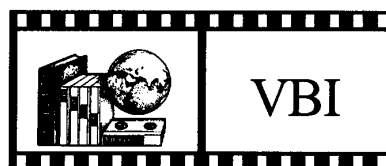
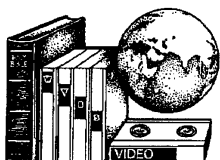


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



JEREMIAH - LAMENTATIONS

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JEREMIAH - LAMENTATIONS

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JEREMIAH, LAMENTATIONS

Syllabus

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: C. M. Horner.
- B. This course consists of 15 lessons on 5 DVDs or 5 videotapes.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is a detailed study of the texts and background of these two books of prophecy.
- B. A special emphasis is placed on the prediction of the spiritual nature of the Lord's church.
- C. Students will have a deeper knowledge and acceptance of God's rulership of all nations.
- D. Students will understand the Lord's church was not an afterthought, but that it was in the mind of God even in the time of Jeremiah.
- E. Students will understand the relationship between the prophets and the people of God.
- F. Students will understand God's promises, for good or for evil.
- G. Students will read Jeremiah and Lamentations with a view to personal relevance. How will it build my faith?
- H. Students will understand God's relationship to those He considers His own.
- I. Students will examine each individual section of Jeremiah for God's ruling in the affairs of mankind.
- J. Students will be able to see that:
 - 1. God is concerned about the lost as well as the saved.
 - 2. God is concerned about the individual as well as the nation.

3. God takes *special* care of His own.
4. There is the possibility He continues to rule in the affairs of mankind today.
5. God is concerned about *me*.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 2. 15 video lessons.
 3. Spiral bound course notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on Jeremiah / Lamentations.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire text of Jeremiah and Lamentations at least once.
- B. View all 15 video lessons in their entirety.
- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- F. Take two written tests.
- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your VBI enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.

- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:

Jeremiah 1:7-10

Jeremiah 10:23

Jeremiah 15:1

Jeremiah 17:5

Jeremiah 20:9

Jeremiah 31:31-34

- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your second written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There are two written tests for this course.
- B. When you near the middle of the course, contact us and request the first test. When you near the end, contact us and request the final test.
- C. When you receive a test, you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write a paper on ten different lessons we can learn from the book of Jeremiah. Cite Scripture references from Jeremiah to support each lesson you draw.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of four pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of six pages, single spaced. paper is due when you mail VBI your second test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and tests will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the tests counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. We hope you enjoy and profit from your study of Jeremiah and Lamentations, and that this course helps in your journey to heaven.

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

627-586 B.C.

Jeremiah may be lacking in the literary magic of Isaiah, but his is second to none in his depth of emotions, his sympathy for the people, his love for his nation and his devotion to God.

I. His writings consist of prophecy, history and elegy.

- A. Prophecy predicting the punishment of Judah and Jerusalem.
- B. History records the fulfillment of these in the decline and fall of the Jewish state.
- C. Elegy consists in the Lamentations uttered after the destruction of Jerusalem.

II. These compositions are too seldom read. Why?

- A. The tone of the writing is somber and sad.
 - 1. One who is known as the “weeping prophet” is not likely to be popular.
 - 2. He had a solemn commission.
 - 3. He was a messenger of doom.
 - 4. He alone predicted that the captivity would end in exactly 70 years.
- B. The great length of these writings.
 - 1. They constitute about 1/20th of the entire Bible.
 - 2. They contain the only record of a critical era in the history of the people from whom our Savior was born.
 - 3. The inspired warning is pertinent for today.
 - 4. These chapters are difficult to read because they are not arranged in the order of time.

III. The times in which Jeremiah lived (2 Kgs 22-25; 2 Chron 34-36).

- A. The scene is one of moral corruption and chaos.
 - 1. In the background are burning cities, and battling armies, files of wretched captives, desolation, destruction, ruin.
 - 2. In the foreground is Jerusalem, impenitent, indifferent and blind to predicted peril, its streets filled with traffickers; its temple filled with worshipers.
 - 3. In the city gates, or the temple court, surrounded by hostile crowds, stands the unpopular prophet uttering warning and predicting doom.
- B. The reform accomplished by Hezekiah, has long since been swept away by his apostate son, Manasseh.
 - 1. During Manasseh's 55 years reign he introduced the most abominable idolatry, and was a relentless persecutor of the worshipers.
 - 2. Late in life, when carried away to Babylon, he repented, but it was too late to save the people (Jer. 15:4).
 - 3. Manasseh was followed by his son Amon who imitated his father.
- C. Josiah was the next ruler.
 - 1. This good prince destroyed idolatry, after finding the book of the Law in the temple.
 - 2. He was killed in battle by Necho of Egypt.
- D. Jehoahaz - also called Shallum.

After reigning 3 months, he was deposed by Necho and carried captive to Egypt to die.
- E. Jehoiakim, an older brother, was chosen in his place by the Egyptian king.
 - 1. When Necho was defeated at Carchemish, by Nebuchadnezzar, he became a vassal of the victorious Babylonians.
 - 2. During the 11 years of his reign, the people relapsed even more into idolatry.

3. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and was driven from his throne.
- F. Jehoiachin - also called Jeconiah or Coniah - succeeded his father Jehoiakim.
1. He followed in the steps of his father.
 2. He reigned only 3 months, then he was taken as a captive to Babylon, there to remain in confinement for 37 years.
 3. At the time of his deportation all the chief men and artisans were carried away.
 4. Jerusalem was left desolate and impotent with only a shadow of her former glory.
- G. As a mere puppet king, Zedekiah his brother was placed on the throne.
1. In blind folly he conspired with Egypt to rebel against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar besieges and destroys the city.
 2. Zedekiah is dragged to Riblah, where his sons are killed before his eyes.
 3. Then his eyes are put out and he is dragged to Babylon and placed in a dungeon.
 4. Thus ends the long reign of 400 years of kings in Jerusalem.
 5. After this Gedaliah was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar.
 - a. He was murdered by Ishmael, a Jewish prince, and anarchy followed.
 - b. Small bands of refugees escaped to asylum in Egypt.

IV. The life of Jeremiah spanned the reigns of the last 5 kings of Judah.

- A. He was born as a member of a family of a priest in the small city of Anathoth, some 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem.
- B. He was called to the office of prophets at an early age.

1. It was in the 13th year of Josiah - 626 B.C.
2. At first he shrank from the task.
3. He was forbidden to marry or to be present in homes of mourning or feasting.
4. Standing alone, he soon found himself opposed by princes, the people, false prophets and priests.
5. Wherever he appeared he was hated, despised, feared and threatened.
6. Yet he delivered God's message with a bleeding heart.
7. A plot was formed against his life by his own people in his native village.

V. The Message of Jeremiah.

- A. Every class of Hebrew society was condemned as inexcusably guilty.
- B. Because Judah refused to repent the Babylonian captivity was inevitable.
- C. All Hebrews needed to submit humbly to the Chaldean yoke rather than to rebel against it, since it was a just chastisement for their unfaithfulness to God's covenant.
- D. Nevertheless, the day would come when Israel would be delivered by the Messiah.
- E. True Israel will always trust in God alone, never in the arm of flesh.
- F. Jeremiah was the only one to give the captivity as seventy years in length.

VI. Jeremiah the man.

- A. Early Training.
 1. Raised in city of Anathoth (close to Jerusalem).
 2. He was brought into the company of scholars, priests, prophets and students of God's word while growing up.

B. His Call.

1. He was weak, timid and shy - but he was ready.
2. God called him and said he was going to send, command and be with Jeremiah.
3. He prophesied from the thirteenth year of Josiah to the eleventh year of Zedekiah.

C. His Character.

1. Very emotional.
2. He was misunderstood and shunned by his family, opposed by priests and prophets, his life was a tragic experience.
3. He continually urged his fellow citizens to turn to God.
4. He had a good education.

D. His religion.

1. Was an affair of his own inner heart.
2. He depended heavily upon the Eternal One.
3. Had a more spiritualized conception of sin than the other prophets.

VII. Practical Lessons.

- A. God's tender heart is severely hurt by the sight of chosen ones who have forgotten the vows of their first days.
- B. Genuine repentance must precede the giving of God's blessings in individual lives.
- C. True religion is an inward, spiritual, genuine repose of the heart to the righteous God.
- D. Religion may be tested by its results in producing the right sort of conduct and attitudes.
- E. Sin cannot triumph, for God must have the ultimate victory over sin.

- F. Each man stands alone before a righteous God and must be judged as an individual soul.
- G. The new covenant provides for a divine operation (non-miraculous) on the human heart that true life may be guaranteed.
- H. The minister who suffers most and leans most heavily on God and His word is the one who knows the deeper truths of God.
- I. God never calls men to run with horses until He has subjected them to easier training with footmen.
- J. Sin always results in ruin. Judgment is inevitable, automatic and eternal.

VIII. The Prophets (Rom 15:4).

- A. The prophetic office was ordained by God (Deut 18:9-22). The prophets were men raised up by God, and in their mouths God placed His word. They stood as the opposites of the soothsaying and divinations of Canaan. Israel was to listen to her prophets and no others.
- B. Their mission:

To communicate to Israel God's word. They predicted the future but as a whole they were more concerned with being proclaimers rather than predictors.
- C. The prophets were the teachers of Old Testament times (with the priests) Jer 1:8,9; 18:11.
 - 1. Wise men and women for council, 2 Sam 14:1-24; 2 Sam 20:16-22, Solomon and others. "The wise man did not appeal directly to the conscience as did the prophets, but rather to the mind through council and argument, though their ultimate aim was to reach the conscience and through it to influence conduct and life" (Eiselen).
 - 2. Priests and the Law, always related (Mal 2:7). Two-fold duty of the priest was:
 - a. To declare and interpret the Law. This involved helping the judges settle disputes by explaining the Law to them.
 - b. To tend to the sacrificial duties of the worship.
 - 3. Prophets, God's word. They were both preachers and predictors,

both forthtellers and foretellers.

- D. Some New Testament statements concerning the prophets.
1. Spoke from God, 2 Pet 1:20,21.
 2. All foretold of "These days" (Christian age), Acts 3:18, 22-26.
 3. Read every Sabbath, Acts 13:27.
 4. Persecuted by their hearers, Acts 7:52; Mt 23:37; Neh 9:31.
 5. Paul reasoned "out of the prophets," Acts 28:23.
 6. Connected with the gospel, Rom 16:25-27; Lk 24:27.
 7. Even the return of Christ predicted, Jude 14-16.
- E. Meaning of the word prophet: "A prophet is one who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, speaks the words and thoughts of God, whether they relate to the past, the present, or to the future" (Milligan). "To boil up like a fountain," Hebrew verb. "The prophet is a speaker for God. His words are not the production of his own spirit, but come from the higher source," (ISBE).
1. Other terms applied to such men: Seer, I Sam 9:9; Man of God, I Sam 9:6; Servant of God, Isa 20:3; Messenger for Jehovah, Isa 42:19; Watchman, Ezek 3:17.
 2. "There are two classes of preachers; the good preachers who have something to say, and the poor preacher who has to say something. A third and higher class is the prophet, who has something to say and has to say it."
- F. Oral prophets; Abraham, Gen 20:7,17; Isaac and Jacob, Psa 105:9-15; Moses, Deut 18:15, 34:10; Miriam, Ex 15:20; Deborah, Judges 4:4; Elijah, I Kgs 17:24; Sons of the prophets, 2 Kgs 2:3.
- G. Unity without uniformity:
- Amos - herdsman.
Micah - countryman.
Zephaniah - aristocrat.
Zechariah - A leader of his people in Palestine.
Zephaniah was young and Haggai was an old man.

Habakkuk was sensitive and introspective, and Nahum was a thunderbolt. Joel had intense nationalism, and Hosea tells of the love of God.

H. Basic principles for understanding the prophets.

1. The prophet is a man who is moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20, 21).
2. The prophet cannot introduce strange religions (Deut 13:1-5). Prophets did not introduce a new law. It was their function to call men back to the Law given by Moses (Cf. Gal 1:6-9).
3. The false prophet is the man whose oracles do not come to pass (Deut 18:20-22). The ability to know the future belongs to God alone. The prophet knows things to come only to the extent that God speaks through him.
4. Prophecy is conditional (Jer 18:5-10). The question must be kept before us: Have the conditions of this threat or promise been met? The Lord did not destroy Nineveh at once despite Jonah's threat, for Nineveh repented. A threat may be delayed by repentance (1 Kgs 21:29).
5. The prophets lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Threats of destruction were fulfilled in these calamities. The return from Babylon. Zechariah reminds the post-exilic people that the threats against their fathers are fulfilled (Zech 1:5,6).
6. Christ's coming and the beginning of the church are important subjects of Old Testament prophecy (Rom 1:1-4; 1 Pet 1:10-12).
7. God's final revelation is made in his Son (Heb 1:1,2). It is for this reason that when a New Testament writer says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet," it is to be considered as conclusive for that particular prophetic statement (Acts 2:16).

IX. Fulfilled Bible Prophecy.....Just A Coincidence?

Why do Christians claim that fulfilled prophecy is one of the best evidences for the inspiration of the scriptures? Have very many prophecies been accurately fulfilled? Is it coincidence when Bible prophecies come true? Or is it really supernatural? Every Christian interested in giving a reasonable answer for his faith should be familiar with fulfilled Bible prophecy, which presents overwhelming evidence for inspiration of the scriptures.

- A. What is prophecy?
1. Prophets in the Bible were spokesmen for God.
 - a. He revealed His thoughts through chosen men.
 - b. Prophet literally means “to declare, to proclaim.”
 2. Forthteller who declared God’s will to his contemporaries.
 3. Some cases he was “foreteller” because his words had a predictive meaning.
- B. What are marks of a genuine prophecy?
1. Proper timing (far enough in advance).
 2. Specific details (not vague generalities).
 3. Freedom from ambiguity (no double meanings or misleading statements).
 4. Exact fulfillment.
 5. Genuine date and authorship.
- C. What are examples of fulfilled prophecies?
1. Babylon, one of the greatest cities of all time.
 - a. Modern characteristics, irrigation and canal system, paved streets, apartment houses, street lights, running water. Wall wide enough for three chariots abreast on top. Hanging gardens of Babylon.
 - b. It’s idolatry and invasion of Israel and persecution of God’s people caused God’s pronouncement of doom by Isaiah 700 B.C. (Isa 13:19-21).
 - c. One hundred years later Jeremiah predicted the fall of Israel, saying she would serve the king of Babylon 70 years (Jer 25:11). And also the desolation of Babylon (Jer 25:12-14).
 - d. Medes led by Cyrus attacked in 539 B.C. It was later plundered by Xerxes, and Alexander the great.

- e. Ruins caused chemical reaction in the soil, turned it to arid waste.
 - f. First century....foul-smelling decaying ruin inhabited only by wild animals.
 - g. Twelfth century...ruins of city palace impossible to reach because of too many poisonous snakes and scorpions.
 - h. Arabians refuse to see sun go down on area.
2. Tyre, rich and prosperous city on Mediterranean.
- a. Invincible 150 foot walls.
 - b. Sinned against God through pride/ mistreatment of Jewish prisoners of war, broke a treaty with King Solomon (Amos 1:9,10).
 - c. Sixth century....Ezekiel predicted their doom.
 - 1) City would be broken down.
 - 2) Scraped off like a rock.
 - 3) Place for fishermen to spread their nets (Ezek 26:3-14,9).
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar led a 13 year siege and destroyed the mainland cities. Tyrians fled to an island a half-mile off shore (332 BC). Alexander invaded it by tearing down ruins to construct a bridge (fulfilled Ezek 26:12).
 - e. Completely destroyed 13th century by Moslems who took it from the crusaders.
 - f. Today tourists watch fishermen dry nets on the barren rocks.
3. Edom, polytheists and persecutors of Israelites (Isa 34:5-12; Amos 1:11,12; Ezek 25:14).
- a. Over-run by Jewish Maccabean forces, 164 BC, & then in 12(D B.C.
 - b. A.D. 70, when Romans destroyed Jerusalem, Edomites

disappeared, & land of Edom is a devastated ruin.

4. Nineveh, capital of Assyrian empire.
 - a. God gave chance to repent through Jonah.
 - b. Soon returned to brutal and murderous practices.
 - c. Seventh century....prophecy against city (Nahum 1:1-8; 2:3-6; 3:7. Zephaniah 2:13-15.
 - d. 612 B.C. - Babylon and Median forces diverted the Tigris River and caused a flood to literally dissolve the buildings and walls (Nahum 2:6)
 - e. Nahum 3:7 "Nineveh is laid waste: who will mourn her?"

