



LOGOS

JEREMIAH

Session 2: Prophetic Word
The use of language and imagery to speak of God

14 February 2023

Overview

10 January

14 February

14 March

Jeremiah an overview

Prophetic Word

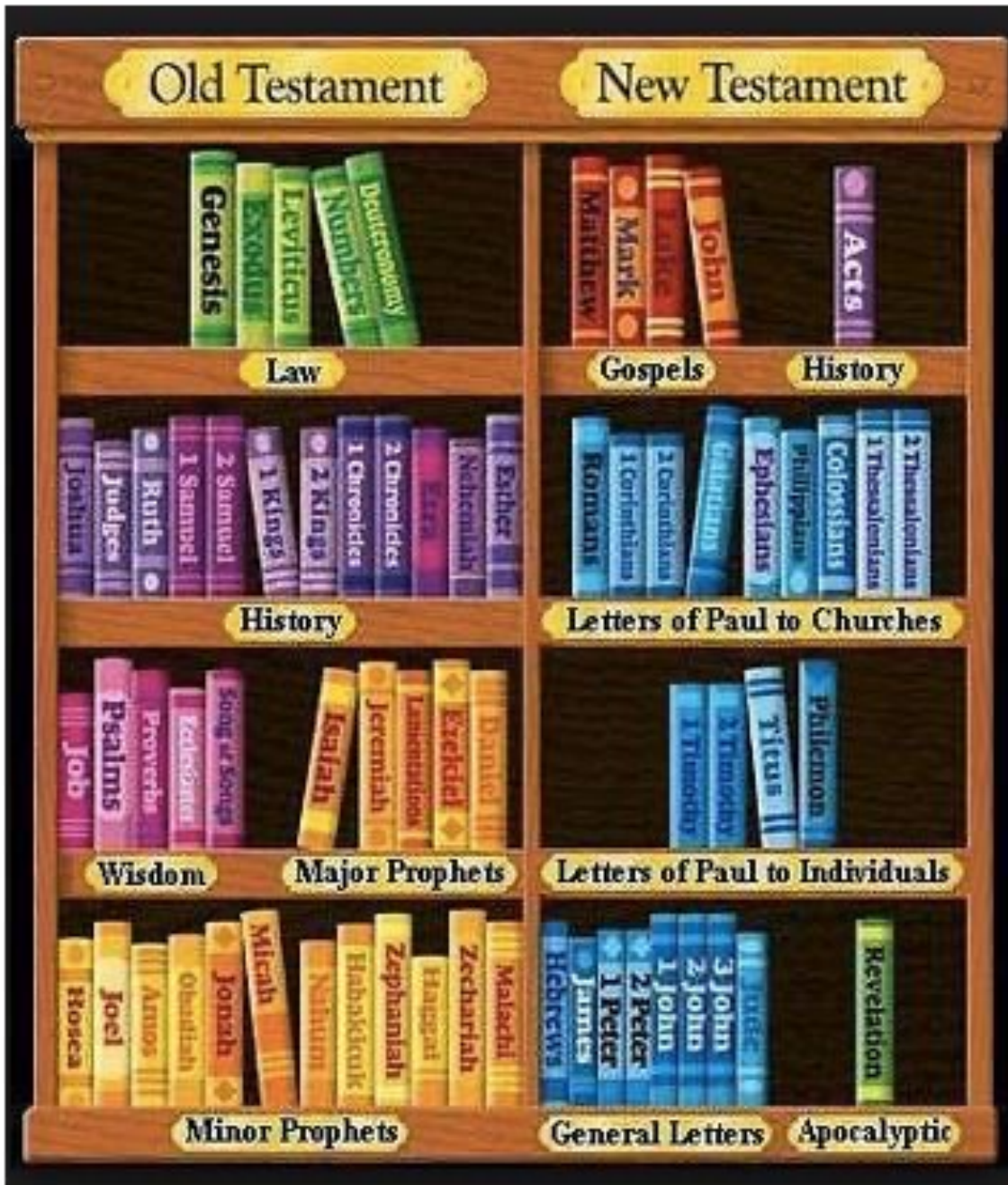
Prophetic Imagination

Discontinuity and Possibility



May - December

Employing prophetic Imagination
with the Book of the Twelve
Minor Prophets



Bible

A library of books

Different genre
and purposes

Not chronological

Authorship?



