

## Additional Biblical / Theological Questions From God's Prophet Jeremiah

Based on commentary by John Calvin  
Edited by Wabash Bible Ministries

A topical study of various Biblical / theological questions addressed by John Calvin in his Commentaries on Jeremiah:

### **Astrology (or Astronomy)—the study of the stars**

Astrology may justly be called the alphabet of theology; for no one can with a right mind come to the contemplation of the celestial framework, without being enraptured with admiration at the display of God's wisdom, as well as of His power and goodness.<sup>1</sup>

Moses learned astrology as understood by the Egyptians and Daniel as known by the Chaldeans; but the art among them was at that time much adulterated; for they had mingled, as I have already said, foolish divinations with the true and genuine science.<sup>2</sup>

We number the years by the solar course, and the months by the lunar; and then the sun, with respect to the twelve signs, introduces the spring, then the summer, then the autumn, and lastly the winter.<sup>3</sup>

When the opinion prevailed that all events depended on the stars, the fear of God was removed, and nothing was ascribed to His judgments, faith was extinguished, and prayer to God, and all the ordinances of religion, were reduced to nothing.<sup>4</sup>

### **Body Mutilation**

The prohibition of the Law seems to me to have had something special in it, even that God designed by it to distinguish His people from heathens. And we may gather from sacred history that some artifice was practiced by idolaters, when they cut their bodies; for it is said, that the priests of Baal cut their bodies according to their usual manner or practice. God then, wishing to keep His people from every corruption, forbade them to imitate the rites of the heathens (Jer. 41:4-5).<sup>5</sup>

### **Civil Disobedience**

Christians must disobey laws that command sin or forbid righteousness (Jer. 37:18): Let us then bear in mind that though princes may ill bear their decrees to be disregarded by us, they are yet not absolved before God and His angels, and also that we can boldly, openly, and with a full mouth, as they say, assert our innocence, when religion constrains us, and when it is not lawful to obey the impious and unjust edicts of kings.<sup>6</sup>

### **Civil Government**

Political leaders are "God's servants": How was Nebuchadnezzar "God's servant"? Nebuchadnezzar is afterwards called *the servant* of God, not that he was worthy of such

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, Vol. II, trans. Rev. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. II, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. IV, 463.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. IV, 380.

an honor, as it had never been his purpose to labor for God; but he was called a servant, because God designed to employ him in His service, as those are called in the Psalms the sons of God, to whom the word of God was addressed, that is, to whom He gave authority to rule (Ps. 82:6; John 10:35). So also Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant because he was divinely endued with sovereign power (Jer. 27:6-7).<sup>7</sup>

We must obey the civil government: They were obeying God in humbling themselves and in undertaking the yoke of the king of Babylon, for this pleased God. There is no power, says Paul, but from God (Rom. 13:1), and that sentence is derived from this principle, that all power is from God; for He gives the power to rule and to govern to whom He pleases. Whosoever, then, are endued with the power of the sword and public authority, are God's servants, though they exercise tyranny and be robbers. They are servants, not with respect to themselves, but because God would have them to be acknowledged as His ministers until their time shall come (Jer. 27:6-7).<sup>8</sup>

We ought not only to obey the kings under whose authority we live, but we ought also to pray for their prosperity, so that God may be a witness of our voluntary subjection.<sup>9</sup>

The Jews had been led to Babylon on the condition of rendering willing obedience to the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar, and of testifying this by their prayers. He not only bids them patiently to endure the punishment laid on them, but also to be faithful subjects of their conqueror; He not only forbids them to be seditious, but He would have them to obey from the heart, so that God might be a witness of their willing subjection and obedience (Jer. 29:7).<sup>10</sup>

Empires rise and fall according to God's will: As, then, the life of every individual has its fixed limits, so God has determined with regard to the empires of the whole earth; thus the life and death of every kingdom and nation are in the hand and at the will of God (Jer. 27:6-7).<sup>11</sup>

Even bad civil governments are better than the alternative, which is anarchy. It is better that the devil should rule men under any sort of government than that they should be set free without any law, without any restraint (Jer. 30:9).<sup>12</sup>

### **The Death Penalty**

It is a thing worthy of praise that he [Gedaliah] was unwilling that Ishmael should be rashly killed, the cause being not known; yet he ought to have carefully inquired, and the thing being found out, he might have defended himself, and put to death a wicked man and a public pest. Gedaliah was armed with the sword; and he might have justly punished Ishmael, if he had only been attentive to the matter, that is, if he had taken the trouble to ascertain the facts (Jer. 40:16).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Vol. III, 355.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. III, 356.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. III, 423.