D. What are some of the fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ - the Messiah?

1. 333 B.C. - Old Testament predictions concerning the Messiah.
2. Begins Gen 3:15.
3. Jesus made many predictions.
 - a. Announced crucifixion 3 yrs before it happened (Jn 3:14).
 - b. Declared resurrection 3 yrs ahead of time (Jn 2:19, 21).
 - c. Complete destruction of temple in Jerusalem (Mt 24:2).

E. What about fulfilled prophecies concerning Israel?

1. Predicted dispersion of Jews (Deut 28:64-68).
 - a. 15 centuries after Moses' prophecy, 70 AD Jerusalem fell.
 - b. All survivors over 17 sent by ship to work in mines in Egypt.
2. Predicted return (Isa 43:56; Jer 29:14).
 - a. 1800 yrs later Jewish nationalism began return.
 - b. 1935 over 300,000 Jews in Palestine.

- c. 1936 over 350,000 acres had been purchased.
 - d. 1949 Israel accepted by United Nations.
 - e. Overwhelming transformation of the land, from barren desert & material swamps to modern cities & garden spot of the world (Isa 51:3; Isa 61:4; Ezek 36:34,35).
 - f. Victories over Arab nation in 1948 and 1967.
- F. Fulfilled prophecy does not prove the divine inspiration of scripture, but it does provide undeniable evidence that the Bible is a supernatural book, written with more human knowledge.

JEREMIAH OUTLINE

- I. Prophecies under Josiah and Jehoiakim Ch 1-20
- II. The Later Prophecies under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah Ch 21-39
- III. Prophecies After the Fall of Jerusalem Ch 40-45
- IV. Prophecies Against the Heathen Nations Ch 46-51
- V. Historical Appendix Ch 52

JEREMIAH EXPANDED OUTLINE

- I. Prophecies under Josiah and Jehoiakim Ch 1-20
 - A. The prophet's call and commission Ch 1
 - B. The sin and ingratitude of the nation 2:1-3:5
 - C. Prediction concerning devastation from the North 3:6-Ch 6
 - D. The threat of Babylonian exile Ch 7-10
 - E. The broken covenant and the broken girdle Ch 11-13
 - F. The drought; the sign of the unmarried prophet;
the warning about the sabbath Ch 14-17
 - G. The sign of the potter's house Ch 18-20
- II. The Later Prophecies under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah Ch 21-39
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar, God's instrument to punish Zedekiah
and Jerusalem Ch 21-29

B.	The future Messianic kingdom	Ch 30-33
C.	Zedekiah's sin and the loyalty of the Rechabites	Ch 34,35
D.	Jehoiakim's opposition and destruction of the prophetic scroll	Ch 36
E.	Jeremiah in jail during the siege	Ch 37-39
III.	Prophecies After the Fall of Jerusalem	Ch 40-45
A.	Ministry among the remnant in Judah	Ch 40-42
B.	Ministry among the fugitives in Egypt	Ch 43,44
C.	Encouragement to Baruch	Ch 45
IV.	Prophecies Against the Heathen Nations	Ch 46-51
A.	Egypt	Ch 46
B.	Philistia	Ch 47
C.	Moab	Ch 48
D.	Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, Elam	Ch 49
E.	Babylon	Ch 50,51
V.	Historical Appendix	Ch 52

From: Archer Jr., Gleason L.,
A Survey Of Old Testament Introduction,
Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1972

JEREMIAH OVERVIEW

NAME: Jeremiah.

MEANING: Jehovah appoints.

DATE: 600 B.C.

AUDIENCE: Judah.

THEME: Judah must fall.

SPECIAL NOTE: A new covenant is coming (31:31ff).

BRIEF OUTLINE:

- I. Prophecies to Judah Ch 1-45
- II. Prophecies to Heathen Nations Ch 46-51
- III. Historical Appendix Ch 52

LESSONS:

God chooses whom He will, to do His purposes here on earth.

You do your part and God will do His.

God always holds out a ray of hope.

Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.

Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.

Our sins testify against us.

All of God's promises are conditional.

Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord negligently.

JEREMIAH EXPOSITION

Summary of the Book: 1:16

- I. Prophecies under Josiah and Jehoiakim Ch 1-20**
 - A. The prophet's call and commission Ch 1**

A nation, or a congregation, can be excited into mass repentance but, after all of the excitement is over we are often left with people who are basically unchanged. Their repentance, though sincere at the time, was not deep enough to affect the needed changes in their personal and/or corporate life.

CHAPTER 1.

Jeremiah will be required by God to challenge every view that would, if true, limit God's power or sovereignty.

- 2,3. Jehovah is announcing the end of the world order as Judah knows it. The unraveling of royal rule, destabilizing of public order along with the loss of public confidence is not due to the lack of God's power to rule. What may appear to be weakness on Jehovah's part is actually His stated policy written in their law.

Now that God has spoken these words of doom they will come to pass! They could only wait and watch as His words come true. This book of Jeremiah is the story of the waiting and the fulfillment of all God has spoken against Judah.

- 5. God chooses whom He will, to do His purposes, here on earth.

Cf. Gal 1:15,16 (Saul / Paul).

Rom 9:10-16.

- 6. Even though Jeremiah's objection reminds us of Moses', they are not the same. Moses felt he was inadequate in speech while Jeremiah's objection is more that he is not qualified, or prepared, and that he is inexperienced.

- 7. Be a man!

God's prophets are not to retreat from everyday life to become closer to Jehovah, they are to go into society with the mission God gives them.

This kind of fear is good for in it we see how inadequate we are (1 Cor 2:3). But,

with that knowledge we can do great things for the Lord (Phil 4:13).

9,10. What God's word will do. Cf. Deut 32:39; Isa 55:11; 14:24-27.

There are six verbs in verse ten. The first four have to do with bringing an end to Judah as she is, and the last two show that God also has a beginning in store for them. God alone has the power to bring about such destruction or to bring a new political state into being. God alone rules the nations including their beginnings and endings.

Cf. Deut 32:39; Isa 45:7; 13:7-9.

The trigger in history for political endings and beginnings is not political and social, it is theological and moral.

This same claim is made by Jesus in Jn 2:19. Jesus speaks of the temple, but also of His own body. Jesus is Jehovah!

11,12. The almond tree was called the "Awake" tree because the tree was the first one in the spring to have fruit blossoms. And this was even before it had leaves. Jehovah is saying I am awake and know what I am saying and I will do it. Cf. Isa 55:11.

13,14. Boiling pot facing from the north.

16. This verse is a summary of this particular prophecy. Israel's relationship with Jehovah was based on His grace and promises. But God demanded faith and obedience from the people.

Judah's evil will be punished with evil.

17-19. You do your part and God will do His!

Jeremiah - "As a man he melts in tears and pines away in sympathy; as the bearer of God's word he is firm and hard like pillar and wall, on which the storm of a nation's wrath breaks in vain." ©. von Orelli, 1889)

A true prophet of God never says, "All is well." Jehovah sends His prophets when the people are in trouble with Him in order to bring them back to Him.

B. The sin and ingratitude of the nation 2:1-3:5

CHAPTER 2.

Jeremiah, like all true preachers, has a limited number of themes he preaches. He preaches these themes over and over with urgency and passion.

It is not because God has lost any power when He turns away from His people. It is because He will not protect them when they have turned from serving Him to serving idols.

2. Israel had once been faithful! Cf. Rev 2:4,5 - Ephesus.

3. God's people are His:

a. Holy to Him, and

b. Firstfruits.

Any who attack God's people are:

a. Guilty, and

b. Evil shall come upon them:

1) Sometimes in this world, but

2) Always in eternity.

Whoever "devours" what belongs to Jehovah is guilty of sin and will be punished.

5. God asks Israel, "What injustice did she find in Jehovah that sent her away from Him?"

Idols = emptiness.

Idolaters = nothing.

The idea is that Israel sought after gods which are "nothing." Since we take on the character of that which we love and/or worship, Israel had become a "nothing." Cf. Hos 9:10; Psa 115:8.

6,7. The covenant was given to the people in the desert when conditions of life were harsh. Now that they have prosperity they forget the bond and break it.

8. The Jews, like all people of all time, have become blind to their own sins. Jeremiah must destroy their complacency. They were present in great numbers for their religious services, but they were not right with God!

Three groups are condemned:

- Priests - They were the teachers of God's revelation to the people. However, they did not know God themselves. To know God is to obey in everyday life, not just to have a mental knowledge of Him.
- Rulers - They play an important role in the religious, political and social life of the nation. These had failed. See Psa 72 for a picture of a good ruler.
- Prophets - They were false prophets. Claiming to be from Jehovah but speaking what the people wanted to hear, not what God wanted them to hear. Compare 1 Kgs 13,22.

Almost always when a nation falls it is because the leaders have failed in their God-given work. A nation dies at the top first.

- 9-11. Even the Gentiles do not change their gods!

Israel had forgotten her history. Where the history of the land is lost, the loss of the land will also follow.

Israel had received much grace from the Lord. But what they had forgotten is that grace demands much of the ones who receive it. It demands faith and obedience. Without faith and obedience grace becomes an empty word and loses its value.

13. The contrast is made stronger - two sins:

- a. Forsaking Jehovah, and
- b. Hewn themselves cisterns (followed false gods).

Jehovah	=	living waters	never ending	always fresh,
Cisterns	=	dead water	limited supply	always stale.

- a. All cisterns would crack.
- b. Even if repaired - tasted of clay - were full of worms.

c. A limited supply and could not replenish themselves.

Cf. Jn 4:14.

It is easy for us today to look back and declare that Jeremiah was right. But are we not also blind to our everyday lives spent in sin, and not doing those things which God wants us to do?

The Jewish nation which had known Jehovah in His power and majesty was now “out-paganing” the pagans.

16. “Noph” is “Memphis,” capital of Lower Egypt.

“Taphapanes” will later be called “Daphne.”

18. When Israel seeks help from other nations it is actually forsaking Jehovah. Jehovah had been their protector and Israel is saying we need different and better protection.

19. Israel’s sins would be her downfall - she will look at these sins and know why she is being punished.

Israel’s problems were religious! When all is said and done, it all comes down to the religious tie, or lack of it, we have with Jehovah.

“The Lord your God” - this is a statement that you belong to God, not that God belongs to you! Many times we look at God’s love and mistake it for a soft love from Him when in reality His love is very demanding. True love is always a very demanding thing.

20. Evil always has its own distorted sense of values.

23. “In the valley” - the valley of Ben-Hinnom was just outside Jerusalem and a place of many evil pagan practices including using children for burnt sacrifices. Cf. Jer 7:21-26; 2 Kgs 23:10.

24. Israel is like an animal in heat, the males need not seek her, she is available to all.

25. Israel will go off into captivity shoeless and thirsty.

27,28. IF false gods were real:

a. Wood would be their father, and

- b. Stone would be their mother.

Let the false gods save Israel - every city has its own god, so there should be enough of them!

29-37. God's mercy and fellowship are conditional! They depend upon our responsiveness. It is not unconditional. When our faith and obedience fail, God will terminate His mercy and fellowship.

36. Political apostasy goes hand in hand with religious and moral apostasy.

Guilty on two counts:

- a. Worshiping other gods, and
- b. Social evils including injustice and corruption.

When God is rejected a country's values and morals deteriorate and life turns into a frantic pursuit of self-gratification.

Jehovah never allows religious issues to be separated from the public policies of the government.

37. "With your hands on your head" = in grief.

CHAPTER 3.

- 1. Legally a woman could not go back to her first husband. Therefore, Israel could not go back to Jehovah without total repentance and this will take drastic punishment.
- 2. "Like an Arabian in the wilderness," you would expect a woman on the road to be attacked, but Israel is so desperate for lovers she is the attacker.
- 3. Harlot's Forehead = boldness - the unashamed are always bold!
- 6. Backsliding = apostate one.

C. Prediction concerning devastation from the North 3:6-Ch 6

- 8. Israel (10 tribes) are divorced by Jehovah.
- 10. Pretense - in Josiah's time.
- 11. Why was Judah less righteous than Israel? Judah had Israel's example before

her and yet she goes in the same way to destruction that Israel had.

13. There can be no reconciliation between God and man unless men honestly look at the reason for separation, and repent.

14-19. A ray of hope - God always holds out hope!

18. Hope - there must be a ray of hope for faith to continue or to be strengthened.
19. The picture here is of a father who has worked long and hard to build an inheritance for his son. It has come time to give the inheritance, but the son does not care about the inheritance and has forgotten it. The father is rejected and feels great remorse over the son's condition, but he cannot give him the inheritance.
22. How frustrating it is to preach repentance to people who feel they have already repented. Their religious leaders have told them they are in a right relationship with God already. But these leaders were wrong! Their false teaching had inoculated them against the truth.

It is not enough to desire no punishment from Jehovah, you must so live that you will receive rewards from Him.

24. "From your youth" means that from the very inception of Israel as a nation they have sought alternatives to the only God, Jehovah.

CHAPTER 4.

- 1-4. Repent, Judah - do not be like Israel!

Even though they have broken Jehovah's heart, He is still open to reconciliation.

4. Circumcision was the physical sign of the covenant relationship Israel had with Jehovah. If there was no internal commitment to match the external sign, the circumcision was meaningless.

- 5-9. If there is no repentance these people need to "Prepare to meet their God." Cf. Amos 4:12.

Even though God is filled with love, pity and compassion He will not be mocked! We very much need to learn this lesson today!

7. Great warriors of the Gentiles were represented as lions.

Cf. 2 Sam 23 where Benaiah killed two "lion-like heroes" of Moab.

8. The people have not “turned” to Jehovah, therefore Jehovah has not “turned” His anger from them.
10. Were the people truly blind to their circumstances? Yes! They had been misguided by their leaders who claimed as absolute, not conditional, the promises of God. All of Jehovah’s promises had proven true. The promises to Israel to inherit the land and remain in it, and the promises to David to have a descendant of his on the throne for all time, were assumed to be permanent. But a cursory reading of the Law and the Prophets showed these promises to be conditional!

- 17,18. God connects their internal (spiritual) failure to the external invasion of Babylon.

God’s overruling power on the nations is not done supernaturally. It is worked out through historical people and agents. In this case it will be Babylon who will be God’s agent in punishing Judah.

19. Jeremiah’s knowledge of the coming captivity gives him inner pain as if he were to deliver a child.

“Disaster upon disaster - this is God’s message; it must be spoken, but Jeremiah cannot proclaim it with calm indifference or studied self-control. He is God’s messenger, but he is also one of the people. He cannot help but identify with them in their tragedy. There can be for him no personal haven of spiritual calm while his people perish (cf. 8:18,19). As the fabric of the nation’s life collapses, so does the fabric of his inner life collapse like a tent suddenly destroyed.” (Robt. Davidson 1983)

22. Foolish (Sottish) = stupid, no understanding or knowledge (as a sot; drunkard). Cf. Hos 4:6.

How are the people to respond to God? They have been misled into feeling what they are doing is right with God. It seems that the only skill they have is to do evil in the sight of God.

- 23-26. It is as if a video were being watched in reverse. Everything is being rolled back to creation, light turns into darkness and life disappears. This describes utter destruction, and the people themselves are the reason for this!

- 30 Do not court or woo evil!

CHAPTER 5.

1. The city is so degenerate that not even one righteous one can be found to plead for Jerusalem. Cf. Gen 18:23-33 - Abraham / Sodom 50 - 45 - 40 - 30 - 20 - 10.

3. Stricken,
Consumed and
Hardened.
4. "Poor" does not necessarily mean those with meager incomes. It could mean the normal everyday person who does not feel he is deeply religious. They are decent people when properly led.
6. Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.

Lion	-	Zeph 3:1-3	-	fierce.
Wolf	-	Hab 1 :6-8	-	ravenous.
Leopard	-	Hosea 13:7	-	cunning.

7-9. How shall I pardon?

- a. Forsaking Jehovah vs. 7
- b. Swearing by stock and stone vs. 7
- c. Prosperity turned to pollution vs. 7
- d. Adultery vvs. 7,8
- e. Jehovah must be avenged vs. 9

Cf. v. 29.

God wants to forgive them, but to do that without repentance on their part would make God appear to be a beggar for their affection and a helpless patron. The problem is that they have gone past the point of no return and cannot repent. Israel now stands under the judgment of Jehovah.

