

Jer. 10:1 ¶ Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:

Jer. 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

This chapter begins with another declaration that the prophet is declaring the word of the LORD to Israel. It is yet another warning to stop investing their energies into learning the ways of the Gentile nations. They are not to practice astrology or be frightened by ominous signs in the stars. Implied: Your fear should be focused on reverencing God. You should be looking to the God of Israel, the Creator of the heavens, for guidance and direction.

Jer. 10:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

Jer. 10:4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Jer. 10:5 They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Jeremiah goes on to explain how ludicrous it is to worship idols. Idols are nothing more than manmade icons decorated with silver and gold. In fact, an idol can be knocked over if it is not nailed down. They may stand up straight, but they can't speak. They have to be carried around because they cannot move around on their own. There is nothing to fear from them. They have no power to do either good or evil. This truth is affirmed by the psalmist.

Psalms 115:4–7 “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.”

Jer. 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

Jer. 10:7 Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

YHWH, on the other hand, is mighty in word and deed. His power and authority should invoke fear. Though they might not yet accept Him as such, He is and will be King over all the nations. There is no wise man or king in any kingdom that compares to Almighty God. Again the psalmist affirms this truth.

Psalms 115:3 “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”

Psalms 47:7–8 “For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.”

Psalms 95:3 “For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.”

Jer. 10:8 But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock *is* a doctrine of vanities.

Jer. 10:9 Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple *is* their clothing: they *are* all the work of cunning men.

Again, I liked the NLT translation for verse 8: *"The wisest of people who worship idols are stupid and foolish. The things they worship are made of wood!"*

You can hire the most skilled craftsman to make your idol and decorate it with all the most expensive ornaments at your disposal, and it will do nothing to make that representation of a false god worthy of honor or worship. It's nothing more than evidence of one's foolishness—proof of one's lack of wisdom.

Jer. 10:10 But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

True = stable, certain, trustworthy, faithful; from Webster: "Actual; not counterfeit, adulterated, or pretended; genuine; pure; real...."

YHWH is unique from all the "gods" of the Gentile nations. He is genuine and trustworthy. There is not one iota of pretense about Him. Unlike the idols worshipped by the world at large, YHWH is "the living God." In fact, He is the source of all life.

Isaiah 42:5 "Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein...."

Acts 17:24–25 "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...."

Not only is God the Creator and the source of all life, He is the everlasting King. He is not bound by time or space; He is outside time and space. His authority and power will last for time without end.

Though God is longsuffering and full of love for His creation, He is also righteous and holy. His wrath is expressed in righteous anger against all that is wicked and evil. It is His holiness and righteousness that should cause the nations to tremble at the thought of His wrath being unleashed in absolute power and authority. The truth—the nations will not be able to endure His judgment in wrath and righteous vengeance. Only by seeking deliverance through His provision for us in His Son can one hope to avoid His wrath. Scripture is clear that His wrath is reserved for His enemies and the wicked.

Nahum 1:2 "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies."

John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Ephesians 5:3–6 "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

Jer. 10:11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

The LORD is telling the prophet to inform His people that the time is coming when idols and false gods will no longer be allowed on earth under heaven. Why? Because the Creator will be on the throne for eternity.

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Revelation 19:11–16 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war....his name is called The Word of God....And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Jer. 10:12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Jer. 10:13 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

"He" = "the LORD ... the true God ... the living God" from verse 10

Again the emphasis is made that YHWH is the Creator. He created the earth and the universe in His power, wisdom and *discretion* (according to His own pleasure and purpose). With all the technological advances available to us today, we are just beginning to get a real glimpse of how powerful and wise He is as we study the creation.

My paraphrase of verse 13: "He only has to speak, and nature obeys His command." There are several examples in scripture of this truth. Following are just a few.

Joshua 10:12–14 “Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.”

2 Kings 20:8–11 “And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.”

Mark 4:37–39 “And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”

Jer. 10:14 Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

Jer. 10:15 They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

I like the CJB translation for the first part of verse 14: *“At this, everyone is proved stupid, ignorant, every goldsmith put to shame by his idol!”*

In other words, there is no comparison between YHWH and idols and the false gods represented by those idols. They are dead; they have no life in them; they are frauds. When the LORD comes to judge the world, they will be destroyed along with those that choose to worship them.

Revelation 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Jer. 10:16 The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.

The wording of this verse is a bit confusing; I think the NLT expresses the meaning best: *“But the God of Israel is no idol! He is the Creator of everything that exists, including Israel, his own special possession. The LORD Almighty is his name!”*

Jer. 10:17 ¶ Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.
Jer. 10:18 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find *it so*.

This is another statement regarding the surety of coming judgment. Jeremiah is telling the people to pack up their things and get ready to leave because He is going to send them out of the land as captives of their enemy.

It is interesting to note that though declaring severe judgment that will result in removing His people from the land, YHWH still identifies them as belonging to Him (verse 16). They have broken covenant with Him, but He will not break covenant with them.

Deuteronomy 4:31 "(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

Jer. 10:19 Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.
Jer. 10:20 My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they *are not*: *there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.*
Jer. 10:21 For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

As I read through these verses, I at first thought it was an expression of Jeremiah's feelings; but I tend to think he is speaking of the hurt in God's heart.

The severity of the judgment to come will cause great sorrow and mourning. Judgment is not meant to be easily endured, or it would be ineffective. It is a necessary action on the part of a loving Father toward His people intended to result in a change of heart in His people.

This judgment will result in the homes of the people being destroyed and their children taken away from them. Their spiritual leaders have become useless because they no longer seek the LORD. The leaders shoulder great responsibility for the people being scattered among the heathen because they have failed in providing spiritual leadership according to God's word.

Jer. 10:22 Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, *and* a den of dragons.

The wording of this verse indicates that the enemy is already in the land coming from the north and leaving destruction in their path.

Jer. 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man *is not in himself*: *it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Jeremiah is acknowledging to the LORD that he understands that man was never intended to live out of relationship to the LORD. Apart from God, man does not

have the wisdom to make the right choices about how to live his life.

I couldn't help but think of the words of the LORD Jesus at this point: *John 15:5* "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

And of Solomon: *Proverbs 16:25* "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Jer. 10:24 O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

Jeremiah is quick to acknowledge that he needs God's loving correction. He realizes that to experience God's wrath as His enemy, one who has rejected Him, will "bring me to nothing."

Jer. 10:25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

Jeremiah loves the LORD; his desire is for God to be honored and obeyed. This verse is a statement calling for God to pour out His fury on those that reject Him as LORD, whether heathen or Jew. Both the heathen nations and the unbelieving Jews were responsible for the destruction of Israel—the heathen nations as the rod of judgment in God's hands, and the Jewish idolaters as those whose actions brought judgment upon the nation. Though the heathen nations are acting in accordance with God's purpose, they are not acting against their conscience or desire. They are still accountable for their wickedness and deserve judgment for their actions.