

April 5, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

OBEY ME, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

I knew their plot because the LORD informed me; at that time you, O LORD, showed me their doings. Yet I, like a trusting lamb led to slaughter, had not realized that they were hatching plots against me: "Let us destroy the tree in its vigor; let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will be spoken no more."

JEREMIAH 11:18-19

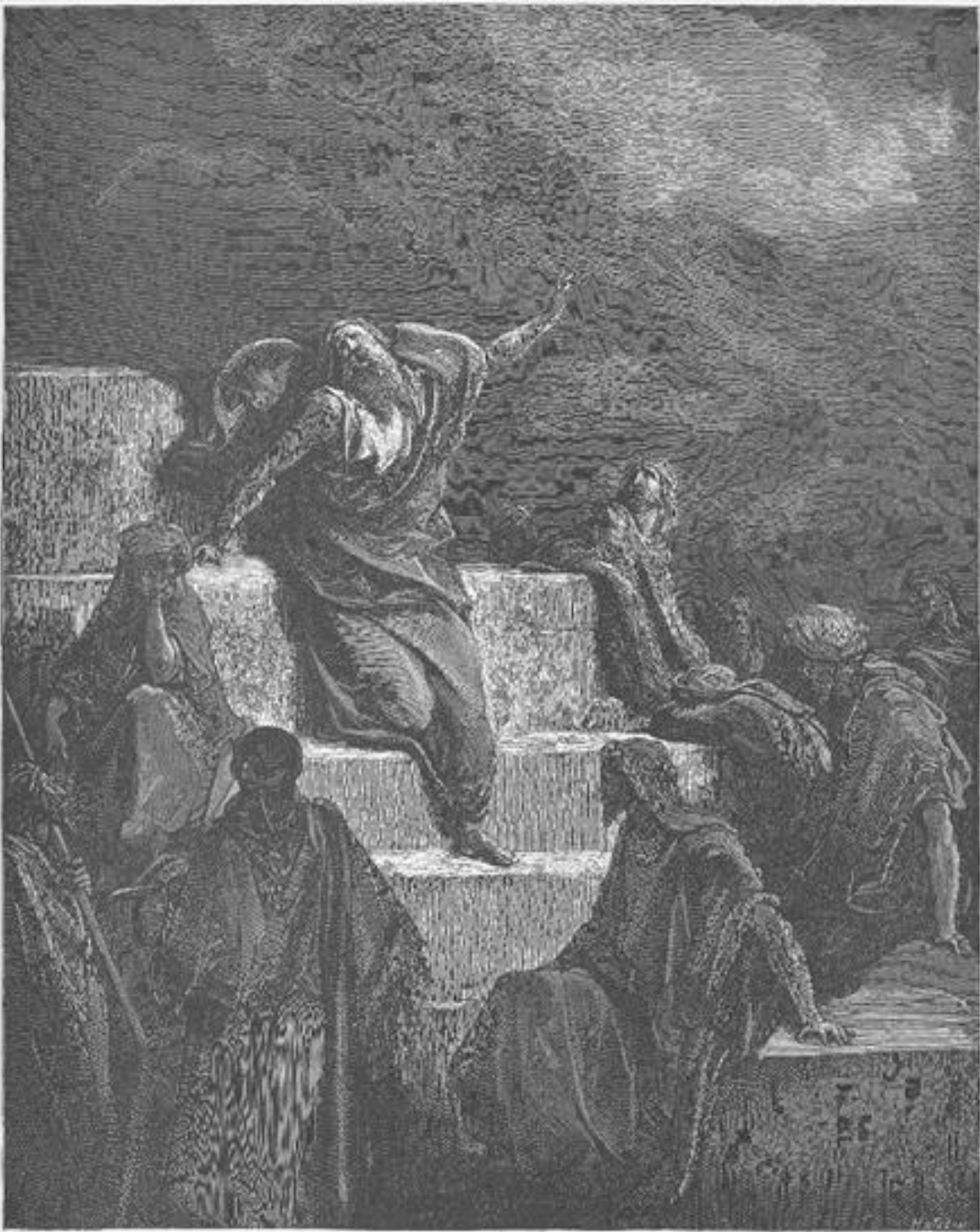
So the guards went to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not bring him?" The guards answered, "Never before has anyone spoken like this man." So the Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law, is accursed." Nicodemus, one of their members who had come to him earlier, said to them, "Does our law condemn a man before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?"

Reflection

As we draw near to the spiritual catastrophe that is the crucifixion, our Lenten scriptures portray the ultimate chaos that disrupts the community and spiritual solidarity of the Jewish people whose lives intertwine with Jesus in his last days. The rupture of the Covenant mirrors the dissolution of tradition that cries out in the voice of Jeremiah. God calls him to be the prophetic spirit that would draw the people back to the simple fidelity that had been the birthplace of their religious lives. Yet the divine anger is fueled as God recognizes the opacity of their spirits to his call. The only remedy seems to be a punishment that will destroy them entirely. Jeremiah, like Jesus, allows himself to be a sacrifice for the ultimate fulfillment of God's intentions, presenting himself as a *trusting lamb led to slaughter*. This sacrificial gift is ultimately the point of transformation that opens history to God's saving plan.

The selection from John's Gospel portrays the complex storm of passions and religious ideologies that swirls around Jesus in the final days. He no longer moves freely in public spaces due to the bitter opposition of the rabbinic forces who see him as an enemy of the Law, and a rabble-rouser who lures crowds with his 'miracles.' He stands in the lineage of the ancient Jewish prophets who seek to serve the calling of God with humility and love, but the politics of religion swallow them up. However, like those clarion voices of the past, Jesus' message and his mission are part of a new world being born.

The scriptural witness of these waning Lenten days may seem to immerse us in the harsh and cruel dimensions of religious communities and clerical leaders. However, the darkness of these moments is only a shadow of the passing world that will vanish into the emerging promise of the Resurrection as it brightens our spiritual horizons with new life and an enlivened sense of God's way with us as Children of Faith.



JEREMIAH

And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant . . . (Jeremiah 1: 9, 10)

The Prophet Jeremiah
By Gustave Dore

Questions to Ponder

- What parallels do you see in our contemporary religious conflicts to the broken faithfulness of the Covenant communities?

- Have you felt challenged by the struggles that seem to undermine the simple humility of Christian faith?
- How can you contribute to the simple way of the disciple in your own faith community and your family?

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