Who, what and how people worship influence their sense of values in all phases of life.

Is Jeremiah's preaching becoming repetitious? If a message is worth preaching once it is worth preaching again! People may not always remember an exact sermon but they will eventually remember the message you are trying to convey to them.

10. Make not a complete end!
12. Notice this theory about God. We place Him, in our minds, out at the edge of the universe where we expect Him to sit and watch us with interest, but never do anything to correct or punish us.
- 21-23. See not vs. 21
 Hear not vs. 21
 Fear not vs. 22
 Therefore, not near vs. 23
22. Jehovah is showing them, and us, that He has set boundaries for nature and it obeys Him. If this is so, why do we humans rebel against the boundaries He has set for us?
- 30,31. Horrible (Wonderful) = astonishing.
 Prophets - false.
 Priests - follow the prophets.
 People - follow both and all are lost!

Jeremiah is astounded at the prophets with their false teaching and the priests who are in agreement with them in their evil. Not only that, but the people are getting just what they want - a religion that does not demand anything of them.

The people need to know what is coming upon them and why. But they also need hope for the future. Just as the cross of Christ would be total gloom and a total tragedy if we did not have the hope set forth in the resurrection!

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11.

- 1:5 God knew Jeremiah would be His man before he was born.
- 1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.
- 1:16 Summary of the book of Jeremiah.

- 2:11 Even the Gentiles do not change their gods.
- 4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope!
- 5:1 Not even one righteous one to plead for Jerusalem.
- 5:6 Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.
-

CHAPTER 6.

3. The invading army will be like shepherds:

Come,

Camp and

Consume.

- 4,5. So eager to destroy - they want to fight at night which was not a normal military tactic in the ancient world.

- 10,11. God did not expect Jeremiah (or us) to be a successful preacher, He expects us to be faithful to Him and deliver His message only!

We do not, as they did not, like to hear about the wrath of God. The religious world wants to talk about the love of God and forget His wrath. They feel that the love of God will override His wrath and this is contrary to all Bible teaching on the subject.

14. False cries by false brethren - Peace, Peace BUT there is no Peace.

Peace = *Shalom* - a state of undisturbed prosperity and unbroken harmony between God and man.

To use the word *shalom* in Jerusalem at this time was to mislead the people. Instead of addressing the true problem of a broken relationship with Jehovah they were giving the false impression that all was well.

To use this phrase or to teach that all is fine with the current corrupt system is to attempt to keep critical questions muted. This way the government's established policy may advance unchecked and eventually be our ruin.

16. The answer: SEEK THE OLD PATHS!

This is not an appeal to go back to the “good old days,” but to return to the original ways that were set out by God.

The people answer; “We will not walk in it.”

Because nobody hears the warning and withdraws fellowship from sinners, nobody will be exempt from fellowship with judgment!

20. No matter how pleasing worship is to us personally, if our lives do not match what we profess in worship that worship is an abomination to God.
21. “Stumbling block” = truth - to the righteous a stepping stone - to sinners a stumbling block.
- 27-30. Rejected Silver. Jerusalem has been placed in the crucible and found to be all dross, therefore, without value and to be rejected. It seems strange that the Jewish people could be so indifferent and detached from Jehovah that they do not see what is happening among them and to them. But, are they so different from us today?

D. The threat of Babylonian exile Ch 7-10

CHAPTER 7.

A plea to worshipers.

Jeremiah’s words will be taken as treason. This is a result of the ideology of the priests and kings. This ideology claimed that the promises of God regarding the establishment of the temple and its protection were unconditional. This limited God in His actions toward Israel if she sinned. In other words, Israel’s obedience was not necessary to the maintenance of her faith in Jehovah.

2. Stand and preach in the gate of the Lord’s house.
3. “Retention of the land is not by inherent right, not by might, not by liturgy, but only by the practice of justice and obedience.” (Brueggemann, 1988).
- 5-7. If - then.
- 8-20. The price to be paid. Judah had rejected the remedy for their sins. Therefore, Jehovah must destroy the temple in order for people to understand that truth was no longer being preached or taught from it. Only false religion was being presented, therefore the temple must go.
10. Lying words cannot profit.

11. Worship is business as usual. These violators of God's law attempted to hide their sins in the sanctity of the worship service. Their "correct" worship became a cloak for the sinful lives they were leading. This is self-deception and led Israel into destruction. What about denominationalism today? What about many in the church today? Cf. Mt 21:13 - "Den of thieves."
12. They had a difficult time, because of their temple ideology, in believing Jerusalem would be treated, by Jehovah, as Shiloh was.
15. "People do not like to have their deeply ingrained prejudices called into question - particularly if they are religious prejudices....There are two things, however, about this unpopular sermon worth pondering....(1) Much of what Jeremiah is here saying is not new....(2) Faith is based on God's promises, but we dare not convert these promises into unconditional certainties....To ignore the continuing 'if' in faith is to court disaster. When worship and faith seem to lose their meaning for us, it is wise to begin by taking a close look at our own life-style and ask whether we have been living in the light of the demands that faith make upon us." (Robert Davidson, 1983)
16. There is a point beyond which prayer will not help!

Do not pray for them, Jeremiah! Cf. 11:14; 14:11; 1 Jn 5:16.
18. "Queen of heaven" - women were attracted to her worship because it appealed to many basic instincts such as sexuality, motherhood and foreseeing the future (astrology, etc.).
20. God's anger shall burn and not be quenched.
- 21-28. The Ten Commandments, in themselves, do not require any burnt offerings or sacrifices. These were important to Israel but the point is that they are not necessary to the faith of the people (such as in exile, etc.).
23. Obey my voice and I will be your God.
28. But you do not obey - truth is perished.

Therefore:

- a. Slaughter vs 32
- b. Shame vs 33
- c. Sorrow and suffering vs 34

To listen to God's word is to be willing to be directed in your life by that word. This kind of listening leads to your yielding your life to Jehovah rather than trying to cover up your sinful life by religious observances. The alternative to this kind of listening is autonomy where you (or society, or government) claim that you are your own authority.

CHAPTER 8.

Reasoning that leads to ruin!

3. This is not pleasant to read. Jehovah, and Jeremiah, did not allow the people to deceive themselves. The falsehoods had to be exposed and destroyed. Their false sense of security also needed to be destroyed. Then, and only then, could there truly be any hope.

5. Perpetual backsliding.

7. Even the birds know when to come and go. They live the God-ordered life given to them. But, Judah will not follow the order Jehovah has given them. It seems nature is wiser than men.

8,9. What wisdom is in the wise?

Us today?

11-13. These people were so blind they could not see the fraud of the priests and kings. They could not see the difference between the claims of the establishment and reality. Look at us today and look at history, we have not changed. We are no different now than these people were then.

15. Results of false wisdom.

17. Notice this change from a horse to a snake. This is a shift from the rush of power to a slow creeping terror.

20. Therefore, we are not saved!

22. No balm in Gilead! There is no healing because the illness is too deep. The idolatry is too pervasive. Judah refuses the medicine that is available.

Again the picture changes. This time from threat and terror to dread, sickness and sadness.

CHAPTER 9.

Folly of the people.

1. We are all cried out! BUT we cry again! Jeremiah does not have the attitude of "I told you so," but feels anguish for the people and sheds tears of deep grief for them.

2. Prov 6:16-19 reads like a paraphrase of this section.

Motel Business - anything to get away from his brethren. A "crew of faithless ones."

4-6. This society, as well as any other, cannot continue to function properly when its language is deceitful. We see it today in economic, religious and political life. There will be an accounting to Jehovah for all we say. Cf. Mt 12:36.

6. Refusal to know Jehovah!

HOW? DECEIT!

Right acts of worship - wrong heart?

Right love of doctrine - wrong love for the lost?

Right attitude toward giving - wrong concern for brethren?

Cf. Mt 23:25,26 Clean the inside first!

9. If God's people understood God's holiness there would be more righteous people in the world.

14. Stubbornness and idol worship are equated. Both lead to spiritual death.

17-19. Grief for sin is needed. It is as if a specialist in grief were needed to lead the people to repentance.

Also the dead will be so numerous that the number of professional mourners will not be enough.

23,24. Do not glory in:

a. Wisdom,

b. Might and

c. Riches,

But glory in:

a. Understanding and

b. Knowing Jehovah.

For Jehovah exercises:

a. Loving-kindness,

b. Judgment and

c. Righteousness.

Cf. 1 Cor 1:18-31.

The idea of “wise” in this context is the worldly wise. Not those who are wise in God’s eyes.

26. God is saying there is no difference between the circumcised and the uncircumcised as long as there is no faith and obedience.

Cf. Rom 2:28,29.

“It is worth noting that in Deut. 10:16,17 the command to circumcise the foreskin of the heart is followed immediately with the assertion that God is impartial and takes no bribe. That is, circumcision is a mark of covenant obedience, but it gives Israel no preferential status. The distortion of circumcision, as argued by Paul, arises when the command to obey is distorted to indicate a preferential status. That distortion is rejected by Jeremiah and Paul.” (Brueggemann, 1988).

CHAPTER 10.

God versus Idols. This passage has two interwoven themes, (1) ridiculing the worship of other gods (2-5; 8,9; 14,15), and (2) celebrating the wonder and power of Jehovah, the true and only God (6,7; 12,13; 16).

We have created many gods today such as naturalism, technology, science, nationalism, consumerism and militarism. The key to this is that these are created, and we worship things we make instead of the One who made us.

2. Learn not the ways of the heathen:

- a. Religiously, or
 - b. Morally:
 - 1) Personal and in
 - 2) Business.
5. Fear no evil!
- False gods cannot:
- a. Speak,
 - b. Move,
 - c. Do evil or
 - d. Do good.
10. Fear Jehovah!
- Jehovah is:
- a. True God,
 - b. Living God,
 - c. Everlasting King and
 - d. Wrathful.
16. The phrases “the portion of Jacob,” and “Israel is the tribe of His inheritance” had been twisted to mean “God belongs to us.” This is just the opposite of the meaning which is “we belong to God.” If the first were true it would mean we have a monopoly on Jehovah and could use Him for our own purposes. The second means we must be committed to Jehovah and to His service in every part of our lives including public, private and worship.

In comparing idols with Jehovah in verses 1-16 consider the following: “In our own time, we seem to be deeply—if not hopelessly—enmeshed in our self-created systems of security, well-being and prosperity. But the enmeshment destroys us, for it talks us out of neighbor love, out of genuine freedom, and destines us to the anxiety of competence and finally to despair. That the source of life lies outside us and moves freely delivers us from being self-generated and

self-sufficient. The modern form of idolatry is finally autonomy, the sense that we live life on our own terms. But such autonomy is a lie. The truth concerns this other One. It was so for Jeremiah and his contemporaries. It is so now, for us.” (Brueggemann, 1988)

23. God marks the road! BUT man looks for the side paths.

24. To correct - with justice = correction.

To correct - with anger = punishment.

If we do not heed correction - wrath will come!

Whether we like it or not God may have to discipline us and we can be assured He will do it justly and not irresponsibly. This tells us that even in tragedy we must trust God and pray for His overriding providence for our good (Rom 8:28).

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.

5:6 Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.

7:16 There is a point beyond which prayer will not help.

9:9 If God's people understood God's holiness there would be more righteous in the world.

10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
AND
They cannot do you any good.

10:24 If we do not heed correction, wrath will come.

E. The broken covenant and the sign of the girdle Ch 11-13

CHAPTER 11.

Judah's disloyalty and its consequences.

1. Judah had failed in her religious life, but her punishment came in her public and political lives.
2. "Hear the words" is a requirement not only to hear these words but a requirement to obey them!
- 3-5. When the Law was read to the people of Israel they would respond with "amen" (So be it) each time a curse was read. Jeremiah confirms it here as he adds his "So be it."
11. The curse is upon them. It would have been better for them not to be the people of God than to be so, then fall away.

It is the same today for Christians! Cf. Lk 12:48; Heb 10:24-31.

- 11-13. Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.

A god for every city.

Today? Each city seems to have its own special kind of evil.

14. DO NOT PRAY FOR THEM!! Cf. 7:16; 14:11; 1 Jn 5:16.

- 18-23. Anathoth - Jeremiah's countrymen plot to kill him..

19. Like a pet sheep accustomed to the home of its owners has no idea it is to be killed when they lead it out of the house.

23. NO REMNANT!

CHAPTER 12.

More evidence against Judah.

- 1-6. The wicked prosper:

- a. Worldly goods - Yes.
- b. Spiritual goods - No!

All creation suffers because of sin - Rom 8:18-22; Heb 2:9.

5,6. Jeremiah has asked, "Why?" But God does not always answer in neat, detailed ways. Here His answer is, "You think it is bad now? Worse is to come!"

7. Compare this forsaking with Jesus in Mt 27:46.

7-17. Judgment is sure to come!

These words of exhausted grief from Jehovah come to the point where He finally says He hates His inheritance (Judah).

Does God hate individuals? YES! Read Psa 5:5 cf. Deut 25:13-16; Psa 11:5; Prov 6:16ff.

11,12. These invaders are not intruders into Jehovah's rule, but instruments in His rule. Jehovah grieves because these invaders are His own instrument of anger and justice.

13. They were deceived and did not realize that their theory, that Jehovah would never desert the temple and Jerusalem because of their sin, would actually drive Jehovah to grief and even to withdrawal. The reality was actually the reverse of their theology. We too, today, must be most careful how we treat and understand the word of God!

16,17. If - then (twice). These verses show Jehovah is not a respecter of nations. The nations are subject to the same choices, possibilities, and threats that Israel is.

CHAPTER 13.

Pride - Judah is the problem.

1-11. The linen sash (girdle / loin-cloth):

a. At first clean and special Cf. vs. 1

b. Then dirty and worthless Cf. vs. 7

c. Pride to be ruined Cf. vs. 9

Judah, like the loin-cloth, is good for nothing.

4. Some commentators point out that this Euphrates might not be the great river but a small village (called Ain Farah today) a few miles northeast of Anathoth.

NOTICE: The identification of the site has no bearing on the interpretation of this passage!

10,11. The result of not obeying Jehovah.

Summary of 1-11:

Command:

Interpretation:

Buy and wear (vv. 1,2)

Cling to Jehovah (v. 11)

Remove and hide (vv. 3-5)

Israel refuses Jehovah (v. 10)

Recover and find useless (vv. 6,7)

Israel is worthless (v. 9)

16. "Darkness" - translated as "shadow of death" in Psa 23:4. It can also be translated gloom, darkest death or deepest darkness.

18,19. Jehovah declares the royal claim is now nullified. The claim is forfeit because of the lack of faith and obedience. And all of this because of not listening to Jehovah.

22. Why punished? SIN!

23. You are set in your ways! (Ethiopian and leopard).

"The Old Testament knows no doctrine of original sin. The story of the Garden of Eden was never so interpreted in the Old Testament or by later Jewish scholars." (R. Davidson, 1983)

27. O Jerusalem, will you ever be clean? It is as if Jerusalem had become a corpse. The corpse is ritually unclean and not fit to be inhabited by Israel, and definitely not fit for habitation by Jehovah.

**F. The drought, the sign of the unmarried prophet,
the warning about the Sabbath Ch 14-17**

CHAPTER 14.

A great famine.

1-6. Description of the famine Cf. 2,4

7-9. Jeremiah's response:

a. Our iniquities (sins) testify against us!

b. Punish us for Your name's sake,

- c. Our backslidings are many and
- d. Our sin is against the Lord.

In its final form this is a prayer demanding Jehovah's presence. Jehovah gives His answer in 11,12.

11,12. Do not pray for them!

I will not accept them,

I will punish Judah by:

- a. Sword,
- b. Famine and
- c. Pestilence.

13-16. False prophets say:

- a. NO sword,
- b. NO famine,
- c. BUT peace.

Cf. Deut 18:20-22; 13:1-5.

15. The false prophets were deceived, either self-deceived or by others. How many times do people make wrong decisions and teach wrong doctrine for the "best of reasons?" And today those who seem to make this error quite regularly are those who claim to be "led by the Holy Spirit." BUT error is error and is still sin!

17-22. REPENT!

Your false prophets - Peace There is no peace.

Your false prophets - Time of Healing There is trouble.

The cause of their problem is their leadership which has failed them. In this failure they have no true knowledge of God and therefore no desire to obey Him.

