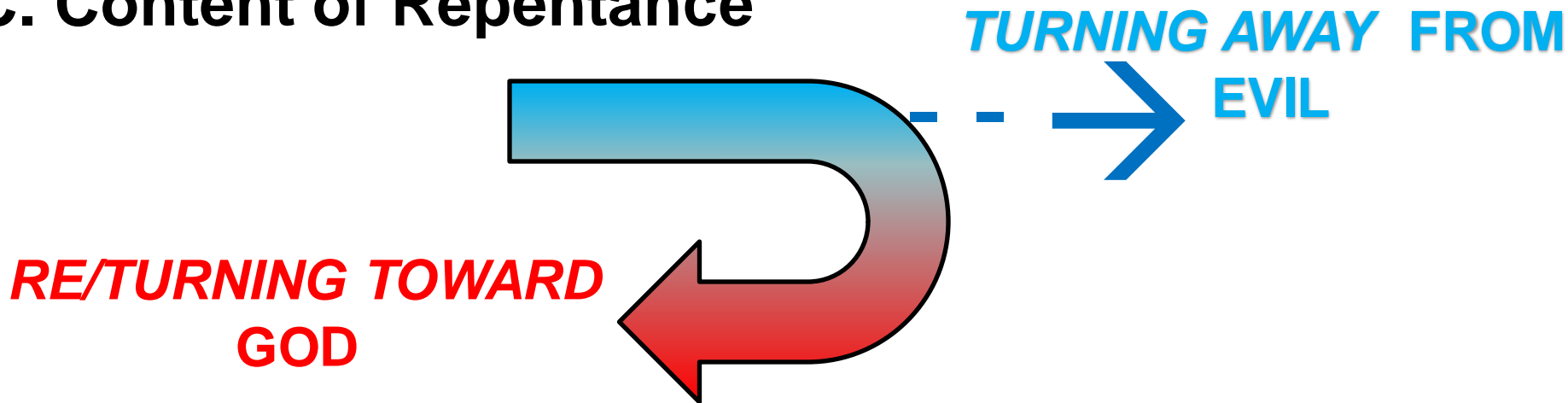
is שׁוּב (šūb)

means to “turn” or “return”



THEOLOGY OF "REPENTANCE" in *Jeremiah*

C. Content of Repentance



1) Change in Inner Loyalty

- ▶ "turning toward / returning to" God
- ▶ "turning away from" other gods (idols)

2) Change in Behaviour

- ▶ "turning to" Right Behaviour
- ▶ "turning from" Wrong Behaviour

1) Change in Inner Loyalty

▶ “turning toward / returning to” God

(a) "Return" to God

- ◆ 3:12, 14, 22 - “**Return**, you backsliding Israel / children,”
- ◆ 4:1 - “If you will **return**, Israel . . . if you will **return** to me”

(b) Taking on a New Inner Disposition

- ◆ 4:3-4 – “Break up your fallow ground,
and do not sow among thorns.
Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh,
and take away the foreskins of your hearts”
- ◆ 4:14 – “wash your heart from wickedness”

1) Change in Inner Loyalty

◀ “turning away from” other gods (idols)

(a) Acknowledging of Sin

◆ 3:13 – “Only acknowledge your iniquity,
that you have transgressed against Yahweh you God,
and have scattered your ways to the strangers
under every green tree,
and you have not obeyed my voice”

(b) Not following other gods

◆ 7:6 – “and do not walk after other gods to your own hurt”

2) Change in Behaviour

▶ “turning to” Right Behaviour

(a) Doing Righteousness

- ◆ 7:3 – “Amend your ways and your doings”
- ◆ 7:5 – “For if you thoroughly amend your ways
and your doings;
if you thoroughly execute justice
between a person and their neighbor;
- ◆ 18:11 – “and make good your ways and your deeds”

◀ “turning from” Wrong Behaviour

(a) Refraining from doing evil

- ◆ 4:1 – “and if you will put away your abominations
out of my sight”
- ◆ 7:6 – “if you do not oppress the foreigner,
the fatherless, and widow,
and do not shed innocent blood in this place,”
- ◆ 18:11 – “**Turn**, each from their evil way”

People's Responses to "Calls to Repent" in *Jeremiah*

1) Refused to Repent

2) They "Repented",
but it was not Genuine

1) Refused to Repent

(KGF)

**3:7 And I (inwardly) said, “After she has done all this, to me she will (re)turn”;
but she did not (re)turn . . .**

**17:23 And they did not listen and did not incline their ear;
but they stiffened their neck so as not to listen, and so as not to take instruction.**