Who was Jeremiah?

The *Weeping Prophet*, prophesied during the great crisis in Israel's history, the downfall of Judah, the destruction of the Temple, and exile into Babylon.

<https://biblediscoverytv.com/spotlight/2020/the-weeping-prophet/>

Jeremiah, as depicted by Michelangelo from the Sistine Chapel ceiling.



Jeremiah, fact or fiction?

Historical critical
biblical studies.

Deuteronomistic history
– retelling the story as
theology.

The Jeremiah Call



Jeremiah 1.10 is constructed from six infinitives,
set out in pairs:

to pluck up (*lintosh*) and to pull down (*lintots*),

to destroy (*leha'abid*) and to overthrow (*laharos*),

to build (*libnot*) and to plant (*lintoa*).

The reader is invited '*to reckon with the reality of the discontinuity in the historical process, out of which God can work a powerful newness, utterly inexplicable*'.

(Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 1998, p. 26)

DISCONTINUITY

To pluck up and to pull down



POSSIBILITY

To build and to plant



Israel's decline -
warnings of judgement

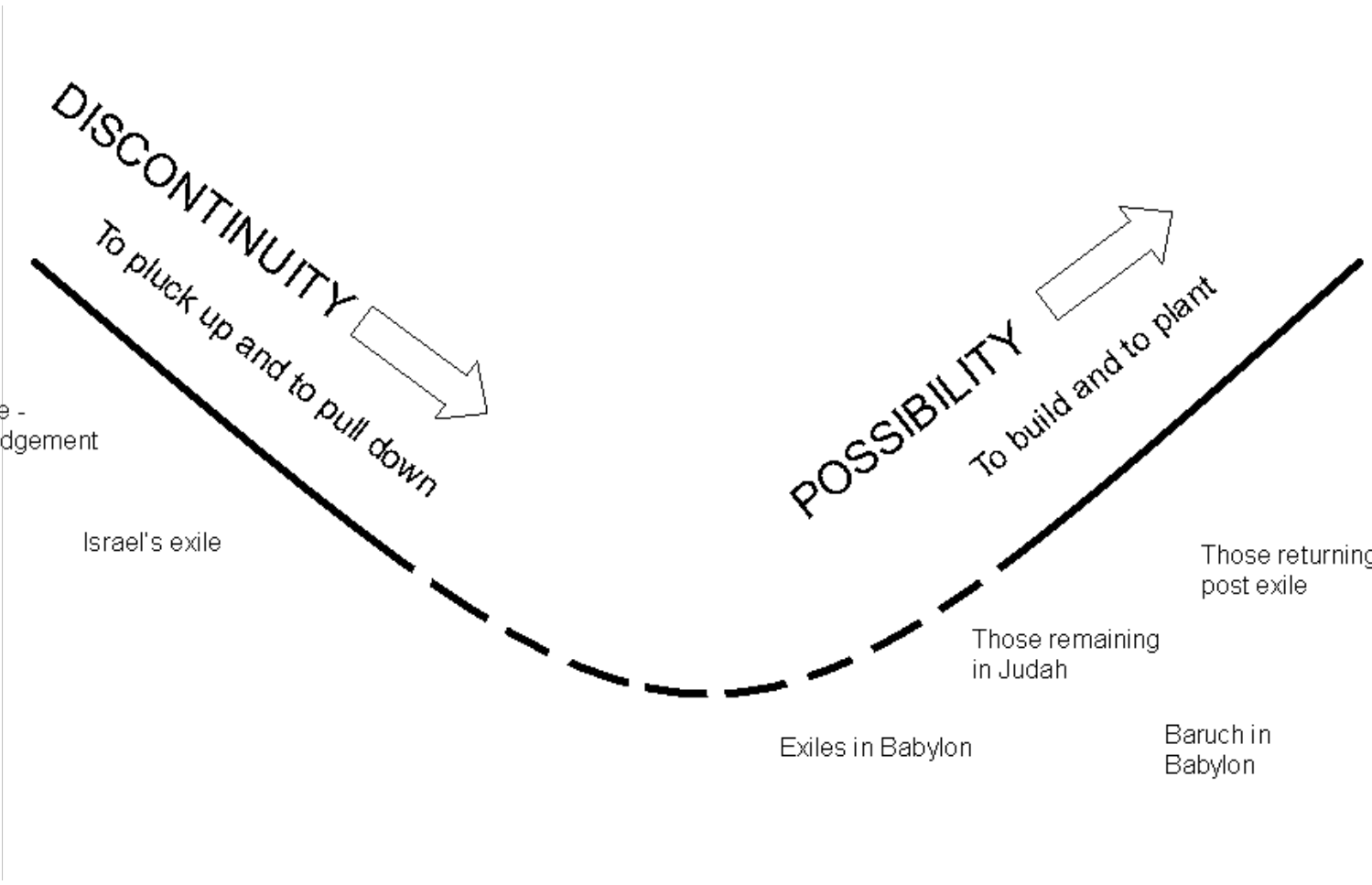
Israel's exile

Those returning
post exile