Israel, nor we, can continue to disobey and expect everything to be right with God by an act of praise on our part. Careful listening to God's word and true

repentance are required.

CHAPTER 15.

Judah has gone too far! Even Moses and Samuel could not change Jehovah's mind!

1. Get Judah out of my sight!

Moses and Samuel were known for their effectual prayers. This is a very strong statement of rejection!

- 2-9. Their punishment will be complete.

They will reap what they have sown. Cf. Gal 6:8; Rev 14:9b, 10.

4. Because of Manasseh. Cf. 2 Chron 33.

He did for Judah what Ahab did for Israel. Cf. 1 Kgs 16.

- 5-9. God uses the picture of a great number of grieving mothers to show how full Judah's grief will be. Seven sons were considered an ideal size for a family and here the family is essentially erased from the earth.

6. Jehovah is weary of Judah.

- 15-19. Jeremiah is weary also!

Are there any Jeremiahs among us?

Jeremiah has been absolutely faithful to Jehovah and this request is for that to which he is entitled as an obedient servant.

- 20,21. Take courage, Jeremiah - Jehovah repeats His promise He gave in chapter one.

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

- 4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.
- 5:6 Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.
- 7:16 There is a point beyond which prayer will not help.
- 9:9 If God's people understood God's holiness there would be more righteous people in the world.
- 10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
AND
They cannot do you good.
- 10:24 If you do not heed correction, wrath will come.
- 11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.
- 14:7 Our sins testify against us.
-

CHAPTER 16.

Punishment and ruin to be complete!

1-4. Jehovah tells Jeremiah:

- a. Do not marry!
- b. Do not have children!
- c. The punishment is too harsh!

Being unmarried (a bachelor) was not usually a choice for a man in Israel. His marriage was arranged by the father to perpetuate the family name and means of income. Therefore, to be a bachelor was against all normal life-styles and would mark Jeremiah as an oddity in society. He would be a marked man with an undesirable message!

5. Do not enter into grief with the people.

I have taken away:

- a. Peace,
- b. Loving-kindness and

c. Mercies.

Jeremiah was a living “visual aid.” His life would be the example of the coming total disruption of family and social life as known to these people.

9. All joys in this land will cease.

Not even any marriages!

13. Who can survive without God's favor?

14. God IS Dead! (Ruin is so Complete)

15. He IS NOT!! (A Remnant)

The exodus was the event by which Israel measured its life and interpreted all of her experiences in history. Jehovah is saying that they are going to have a new point of reference, and it will be the return from exile.

CHAPTER 17.

1. Your sin is obvious.

Cf. Job 19:23-25.

5. Place no trust in men!

7. Trust God instead!

8. Cf. Psa 1.

9-11. Work Evil - Reap Evil!

11. The partridge was known for gathering eggs that were not hers. The idea is that just like the partridge, those who have gathered wrongly from others will not enjoy the fruit of their ill-gotten gain.

14. God only is salvation.

15. Cf. 2 Pet 3:4.

27. If - then.

The temple was not needed to keep the sabbath. The people did not have to go physically to the temple to be able to worship on the sabbath. They could keep

the sabbath anyplace on the earth. They could read the law and obey its conditions wherever they lived, even in captivity!

G. The sign of the potter's house Ch 18-20

CHAPTER 18.

Potter's rights.

1-9. The Potter:

The remaking of a vessel which has not met with approval.

- 1-6. If a potter does not like the shape a jar or vase is taking he can crush it into a shapeless mass and then make it into a useful vessel.

However, if the clay refuses to be worked, the potter is not committed to work endlessly on it. There will come a time when the potter gives up and the clay has no future.

The illustration is of Jehovah and Israel!

- 9,10. All of God's promises are conditional! Cf. Jonah - Nineveh.

12. There is no hope . . . To try to convert us.

- 13-17. Therefore Jehovah turns from them.

If you remove the snow from Lebanon it will change to water and cease to be snow. If Israel removes herself from Jehovah, she ceases to be Israel.

18. To attack the one bringing a different or dissenting message is normal for those in positions of authority in established political or religious systems.

To "devise plans" shows this is an organized resistance to Jeremiah. It is opposition that is formidable, and is an intentionally developed plan for silencing this "treasonable" person.

23. God does not forgive without repentance first! Neither should we!

CHAPTER 19.

The broken vessel. The destruction of a vessel that proves to be useless!

- 1,2. God's word is not to be held in secret, but is to be spoken in the midst of the people.
3. Even the news of your punishment will cause fear and astonishment.

"His ears will tingle" with fear and astonishment.
- 7-9. Notice Jehovah says, "I will" five times in these verses. There is no agent of God mentioned; God takes full responsibility for these actions.
9. This is a good reason for Jeremiah to not marry.
- 10,11. Breaking of a bottle and a nation.
15. This destruction is not to discipline the people for there is no call for repentance. Judah has gone too far. There is no escape. This judgment is final, massive, decisive, and not open to debate or arbitration.

"The climactic indictment is 'You did not listen.' Everything depends on listening. Everyone suffers when there is no listening. Out of the tradition of Deuteronomy, not listening is the fundamental act of autonomy and bad faith. Not to listen is not to belong, not to concede sovereignty. Not listening is to claim one's own place and take one's own counsel (v. 7). It is to imagine one is free to order life as one wills, which leads to forsaking and making alien." (Brueggemann, 1988)

CHAPTER 20.

Jeremiah's trials and lamentations.

1. This prayer shows both weakness and power. Weakness in Jeremiah, but power in Jehovah who is able to do whatever He sets forth.
4. Can we be a terror to ourselves and our friends?
7. Cf. 1 Kgs 22:8.
9. I quit!
10. Who is watching you?
- 14-18. Hated for Jehovah's sake!

Cf. Job 3:1-19.

The Bible is sometimes brutally honest. Jehovah does not hide from us that to receive His word can be very costly to us. Deep faith, like Jeremiah's, does not lead to a smooth and secure life, but into crisis. And sometimes from crisis to crisis.

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29.

- 1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.
- 2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.
- 4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.
- 5:6 Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.
- 7:16 There is a point beyond which prayer will not help.
- 10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
AND
They cannot do you good.
- 11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.
- 14:7 Our sins testify against us.
- 18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.
- 20:4 We can be a terror to ourselves and our friends.
-

- II. The later prophecies under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah Ch 21-39**
- A. Nebuchadnezzar, God's instrument to punish Zedekiah
 and Jerusalem Ch 21-29**

CHAPTER 21.

- 1,2. Zedekiah is like a person who keeps returning to the doctor with an illness, but is

unwilling to take his advice or take the medicine to cure himself.

Zedekiah's attitude seems to be, "It can not happen to us." This is always a dangerous attitude, but doubly so when it is claimed to be rooted in deeply held religious beliefs.

The leaders of Israel have resisted Jeremiah from the beginning, but now they are finally forced to come to Jeremiah as a last resort. All of their strategies and policies have failed and now, last of all, God's word must be taken into account.

5. Jehovah fights for His people by fighting against them.

Cf. 2 Pet 2:20,21.

- 8-10. The way of Life and the way of Death.

9. "Prize" = booty.

- 11,12. Politics, morals and justice cannot be separated! If a government ignores justice and morality the fire of Jehovah is sure to come on that political system. We may feel it is slow in coming, but only the Lord knows when our iniquity has become full and it is time for His interference in the political process. Cf. Gen 15:16.

14. Jehovah is Just!

CHAPTER 22.

- 1-3. Do not talk - actions are louder than words.

- 4,5. Notice the word "if." This is one of the key words in a true prophet's message.

There are conditions to be met for there to be a descendent of David on the throne.

The king, and his throne, are subject to Jehovah. The position is not unconditional nor guaranteed perpetuity.

- 8,9. Often those outside our community seem to know what is going on with us better than we do. This seems to be especially true with God's people. We are often adept at answering questions that are not being asked, and blind to the questions we should be hearing and answering.

8. WHY DESOLATE?

9. BECAUSE OF SIN!

11. Shallum = Jehoiakim (v. 18).

13. A home built on righteousness and a business built on righteousness.

15-17. The difference between them and David.

18,19. Zedekiah is to die and his body thrown out, like an unclean animal's, outside the city walls.

20. Judah will find no help in her political allies because they, too, have been defeated. Why did Judah have these allies in the first place? Jehovah was to be her defender, not the arm of flesh. Cf. Hos 8:9.

24. The "signet ring" was used as a personal seal. Each was unique. It was used to identify your approval by imprinting it in wax on the document. Jehovah is saying that if Coniah was this valuable to Him He would still tear it off and cast it away!

30. God is not saying that Coniah would not have any children, but that none of them would ever be able to sit on David's throne in Jerusalem and prosper.

There will be no heir to Coniah's (David's) throne. The promise of 2 Sam 7:13-16 was not unconditional as they had assumed. They were selective in which part of the Bible they would believe, for Psa 132:11,12 shows clearly that the kingship and throne were conditional upon obedience to Jehovah. There would be an heir if the law of God was obeyed. No obedience, no heir!

24-30. PREMILLINIALISM.

a. Seed promise: Jehoichin + Coniah = Jeconiah - Cf. Jer 22:24-30; Mt 1:11,12.

b. Land promise - Deut 19:1-10 cf. Josh 20:7,8.

c. Additional: Neh 9:8; Josh 21:43-45; 1 Kgs 4:21; 30:10,11.

CHAPTER 23.

Judgment without hope will destroy the soul, and hope without judgment is wishful thinking.

1. Who were the shepherds, pastors, then - who now?

For more on the shepherd theme see Psa 72; Ezek 34:1-24.

Notice that Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd - Jn 10:11.

3. Remnant - restoration.

4. Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.

5,6. Predictions of Christ.

Cf. 2 Sam 7:12-17.

The Lord our righteousness.

7,8. God promises renewal, but it will only come after and by means of the exile.

9-40. False Prophets . . . Today?

a. Test of true prophet - Deut 18:20-22; 13:1-5.

b. Mt 24:11 - Many rise and deceive.

MEMORIZE: Isa 8:20. "To the law and testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

9,10. Like adulterers . . . caused drought.

11. In temple service.

13. Caused Israel to fall.

14. A horrible thing in Jerusalem. The religious leaders upheld the evil public policy of the king and his advisors. They made it legitimate by not showing its evils and, therefore, created more evil.

"Adultery" goes along with a corrupt political system. It touches every phase of public life, both economic and political.

17. No Evil

21,22. Who sent them? Not Jehovah!

The false prophets can not legitimately say, "Thus says the Lord." Their authority does not come from Jehovah. It comes from within themselves, and their ultimate authority is Satan.

23,24. God is not near and available to them, but He is unavoidable.

25. Oral Roberts.

26-31. Those prophets should have told the truth (v. 28), but their lies caused Jehovah's name to be forgotten (v. 27), His word to be distorted (v. 29), and His name to be taken in vain (v. 31).

29. My word is like a fire . . . and a hammer.

32-40. Oracle (Burden): a weighty utterance . . . using oracle (burden) mockingly.

34. Do not use it! (Term - Oracle / Burden)

CHAPTER 24.

Good and bad figs.

1. Same as Dan 1:1 - captivity.

2. Situation.

5. What good figs symbolize? - Captives.

8,9. Who are bad figs? - Those who resist.

10. Destruction.

CHAPTER 25.

1. Fourth year of Jehoiakim.

3. How long? Twenty-three years of prophecy.

4. But, you have not listened!

4-10. Restates the past prophesying.

11. The end of Babylonian captivity will be in seventy years.

Cf. 29:10.

12. NOTICE: "Perpetual," this word is sometimes translated "forever." The word does not mean absolute, timeless future—it refers to all thinkable, foreseeable future.

Jehovah uses other peoples to hand out His punishments.

BUT they do not go unpunished.

The cup of wrath on all nations.

17,18. All nations are under judgment but, notice that judgment does begin with God's people. Cf. 1 Pet 4:17.

37. The land.

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1:17-19 | You do your part and God will do His. |
| 2:11 | Even Gentiles do not change their gods. |
| 4:27 | God always holds out a ray of hope. |
| 5:6 | Live like animals, therefore, die like animals. |
| 7:16 | There is a point beyond which prayer will not help. |
| 10:5 | False gods cannot harm you,
AND
They can not do you good. |
| 11:11-13 | Prayers of the ungodly are not heard. |
| 14:7 | Our sins testify against us. |
| 18:8-10 | All of God's promises are conditional. |
| 20:4 | We can be a terror to ourselves and our friends. |
-

CHAPTER 26.

Jehoiakim - threat on Jeremiah.

1. From the very beginning of Jehoiakim's reign the word of Jehovah was unwelcome, rejected and resisted by those in government around him.

2. In the temple court yard.
3. Why? Maybe they will repent (individually).
7. Who heard?
9. Notice they become irate when he speaks against Jerusalem. They felt Jerusalem was immune to any such criticism. Cf. Amos 7:12,13.
11. Jeremiah is worthy of death! Why?

The priests and the prophets call for the death penalty for what they perceive as false prophecy. Notice they concentrate on his anti-Jerusalem prophecies but quickly forget to include his call for their repentance. This is partial quoting. This and out of context quoting are the standard tools of religious and political rivals of truth.

Those who are opposing Jehovah's word through Jeremiah assume that if they can silence him God's word will be nullified.

- 12,13. Jeremiah's defense is two-fold:

- a. These are not my words, they are Jehovah's, and
- b. God's message to you is not a threat, it is an offer for you to repent.

14. Do with me as you will.

15. BUT!

16. You never know who will, or who will not, come to your defense.

18. Micah - what happened - Hezekiah repented.

Urijah - what happened - Jehoiakim kills Urijah.

Cf. Mic 3:12.

24. Nevertheless . . . Ahikam - saved Jeremiah. Cf. 1:17-19.

Jeremiah is saved from this fate, but his new fate is to be ignored by those he is preaching to. How sad to be ignored and know that the land and people are going into captivity because of it.

CHAPTER 27.

Those in power in government welcome the backing of the church and consider it normal and their due. But when criticism arises within the church, these same leaders say that we are illegitimately interfering with the political process. Why is support legitimate and criticism illegitimate?

- 1-7. Beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.
 - 8. “The sword, the famine, and the pestilence” are the natural results of war and an occupying army.
 - 12. Zedekiah’s reign.
 - 12,13. Bondage is life and resistance is death!
 - 16,17. Notice that the subject here is the return of the vessels of the Lord’s house. These vessels have been profaned by removal and have been treated as booty or just some ornate utensils to use for show as trophies.
 - 18. If these prophets who oppose Jeremiah are true prophets, let their intercession with Jehovah stop the flow of the temple vessels to Babylon. Then all could believe them rather than Jeremiah!
 - 22. The vessels are not lost to the temple forever. However, they will be gone for a long time. They will return at Jehovah’s pleasure, and not before.
- Jehovah, through Jeremiah, declares a terrible immediate future for Jerusalem. But notice that they are not left without a small ray of hope.

CHAPTER 28.

Jeremiah versus Hananiah.

Hananiah’s predictions:

- a. Yoke of Babylon is broken vs. 4,10
- b. Vessels of the Lord will return in two years. 3
- c. King Jeconiah shall return from captivity 4
- d. All captives shall return from captivity. 6

Jeremiah's answer:

- a. Amen. 6
Cf. 1 Kgs 22:13-18. Ironical answer to Ahab.
- b. Babylon's yoke is of iron, not wood 14
- c. Even the beasts of the field will be in subjection 14
- d. Jehovah has not sent you 15
- e. You make this people trust in a lie 15
- f. You shall die this year 16

Cf. 2 Thess 2:10-12.

ENDURE! Cf. Jas 5:11; Mt 10:22b.

Hananiah finds it difficult to listen to Jeremiah who constantly challenges his deepest convictions and prejudices. Do we not find ourselves in this same condition even if, sometimes, the challenger is correct?

- 16. Hananiah declared life for Judah, therefore Jehovah declares death for him. Hananiah is a rebel and will, because he is a rebel, receive God's wrath!

CHAPTER 29.

1-23. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles

- a. Build houses vs 5
- b. Plant gardens 5
- c. Take wives 6
- d. Beget children 6
- e. Pray for peace in the city where you are 7
- f. Give your children in marriage 6
- g. Listen not to the prophets among you 8

- h. You shall return in 70 years 10,11
- l. You will seek Me and find Me 13
- j. I will punish the false prophets 15-23

Notice they are to pray for their enemies (e). Pray for their good, not evil. This is new! Cf. Mt 5:44.

