

Jeremiah 4:23-27

Temporary English Version (TempEV)

- 23 I looked at the earth.
See!
It's higgledy piggledy.
To heaven,
but no light there!
- 24 I looked on the mountains.
See!
They are quaking.
All the hills shake themselves.
- 25 I looked.
See!
No human,
and all the birds of heaven have fled.
- 26 I looked.
See!
The field's a desert,
and all its cities are destroyed before Adonai,
before the heat of his anger.
- 27 For thus says Adonai:
All the land will be desolation.
But I will not make a full ending.
- 28 Because of this the earth will mourn,
and the heavens will be dark above,
because I have spoken,
I have decided;
and I have not relented
nor will I turn back.

Readers of this text

- When have we heard/studied this passage before?
- How does the social location of this text contrast with ours?
- How is it similar?
- Where are we reading? (Church service, group study, “quiet time”, University paper...)
- What issues are addressed in this text? What is my experience of this?
- What experiences do we have that resonate with this passage?
- How are our situations dissimilar to those of the writers/ first readers?

Meeting the Text

Overview

Listen to passage being read.

Ideally we should hear the whole book! (Borrow the tapes from the library.)

Cotext (hear the passage in its textual setting).

First Impressions

- Note down your first impressions.

Getting to Know the Text

Reread the passage in different translations.

- differences between translations
- the way you respond to different “versions”
- How do your reactions reflect what you noted about yourself (“Beginning at the Beginning” above)?
- What elements of the text are problematic?
- What needs explaining, people, places, customs...?
- Imagine how people from other “places” might hear the passage (other gender, race, wealth, etc.).

Exploring the Text

Limits of Passage

- Does the passage set makes sense as a unit?
- Where does it start and end? Why?
- Does it depend on what surrounds it?

Text and Translation

Look at the footnotes to your Bible.

Compare the different translations.

Look at the commentaries.

Look at a critical text. Those who can work with the original languages can get much fuller information about important variants from a "critical text".

Structure

One way to look at the structuring of a passage is to try to write out its outline. Re-read the passage again. This time try to note any evidence of a plan or outline to the thought. Write this down in summary form. Note particularly: the headings you think are useful for sections and the linking words (like "but", "therefore", "however", "so"...) which often reveal the skeleton of the passage.

Information

List words, people, places, events, customs etc. that need explanation: gather information from dictionaries, Bible Dictionary, Bible Atlas, commentaries etc.. A good Bible dictionary is the single most useful tool for an exegete.

Language

- **Style:** Poetry or prose; repetitive; terse or ample
- **Purpose:** Convince, inform, worship etc.
- **Voices:** Does the "speaker" change within the passage? From whose point of view is the story told?
- **Imagery:** What "picture language" is used? Does this mean the same in biblical culture as it does in yours, or your audience's? (Eg. the "heart" in the Old Testament means "will/thought" not warm fuzzy emotions!)