

בְּחֻקֵי

Jeremiah, chapter 16, verse 19 to chapter 17, verse 14

Introduction

Connection of haftarah and sidra:

The sidra presents Israel with a choice between blessings and curses. The haftarah brings us Jeremiah's assurance that, after God's people make their choice for God, they can be certain of divine favor: "Blessed are those whose trust in the Eternal." (17:7)

The setting:

Jeremiah lived at a time of turbulence and danger. We cannot tell at what stage of his life he delivered the observations and warnings contained in our haftarah. Most likely they stem from various periods of his career.

For more on Jeremiah and his time, see our *General Introduction*.

The message:

We can distinguish eight individual sets of sayings, which may have been culled from Jeremiah's notes by his scribe and friend, Baruch. Some of them have become famous sayings, and one has been incorporated into the daily prayer service.

1. The peoples of the earth will come to acknowledge the Eternal. (16:19)
2. Pagan deities are not divine. (16:20-21)
3. Israel's sins will cause it to lose its inheritance. (17:1-4)
4. The cursed contrasted with the blessed. (17:5-7)
5. The human heart is deceitful, but God knows its ways. (17:9-10)
6. On wealth unjustly acquired. (17:11)
7. The consequence of forsaking the Fountain of Living Waters. (17:12-13)
8. A short prayer for healing. (17:14)