Also notice they will find Jehovah in their captivity (l). They have lost all that they thought was necessary for their faith - the temple, sacrifices, etc. But Jehovah is saying He will hear them wherever they are if their lives reflect the faith and obedience required by Him.

Even in exile Judah is to multiply just as they did during the Egyptian enslavement. God is still in control and Judah must be ready for her return home.

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint.” Rom 5:3-5a.

- 10. The end of Babylonian captivity will be in seventy years! Cf. 25:11,12.

Just as exile is Judah’s devastating judgment, her return is her greatest wish, and God’s desire and gift for her.

- 20-23. Those who resist Jehovah’s judgment, or the hope He offers, will be brought to a terrible end.

- 24-29. The exiles answer: PUT JEREMIAH IN PRISON!

Believing in falsehoods can lead to very horrible actions. And the sad thing about that is they will commit their foul deeds in the name of their religion. A quick review of “christian” church history proves this point over and over.

- 30-32. The false prophet who excited you to write shall die.

Looking back over chapters 26-29 we see Jeremiah’s preaching almost gets him hanged (26), he tries to influence an international conference (27), he clashes with a false prophet (28), and he writes what some consider a treasonable letter to the exiles (29). This man was preaching and teaching the truth regardless of any personal cost to himself.

B. The future Messianic kingdom Ch 30-33

CHAPTER 30.

Religion has little to say to the world if it offers only disaster and no hope.

3. This verse points to the reversal of evil in their lives and to the time when they will again, by faith and obedience be His people, and Jehovah will bless them with a great fullness of life.

10,11. I am with you, BUT I will punish you.

13. The idea in the last part of this verse is that he sees “an open wound upon which no new skin will grow.”

14. All of your lovers have forgotten you.

17. Jehovah destroyed because He loves and cares for His people, and He will heal them because He still loves and cares for them.

18-21. I will prosper you IN Israel.

21. Their “governor” shall be from among them - the new prince had to be a specially authorized one by Jehovah in order to exercise priestly functions for the people. For any unauthorized person to attempt to do this was to be struck down by the dangerous holiness of God. The writer of the book of Hebrews identifies this man as Jesus the Christ. Cf. Heb 4:16.

22. My People! Your God!

23,24. Jehovah's anger is like His word, it will not return to Him void!

Cf. Isa 55:11.

“In the latter days” are the days, whenever they are, in which Jehovah will implement His words.

REVIEW

Memory work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.
5:6 Live like animals, therefore, die like animals.
10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
 AND
 They can not do you good.
11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.
14:7 Our sins testify against us.
18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.
20:4 We can be a terror to ourselves and our friends.
27:12,13 Bondage is Life - Resistance is Death.

CHAPTER 31.

God's new order Is coming!

10. It is the same Shepherd who scatters and then gathers.
11. There is a difference between the words "redeemed" and "ransomed."

 Redeemed has more to do with the "redeemer" or "near kinsman" in the family.
 See special study on "Goel" enclosed.

 Ransomed = "to purchase back," a legal term.
15. Cf. Mt 2:17,18.
20. Israel shall receive mercy.
21. Mark the way home - do it now! The way is not new! It is following the law of
 Jehovah. The return to the land is based on their return to God.
22. Why?

 Because Jehovah has created a new thing on the earth! (IE: a new order of

things!).

The Woman = Israel.

The Man = Son of God.

The new relationship foretold in vvs. 31-34.

Cf. Heb 8:10-13; 10:16,17.

- 30. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY! You will suffer for your own sins. You will accept responsibility for all of your actions.
- 34. Cf. Jn 6:45; Isa 54:13.
- 37 How large (small) is your God? If your God is not the omnipresent and omnipotent God, He is too small.

CHAPTER 32.

- 1-5. Zedekiah imprisons Jeremiah.
- 3. If Zedekiah had listened to Jeremiah close enough to quote his words exactly, he should have also known the answer!

Zedekiah is not really asking a question, he is making a plea for a rescue.

- 6-25. Jehovah encourages Jeremiah:

- a. Buy real estate!
- b. It is a good investment in Judah!

This purchase and the recording of it put Jeremiah on public record as claiming that there is going to be life in Judah after the exile.

- 16-25. This is a prayer - notice that only one verse, and it is the last one, is personal. All of the rest of the prayer is praising Jehovah.

How about your prayers? How much is for your personal life? Do we try to use God just to answer our personal requests and then, when answered, relegate Him to an unimportant part of our lives again?

- 37-40. God predicts the end of idolatry.

41-44. The ray of hope is given again.

CHAPTER 33.

Jehovah promises blessings.

7. The captives of Judah and Israel shall return.

9. Judah will be faithful.

Are you and the congregation where you are a joy to the Lord? Or do your lives deny the gospel? Sometimes the worst enemy to the spread of the gospel is the life of the church. There is a large gap, in many congregations, between what we teach and what we live. This must not be so! If it is, we will answer for it as individuals and as leaders in the congregation.

When the people are restored to Jerusalem all the nations will know that there is a God in Israel.

14-18. Messianic.

Israel's problem was two-fold - kings who failed in justice and godly rulership and priests who had failed in instructing the people in God's ways.

The new ruler (Christ) will do what kings are supposed to do—practice justice and righteousness.

The new ruler will combine both of these offices and He will be the Messiah (Christ) of God.

20,21. God's care and love are as certain as:

a. Sun, moon and stars.

b. Day and night.

25,26. The exile is not the end of Israel's chosen status. They will remain as God's chosen people until God's purposes with them are fulfilled.

They were God's chosen for two purposes:

a. Keepers of the oracles of God (Old Testament), and

b. The nation through which the Messiah will be brought into the world.

C. Zedekiah's sin and the loyalty of the Rechabites Ch 34,35

CHAPTER 34.

The certainty of Babylon's victory.

1-5. This appears to be an "if—then" statement. If Zedekiah will hear the word of the Lord, then he will be captured but die in peace. Cf. 27:12,13.

10,11. Untrustworthy treatment of slaves.

They had freed their slaves but now, after considering their financial loss, go back on their solemn vow. Why is it we worship our money rather than Jehovah? What good is it to gain the whole world and lose our souls?

17. The result! Since Judah did not release her brethren, Jehovah will release sword, famine and pestilence upon them.

18. Cut the calf - a solemn pledge.

Cf. Gen 15:9,10,17,18 - Abram and Jehovah.

CHAPTER 35.

Obedience of the Rechabites.

1-11. Steadfastness. They were a people of intense obedience. What a lesson for Jeremiah and for us today.

Jonadab. Cf. 2 Kgs 10:15-28.

a. Rode with Jehu.

b. Descended from Jethro - Moses' father-in-law (Midianites).

12-19. Rechabites obey - why can you not obey?

These verses are a very strong lesson on the meaning of listening, the requirements of listening, and the costs of not listening. Everything depends on the listening which ends in obedience!

It seems to be generally a fact that the poor, those who have so little to lose or gain in this world's goods, are the better listeners. Those who have much to lose or gain seem to be the least candidates for listening.

REVIEW

Memory work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12.

- 1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.
- 2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.
- 4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.
- 10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
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They cannot do you good.
- 11:17-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.
- 14:7 Our sins testify against us.
- 18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.
- 20:4 We can be a terror to ourselves and our friends.
- 27:12,13 Bondage is life - resistance is death.
- 31:31ff God has a new order coming. Cf. Heb 8:10-13; 10:16,17.
-

D. Jehoiakim's opposition and destruction of the prophetic scroll Ch 36

CHAPTER 36.

Jehoiakim's penknife.

- 2,3. Perhaps Judah will repent.
- 5,6. Baruch must read the book in the Lord's house - Jeremiah is a prisoner.
- 9-14. The Lord's word is to be proclaimed in public. It is not to be hidden. How is
 Jeremiah going to affect public policy unless, through Baruch, he makes God's

word known publicly?

15. The princes want to hear for themselves.
- 17,18. If the princes are to know of the authenticity of the scroll, and take some action on it, they must know of its origin and credibility.
21. Now it is brought to the King.
23. The penknife of unbelief!
25. In effect the king, in his rejection of this scroll, rejected all of God's word which included Jehovah's protection based upon that word.
26. The situation worsens and this passage shows that God's providential care has intervened for Jeremiah and Baruch.
- 27-32. Write it again only make it harder!

"In chapter 22:13-17 we have Jeremiah's savage attack upon Jehoiakim as the corrupt, unworthy son of a godly father, Josiah. Perhaps the story of the scroll that Jehoiakim destroyed is intended to underline the contrast. Both have dealings with a scroll in the Temple. Josiah, according to 2 Kings 22, has a scroll read to him; he listens...it leads to national reformation. Jehoiakim has a scroll read to him; he does not listen, he consigns it to the flames...it leads to national disaster. So the different choices we take, when faced with similar situations, are fraught with consequences for good or for evil." (R. Davidson, 1985)

30. Jehoiakim - you shall die with no descendants on your throne.
32. The king's action did not destroy God's word, it only caused it to be written with more words and magnified the problems for the king.

E. Jeremiah in jail during the siege Ch 37-39

CHAPTER 37.

Babylon will return and defeat you.

3. Zedekiah frees Jeremiah. "Pray for us!"

Is it not strange that this king, who rejected God's word, immediately asks for prayers on his behalf?

The king wants the aid of the prophet, not his command. This man is in great

fear and is desperate.

5. Babylon leaves Jerusalem to fight with Egypt.
- 9,10. Be not deceived, even the wounded (lame) can defeat you!
16. Back to prison.
17. Is there any word from the Lord?
- 18-20. Jeremiah pleads with the king - I have proven to be the true prophet but you place me in prison. Whereas your prophets, who are now proven to be false and should be put to death according to the law, are free. Where is your justice, Jehoiakim?
19. Where now are your false prophets?
21. Zedekiah is kind to Jeremiah.

Let him be confined to the court of the outer prison and receive food regularly.

CHAPTER 38. The cowardice of Zedekiah.

- 1-4. "Jeremiah is a traitor."
Gedaliah - son of Pashhur.
4. Jeremiah "does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm" in whose eyes?
Kill Jeremiah!
5. No "backbone" in Zedekiah - afraid to stand against the people.
6. Into a dungeon - a mire. Literally "a pit."
- 7-13. Zedekiah hears the plea of an Ethiopian eunuch to free Jeremiah.
11. Ebed-Melech is a kind person. He even brings cloth to soothe the chafing of the ropes on Jeremiah's flesh as he is hoisted out of the pit.
15. Jeremiah knows Zedekiah!
- 14-28. The end is here!

- 19 Zedekiah is not fit to rule as he needs a “public opinion pole” before he can make a decision. He is afraid of what the people will say.

CHAPTER 39.

Prophecy fulfilled!

1-3. After 18 month siege Jerusalem falls.

4-7. Zedekiah's:

- a. Escape vs 4
- b. Capture 5

Judgment from God on Zedekiah carried out:

- c. Slew his sons in his sight 6
- d. Put his eyes out 7

Remember the last thing you saw!

8-10. The work of Nebuzaradan. Cf. 2 Kgs 25:8-19.

- a. Burn the Temple,
- b. Burn the palace,
- c. Burn the houses of the great men,
- d. Break down the walls of the city,
- e. Remove the captives,
- f. Leave the poor to take care of the fields,
- g. Take all the valuables from the house of the Lord (returned 100 yrs later),
- h. Remove the chief priests,
- i. Remove the king's associates and
- j. Remove the men of war.

11-14. Jeremiah is treated very well:

- a. He can go anywhere he pleases,
- b. Given victuals and
- c. Given a gift.

15-18. Kindness of Ebed-melech rewarded:

- a. You will not fall into the hands of those you fear, and
- b. You will not be killed.

III. Prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem Ch 40-45

A. Ministry among the remnant in Judah Ch 40-42

CHAPTER 40.

More troubles at home.

1-6. READ! Notice 3,4 - "The Lord your God."

3. The word "you" is plural and the NKJ is correct in adding "people" because it refers to them.

7,8. Those Jewish troops that were scattered come back.

9-12. Gedaliah tells them to live in peace with Babylon.

13-16. Gedaliah is informed of Ishmael's (Ammonites) plot to kill him.

Disbelief!

15. Johanan - why should the remnant perish?

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12; 51:7.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.
10:5 False gods cannot harm you,
AND
They cannot do you good.
11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.
14:7 Our sins testify against us.
18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.
20:4 We can be a terror to ourselves and our friends.
27:12,13 Bondage is life - resistance is death.
31:31ff God has a new order coming. Cf. Heb 8:10-13; 10:16,17.

CHAPTER 41.

The Ammonite rule is thwarted.

1-3. Ishmael and his ten men kill Gedaliah and many others.
4-9. Ishmael also kills seventy faithful to Jehovah (Cf. vs 5).
10. Ishmael takes captives and sets out toward Ammon.
11-16. Johanan hears of this treachery, intercepts Ishmael's group and recaptures all the people.
17,18. They all flee to Egypt out of fear of Babylon.

CHAPTER 42.

Dissimulation (disguised feelings - hypocrisy).

1-6. Johanan and others want to know what to do so they go to Jehovah.
READ vs. 5,6.

Cf. vv. 20-22.

7-12. After ten days Jehovah answers.

10. Jehovah says stay and prosper.

11. Do not be afraid!

13-18. BUT if you say NO!

15-17. Johanan, if you go into Egypt:

- a. What you have feared will overtake you vs 16
- b. Famine 16
- c. Sword 17
- d. Pestilence 17
- e. None shall return 17

Most exiles feel they will someday return to their land. But, Jehovah is telling them their only chance for life is to remain. If they go into Egypt they will not return! War will follow them and they will be destroyed.

18. Here is what you will be:

- a. Oath, and an
- b. Astonishment,
- c. Curse = a.
- d. Reproach = b.

19. Do not go to Egypt! What part of that command do they not understand? Why do they insist on doing their own will?

20-22. Hypocrites in your hearts = destruction!

Cf. vv. 5,6; Gal 2:11-13.

These people have two serious problems:

- a. They have broken a solemn vow, and
- b. They are breaking a direct command of Jehovah.

B. Ministry among the fugitives in Egypt Ch 43,44

CHAPTER 43.

People believe what they want to believe.

- 2,3. Jeremiah - you speak falsely.
- 4-7. Johanan takes Jeremiah and the remnant to Egypt.
- 8-13. Jeremiah hides stones in the courtyard at the entry of Pharaoh's house.

Babylon is coming!

These Jews who go to Egypt feel they can escape Babylon. But Babylon will find them anyway. They cannot hide from Babylon, who is Jehovah's instrument, any more than they can hide from Jehovah.

CHAPTER 44.

We will do what we please.

Loyalty to Jehovah must be singular and unambiguous! Judah's has not.

- 1-6. Jeremiah reminds them why Judah fell.
- 7,8. Why cut yourselves off?
- 15-17. We will do as we please.
- 17. In their eyes they had prosperity and peace when they worshiped this false goddess, and when they stopped they had poverty and war. And, this goddess was able to keep her promises. What a perfect argument, in their eyes, for continuing to worship this goddess.

Now comes the question—Which god is able to bless and to curse? Jeremiah has never held back the truth on this and more proof is on the way.

- 27,28. The result AND a ray of hope.
- 29,30. The sign - if Babylon rules, my threats will come true.

C. Encouragement to Baruch Ch 45

CHAPTER 45.

Baruch + Jehovah = Success.

1-5. Seek not great things for yourself.

This chapter is an oracle of vindication to Baruch, and all like him. You have kept the faith, you have been obedient, you shall live!

As long as Baruch lives he is proof to the exiles that God will keep His promise to them also.

This also shows that in the face of the upheavals predicted in the following chapters there is still hope. Jehovah is still God and the faithful can trust in His promises.

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12; 51:7.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.

10:5 False gods can not harm you,

AND

They cannot do you good.

11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.

14:7 Our sins testify against us.

18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.

27:12,13 Bondage is life - resistance is death.

31:31ff God has a new order coming. Cf. Heb 8:10-13; 10:16,17.

42:20-22 Dissembled (disguised feelings) in the heart.
= destruction. Cf. Gal 2:10-13.

Ch 43 People believe what they want to believe.

IV. Prophecies against the heathen nations Ch 46-51

The following chapters are making an announcement: JEHOVAH IS KING!

A. Egypt Ch 46

God rules all nations. He has a purpose for each nation. Whether they know it or not they are to serve His standards of justice and righteousness. When they fail they will be punished or even cease to exist!

CHAPTER 46.