<sup>10</sup> Vol. III, 420.

<sup>11</sup> Vol. III, 356.

<sup>12</sup> Vol. IV, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Vol. IV, 458.

The death penalty is often abused or neglected in our fallen world. God often extends the life of the most wicked so that they may be exhibited as a spectacle; nor does the truth of the words, "Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed," become meaningless, for God has various ways by which He renders a just reward to murderers and assassins. And we ought to notice what is said in the book of Psalms, "Slay them not, lest my people should forget" (Ps. 59:11). The Psalmist there asks God not to destroy immediately the wicked; for a forgetfulness of a remarkable punishment might easily creep in, if God executed it suddenly and instantly. But when God impresses a mark of His curse on the impious and the wicked and prolongs their life, it is the same as though He placed them in a theater to be looked on leisurely and for a long time (Jer. 41:15).<sup>14</sup>

This ought especially to serve as a confirmation to our faith when we see the godly cruelly slain and the wicked remaining in security; for it hence follows that we are to look for another judgment of God, which does not yet appear. For if God rendered to each his just reward then the Sadducees would have some ground to boast that there is not another life; but when things are thus in a state of confusion in the world, we know that God's judgment is suspended and deferred to another time. So this variety or confusion confirms our minds in the hope of the last judgment and of a blessed resurrection (Jer. 41:15).<sup>15</sup>

### **Drunkenness**

When one falls under the water, he is no more sunk than he who drowns his brain with wine; for drunkenness is like a grave, inasmuch as it holds the whole man under its power (Jer. 23:9).<sup>16</sup>

The metaphor of drunkenness which Jeremiah uses, is common; for when Scripture says that any are made miserable to excess or more than what can be well tolerated, it compares them to those who are made drunk. For as a drunken man loses his senses, so they who are overwhelmed with miseries are almost stunned with evils, so that they become deprived of reason and judgment. For the drunkard delights in drinking, but afterwards by vomiting he suffers the punishment of his intemperance, when his head, his stomach, his legs and other members shake and tremble (Jer. 48:26-27).<sup>17</sup>

### **Famine**

Though famine is a sign of a curse, and also the sword, yet we know that many of God's children perish by famine and by the sword.<sup>18</sup>

### **Fear**

Men are by nature fearful: However courageous we may be, yet our constancy and boldness are more apparent when we have to deal with men than when we are alone, and God is the only witness; for when no one sees us, we tremble; and though we may have previously appeared to have manly courage, yet when alone, fear lays hold on us. There is hardly one in a hundred who is so bold as he ought to be when God alone is

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<sup>14</sup> Vol. IV, 473.

<sup>15</sup> Vol. IV, 474.

<sup>16</sup> Vol. III, 152.

<sup>17</sup> Vol. V, 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> Vol. II, 305.

witness. But shame renders us courageous and constrains us to be firm, and the vigor which is almost extinct in private is roused in public (Jer. 51:60-64).<sup>19</sup>

### Feelings

Let us learn to restrain, in due time, our feelings, which will pass over all bounds if we indulge them; for they will break out then as it were into fury, as the case was with the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 20:16).<sup>20</sup>

### Funerals

Should Christians bury the dead? Burying has been held as a sacred custom in all ages; for it was a symbol of the last resurrection.<sup>21</sup> The faithful ought not to disregard burial, inasmuch as it is a badge of the resurrection.<sup>22</sup>

Burial is also a pledge as it were of immortality; for when man's body is laid hid in the earth, it is, as it were, a mirror of a future life. Since then burial is an evidence of God's grace and favor towards mankind, it is on the other hand, a sign of a curse, when burial is denied.<sup>23</sup> They were barbarous who dared to deride burial, as the Cynics did, who treated burial with contempt. This was inhumanity.<sup>24</sup>

For as health and food sufficient for the necessities of life are evidences of God's love, so is burial after death; for burial distinguishes men from brutes. When a wild beast dies, his carcass is left to putrefy. Why are men buried, except in hope of the resurrection, as though they were laid up in a safe place until the time of restoration? Burial, then, as it is a symbol of our immortality, makes a distinction between us and brute animals after death (Jer. 34:4-5).<sup>25</sup>