**25:4 “And Yahweh has sent to you all his servants, the prophets,
sending them persistently,
and you have listened and have not inclined your ear to listen
5 (when they were) saying: ‘Turn now, each
from their evil way and from the evil of your deeds . . .’
7 And you did not listen to me,” declaration of Yahweh,
“therefore provoking me by the work of your hands to your own evil (hurt).**

**35:15 And I have sent to you all my servants the prophets,
sending them persistently, saying,
“Turn now, each from their evil way,
and make good your deeds,
and do not walk after other gods to serve them, . . .”
But you did not incline your ear and you did not listen to me.**

**18:12 And they said,
‘Despairing {There’s no hope}!
For after our plans we will go.
and each in the stubbornness of their heart, the evil we will do.’”**

Audience Response to “Calls to Repent” in Jeremiah

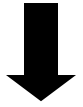
1) Refused to Repent

2) They “Repented”,
but it was not Genuine

**3:10 And also Judah . . .
did not (re)turn to me with her whole heart,
but rather in deception,” declaration of Yahweh.**

Jeremiah 18

18:1-10 - Report of an Object Lesson



18:11 - Call to Repentance



18:12 – Refusal to Change

Jeremiah 18 (KGF)

18:1-10 - Report of an Object Lesson

vv. 1-2 Command	<p>¹ The word which was to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,</p> <p>² “Arise and you shall go down to the house of the potter, and there I will make you hear my words.”</p>
vv. 3-4 Observed Action	<p>³ And I went down to the house of the potter, and behold he was, making a work on the wheel [lit., “two stones”].</p> <p>⁴ And the vessel was ruined, which he was making of clay, in the hand of the potter; so he returned and he made it into another vessel, just as was right in the eyes of the potter to make.</p>



<http://www.kippax.org.au/sermons/19980906.htm>



www.elijahsbmom.bravejournal.com/



<http://www.kippax.org.au/sermons/19980906.htm>

vv. 5-8
Meaning of
the Object
Lesson

⁵ And the word of Yahweh was to me, saying,
⁶ “Just as this potter,
am I not able to do to you, O house of Israel,”
declaration of Yahweh.
“Behold like the clay in the hand of the potter,
thus you are in my hand, O house of Israel.



<http://www.dabar.org/Ethnoarchaeology/wheelthrowingZ7-97.jpg>

Case 1:
♦ **Prophecy of**
Disaster
• **People**
Repent
► **God does**
not bring
Disaster

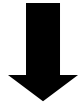
⁷ (At one) moment I might speak concerning a nation
or concerning a kingdom
to uproot, to pull down, and to destroy;
⁸ and that nation turns from its evil, which I spoke against it,
then I will relent {change my mind} concerning the evil {disaster}
that I had planned to do to it.

Case 2:
♦ **Prophecy of**
Blessing
• **People do**
evil
► **God does**
not bring
Blessing

⁹ And (at another) moment I might speak concerning a nation
or concerning a kingdom
to build or to plant;
¹⁰ and (yet) it does evil in my eyes
by not (obediently)-listening to my voice,
then I will relent {change my mind} concerning the good
that I had spoken to do it good.

Jeremiah 18

18:1-10 - Report of an Object Lesson



18:11: Call to Repentance

	11 Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: `Thus says the Lord:
Motivation: <i>Threat</i>	Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you.
Appeal	Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.'

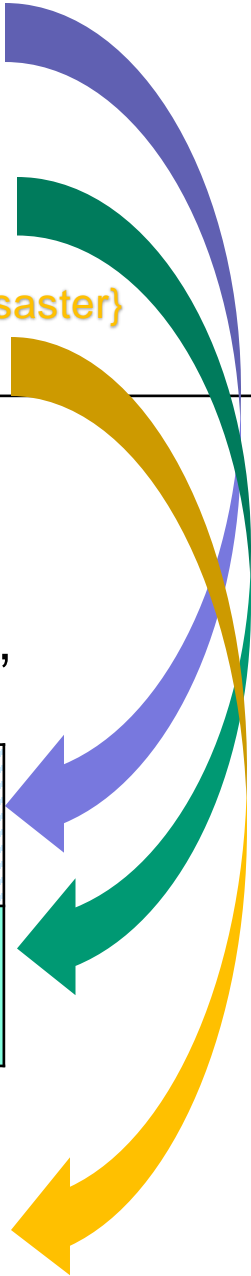
<p>Case 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prophecy of Disaster ● People Repent ► God does not bring Disaster 	<p>7 (At one) moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, and to destroy;</p> <p>8 and that nation turns from its evil, which I spoke against it, then I will relent {change my mind} concerning the evil {disaster} that I had planned to do to it.</p>
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18:11 - Call to Repentance