Those remaining
in Judah

Exiles in Babylon

Baruch in
Babylon

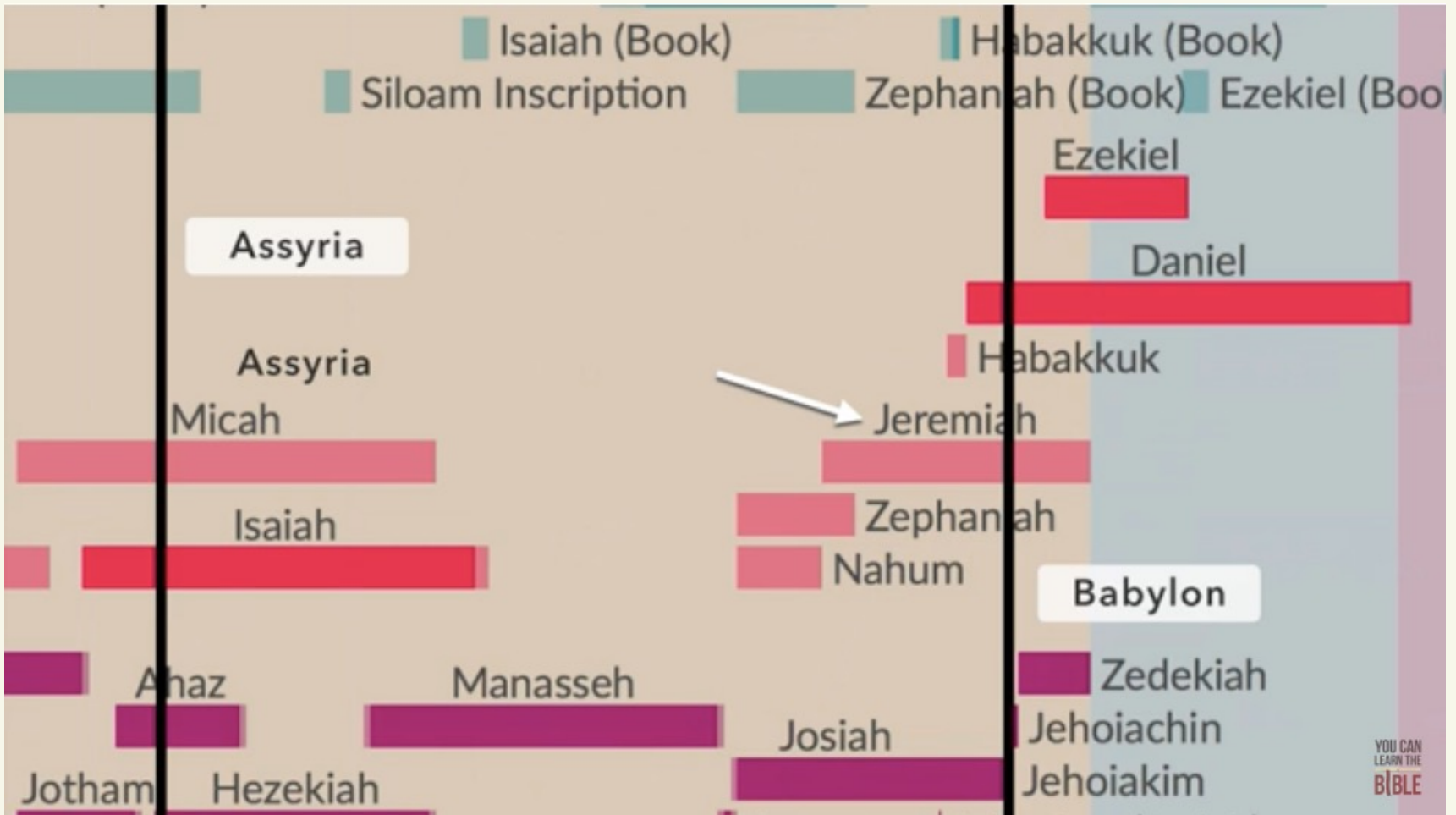




Session 2: Prophetic Word

The use of language and imagery to speak of God

- Context
- Structure
- Language and imagery types
- Group work in break out rooms



Josiah's reign 641-609 BC

You can learn the Bible, The Context of Jeremiah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxi6WAqgmQY>



NIV Study Bible, Map 1, Hodder & Stoughton,

Josiah

Reigns for 32 years, 643 - 609 BC

- Godly reform / Deutero Law
- Lull in dominance of Assyria and Babylon

Jehoahaz

- Reigns for 3 months

Jehoiakim

Reigns for 11 years as vassal King for Babylon

- 1st deportation (Daniel, Ezekiel, 10,000)
- Defies Nebuchadnezzar 2nd deportation.
- Dies in battle.

Jehoiachin

- Son of Jehoiakim, deported with large proportion of population in 2nd deportation.

Zedekiah

- Vassal King, Reigns 11 years, after 9 years defies Babylon and sides with Egypt. Leads to full destruction for Judah and Jerusalem.

Structure of Jeremiah



THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Prophecies and Narratives

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Ch 1-25 | Ch 26-36 | Ch 37-45 | Ch 46-51 |
| Prophecies | Narrative | Narrative | Prophecies |
| <i>Against Jerusalem</i> | | | <i>Against the Nations</i> |

You can learn the Bible. The Structure of the Book of Jeremiah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxUjdaDdph8>

Structure of Jeremiah



THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Prophecies and Narratives

1

Ch 1-25

Prophecies

*Against
Jerusalem*

Jeremiah's famous
"temple sermon"

7:1-29

The people's
reaction to it

26

2

Ch 26-36

Narrative

*Future
Hope*



You can learn the Bible. The Structure of the Book of Jeremiah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxUjdaDdph8>

Structure of Jeremiah



THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Prophecies and Narratives

1

Ch 1-25

Prophecies

*Against
Jerusalem*

The reasons for judgment
of Judah's kings

22-23

The account that
describes what
happens

34-36

3

Ch 37-45

Narrative

*Fall of
Jerusalem*

BIBLE

You can learn the Bible. The Structure of the Book of Jeremiah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxUjdaDdp8>