It is God's will that there should be some monument that men might understand how much more excellent is their condition than that of brute animals. Hence when God favors us with burial, He shows His paternal care towards us.<sup>26</sup>

Notwithstanding what I have said, it sometimes happens that the most wicked are buried with honor and great pomp, when the children of God are either burnt or torn by wild beasts. Known is that complaint of the Psalmist, that the bodies of the saints were cast away and became food to birds and wild beasts (Ps. 79:2). And it is said of the rich man who lived in splendor that he died and was buried, but there is no mention made of the burial of Lazarus (Luke 16:22). We ought not then simply to conclude that those are cursed who are not buried and that those are blessed who obtain the honor of a burial.<sup>27</sup>

It has commonly been the case almost in all ages to be ostentatious in mourning for the dead.<sup>28</sup> Yes, it is natural to weep for the dead.<sup>29</sup> Yet, Christians are to be moderate in

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<sup>19</sup> Vol. V, 291.

<sup>20</sup> Vol. III, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Vol. II, 416.

<sup>22</sup> Vol. II, 418.

<sup>23</sup> Vol. III, 108.

<sup>24</sup> Vol. IV, 276.

<sup>25</sup> Vol. IV, 275.

<sup>26</sup> Vol. IV, 275.

<sup>27</sup> Vol. IV, 275.

<sup>28</sup> Vol. IV, 277.

<sup>29</sup> Vol. IV, 278.

their grief over the loss of loved ones: We are so to moderate our sorrow as not to be like the unbelieving, who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13); for they think that death is the death of the soul as well as of the body; they therefore lament their dead as forever lost; and they also murmur against God and sometimes utter horrid blasphemies. Paul then would have us to be moderate in our sorrow. He does not condemn sorrow altogether, but only requires it to be moderate, so that we may show what influence the hope of resurrection has over us (Jer. 34:4-5).<sup>30</sup>

### **Horoscopes**

False astrologers hold and maintain that a judgment respecting man's life ought to be formed by the horoscope, as though the fortune of every one depended on the stars. When, therefore, any one is born at a certain hour, this or that condition, according to them, awaits him. Thus they imagine that there is a fate, or some necessity, which holds a man bound to the influence of the sun, moon, and stars; for he was born when the sun was in the tail of that sign or in the head of another; his birth portends such and such fortune; he will live but a short time, or he will live long.<sup>31</sup>

God never intended the stars to be signs for such purposes. This divination [i.e., horoscopes] extinguishes all religion; for there will be no faith, there will be no recognition of punishment, no acknowledgement of God's blessings, and no concern for sin, whenever this diabolical error possesses our minds—that we are subject to the stars, that such and such is our nativity [birth], and that the stars portend some kind of death every day and every moment.<sup>32</sup>

### **Luther and his followers**

John Calvin thought highly of Martin Luther and his successor Philip Melancthon, yet many Lutherans in Calvin's day really rejected them all! I have now faithfully and plainly explained why they who boast themselves to be the followers of Luther so hastily contend with us at this day. For the same reason they pour forth their execrations on Philip Melancthon, now dead, a man who, for his incomparable knowledge in the highest branches of literature, his deep piety, and other endowments, deserves to be remembered by all ages, and whom they have until this time regarded as their leader: and it is strange, that in order to obtain the favor of the public, they pretend to adopt that noble CONFESSIO OF AUGSBURG, of which he was especially the author and ought to be deemed its true interpreter. I regard them as turbulent and unprincipled men who possess no common courtesy and feel no shame.<sup>33</sup>

### **Marriage**

The sacred bond of marriage is the main thing in the preservation of social order.<sup>34</sup> Marriage is necessary for the preservation of society.<sup>35</sup> Marriage is the preservation of the human race.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Vol. IV, 277.

<sup>31</sup> Vol. II, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Vol. II, 11.

<sup>33</sup> Vol. I, xxi.

<sup>34</sup> Vol. I., 155.

<sup>35</sup> Vol. I, 417.

<sup>36</sup> Vol. II, 302.