11 So now, speak to the people of Judah,
and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,
‘Thus says Yahweh,

<p>Motivation: Threat</p>	<p>“Behold, I am fashioning against you evil {disaster}, and planning against you a plan.</p>
<p>Exhortation</p>	<p>Turn, each from their evil way, and make good your ways and your deed.”</p>

► The People, by repenting,
are given the opportunity
to alter the prophesied, impending disaster



<p>Case 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prophecy of Disaster ● People Repent ► God does not bring Disaster 	<p>⁷ (At one) moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, and to destroy;</p> <p>⁸ and that nation turns from its evil, which I spoke against it, then I will relent {change my mind} concerning the evil {disaster} that I had planned to do to it.</p>
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18:11 - Call to Repentance

¹¹ So now, speak to the people of Judah,
and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,
‘Thus says Yahweh,

<p>Motivation: Threat</p>	<p>“Behold, I am fashioning against you evil {disaster}, and planning against you a plan.</p>
<p>Exhortation</p>	<p>Turn, each from their evil way, and make good your ways and your deed.”</p>

18:12 – Refusal to Change

¹² And they said, ‘(We are) despairing {i.e., There is no hope} !
Rather after our plans we will go.
And each in the stubbornness of their heart,
the evil we will (continue to) do.”



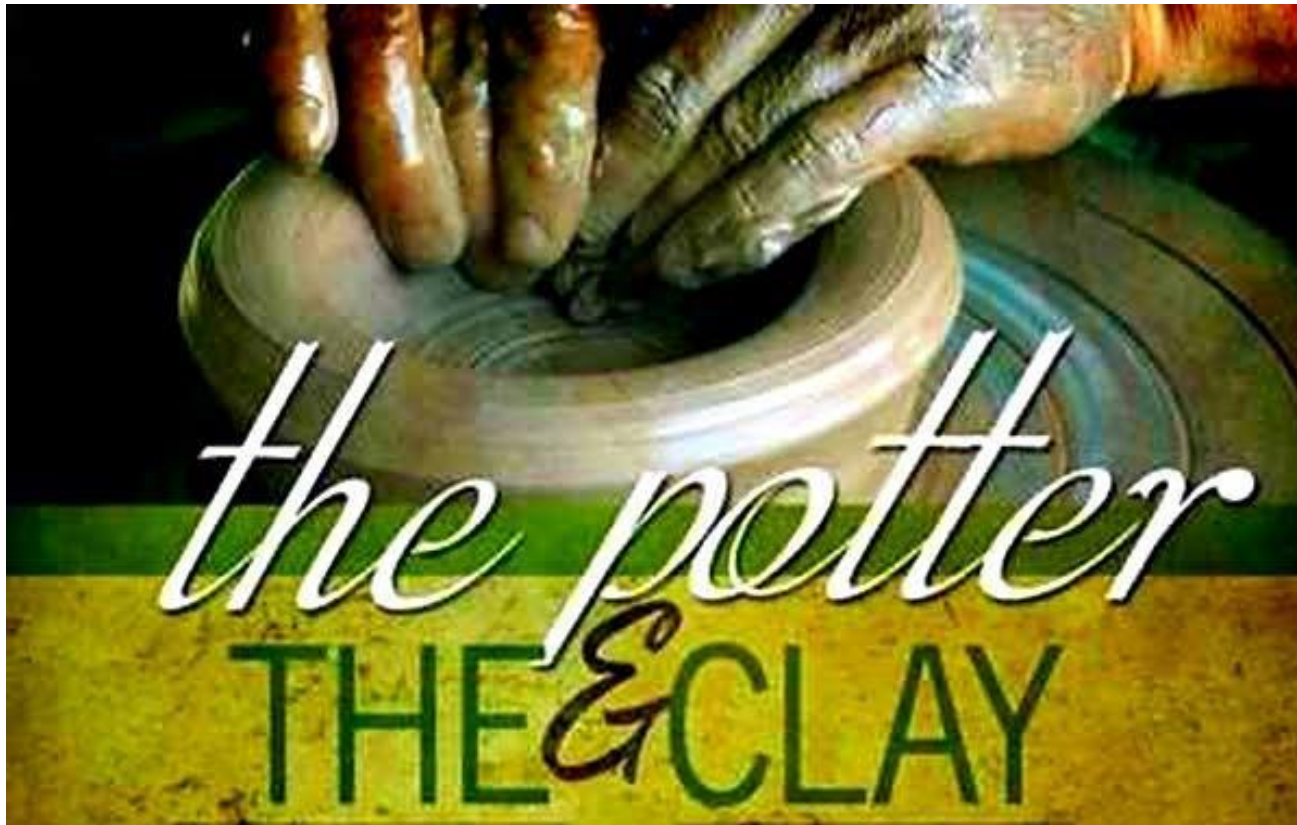
Jeremiah 18



- The point of the Object Lesson is NOT the complete Sovereignty of Yahweh (the Potter) that he will do whatever he wants with the People (Clay) regardless of any response on their part

Jeremiah 18

- ◆ Rather the point is that
the People (Clay) can Respond
to what Yahweh (the Potter) is doing,
and thus alter the shape of the Vessel
originally intended by the Potter



► **The Potter / Clay imagery of Jer 18
is being used very differently
than the Potter / Clay imagery in Isaiah & Romans,
where the Sovereignty of the Potter is stressed**

- **Isaiah's & Paul's use of the imagery
must not be read into Jeremiah's**

Isaiah 29 (WEB)

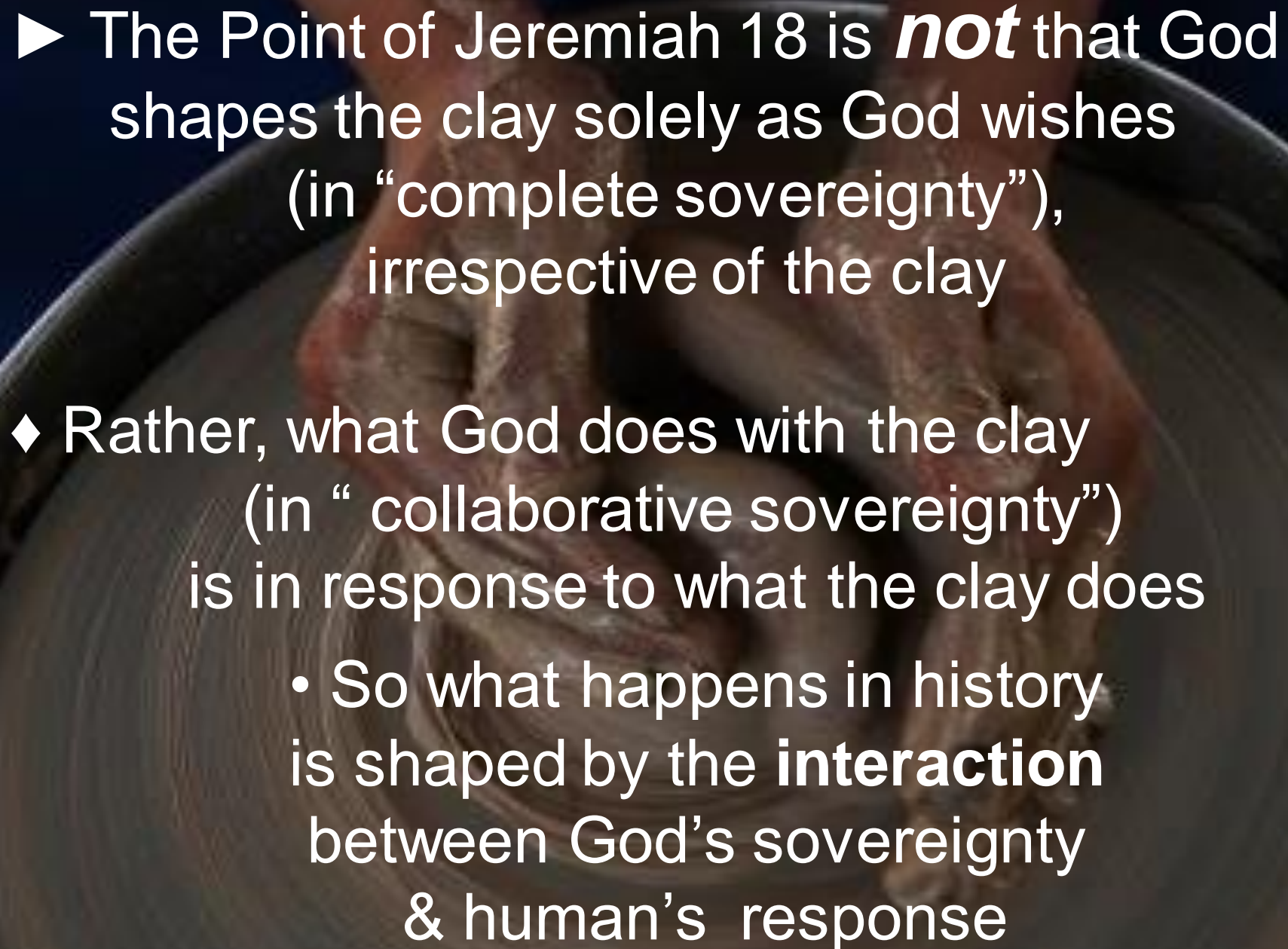
^{16b} Should the potter be thought to be like clay;
that the thing made should say about him who made it,
“He didn’t make me;”
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,
“He has no understanding?”

