



## CONTACT

**Slaviša Janković**

PhD OT student, Andrews University

slavisai@yahoo.com

269 471 6929

## LITERARY STRUCTURE

- A. v. 19 Jeremiah cries, the sound (קול)  
 B. v. 20 The land is devastated (דבר)  
 C. v. 21 The call of a trumpet (קול)  
 D. v. 22 Yahweh's first statement  
 a. For My people are foolish (3+3)  
 b. They are stupid children (3+3)  
 c. They are shrewd to do evil (3+3)  
 E. vs. 23-26 Four prophet's views  
 a earth and heaven (4+3)  
 b mountains and hills (4+2)  
 a' man and birds (4+3)  
 b' fruitful land and cities (4+2)  
 c *the Lord and His anger*  
 D. v. 27-28 Yahweh's second statement  
 a. Devastation but not total  
 b. Earth and Heaven  
 c. Declaration without repentance  
 C'. v. 29 The voice of the horseman (קול)  
 B'. v.30 The Devastated One (דבר)  
 A'. v.31 She cries, the voice (קול).

# DO THE ALLUSIONS FOUND IN JEREMIAH 4:23-26 SUPPORT A LOCAL OR COSMIC SCOPE?

## INTRODUCTION

Leading scholars of Jeremiah, such as Holladay, Bright, McKane and Fishbane, hold that the phrase *ארץ נדבחה* in 4:23 alludes to Gen 1:2. This allusion leads them to claim that 4:23-26 forms the undoing of creation, i.e. de-creation. The present study will argue that Jeremiah does not convey the idea of de-creation of the entire world via 4:23-26, but rather the destruction of the land of Judah. The allusions found in 4:23-26 and its context will support this claim.

## IS JER 4:23-26 A DISTINCT LITERARY UNIT?

- ✓ The beginning of the poem is delineated by a shift in content and the literary structure, while its end is delineated by a shift in content, prophetic formula, and person
- ✓ Each line of the poem begins with verbal form *אמר*
- ✓ The structure of its immediate context forms a distinct unit (see the literary structure)
- ✓ A parallelism separates the two levels of thought
- ✓ An auditory pattern of the poem decreases

## CONCLUSION

- ✓ The allusive connection of 4:23-26 and chapters 2-6 to Lev 26, Deut 8, 11 and 28 confirms the meaning of the poem: it depicts a local destruction
- ✓ Jeremiah's alludes to Gen 1:2 and 2:5 not for the purpose of communicating de-creation, but to make people aware that the God of Creation and the God of the Covenant is in charge of the doom incurred by Israel's covenantal unfaithfulness
- ✓ This understanding of 4:23-26 and its allusions is supported by the following:
  - Covenant, as the background to chapters 2-6, acts as a limiting factor
  - The text of 4:23-26 strongly ties it to chapters 2-6
  - 4:23-26 is at the beginning of the text that addresses the covenantal curses over Judah
  - The final punishment for covenantal unfaithfulness is not de-creation but exile with the hope of a new beginning
  - "Not a full end" in v. 27 speaks about the new beginning and that even Judah will not be destroyed completely
  - Historically, only Judah was punished/destroyed by God in 587 BC
  - Because Jeremiah prophesied concerning Judah, who was unfaithful to the covenant, the allusions seem to refer to Judah
  - There are no references, either before or after 4:23-26, to its universality
  - The poem, Jer 4:23-26, does not share any literary features with any Old Testament apocalyptic text

## WHAT ARE THE THEMES OF JER 2-6?

- ✓ Chs. 2-6 is the broad literary context of 4:23-26 which is evident by its introductory formulas
- ✓ The covenantal backdrop of chs. 2-6 is evidenced by two themes: national apostasy (2:5-4:2) and punishment from the north (4:5-6:30)
- ✓ The most frequent use of the covenantal root *עָוָה* is found in the book Jeremiah
- ✓ The first theme (2:5-4:2) of chs. 2-6 contains the allusions to the covenant
- ✓ The second theme (4:5-6:30) of ch. 2-6 contains the allusions to the covenantal curse

## TO WHAT DOES JER 4:23-26 ALLUDE?

- ✓ The items mentioned in 4:23-26 are all mentioned in Lev 26 and Deut 8, 11, 28.
- ✓ The allusions in the poem show up in a sequence that follows its parallel arrangement, which means that vss. 23 and 25 will allude to the creation account and the covenantal texts, i.e. texts that are universal in scope, while vss. 24 and 26 will always allude to the covenantal texts
- ✓ The placement of *אֶרֶץ נִדְבַחָה* after "earth and heaven" led many scholars back to the same phrase in Gen 1:2; an alternative view is to connect "earth and heaven" with the covenantal texts. This is plausible since both entities are under God's curse in the case of covenantal betrayal
- ✓ The word order of all of the shared entities in 4:23-26 and Gen 1:1-2:4a is different
- ✓ "man and birds" forms a defective merism
- ✓ In Jer 2:7 *קִרְקַל* emphasizes the important quality of the Promised Land; i.e., its fruitfulness
- ✓ The desolation of Judah's cities in 4:26 alludes to Lev 26:31-33
- ✓ The finale of the poem explicitly expresses the source of the doom - the Lord himself. Also, 4:26 contains all of the roots that refer to God's anger

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