Language and Imagery

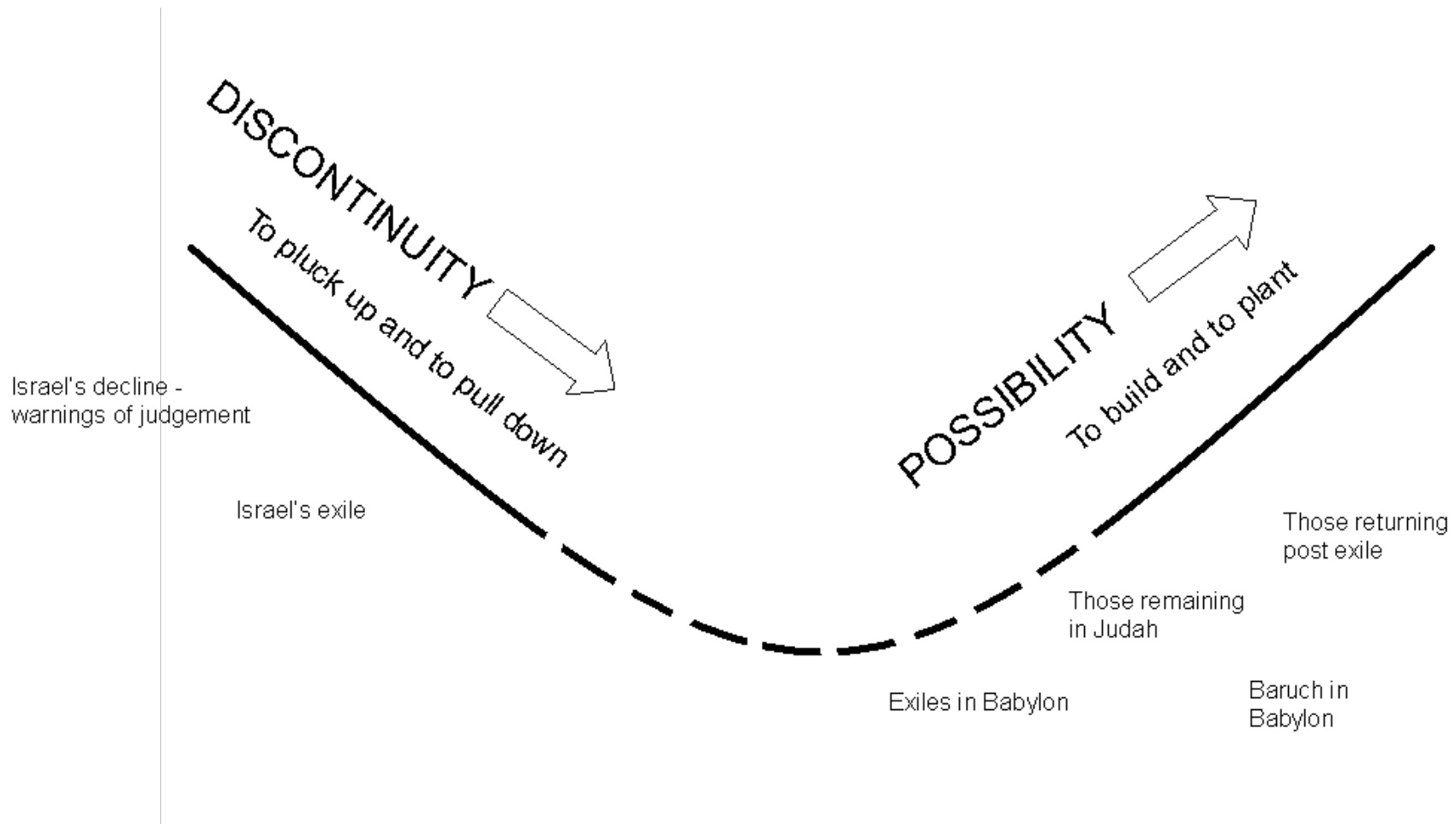
Baruch and the redactors

- words of Jeremiah
- edited by Baruch (e.g. ch 36.4)
- edited by redactors

‘The prose of hope does not cancel out the poetry of hurt’.

Brueggeman, *A Commentary on Jeremiah*, p.47

Language and Imagery: The Call



Ch 1 followed through the whole book

e.g. 12.14-17, 18.7-9, 24.6-7, 31.27-28, 42.10, 45.4

Language and Imagery



Legal case for divorce - a covenant broken

2. 4-13, 5.1-13, 8.8-10, 11.1-17, 17.1-4



Groupwork 1



Legal case for divorce - Ch 2. 4-13

⁴ Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

⁵ Thus says the Lord:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?

⁶ They did not say,

‘Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?’

⁷ I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination.