Isaiah 45 (WEB)

quoted in Romans 9:20-21

⁹ Woe to him who strives with his Maker—
a clay pot among the clay pots of the earth!
Shall the clay ask him who fashions it,
“What are you making?”
or your work, “He has no hands?”

Jeremiah 18

- 
- ▶ The Point of Jeremiah 18 is **not** that God shapes the clay solely as God wishes (in “complete sovereignty”), irrespective of the clay
 - ◆ Rather, what God does with the clay (in “collaborative sovereignty”) is in response to what the clay does
 - So what happens in history is shaped by the **interaction** between God’s sovereignty & human’s response

Jeremiah 18

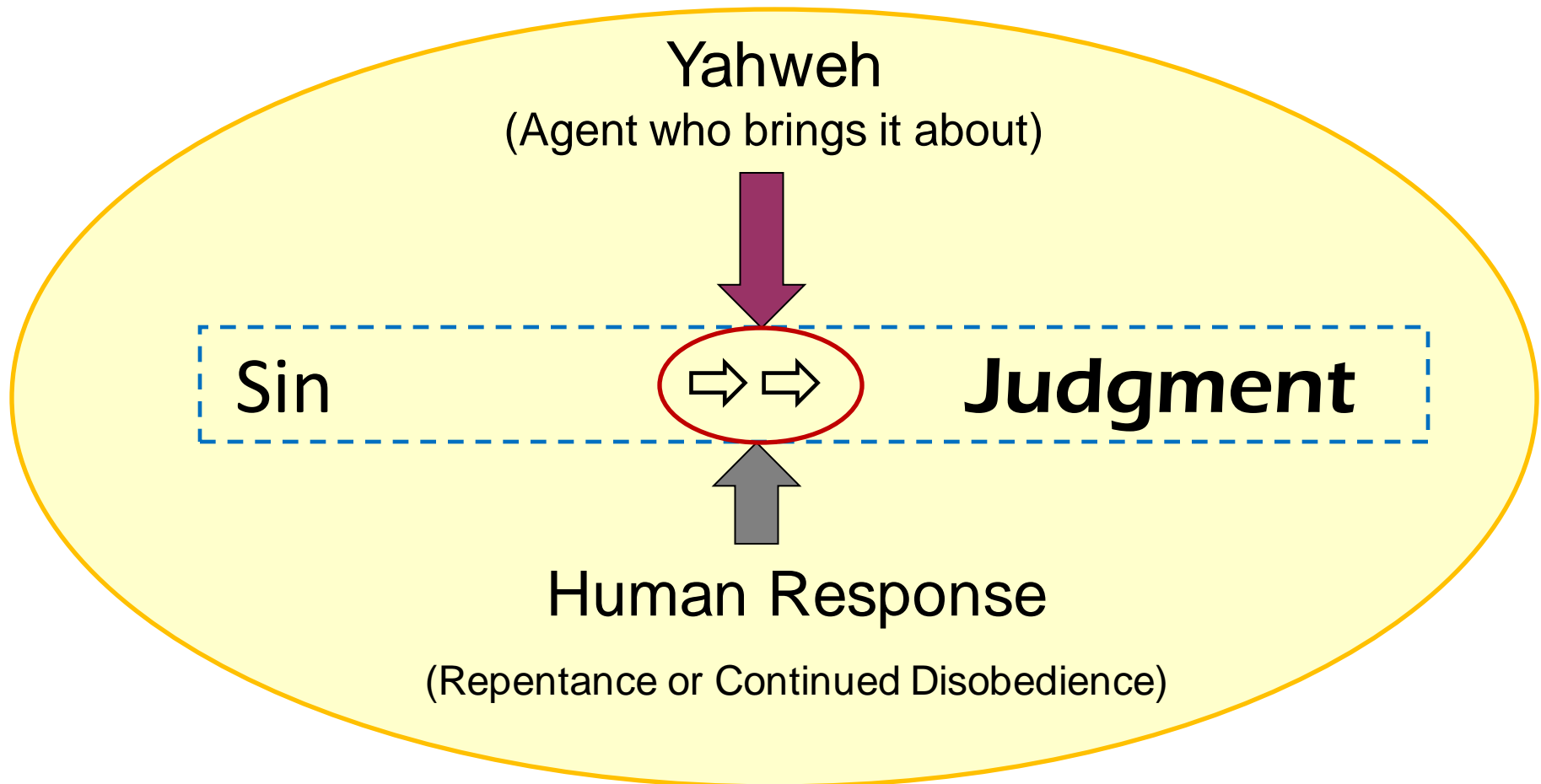
Implications for Theology:

- There is a Divine-Human Interaction
that shapes the Events of History
- ◆ The Human Response
(whether Positive or Negative)
can alter what was Originally Divinely Intended
(whether Blessing or Judgment)

B. Judgment is a “Consequence”

(Cause $\Rightarrow \Rightarrow$ **Effect**)

but, not an “inevitable” one



(see Jeremiah 18:1-12)

Jeremiah 18

Implications for Understanding Prophecy:

- Indicates that some “Predictive” Prophecy about the Future, is Contingent in Nature, NOT Inevitable
 - ◆ What is “Predicted”
(whether Blessing or Judgment)
does not inevitably have to come about,
rather the “fulfillment” of the Prophecy
is dependent upon the Human Response
 - Contingency is assumed,
even when a Condition (“if” → “then”)
is not explicitly stated in the Prophecy

Interpreting OT Prophecy

*Kind of
Foretelling / Predictive Prophecy,
whether it is:*

INEVITABLE

that is, the predicted event *WILL (MUST)* come to pass
or

CONTINGENT

that is, whether the predicted event comes to pass is
contingent upon a human response

“Foretelling”

(Predictive) Prophecy

is a divine declaration of
what God
intends / plans to do.

► What God *intends* (plans):

- He will bring it about
irrespective of
any human response

= *Inevitable
Prophecy*

- He may or may not
bring it about
based upon the kind of
human response
there is to the prophecy

= **Contingent
Prophecy**

Distinguishing between “Contingent” & “*Inevitable*” Foretelling / Predictive Prophecy

- ▶ Is it Explicit in the Prophecy itself?
 - - Is a condition expressed (“if” → “then”)?
 - - Is the *inevitability* expressed?

e.g., 1 Samuel 15:10-35 —
Prophecy of the Removal of Kingdom from Saul

1 Samuel 15 (WEB, with modifications)

10 Then Yahweh's word came to Samuel, saying,

11 "I **relent (changed my mind)** that I have set up Saul to be king,
for he has turned back from following me,
and has not performed my commandments." . . .

23b "Because you have rejected Yahweh's word,
he has also rejected you from being king."

24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned;

for I have transgressed the commandment of Yahweh and your words,
because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin,
and turn again with me, that I may worship Yahweh."

26 Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you;
for you have rejected Yahweh's word,
and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel."

27 As Samuel turned around to go away, Saul grabbed the skirt of his robe, and it tore.

28 Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today,
and has given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you.

29 Also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent (change his mind);
for he is not a man, that he should relent (change his mind)."

Inevitability is
Expressed

35 Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death

Yahweh relented (changed his mind) that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Distinguishing between “Contingent” & “*Inevitable*” “Foretelling Prophecy”

- ▶ Is it Explicit in the Prophecy itself?
 - - Is a condition expressed (“if” → “then”)?
 - - Is the *inevitability* expressed?
- ▶ Is a “Call to Repent” attached?
 - If so = Contingent

► **Command to Prophecy given to Jeremiah (vv. 1-3)**

1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, 609/608 B.C.
son of Josiah, king of Judah,
this word was from Yahweh, saying:

2 Thus says Yahweh:

“Stand in the court of the house of Yahweh,
and you shall speak . . .

all the words that I have commanded you to speak to them.
Do not omit a word!

3 Perhaps they will listen
and they will turn {repent}, each one from their evil way,
and I will relent {change my mind} of the evil {calamity}
that I am planning to do to them,
because of the evil of their deeds.