### Parents and Children

God commands parents to discipline their children. Without discipline early in life, children become monsters and civilization collapses: God commanded what was right not only once but *rose up early*, that is, He anticipated them with perseverance; for by this metaphor He means that He did not wait until after a continued licentiousness they became more addicted to their vices; for we know that those who have for many years been without restraint, are not easily brought into order, but they become habitually refractory [obstinately resistant to authority or control]. And hence, also, it comes to be necessary to form those from infancy who are to be ruled by us; for if they are allowed to act as they please, their rebelliousness [lawlessness] cannot afterwards be restrained by any laws. God then says, that He *rose up early*, that is, that He anticipated the Jews so that together with their milk they might imbibe religion (Jer. 35:12-15).<sup>37</sup>

Scripture limits children's obedience to their parents: When Paul exhorts children to obey their parents, he modifies his exhortation by saying, "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1). We then see that Paul commands children to obey their parents, not in everything, or without limitation, but so that God, who is the Sovereign and the only Father of all, may still retain His authority and that earthly parents may not claim for themselves so much authority as to ascend the throne of God as though they were lawgivers to souls (Jer. 35:7).<sup>38</sup>

### Polygamy

It was, we know, an ancient evil, but it had now passed into general practice, so that it was, as it were, the common law; and yet what God had once established continued unchanged, even that every man should have only his own wife. As, then, polygamy had so prevailed and had become so licentious among the Jews, we see that the fear of God was in fact extinguished and also all regard to purity (Jer. 38:23).<sup>39</sup>

### Poverty

Is poverty a curse? Sometimes it is, but sometimes poverty is a blessing of God. We here see that poverty is often an advantage, for the nobles, as we have seen, were killed and many also of the middle class were killed in the siege of the city, while some of them were treated a little more humanely. The land was now left to the poor alone; and those who possessed not a foot of ground before, lived now very comfortably; for they were not so large a number, but each of them had some extent of land. Thus often God shows His care for us when He does not allow us to rise high but keeps us in an obscure and humble condition. This shows that He thus had a regard for our salvation (Jer. 39:10).<sup>40</sup>

**Agriculture** Agriculture is in itself a mode of living not only honest and innocent but also remote from ambition, fraud, and plunder; in short, it seems to be of all kinds of living the simplest and the most innocent.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Vol. IV, 317.

<sup>38</sup> Vol. IV, 312.

<sup>39</sup> Vol. IV, 414-415.

<sup>40</sup> Vol. IV, 431-432.

<sup>41</sup> Vol. IV, 307.

### Imprecatory Prayers

Is it right to pray for evils on the ungodly and wicked, while we are doubtful and uncertain as to their final doom? To this I answer—that we are not to denounce a sentence on this or that man individually, but we may use this form of prayer generally with regard to the obstinate enemies of God. It would then be more becoming in us to pray for the good of all and to wish their salvation, and, as far as we can, to promote it.<sup>42</sup>

It is lawful for us to pray for the destruction of the reprobate and of those who despise God. However, our prayers ought not to anticipate God's judgment; we are not to determine as to individuals, but only remember this distinction—that God acts as a Father toward His elect and as a judge towards the reprobate.<sup>43</sup>

### Slavery

Was slavery unlawful in Old Testament times? No. Is perpetual servitude so displeasing to God that it ought not to be deemed lawful? To this the answer is easy—Abraham and other fathers had servants or slaves according to the common and prevailing custom, and it was *not* deemed wrong in them (Jer. 34:8-17).<sup>44</sup>

Hence it is without reason that any one infers that it is not lawful to exercise power over servants and maids; for, on the contrary, we may reason that since God permitted the fathers to retain servants and maids, it is a lawful thing; and further, as God permitted the Jews also, under the Law, to bear rule over aliens [foreigners] and to keep them perpetually as servants, it follows that this cannot be disapproved.<sup>45</sup>

Nor was slavery unlawful in the times of the New Testament. The Apostles did not constrain masters to liberate their servants, but only exhorted them to use kindness towards them and to treat them humanely as their fellow-servants (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). If, then, servitude were unlawful, the Apostles would have never tolerated it; but they would have boldly denounced such a profane practice had it been so. Now, as they commanded masters only to be humane towards their servants and not to treat them violently and reproachfully, it follows that what was not denied was permitted, that is, to retain their own servants. We also see that Paul sent back Onesimus to Philemon (v. 12). Philemon was not only one of the faithful but also a pastor of the Church. He ought then to have been an example to others. His servant had fled away from him; Paul sent him back and commended him to his master, and implored his master to forgive his theft. We hence see that the thing in itself is not unlawful.<sup>46</sup>

However, just because slavery is lawful does not mean that it should be practiced. It is by no means to be wished that there should be slaves among us, as there were formerly among all nations and as there are now among barbarians. The Spaniards know what servitude is, for they are near neighbors to the Africans and the Turks; and then those they take in war and sell them; and as one evil proceeds from another, so they retain these men as slaves throughout life. But as no necessity constrains us, our condition,

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<sup>42</sup> Vol. II, 65-66.