- 2. Egypt is defeated. C. 605 B.C.
- 10. Jehovah is defeating the Egyptian army as if it were a bloody sacrifice.
- 13. Prophecy against Egypt repeated.
- 27,28. A ray of hope. But, you will still be punished!

Jehovah rules Egypt as well as all nations. Jehovah will punish Egypt, not because He loves Israel, but because He will punish all who do not honor Him. When Jehovah is honored, Israel will benefit!

B. Philistia Ch 47

CHAPTER 47.

- 4. It is Jehovah's battle.
- 6,7. The sword cannot be put away - more judgment is coming.

C. Moab Ch 48

CHAPTER 48.

10. Cursed is he that does the work of the Lord negligently (deceitfully)!
- 11-13. Moab at ease - good land, etc. vs 11
- Empty and break their bottles. Cf. 19:11 12
- Ashamed of their false god just as Israel was ashamed of their false worship 13
11. Cf. Zeph 1:12.
25. Horn = arm = power.
29. Pride, loftiness, arrogance and haughtiness cause enormous loss and grief.
- Cf. Jas 4:8-10; Prov 16:18,19.
46. Woe be to Moab!

D. Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, Elam Ch 49

CHAPTER 49.

- 1-6. (2a) Judgment against Ammon.
- 7-22. Jehovah's judgment against Edom:
- a. Edom shall not go unpunished vs 12
- b. Petra shall be destroyed 17
- 12,13. There is an important message here. The innocent are always caught in the political upheavals around them. The innocent as well as the guilty suffer from wars and natural disasters. But, God is not unmindful of them. We must remember God does not shelter those who are His from these things. If He did many today would become Christians for the earthly benefits, not because they love Him and want to obey Him.
18. "Neighboring cities" = Admah and Zeboim (Deut 29:22,23).
- Zoar was spared for Lot's sake (Gen 19:23-25).

23-27. Jehovah's judgment against Damascus (Assyria).

28-33. Jehovah's judgment against Kedar (Arabis).

34-39. Jehovah's judgment against Elam.

E. Babylon Ch 50,51

If Jehovah is to prove His sovereign rulership over the nations Babylon would be His test case. If He can rule (overrule) Babylon, as powerful as she is, He is able to, and in fact does, rule over all nations that have ever or will ever exist!

When we come to the end of the book of Jeremiah it is no longer Jehovah and Babylon, it is Jehovah alone for Babylon is gone.

The conclusion is that history in its final form is not a matter of politics and power. It is that Jehovah is God and King. He must be taken into account by all, including all nations, for a day of reckoning is coming. If not on this earth, it will be on judgment day!

CHAPTER 50.

1-4. Jehovah's judgment against Babylon (Syria). The Medes are coming. Jehovah is summoning new enemies against Babylon, and Babylon shall be defeated.

4. Israel and Judah will repent.

6-8. The "rams" will be the strong leaders necessary to lead Judah back to Jerusalem. The return will require great courage and, therefore, will require strong leadership.

The Jewish people going into exile and the Jewish people coming out of exile are different persons. They are Jews, but they are not the same persons except for a few. Old Israel is gone, a new Israel is ready to serve Jehovah.

17-20. Assyria and Syria earned their punishment.

33,34. Jehovah is their Redeemer! Jehovah is their Goel!

35-40. Even great powers like Babylon can expect to receive back in kind for their policies and actions.

39. Defeat is complete.

CHAPTER 51.

Punishment of Babylon / Israel and Judah not forgotten.

- 2. "Winnowers" will come to judge and devastate the land.
- 7. Opportunity brings responsibility. The reverse is also correct!
- 9. It seems that this verse is telling the exiles to leave as this trouble is not aimed at them.
- 35-37. Jehovah will plead the cause of Israel and Judah.
- 45. Cf. Rev 18:4.
- 47. False gods will not be tolerated. Cf. Ex 12:12.
- 50,51. The remaining Jews are told to remember Jerusalem, remember the temple, remember they are exiles. All of this should send them to Jerusalem. They are needed to re-establish Jehovah's worship and system of government.
- 59. Seraiah, like Baruch, is a son of Mahseiah and, therefore, it is presumed they were brothers.
- 61-64. A sinking nation. With this act and the prophecies of Jeremiah the exiles can now assume it is a time for changing national loyalties. They will no longer be bound to Babylon.

V. Historical Appendix Ch 52

CHAPTER 52.

Zedekiah / Jerusalem / Jehoiachin

- 1-11. Rebellion and defeat of Zedekiah (last king of Judah). This is the end of the Davidic dynasty. No more shall a son of Coniah (David) sit on the throne in Jerusalem and prosper. Cf. 22:24-30.
- 12-30. Spoiling of the temple and the people.

Even though there was a great deportation, Nebuchadnezzar left enough people in the land to care for it so that it would not become totally desolate. This is good political strategy—do not destroy the tax base completely.

The removal of all the utensils of the temple removes all legitimacy there might

have been to call this a temple of Jehovah. This also shows that Jehovah has caused all worship from this temple to cease.

28-30. Even though these numbers seem large they are in actuality small in comparison to the entire nation of Judah.

31-34. Jehoiachin given honor in captivity.

Jehoiachin = Jechoniah = Coniah

REVIEW

Memory Work: 1:10; 7:11; 13:23; 17:5; 20:9; 23:29; 29:12; 51:7.

1:17-19 You do your part and God will do His.

2:11 Even Gentiles do not change their gods.

4:27 God always holds out a ray of hope.

10:5 False gods can not harm you,

AND

They cannot do you good.

11:11-13 Prayers of the ungodly are not heard.

14:7 Our sins testify against us.

18:8-10 All of God's promises are conditional.

27:12,13 Bondage is life - resistance is death.

31:31ff God has a new order coming. Cf. Heb 8:10-13; 10:16,17.

42:20-22 Hypocrisy (disguised feelings) in the heart = destruction. Cf. Gal 2:10-13.

Ch 43 People believe what they want to believe.

48:10 Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord negligently.

51:7 Opportunity brings responsibility.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH OUTLINE

- I. From Devastation to Repentance Ch 1-3**
 - A. Jerusalem devastated and forsaken Ch 1
 - B. The reasons for God's wrath upon the city; repentance is its only hope Ch 2
 - C. The city's lament for its devastation; its repentance at remembrance of God's former mercies Ch 3
- II. From Repentance to Mercy Ch 4-5**
 - A. Zion's ancient glory contrasted with her present misery Ch 4
 - B. The repentant nation casts itself upon God's mercy Ch 5

LAMENTATIONS OVERVIEW

NAME: Lamentations.

MEANING: Elegy.

DATE: 575 B.C.

AUDIENCE: The Remnant in Judah

THEME: Jerusalem is destroyed.

SPECIAL NOTE: Shortest book in the Major Prophets.

OUTLINE:

- I. From Devastation to Repentance Ch 1-3
- II. From Repentance to Mercy Ch 4,5

LESSONS:

There is no greater sorrow than falling from the faith after knowing truth.

When you sin Jehovah becomes your enemy.

Jehovah is a God of goodness and severity.

LAMENTATIONS EXPOSITION

“One word of warning that applies throughout Lamentations: don’t go around looking for any clear or neat argument running through the chapters. Rather, you will find a series of pictures, placed side by side, describing from different angles the one shattering event. This reflects the mood of bewilderment which is often part of the healing process of living through grief. A person who has lost someone who has been very close, be it husband or wife or child or friend, will keep talking almost disjointedly about their sorrow, coming back again and again to the same things about that loved one; not aware that he or she is repeating things already said, but with a desperate need to share it with anyone prepared to listen. So it is in Lamentations.” (R. Davidson, 1985)

I. From Devastation to Repentance Ch 1-3

A. Jerusalem devastated and forsaken Ch 1

1-11. Zion’s adversaries and enemies prosper.

1. Using the illustration of a widow shows not only the city’s grief, but also shows how vulnerable and defenseless she is.

2. Lovers and friends have become enemies.

4. No solemn feasts.

5. Here is the answer to Jerusalem’s problems!

“Transgressions” can also be translated “rebellions.”

8. Sin exposed = nakedness.

9. We are not to think the enemy countries have triumphed. The enemy of Jerusalem is Jehovah!

11. The idea is that if the Lord would just look at her plight, He would have mercy on her.

12-19. Sorrows of Jerusalem.

12. No greater sorrow than to fall from the faith after knowing truth.

They are facing grief, sorrow and isolation in that grief. Even if others tried to understand, they can not. There seems to be a private world of grief where

others cannot enter and Jerusalem is in this condition.

15. The Lord is the punisher and His punishment is a winepress.

“The virgin daughter of Judah” could be translated, “the virgin daughter which is Judah.” This would show Judah’s relationship to Jehovah clearer, even if she is an erring daughter.

17. Judah is not requesting that someone hold her hand to give comfort, but to give her new hope.

- 18-22. Jehovah has sent His sorrow. Israel knew the responsibility for this fell upon her. There is no other place to turn for help, but to Jehovah.

22. Misery loves company, BUT Jeremiah pleads for justice on Judah’s oppressors.

This is not just a plea for revenge upon the enemies of Israel, but a recognition that Jehovah is the ruler of all nations and He will punish all those who persist in rejecting Him and in going in their own directions.

Sometimes a person or a nation has been totally broken before they, or he, can or will return to Jehovah. He is waiting for us, and He will give us what we need to bring us to repentance, if only we will.

B. The reasons for God’s wrath upon the city; repentance is its only hope Ch 2

- 1-10. Jehovah has become the same as an enemy; in fact, He is now Judah’s enemy!

1. In Ex 13:21; 14:19,20 Jehovah was in the cloud protecting Israel. Now He is in the cloud as an avenger upon Israel.

9. Is there any word from the Lord? NO!

10. The entire nation from its rulers to the very young go into silent mourning.

- 11-19. False visions cause banishment.

- 11,12. How complete can defeat be? Children are dying in the streets for lack of food.

Punishment comes, and the innocent as well as the guilty receive the results of the nation’s sins. This is a firm principle of God. If the innocent, or God’s people (the church today), were exempt from these national catastrophes many would become members of the church just to avoid these unpleasantnesses. God wants us to come to Him because we love Him, not for physical comforts.

14. The word “deceptive” is also translated as “whitewash” in other places.

15. Is this city “perfection and joy?”

God's prophets are now silent as the time for warning is over because the warnings have been rejected. All that is now heard is the voices of derision.

16. Hear the hissing, and the gnashing of teeth.

17. The truth of the matter is that this is not the “day of the enemy” but “the day of the Lord;” a day of wrath, not of joy for which they had hoped.

19. It is now “all or nothing.” Either they turn to Jehovah with true repentance or there is no hope or future for those children who are now dying in the streets.

20-22. None have escaped.

There is a note of bitterness in these verses. Bitterness is often a part of the recovery process. Out of it we begin to see Jehovah's purposes and His desire for our repentance and return to Him.

C. The city's lament for its devastation; its repentance at the remembrance of God's former mercies Ch 3

1-18. Jehovah is a bear or a lion lying in wait.

In picture after picture Jehovah is shown to be the cause of all of their grief. They are, in effect, saying that God is not acting in the fashion that these people were raised up to believe He would. And this is just the point—they had been taught error and had willingly followed it.

1-4. The Shepherd's protecting and reassuring rod has now become His “rod of wrath.”

9-11. Instead of protecting His people, Jehovah is now lying in wait to pounce on them as if He were a lion or a bear.

19-39. Jehovah is good to those who serve him. Remember and have hope.

19-21. Jehovah has now become very real. The things of the past are also very real, and live daily in the memory.

This should also be true for the Christian today! The crucifixion and resurrection are to be very real in our lives. We experienced them when we obeyed the Lord in baptism. Cf. Rom 6:1-11.

22-25. Goodness comes to those who seek Jehovah.

28-30. Being honest with one's self brings honesty toward God. We are not in charge of our own destinies on this earth, it is God who rules among the nations.

"Let him put his mouth in the dust" shows humble submission before a superior. Cf. Isa 49:23.

"There yet may be hope" does not show doubt, but shows a conviction that the future is in the hands of Jehovah. We cannot see the way to relief, or many times we are not able to see a way out of our problems, but that does not mean there is no relief. God is still in control, He can and will work His purposes among nations and His people!

31,32. Grief, compassion, mercy.

39. Suffering is the just punishment for our sins. It is our character, as it is here the character of Israel, that is being questioned, not the character of Jehovah.

The mood has shifted from complaining to confessing.

40-54. God will not hear your prayers.

40. Examine yourself and repent. If this is truly done, a renewal and deepening of faith will follow.

49. They were, as we are, a proud people. Tears can help cleanse the soul when they are true and lead to repentance. We need to let our sins so grieve us that our tears come. It is not unmanly to show godly grief and allow the tears to flow!

51. "All the daughters of my city" can refer to the young women of Jerusalem, or it may refer to all of the towns around Jerusalem that looked up to her as the "mother city."

57. "Do not fear" can make sense only to the one who knows that, regardless of present circumstances, God is not our enemy in the working out of His will.

59-66. Such enemies, *as well as Israel*, must know and understand the reality of Jehovah's rule and judgments.

II. From Repentance to Mercy Ch 4,5

A. Zion's ancient glory contrasted with her present misery Ch 4

1-10. Our sin is greater than that of Sodom.

11-16. The sins of the prophets and the priests have caused this.

13. As the prophets and priests go, so go the people!

14. “They wandered blind” shows that these leaders failed to challenge the corruption and injustices around them. By their not challenging these evils they had encouraged them, and were therefore responsible for them.

To turn a “blind eye” to evil is often the surest way to guarantee that it will happen, and continue to get worse.

15. The priests, who were to declare when one was “unclean,” are now themselves “unclean.”

Those who were the leaders are now the wanderers, welcomed by no one.

17-20. Our day is come; our end is here.

19,20. These verses describe the attempt of Zedekiah to escape from Jerusalem.

“The breath of our nostrils” was a traditional Egyptian royal title.

“The anointed of the Lord” shows the special relationship of the king of Israel with Jehovah. Cf. 1 Sam 16:13; Psa 2:2.

“Under his shadow” was also an Egyptian phrase describing their king as a falcon, who protecting his people under the shadow of his wings.

21,22. Rejoice. Punishment will end for Judah -

But, only when you have paid the full price!

B. The repentant nation casts itself upon God’s mercy Ch 5

1-18. The miseries of the captivity bewailed.

“If the pitiful destruction of the community is central to this prayer, there is also the recognition that what has happened is understandable. ‘Our fathers sinned’ (verse 7) and we are still reaping the bitter harvest of their mistaken belief that security and prosperity were to be found, not by trusting in the Lord, but through alliances with Assyria or Egypt (verse 6). ‘Our fathers sinned...’ but ‘woe to us, for we have sinned’ (verse 16). There is no attempt here to wiggle out of personal responsibility....; instead, a frank recognition that if the seeds of disaster had been sown in the past, the present generation had actively cultivated them. There is a healthy realism that neither

pretends that we live in isolation, uninfluenced by the past, nor claims that we are simply victims of the past. 'Our fathers sinned'...'we have sinned.'" (R. Davidson, 1985)

19-22. Prayer for mercy.

The temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem may be in ruins, but that does not mean that God's kingdom does not exist or that it has collapsed! There may not be a "son of David" on the throne in Jerusalem, but "You, O Lord, remain forever; Your throne from generation to generation."

"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off." Rom 11:22.

FINIS

A P P E N D I C E S

“MAJOR PROPHETS” GREAT TRUTHS COMMON TO THEM ALL

I. THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD (This is so-called “Ethical Monotheism”):

“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.’” – (Isaiah 44:6).

“Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might).” – (Jeremiah 10:6).

“Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, then they shall know that I am the Lord.
“ – (Ezekiel 30:19. Compare with Exodus 12:12).

“...till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.” – (Daniel 4:25).

II. GOD WILL NOT ACCEPT WORSHIP WHICH IS MINGLED WITH WICKED LIVING:

“And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.” – (Daniel 5:23).

“...at the door of the temple of the Lord...were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.” – (Ezekiel 8:16).

“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods...and then come and stand before Me in this house...and say, ‘We are delivered?’” – (Jeremiah 7: 9,10).

“He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; ...they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.” – (Isaiah 66:3).

III. GOD’S PEOPLE ARE DEFILED BY FOREIGN ALLIANCES:

“For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people.” – (Isaiah 28:11). (This was fulfilled when Assyrian was spoken in the streets of Jerusalem, for they had trusted in Assyria).