***Contingency of the Predicted Judgment is
Explicitly expressed to the Prophet***

► **Message to be Spoken to the People (vv. 4-6)**

4 And you shall say to them:

 `Thus says Yahweh:

5 **If** you do not listen to me,
 to walk in my law,
 that I have placed before you,
to listen to the words of my servants the prophets . . .

6 **and** you have not listened;
 so I will make this house like (that of) Shiloh,
 and this city, I will make a curse
 to all the nations of the earth.”

*Contingency of the Predicted Judgment is
Explicitly expressed to the Audience*

► People's Response (vv. 7-11)

- 7** And the priests and the prophets and all the people
heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Yahweh.
- 8** And it was when Jeremiah finished speaking
all that Yahweh had commanded (him) to speak to all the people,
the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying
“Surely you must die!
- 9** Why have you prophesied in the name of Yahweh, saying,
‘Like Shiloh, this house will be,
and this city will be desolated from there being any inhabitant?’”
And all the people gathered about Jeremiah in the house of Yahweh.
- 10** And the princes of Judah heard these words
and they went up from the house of the king to the house of Yahweh.
And they sat down in the entrance
of the gate of (the house of) Yahweh
-- (that is,) the New (Gate).
- 11** And the priests and the prophets said
to the officials and to all the people, saying:
“A judgment of death for this person,
for he prophesied against this city,
just as you have heard in your ears.”



► **Jeremiah's Response (vv. 12-15)**

12 And Jeremiah said to all the officials and to all the people,
saying:

“Yahweh sent me to prophesy
against this house and against this city,
all the words that you have heard.

Call to Repent (v. 13) means the Predicted Judgment is Contingent

Exhortation	13a And now make good your ways and your deeds, and (obediently) listen to the voice of Yahweh, your God.
Motivation: Promise	13b And Yahweh will relent {change his mind} concerning the evil {calamity} that he spoke against you.

Contingency explicitly expressed to the Audience

What about Predictive Prophecies in which No Condition is Expressed?

Are they therefore *Inevitable*,
or might they be **Contingent** ?

- ♦ Jonah 3:4b → 3:5-9 → 3:10
- ♦ Micah 3:13 (cited in Jer 26:17-19)
- ♦ Jeremiah's prophecies of the
destruction of Jerusalem (chs. 21, 32,
34, 37-38)

► **People's Response (vv. 16-18)**

- 16 And the officials and all the people said
to the priests and to the prophets,
“There is not to be to this person a judgment of death,
for in the name of Yahweh, our God, he spoke to us.”
- 17 And some of the men from the elders of the land arose,
and they said to all the gathering of the people, saying:
- 18 “Micah, the Moreshethite, had prophesied
in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah,
and he said to all the people of Judah, saying:

c. 700 B.C.

[Micah 3:12]

‘Thus says Yahweh (of) Hosts:

“Zion will be plowed (into) a field,
and Jerusalem will become ruins,
and the mountain of the house
(will become) a high place of a forest.”

No Contingency is Expressed

18b 'Thus says Yahweh (of) Hosts:

"Zion will be plowed (into) a field,
and Jerusalem will become ruins,
and the mountain of the house
(will become) a high place of a forest."

*No Contingency related to the
Declaration of Judgment is Expressed, but . . .*

19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah surely put him to death?
Did he not fear Yahweh
and appease the face of Yahweh,

Contingency was Assumed, thus Responded Appropriately

and Yahweh relented {changed his mind}
concerning the evil {calamity}
that he had spoken against them?

Predicted Judgment did not Occur

What about Predictive Prophecies in which No Condition is Expressed?

Are they therefore *Inevitable*,
or might they be **Contingent** ?

◆ Micah 3:13 (cited in Jer 26:17-19)

- ▶ Although in “Predictive” Prophecy there was
no Explicit Contingency expressed,
it was **Contingent**

Jonah (Text: World English Bible)

3:1 Yahweh's word came to Jonah . . .:

2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city,
and preach to it the message that I give you.”

4b And he cried out, and said,

“In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!”

No Contingency is Expressed

^{3:5} The people of Nineveh believed God;
and they proclaimed a fast,
and put on sackcloth, from their greatest even to their least.

⁶ The news reached the king of Nineveh,
and he arose from his throne,
and took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth,
and sat in ashes.

⁷ He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh
by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,
“Let neither man nor animal, herd nor flock, taste anything;
let them not feed, nor drink water;

⁸ but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal,
and let them cry mightily to God.

Yes, let them **turn** everyone from his evil way,
and from the violence that is in his hands.