<sup>43</sup> Vol. II, 66.

<sup>44</sup> Vol. IV, 282.

<sup>45</sup> Vol. IV, 283.

<sup>46</sup> Vol. IV, 283.

as I have said, is better, that is, in that we have hired servants and not slaves; for those called servants at this day are *only* hired servants (Jer. 34:8-17).<sup>47</sup>

### Tolerating Sin

Tolerating sin is sinful. For example, husbands who tolerate their wives' idolatry are also guilty of idolatry by implication: The Prophet says that *all the men* to whom the impiety of their wives was known *answered Jeremiah*. By these words the Prophet suggests that the beginning of idolatry was from the women. Things then had not as yet gone so far that all the men openly worshipped idols; but the women had taken the liberty, and the men readily indulged them. But why then did the Prophet before reprove them, as though they *all* made incense to idols? We doubtless learn from this passage that they are not only guilty before God who openly do what is wicked, but also those who by connivance [collusion; co-conspiracy] tolerate them; for the men ought to have interfered so as to restrain their wives from polluting themselves with ungodly superstitions; but this they patiently endured. The husbands' consent to the crime was the same as if they had committed the sinful deed, as we may rightly conclude from the words of the Prophet. He then says that the men offered incense, not indeed openly and with their own hands, but that they knew of their wives' sin and that this impiety was done by the women with the consent of the men (Jer. 44:15-16).<sup>48</sup>

### Vows & Oaths

Swearing, as we have said elsewhere, is a part of God's worship and of true religion, for we profess that we ourselves and our lives are in God's hand when we swear by His name. We also refer judgment to Him and own that He is really God, inasmuch as He knows our hearts and judges of hidden things.<sup>49</sup>

Should men keep vows that are unlawful or made rashly? No! It is a folly in no way pleasing to God when men indiscriminately vow whatever they may dream according to their own fancies. God then would have sobriety and regard to His will to be observed as to vows. But when any one has made an inconsiderate vow, pertinaciously [stubbornly] to persist in it is no less displeasing to God than the vow itself. When, therefore, we rashly make vows, disapproved by God, nothing is better than immediately to retract them; for we have already sinned more than enough in having abused the holy name of God (Jer. 44:24-26).<sup>50</sup>

When I say that vows made to God ought to be performed, I mean lawful vows; for he who makes a vow without judgment, does not vow to God; but those vows which God sanctions ought to be deemed sacred; and whatever vows God repudiates, ought to be counted as nothing.<sup>51</sup>

In whose name should we make vows? Vows are to be made *only* in God's name. God makes an oath by *His own great name*. Men, as the Apostle says, swear by God (Heb. 6:16) because He is called as a witness and a judge when His name is interposed.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Vol. IV, 283-284.

<sup>48</sup> Vol. IV, 541.

<sup>49</sup> Vol. II, 157.

<sup>50</sup> Vol. IV, 555.

<sup>51</sup> Vol. IV, 556.

<sup>52</sup> Vol. IV, 557.



God is said to swear *by Himself*, because there is none greater, as the apostle says, by whom He can swear (Heb. 6:13). An oath, as we learn from many places in Scripture, is a part of divine worship. As then this honor belongs peculiarly to Him, that is, that we should swear by His name, when He Himself swears, He cannot derive authority from another, which may confirm His words: He therefore swears by Himself. And we have heard what He declares by Isaiah, "I will not give My glory to another" (Isa. 42:8). God then prescribes to us the form of swearing, when He swears by Himself. In short, we must bear in mind that when necessity constrains us to swear, God is ever the sole Judge and that therefore His name is profaned when we swear by another (Jer. 49:13).<sup>53</sup>