“You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable.” (Ezekiel 16:28). “You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors.” – (Ezekiel 16:26).

IV. THE DELIVERER WILL COME! (These sections are called “Messianic”, which is “pertaining to the Messiah “ or “pertaining to the time of the Messiah”).

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” – (Isaiah 9:6).

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment.” – (Jeremiah 23:5).

“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; ...and My servant David shall be their prince forever.” – (Ezekiel 37:24,25).

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.” – (Daniel 7:13,14).

MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS **ESTIMATED CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

Obadiah	845 B.C.
Joel	800
Jonah	780
Amos	755
Hosea	750
Isaiah	725
Micah	725
Nahum	625
Zephaniah	625
Jeremiah	600
Lamentations	586
Habakkuk	606
Ezekiel	575
Daniel	575
Haggai	520
Zechariah	520
Malachi	444

JESUS CHRIST THE TRUE “NEAR-KINSMAN” OF MEN

TEXT: Ruth 2:20

INTRODUCTION:

In reading the book of Ruth we are impressed with a double love story, first between Ruth and Naomi (1:16,17) and then between Ruth and Boaz (4:9,10).

But a closer inspection shows there is another love story in this great book, the love of God and Christ for men. We see that Boaz, as Near-Kinsman (Gahal), is a shadow of the true Near-Kinsman (Gahal) of God. Jesus Himself, the Christ, being that Gahal.

The word for Near-Kinsman is used 119 times in the Old Testament; 24 of these times (20%) are in the book of Ruth.

The word translated Near-Kinsman has also been translated:

Redeemer	Job 19:25; Jer 50:34
Ransomed	Jer 31:11
Redeem	Psa 119:154
Redeemed	Isa 62:12
Redemption	Jer 32:7,8
Purchases	Lev 25:33
Claim it	Job 3:5
Near-kinsman	Ruth 2:20
Avenger of blood	Deut 19:6
My right	Ruth 4:6

The usual emphasis in this word is on redemption being the privilege or duty of the Near-Kinsman.

In this study we will look at the Near-Kinsman's (gahal's) duty in three ways and then see how Jesus has fulfilled every part of this position:

- I. The Forfeited Inheritance.**
- II. The Forfeited Liberty.**
- III. The Forfeited Life.**

FORFEITED INHERITANCE

- A. If an Israelite had to sell any of his land, his Near-Kinsman was to buy it back.**
 - 1. The land of Israel was not to remain in the hands of foreigners or strangers - Lev 25:23-25.
 - 2. The Near-Kinsman had full use of the land until the year of Jubilee - Lev 25:13; 27:24.
 - 3. This made it impossible for anyone to give a clear title, to the land, to another. All that was actually sold was the use of the land and its fruit for a limited number of years - Lev 25:23,24.
 - 4. This kept the land of Israel parceled out to small land owners.
 - a. These people are usually the most industrious in the country.
 - b. They are also, usually, the most frugal.
 - c. And they are, by and large, the most loyal to their country.
 - 5. The inheritance could also be lost if there were no sons to carry on the family.
 - a. The Law of Moses provided for the lost estate when there were no male descendants.
 - b. The widow was to be married to the dead man's Near-Kinsman and the first-born son was to receive the dead husband's name and estate - Deut 25:5-10.

B. All men have lost their first estate!

1. In the Garden - Gen 3:6.
 - a. Man lost access to the Tree of Life - Gen 3:22-24.
 - b. All creation was subject to man but man's sin subjected all of this to another power - Rom 8:19-23; Eph 2:2.
2. Israel fell into sin - Rom 11:22.
3. All men have fallen into sin - Rom 3:23.

C. Christ: the Redeemer of our Lost Estate!

1. New heavens and a new earth - 2 Pet 3:12,13; Rev 21:1-4.
2. The redeemed are the Church, the Bride of Christ, so the inheritance is continued.
3. All spiritual blessings for the redeemed come from Christ - Eph 1:3.
4. The redeemed will inherit all things - Rev 21:6,7.
5. The Tree of Life is restored - Rev 22:1-5.

FORFEITED LIBERTY

A. If an Israelite sold himself into slavery to a foreigner, a Near-Kinsman was to buy him back.

1. If he sold himself to a fellow Jew, he lost none of his privileges in the congregation of Israel - Lev 25:39-46.
2. But, if he sold himself to a stranger (foreigner), he would most likely be taken away from Canaan. As a result would lose his place in the congregation of Israel.
3. Therefore, he was to be redeemed from the stranger (foreigner) by a Near-Kinsman - Lev 25:47-55.

B. We have all sold ourselves in sin - Rom 7:14.

1. When we sin we become the slaves of sin - Rom 6:16; Titus 3:3.
2. We sold ourselves into bondage to Satan - Jas 1:13-15; Jn 12:31.
3. As such, we are powerless - we cannot redeem ourselves - Rom 3:20.

C. Christ: The Redeemer of Slaves to Sin.

1. Isaiah tells us we are to be ransomed without money - Isa 52:3. And Peter tells us Jesus did that when he gave himself as a ransom for all as a lamb without spot or blemish - 1 Pet 1:18,19.
2. Jesus has led "captivity captive" - Eph 4:8.
3. Jesus ransomed us from the power of the grave - Hos 13:14.
4. When Jesus frees you, you are free indeed - Jn 8:36.

FORFEITED LIFE

A. When a person was slain in Israel the pursuit and execution of the slayer was the duty of the Near-Kinsman.

1. No one else had the right or duty to avenge that death - Lev 25.
2. This was part of the law of "an eye for an eye" - Ex 21:22ff. This actually put a limit on revenge.
3. The Near-Kinsman was to take the payment of life for a life.

Just as a piece of land or a slave was repurchased by payment, the lost life of the relative was to be repurchased by the equivalent life of the killer.
4. By restricting the slaying to the Near-Kinsman any potential feuds would be stopped before they started.

B. We have all been slain, by Satan, with sin.

1. All men have sinned - Rom 3:23.
2. We are all dead in sins - Eph 2:5.

3. Satan has the power of death - Heb 2:14.
4. Satan is still our adversary - 1 Pet 5:8.

C. Christ: The Avenger of Blood.

1. Satan is our murder - Jn 8:44 (from the beginning).
2. Christ is triumphant over Satan - Col 2:15.
3. Yes, the Lamb has wrath (Rev 6:16) and a sword (Rev 2:16).
4. Murdered saints cry "How long?" - Rev 6:10.
5. Christ will take vengeance - 2 Thess 1:7-10.

CONCLUSION: Jesus the Christ is the True Near-Kinsman (Gahal) of Men!

A. A Near-Kinsman is to represent us in a legal capacity when we are unable.

1. Under the Law of Moses the Near-Kinsman had the responsibility to represent the harmed brother.
2. Jesus Christ is our Advocate - 1 Jn 2:1,2.
3. Anyone who does not have a Near-Kinsman does not have anyone who cares for his rights or honors.

B. Only a God/man can be our Mediator and Christ is that God/man - 1 Tim 2:5.

C. The Gahal must be a Kinsman!

1. Only a man could be the Gahal of men. No alien, no stranger, only "the man who is near of kin to us, our nearest kinsman" - Ruth 2:20.
2. Christ is our Kinsman (elder-brother) - Col 1:18.
3. He must be kin in the flesh, Jesus is! - 1 Jn 4:2; Lk 24:39; Heb 2:14a.

D. Redeem yourselves from this crooked generation - Acts 2:40!

HOW? Have Jesus the Christ as your Near-Kinsman!

THE CHURCH IN PURPOSE

A. The church was in the purpose of God as early as the birth of Paul.

1. “But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood...” (Gal 1:15, 16a). From this scripture we learn that God separated Paul from the time of his birth to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. Certainly God knew that the preaching of the gospel of Christ would result in the establishment of the church in communities where it is preached. To say that God purposed that Paul should preach the gospel, but did not know that such preaching would result in the founding of churches of Christ is unthinkable.
2. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Lk 8:11). Preaching the word of God is sowing the seed of the kingdom (Mt 13:19, 23). When the seed of the kingdom is sown in the hearts of people and allowed to have its way, children of the kingdom will be the result (Mt 13:38). A group of children of the kingdom in any community constitutes the kingdom in that place. And since the kingdom is the church (Mt 16:18,19), it follows that this group of children of the kingdom produced by the preaching of the gospel, is the church in that community. It was in the purpose of God that Paul should preach Christ among the Gentiles and since this preaching results in the establishment of churches of Christ, it follows that the purpose of God included the establishment of churches of Christ through the preaching of the gospel by Paul. Since he was separated in the mind of God for this work from the time of his birth, we know that the church was in the purpose of God as far back as the birth of Paul.

B. The church was in the purpose of God in the time of Moses.

“I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22,23). Here we learn that the prophets, including Moses, foretold the suffering of Christ on the cross. Paul tells us that Christ purchased the church with his own blood shed on the cross (Acts 20:28). Is it possible that God knew that his Son would suffer on Calvary, but did not know that he would purchase the church with his blood shed in that suffering? John saw the “four living creatures” and the “four and twenty elders” fall down before Christ, the Lamb, and sing his praises, saying, “For thou wast slain, and

didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (Rev 5:9,10). The people who are purchased with the blood of the Lamb are made to be a kingdom. Did God know in the time of Moses that the Christ would suffer, but did not know that through his suffering men would be purchased and that those so purchased would constitute the kingdom, the church? Such a conclusion is unthinkable. God knew and purposed in the time of Moses that the church should be purchased through the suffering of Christ.

C. The church was in the purpose of God in the time of Abraham.

Paul tells us that there was revealed to him a mystery which was not so clearly made known in other generations, "to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph 3:6). The promise here mentioned is the promise made to Abraham that all nations were to be blessed in his seed (Gen 12:3; 22: 18; Eph 2:11-22). It is in fulfillment of this promise that we have all gospel blessings (Acts 3: 25, 26; Gal 3: 7-9). The one body is the church (1 Cor 12:13). When God told Abraham that all nations were to be blessed in his seed, Christ (Gal 3:16), he meant that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews; they were to be fellow-members of the body, which is the church (Eph 1:22; Col 1:18); and fellow-partakers with the Jews of all that is included in the promise to Abraham. And all these blessings were to come to the Gentiles through the gospel of Jesus Christ of which Paul was made a minister and a preacher. God could not plan for the Gentiles to be fellow-members of the body which is the church without planning the existence of the church. So we conclude that the church was included in the purpose of God when he made the promise to Abraham.

D. The church was in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world.

The expression "foundation of the world" has been interpreted by some to mean the beginning of the Christian dispensation. But Paul's use of it in Eph 1:4, seems to be a parallel with the expression "eternal purpose" in Eph 3:11. Peter speaks of Christ being foreknown before the foundation of the world, but manifested "at the end of the times" for our sake (1 Pet 1:20). The manifestation of Christ refers to his coming in the flesh, which was the period just preceding the Christian dispensation. But Peter speaks of the "foundation of the world" as a time prior to "the end of the times." Jesus said the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world would be required of his generation and then added that this includes all the prophets from Abel down to Zachariah (Lk 11:50,51). From his use of the expression we learn that the foundation of the world must extend back as far as Abel, so it must refer to the creation of the

world. Now for the proof that the church has been in the mind of God since before the creation of the world.

1. Paul says that it is God's eternal purpose that the wisdom of God is to be made known to "the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" through the church (Eph 3:11; 1:19,20). So the church is included in the eternal purpose of God.
2. Paul teaches us that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love (Eph 1:4). But in Eph 5:25-27, we learn that it is the church for which Jesus gave himself that is to be "holy and without blemish" (cf: Titus 2:14). So the chosen of Eph 1:4, is the church of Eph 5:27. And therefore the church was in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world. Paul speaks of this same purpose as including the called (2 Thess 2:14) and the justified (1 Cor 6:11) and those who are yet to be glorified (Rom 8:28-30).
3. Peter Says we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ "who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet 1:20; cf: 2 Tim 1:9,10). From the context we learn that he was foreknown as a lamb through whose blood we would be redeemed. Is it possible that God could have foreknown that Jesus would suffer as a lamb in sacrifice for the redemption of our souls from sin and yet did not know that the redeemed would constitute the church? Such a conclusion would be false and ridiculous. So from this we learn that before the creation God knew man would sin, that he would give his Son to suffer for man's sin, and that those redeemed by the blood of Christ would be his kingdom, his church (Rev 5:9,10). So the church was included in the purpose of God from before the foundation, creation, of the world. It is not an after thought with God; it is not something hurriedly arranged to meet an emergency on account of God being unable to accomplish what he had attempted at the time the prophets said he would do it. The church, next to heaven itself, is the climax of all God's gracious purposes to show the exceeding riches of his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

From The Church, by Roy H. Lanier Sr. (Gospel Advocate Company, 1956). Copied with permission from the author.

FALSE TEACHERS

There is a place for tears. One doesn't have to be constrained to weep for departed loved one. It is the natural expression of a broken heart. We vent our sorrow through the cleansing power of tears as surely as did Mary and Martha when their brother died. Even Jesus was touched... and wept.

But there is such a thing as artificial wailing. An old funeral director told me years ago that you could generally mark it down that those who did the loudest screaming and crying at a funeral were those who didn't care a whole lot for the departed, even though that one might be a "close" member of the family. He had concluded that the bigger the show, the less the sorrow. His observation had come through long years of experience.

In Bible times it was customary to hire mourners and chanters. These would weep, howl, beat their breast, and tear their hair according to contract. Jeremiah said "Consider and call for the mourning women to come; send for the skillful women to let them make haste and raise a wailing over us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush with water" (Jeremiah 9:17,18).

William M. Thomson writes in *The Land And The Book*, "There are in every city and community women exceedingly cunning in this business. These are always sent for, and kept in readiness. When a fresh company of sympathizers comes in, these women 'make haste' to take up a wailing, that the newly come may the more easily unite their tears with the mourners." It's a performance for pay. So many tears for so many dollars.

It was even the custom to collect the tears of the mourners, and preserve them in bottles. Thus David said, "Put thou my tears in thy bottle! Are they not in thy book?" (Psalm 56:8). These lachrymatories are still found in great numbers on opening ancient tombs. Such bottles would very much need cunning women to cause eyelids to gush out with waters.

Perhaps it was such ostentatious sorrow which caused Tacitus to write, "At my funeral let no tokens of sorrow be seen, no pompous mockery of woe. Crown with chaplets, strew flowers on my grave, and let my friends erect no van memorial to tell where my remains are lodged."

Genuine tears are one thing; but tears designed for show are something else.

JOHN GIPSON
Little Rock, Arkansas
KEYNOTER 12-8-83

OUTLINE ON JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

By Johnny Ramsey

INTRODUCTION

The Battle Jeremiah Faced:

Notice 26:11-16

“A more crushing burden was never laid upon mortal man.” “He was indeed a man of God.” Some have called Jeremiah the greatest failure, as a preacher, that the world ever knew.

However such is not the impression one gets from the Book!

*Parallels in the lives of Jeremiah and Jesus:

1. They lived under similar world conditions (Babylon and Rome).
2. They grew up in quiet country places - (time for meditation).
3. Both were rejected in home area and family circle.
4. Neither had joys and blessings of married life to help in the face of opposition.
5. Each was aware, at an early age, of God's hand upon him.
6. Both condemned the priests as being blind, false teachers.
7. Their methods of teaching were similar. A simple child could understand and be blessed by their words.
8. Formalism and hypocrisy in religion were despised by both. Their attitude toward the temple and ritual was identical.
9. Each gave evidence of a close walk with the Father!
10. Both possessed tender, yearning, weeping hearts over sinning population.
11. Each was considered a failure but was certainly among the victors.

*Gordon, *The Rebel Prophet* - Harper & Brothers, p 227.

Baruch - A faithful amanuensis and friend (Paul and Luke) (Jer 36).

Division of the Book:

1. Prophecies concerning Jerusalem and Judah - 2-35.
2. Biographical narratives - 36-45.
3. Concerning foreign nations - 46-51.

Chapter 1 gives “the call of the prophet” (child of destiny).

Chapter 52 is the concluding word on Zedekiah.

Theme Song:

*”True religion is an inward, spiritual, genuine response of the heart to the righteous God.”

*Yates: *Preaching From the Prophets* - Broadman.

He faced Idolatry, social injustice and formalism in addition to open rebellion. Sin always results in ruin. Judgment is inevitable, automatic and eternal.