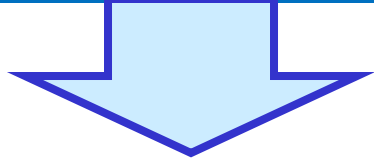
⁹ Who knows whether God will not turn and relent (change his mind),
and turn away from his fierce anger,
so that we might not perish?”

Assumed it might be
Contingent

Jonah (WEB)

3:5-9

Appropriate
Response



3:10 God saw their works,
that they turned from their evil way.
God relented (changed his mind) of the disaster
that he said he would do to them,
and he did not do it.

God
Responds by
Not Brining
the Disaster

- ▶ Although the “Predictive” Prophecy had
no Explicit Contingency expressed,
it was **Contingent**

Reign of Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.)

588 B.C. Initial Siege by Babylonians	21:1-10 34:1-7	No Contingency Expressed	21:10 it shall be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.
Summer 588 or Spring 587 B.C. Siege Briefly Lifted by the Babylonians	34:8-22		34:2 I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.
	37:1-10		34:22 and they will fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire.
587 B.C. Resumption & Culmination of the Siege by the Babylonians	32:1-44		37:6 And the Chaldeans shall return and fight against this city; they shall take it and burn it with fire.
	38:14-28	Subsequent to the Preceding Prophecies, a Contingency is Expressed	32:29 The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come, set it on fire, and burn it . . .
July & Aug 586 B.C.— City falls & is burned			38:17 If you will only surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then . . . this city shall not be burned with fire

What about Predictive Prophecies
in which No Condition is Expressed--
are they *Inevitable*,
or **Contingent** ?

- ▶ Can the Immediate Hearing Audience
affect what is “prophesied”?
- ◆ Will the predicted event happen
in the very near future
to the immediate hearing audience?

What about Predictive Prophecies in which No Condition is Expressed?

► Can the
immediate Hearing Audience
affect what is “propheesied”?

◆ If “no”

≈ probably assume it is *Inevitable*

◆ If “yes”

→ then always treat it as

potentially **Contingent**

♦ If “yes”

→ then always treat it as
potentially **Contingent**

- Ninevites’ response to Jonah’s prophecy
→ God did not do the judgment
- Hezekiah’s response to Micah’s prophecy
→ God did not do the judgment
- ♦ David’s response to Nathan’s prophecy (2 Samuel 12)
→ *God did bring judgment*

12 Samuel 12 (WEB)

Predicted Judgment:

11 “This is what Yahweh says:

‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house;
and I will take your wives before your eyes,
and give them to your neighbor . . .”

13 David said to Nathan,

“I have sinned against Yahweh.”

Nathan said to David,

“Yahweh also has put away your sin.

You will not die.

14 However, because by this deed

you have given great occasion to Yahweh’s enemies

to blaspheme,

the child also who is born to you will surely die.”

12 Samuel 12 (WEB)

Predicted Judgment:

14b the child also who is born to you will surely die.”

No Contingency is Expressed

15b Yahweh struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David,
and it was very sick. not return to me.”

David’s Response:

16 David therefore begged God for the child;
and David fasted,
and went in, and lay all night on the ground.

17 The elders of his house arose beside him,
to raise him up from the earth:
but he would not, and he didn’t eat bread with them.

David Pleads
with God
to Alter the
Judgment

Judgment Came about:

¹⁸ On the seventh day, the child died. . . .

Judgment came about
just as God had said
= *Inevitable Prophecy*

David's Rational for his Response:

¹⁸ On the seventh day, the child died. . . .

^{19^b} David perceived that the child was dead

²⁰ Then David arose from the earth, and washed,
and anointed himself, and changed his clothing;
and he came into Yahweh's house, and worshiped.
Then he came to his own house;
and when he requested, they set bread before him, and he ate.

²¹ Then his servants said to him,

“What is this that you have done?

You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive,
but when the child was dead, you rose up and ate bread.”

²² He said, “While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept;
for I said, ‘Who knows whether Yahweh will not be gracious to me,
that the child may live?’

²³ But now he is dead, why should I fast?
Can I bring him back again? . . .

David Assumed
the Prophecy might be
Contingent

and accepted that it was
an *Inevitable Prophecy*

► What God *intends* (plans):

- He will bring it about
irrespective of
any human response

= ***Inevitable
Prophecy***

- He may or may not
bring it about
based upon the kind of
human response
there is to the prophecy

= **Contingent
Prophecy**

- ◆ But Predictive Prophecy should
always be treated as if it is potentially
Contingent