⁸ The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’

Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit.

⁹ Therefore once more I accuse you,
says the Lord, and I accuse your children's children.

¹⁰ Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing.

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.

¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord,

¹³ for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water,
and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Questions:

What do you notice about the language used?

Discuss the use of language in drawing up legal documents / covenants today (e.g. marriage vows, divorce settlements).

Do you see examples of this type of language in the church today – e.g. the discussions in Synod last week about same sex marriage/blessing

Language and Imagery



Pathos of God
Poetry: sadness, grief,
unfaithfulness.

3. 12.7-13, 12.7-13, 14. 17-22

Groupwork 2: Pathos of God

Poetry: sadness, grief, unfaithfulness



Jer 12.7-13,

God Replies to Jeremiah

⁷ I have forsaken my house,

I have abandoned my heritage;

I have given the beloved of my heart
into the hands of her enemies.

⁸ My heritage has become to me

like a lion in the forest;

she has lifted up her voice against me—
therefore I hate her.

⁹ Is the hyena greedy for my heritage at my command?

Are the birds of prey all around her?

Go, assemble all the wild animals;

bring them to devour her.

¹⁰ Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard,

they have trampled down my portion,

they have made my pleasant portion
a desolate wilderness.

¹¹ They have made it a desolation;
desolate, it mourns to me.

The whole land is made desolate,
but no one lays it to heart.

¹² Upon all the bare heights in the desert
spoilers have come;

for the sword of the Lord devours
from one end of the land to the other;
no one shall be safe.

¹³ They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns,
they have tired themselves out but profit nothing.

They shall be ashamed of their^[d] harvests
because of the fierce anger of the Lord.



Questions:

What do you notice about the language used?

How would you describe *god* in this text?

Do you see examples of this type of language in the church today?

Language and Imagery



Prophecies of
judgment and terror
various verses
from 4.5-6.30
and 15. 1-9



<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2023/feb/05/russia-ukraine-war-situation-in-the-east-very-difficult-ukraines-president-says>

Groupwork 3: Prophecies of judgment and terror



Jer 15.1-9

15 Then the Lord said to me: Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn towards this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! ² And when they say to you, 'Where shall we go?' you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord:

Those destined for pestilence, to pestilence,
and those destined for the sword, to the sword;
those destined for famine, to famine,
and those destined for captivity, to captivity.

³ And I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, says the Lord: the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of the air and the wild animals of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴ I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what King Manasseh son of Hezekiah of Judah did in Jerusalem.

⁵ Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem,
or who will bemoan you?

Who will turn aside
to ask about your welfare?

⁶ You have rejected me, says the Lord,
you are going backwards;
so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you—
I am weary of relenting.



⁷ I have winnowed them with a winnowing-fork
in the gates of the land;
I have bereaved them, I have destroyed my people;
they did not turn from their ways.

⁸ Their widows became more numerous
than the sand of the seas;
I have brought against the mothers of youths
a destroyer at noonday;
I have made anguish and terror
fall upon her suddenly.

⁹ She who bore seven has languished;
she has swooned away;
her sun went down while it was yet day;
she has been shamed and disgraced.
And the rest of them I will give to the sword
before their enemies,
says the Lord.

Groupwork 3: Prophecies of judgment and terror



Questions:

What do you notice about the language used?

Discuss the tensions between the violence of God's terror and the understanding of God as a god of love.

Do you see examples of this type of language in the church today?

Language and Imagery



Links to other texts

- Dismantling creation order
Jer 4.19-31 (Gen 1.2), Jer 10.1-16
- Deuteronomy
Jer 11.1-17/Deut 6.4
- Psalms & lamentations
11.18-12.6, 15.10- 21, 17.14-18,
18.18-23, 20.7-18

Language and Imagery



Weird prophetic acts

- Loin cloth 13.1-11

Buy

Israel should cling to Yahweh

Hide

Israel has hidden from Yahweh

Recovered

Israel is worthless,

but useless

- Buy land

32.6-17 a sign of the promise to come

LOGOS
JEREMIAH



Imagery and
metaphor