It is blasphemy to swear by dead saints or any name but God's: There is therefore under the Papacy a base and an intolerable idolatry, for the Papists swear by dead saints. This is nothing else but to rob God of His right; for since He alone, as it has been stated, is the truth, so He alone is the fit Judge when things are hidden and cannot be ascertained by human testimony. Whoever then swears by the saints, it is the same thing as to make them to occupy the place of God, so as to make them the judges of the world and to ascribe to them all power (Jer. 49:13).<sup>54</sup>

Why does God make oaths? Whenever God confirms His words by an oath, this He does, either because He sees that He has to deal with men who are like stones, who cannot be made to feel by simple truth; or when He is pleased to give aid to our infirmity and sloth; for God confirms threatenings as well as promises by an oath. When He thus confirms threatenings, then He indirectly condemns the obstinate wickedness of those whom He addresses. But when He promises anything by an oath, He shows how great our propensity is to indulge doubts and what weakness there is in our faith; for if we possessed such faith as we ought, we should be content with one little word. As, then, God interposes His own name as a pledge, it hence appears, that we are naturally unbelieving or that the weakness of our faith is such that it wants this support (Jer. 44:24-26).<sup>55</sup>

### **Wealth**

Can Christians be wealthy? Yes. A just man may become rich, as God made Abraham rich; but he became not rich by frauds and plunder and cruelty; the blessing of God made him rich. But they who by wrong and injustice accumulate wealth must necessarily at length be destroyed by God.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the fact that God sometimes blesses His children with great wealth, the Scriptures teach that prosperity is often God's curse, not His blessing:

The Jews while in prosperity disregarded the Prophets; for they were inebriated with their good fortune (Jer. 42:19-21).<sup>57</sup> We indeed know that men in prosperity are in a manner inebriated [intoxicated] so that they are not easily induced to obey sound counsels. For where does it come that kings and princes of the world indulge themselves so much and allow such license to their lusts? Even because the splendor of their fortune inebriates them. So also private men, when all things succeed according

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<sup>53</sup> Vol. V, 78-79.

<sup>54</sup> Vol. V, 78-79.

<sup>55</sup> Vol. IV, 556-557.

<sup>56</sup> Vol. II, 359.

<sup>57</sup> Vol. IV, 500.

to their wishes, they rest in their own luxuries and vices; hence it is that they are difficult to be ruled (Jer. 42:13-17).<sup>58</sup>

Prosperity commonly brings *pride* with it, and those who excel in dignity and power become self-willed and insolent [arrogant] (Jer. 46:18).<sup>59</sup> Yes, riches and power always produce haughtiness and false confidence in men; for in villages and small towns wars are not contrived; but the great cities gather the wood and kindle the fire; and the fire afterwards spreads and pervades the whole land (Jer. 48:45).<sup>60</sup>

Prosperity often blinds men as to their true spiritual condition: The Prophets mentioned the wealth, the riches, and the power of the ungodly because the ungodly are blinded by all the good things in which they abound. Wealthy unbelievers fear nothing, nor do they feel any anxiety, but through a false notion they exempt themselves from every evil and all God's threatenings. As, then, the unbelieving are thus presumptuous and proud, the Prophets warn them and say that however the prosperous may exult in their own strength and defenses, they would yet, when it pleased God to make them a prey, become the most miserable of all (Jer. 46:20).<sup>61</sup>

### **Wisdom**

True wisdom is to seek God.<sup>62</sup>

### **Women's roles**

One unfortunate result of women serving in combat in the military is that women are no longer likely to be spared in modern warfare: We indeed know that the female sex do not stand in the ranks to fight and therefore when a city is taken women are commonly spared (Jer. 38:20-22).<sup>63</sup>

Women judges are a sign of God's judgment. The Prophet said to King Zedekiah that women would be his judges, which was to cast a heavier reproach on him, because he refused to believe the oracles of God (Jer. 38:20-22).<sup>64</sup> The prophet Isaiah similarly declared: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause *you* to err, And destroy the way of your paths" (Isaiah 3:12).

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<sup>58</sup> Vol. IV, 495.

<sup>59</sup> Vol. IV, 592.

<sup>60</sup> Vol. V, 50.

<sup>61</sup> Vol. IV, 594.

<sup>62</sup> Vol. II, 52.

<sup>63</sup> Vol. IV, 411.

<sup>64</sup> Vol. IV, 412.