Each man stands alone before a righteous God and must be judged as an individual soul.

He was an absolute rebel.

Jeremiah was timid, sensitive, emotional, and tender, but he was no weak sentimentalist. His life was a tragic experience as a weeping prophet. However his, Ezekiel’s and Habakkuk’s work was responsible for the REMNANT.

From Anathoth (suburb of Jerusalem) in 626-586 in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign. (Abiathar, David’s high priest, established the city).

Josiah - boy king - could Jeremiah and Josiah have grown up together? Reform by Josiah (2 Kings 23) plus preaching by Jeremiah - not long-lived.

Notice Hab 1:12 and Jer 28:16.

Key point to illustrate poverty of spiritual leadership by the king - Jer 36. Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Josiah, Jeremiah, Nahum. Manasseh - 698 B.C. - At death of Hezekiah.

Josiah in 641.

Jehoahaz.

Jehoiakim - 605 (Battle of Carchemish defeated Egypt).

Jehoiachin for 3 months in 598 when Nebuzaradan took the city.

Zedekiah (Josiah's youngest), under Babylon's supervision, left to rule - 598.

Jeremiah and Habakkuk in Jerusalem and Daniel and Ezekiel in Babylon.

Jeremiah counseled immediate surrender and loyal obedience to Babylon if Judah was to continue. Finally, in 586, Gedaliah left as Babylonian representative to oversee people remaining in Judah.

Jeremiah's personality is clearly set forth as a vivid portrayal of his inmost being.

Hezekiah's good reform work had been nullified by the long and wicked fifty-five year reign of Manasseh, plus a short idolatrous reign of Amon for two years. Sixty years of wickedness.

Jeremiah's boyhood was spent during international political tension and national religious declension. (The decline of Assyrian power, also dual challenge from Egypt and Babylon).

Son of a Priest - Jeremiah = "Jehovah exalts" or "Jehovah throws down." Josiah 2 Chron 24:4-7 and Hilkiah 2 Kings 23.

Jeremiah was:

1. Persecuted - 12:6; 15:15-18.
2. Plotted Against - 11:18-23; 18:18.
3. Imprisoned - 20:2.
4. Declared worthy of death - 26:10; 36:26.
5. Prophecies Destroyed - 36:27.

Notice: 6:14 - "Peace, Peace" - 1 Thess 5:3.

The false prophet (Hananiah) said Babylonian captivity would be only two years (28:3 and 11), but Jeremiah said seventy - 29:10. See 32:5. To understand Old Testament prophets one must study the book of Jeremiah. See Jer 29:19. In the midst of the lack of spirituality and national formalism, Jeremiah looks forward to a New Covenant - 31:31. "A spiritual bond between God and the Individual."

He insisted on repentance from a people who were “past feeling.” He cursed the day he was born. 15:10; 20:14-18.

Words which describe him:

Uncompromising,
Lonely,
Despairing,
Misunderstood,
A failure,
Anguished and
Tender.

Faith - 32:15. 33:16 - “The Lord, our Righteousness.”

Like Stephen, he was in trouble because of the temple - 6:13; 7:4; 18:18; 29:25-32.
False prophets taught that the temple would deliver the people.

BASIC MEMORY WORK

Psalms 135:15-18 - The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

Jer 1:10 - 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.

Jer 2:32 - Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Jer 3:25 - We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

Jer 4:3 - For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

Jer 5:4 - Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God.

Jer 5:30,31 - A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Jer 6:16 - Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Jer 7:4 - Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.

Jer 7:24 - But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Jer 7:28 - But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

Jer 8:20 - The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Jer 9:1 - Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Jer 10:10 - But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

Jer 10:23 - O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Jer 13:15-17 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Jer 16:21 - Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD.

Jer 20:9 - Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

Jer 21:8 - And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

Jer 22:29 - O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

Jer 23:29 - Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

Lamentations 3:40 - Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Key Verses in Jeremiah 1-12:

1. Verse 7 - Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.
Verse 10 - Is set over nations, kingdoms to destroy evil - to build and plant truth.
Verse 11-14 - Seething pot, almond tree, evil from the north.
2. Verse 5 - What iniquity have your fathers found in me saith the Lord?
Verse 8 - The pastors and prophets walk after things that do not profit.
Verse 13 - Two evils committed.
 - A. Forsaken the fountain of living waters.
 - B. Built their own broken cisterns.Verse 25 - I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.
Verse 32 - Can a maid forget her ornaments?
Verse 33 - They made themselves alluring to seek out lovers.
3. Verse 7-11 - False Judah learned nothing from faithless Israel.
Verse 25 - We lie down in our shame.
4. Verse 3 - Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns.
Verse 7 - The destroyer (lion) of the Gentiles is on his way.
Verse 8 - Therefore lament and howl; be clothed in sackcloth.
Verse 22 - My people are stupid children.
5. Verse 1 - Can you find a man that executeth judgment in Jerusalem?

- Verse 4 - Real poverty: They know not the way of the Lord.
- Verse 23 - This people hath a revolting and rebellious heart.
- Verse 30,31 - Astonishing, repulsive facts - false prophets, priests and people.
6. Verse 11 - I am full of the fury of the LORD.
- Verse 14 - Peace, peace when there is no peace.
- Verse 16 The old paths.
- Verse 30 - Reprobate silver = rejected.
7. Verse 4 - Lying words, The temple of the LORD.
- Verse 16 - Pray not for this people.
- Verses 24 and 28 - They go backward because they hearken not to me. They receive not correction.
- Verse 25 - My servants, the prophets.
- Verse 34 - The voice of gladness shall cease in the cities of Judah. The land shall be desolate!
8. Verse 5 - Jerusalemites are perpetually backsliding.
- Verse- 15 - We looked for peace but no good came, for a time of health, and behold trouble.
- Verses 20-22 - Too late! No balm. Tears for the slain of my people!
9. Verse 3 - Strong - but not for truth.
- Verse 14 - Walking in the imagination of evil heart like Baalim.
- Verse 24 - Glory only in the loving kindness of God.
- Verse 26 - Uncircumcised in the heart.
10. Verse 5 - Impossible for idols to do good or withstand evil.
- Verse 10 - The true and living God shall cause the earth to tremble.

Verse 19 - The heavy heart of Jeremiah.

Verse 23 - Man cannot guide self.

11. Verse 9 - A conspiracy against God!

Verse 11 - I will not hear when they cry.

Verse 20 - The LORD tries the emotions and thoughts.

12. Verse 1 - Why do the wicked prosper?

Verse 5 - What will ye do in the swelling of the Jordan?

Verse 7 - The dearly beloved will go into the land of the enemy.

Verses 14-17 - The only way home to God!

13. A. 1) Put a linen girdle about thy loins - verse 2.
2) Take it and hide it near Euphrates in a hole in a rock - verse 4.
3) After many days: take it - Jeremiah dug and found the girdle marred - it was good for nothing - verses 6,7.

Verse 9 - After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and Jerusalem 's great pride.

Verse 11 - Judah and Israel chose not to cleave to Me!

B. Verse 13 - All leaders shall be drunk with authority and wander in stupor.

C. Verses 15-21 - The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee. Jehovah is saddened by their rebellion. Where is thy beautiful flock?

D. Verse 22 - Why do such calamities befall us?

- 1) Thy great sins.
- 2) Verse 23 - Set in ways of evil (Ethiopian and leopard).
- 3) Trusted in falsehood.
- 4) When will you ever be clean, O Jerusalem?

“As stubble grass.”

14. A great famine.

God's chastisement - sword, famine, pestilence.

Verses 7-9 - Jeremiah's response.

False prophets said: No famine or sword, only peace!

The test of Deut 16:22 - (verse 14) I SENT THEM NOT.

Lam 3:37 - The deceit of their hearts. Consumed by sword plus famine.

They shall have none to bring them. My virgin daughter is broken. We looked for peace and found trouble.

15. Even Samuel and Moses could not talk me into changing my mind. Get Judah out of my sight!

The utter loneliness of God's man.

REAP AS SOWN - Gal 6:8; Rev 13:10.

Sword, dogs, birds and beast = Slay, tear, devour and destroy.

Because of Manasseh - 2 Chron 33.

God: I am weary with repenting.

Verse 10 - Jeremiah is weary too!

Verse 16 - Consuming God's word. I sat alone.

Verse 20 - A brazen wall.

16. Ruin so complete that marriage and parenthood are discouraged.

Jeremiah need not lament for the people nor feast for them.

The voice of mirth, marriage and gladness shall cease in this land.

This generation is worse than your fathers.

Into captivity: However, I will still watch you!

The name of the Lord shall not perish.

17. Judah's sin is so very apparent. Job 19:23-25.

You have kindled a fire in my anger.

It is dangerous to trust in men and earthly might.

Desperately wicked

Verse 7 - Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.

Verse 10 - The heart-searcher.

A foolish man - gatherer of riches.

The fountain of living waters.

My hope in day of evil.

Verse 18 - Destroy them with double destruction.

Stand in the gate - warn the stiff-necked people.

17:25 - Throne of David.

18. Get Article: *We Have Been to the Temple.*

The Potter's House.

A. Careless potter.

B. Weak machine.

C. Bad clay.

Pliable, free from impurities, right consistency.

Background on clay.

Return to Me - They said: There is no hope.

My virgin has forgotten the days of old.

God's back, not his face in calamity - Isa 59:1,2.

verse 18 - Come, let us smite him (Jeremiah) with the tongue.

Do not listen to any of his words.

Thou Lord, knowest their wickedness.

Deut 32:35.

19. Judgment upon Valley of Hinnom - 2 Chron 33 (Manasseh).

The Valley of Slaughter.

Break the potter's bottle to illustrate that God will break his people
(verse 1 and 10).

All this evil will come upon the people because they hardened their neck.

20. His personal lament.

Born to experience trouble and sorrow.

Jeremiah is persecuted by Pashur, son of the priest; beaten and imprisoned. The next day Jeremiah predicts Babylonian captivity and Pashur's death due to prophesying lies.

The word of God is a reproach and division.

Verse 9 - I quit!

Everlasting confusion of the wicked.

21. Luke 6:26.

Jeremiah's "popular" preaching is the answer to Zedekiah the king about Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 8 - A choice to make - Deut 30:15; Joshua 24:15.

Do not fight captivity. God's plan = Babylon.

Punishment according to fruit of your doing.

22. Jeremiah speaks to the house of Judah's King.

Verse 3 - Execute; do not just talk about it! Mt 15:9; Eze 33:31.

Judgment plus righteousness.

Verse 9 - Why? - Forsaking the covenant, worshiped and served other gods.

Verse 13 - Builds house on sand.

Thine eyes covet and shed innocent blood for oppression and violence.

Jehoiakim to die like a wild beast and have a beast's burial.

Jehoiachin - 2 Kings 24:8ff.

Coniah - seed never again on David's throne in Judah - 23:5.

Verse 29 - O earth, earth, earth.

23. 597 - Nebuzaradan took Jehoiachin and his mother to Babylon.

- False shepherds.
- True shepherds do not drive sheep, they lead them.
- The Lord our Righteousness (Isa 25:9; 64:6).
- Branch or shoot of tree that has fallen, showing new life.
- Jeremiah's distress over false prophets.
- Prophets of Samaria were idolaters - those in Judah immoral, too! They make it easy to sin.

24. Two Baskets of Figs.

Good versus evil.

Stay with exiles in Babylon = good plus life.

Stay with Zedekiah in Jerusalem = evil plus death.

25. Judgment through Babylon.

Verse 7 - my servant.

Later, upon Babylon!

The wine cup = God's wrath plus judgment.

All nations brought into God's court of judgment - A lament.

- Sheep slaughtered or vessel shattered.
26. Jeremiah speaks in court of the temple.
- Then false prophets - (city is immune from danger).
- Verse 16 - Shows crowd easily swayed - 1 Kings 18:21.
- The stark peril of an impenitent people.
- Urijah's death shows how close Jeremiah had come.
27. The yoke - No need to try breaking Babylon's rule.
- False prophets originate their own message (verse 12-15).
- To the priests - Terse message in regard to vessels - 2 Kings 24:13.
28. Hananiah versus Jeremiah.
- Breaks yoke - verses 4, 10.
- Ironical answer as Micaiah in 1 Kings 22.
- 2 Thess 2:10-12.
- DELAY (10 days).
- This year you shall die.
- Heb 11:27; James 5:11 - Endurance.
29. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles:
- Do not allow superficial words of Hananiah to deceive you!
- Verse 24-32 - Why do we allow Jeremiah to write such a negative letter?
30. Book of consolation.
- A future with hope - (oasis in desert).
- Jeremiah's gloom changes to eager anticipation even though it is the darkest hour of tyranny and oppression.

Your wounds shall be healed!

Restoration - verse 18-24.

Spring is coming at the close of a hard winter (Isa 35).

Restoration:

- A. To the land - verse 18.
- B. Prosperity - verse 19,20.
- C. Ideal King - verse 21.
- D. God's fellowship - verse 22.

31. Rich blessings of the New Testament (sermon outline).

A woman shall compass a man.

32. *Nebuzaradan my servant shall take Zedekiah to Babylon.

*Jeremiah imprisoned.

*Jeremiah buys land in Anathoth.

* Verse 17-25 - Jeremiah's beautiful prayer.

In spite of their iniquity, God will restore them later.

33. God promises blessings to them.

Judah will become the joy of the earth.

God's care, love and providence = As certain as sun, moon, stars, day and night.

34. Jeremiah tells Zedekiah of the certainty of Babylon's victory, but Zedekiah will die in peace.

Only Lachish and Azekah remained of the defended cities of Judah.

Social injustice is one of the major causes of captivity.

Mistreatment of slaves - disobeyed God.

“Cut the calf” - Gen 15:9-20 - If promise is broken let the results and punishments come forth.

Semitic contract or agreement.

35. Rechabites obey their fathers. Why can not Judah obey God?

1 Chron 2:55 - Land of Midian descended from Jethro.

Jud 1:16; 4:11.

Num 10:29-32.

36. Jehoiakim's pen knife.

Baruch must read the message in the temple as Jeremiah cannot go. Perhaps they will repent.

King's princes hear of it and demand they hear of it from Baruch's mouth.

Jehudi reads it to Jehoiakim.

The fireplace.

Jeremiah and Baruch write another roll and make it harder.

Jehoiakim is to die.

37. See verse 19 especially.

Zedekiah replaces Jehoiakim and asks Jeremiah to “pray for us.”

Egypt versus Babylon. The Jews think Babylonians have departed, but God says even a crippled few of the Chaldeans could ruin the Egyptians (Battle of Carchemish) and burn Jerusalem. God's will shall be done!

Jeremiah is imprisoned in the house of Jonathan in Benjamin; and is in the dungeon many days.

Zedekiah has him released.

38. Gedaliah, Son of Pashur, and friends conspire against Jeremiah due to “pro-Babylon” talk (verses 2,3).

Patriotism versus God's will.

Jeremiah is cast into the mire of the dungeon of Malchiah.

Ebedmelech, eunuch in the king's house persuades the king to send him and thirty men to get Jeremiah out - Zedekiah sends for him.

Verse 15 - Is a classic.

Zedekiah's cowardice.

Notice the same old story about Babylon.

39. After an eighteen months siege, Jerusalem is overthrown by Babylon.

Zedekiah flees, is captured and his eyes are put out (verse 7).

Jerusalem's walls are broken; houses and the palace are burned.

However, the poor are left and given the vineyards and fields.

Jeremiah is treated favorably and released from the "court of prison" into a private home.

Ebedmelech blessed and spared.

40. Nebuzaradan, captain of guard, takes Jeremiah bound to Ramah and releases him. The prophet chooses to return to Gedaliah.

Captain gives him food - "reward."

The Jews are scattered in Moab, Ammon and Edom. They hear of the remnant in Judah and return.

Word comes that the king of the Ammonites is sending Ishmael to slay Gedaliah. Gedaliah does not believe it.

41. But Ishmael does come, slays Gedaliah and many others.

Also seventy from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria (ten men beg mercy on basis of "hidden treasure") - Ishmael is about to take Babylon's rule to Ammonites but Johanan intercepts them by waters of Gibeon (Josh 9).

Cast into a pit Asa dug (1 Kings 15:22).

42. Jonathan's request of Jeremiah.

Pray for us. Show us the right way and the things we may do.

After 10 days.

Verse 11 - Be not afraid.

Verses 16-18 - Do not trust in Egypt!

Verses 20-22 - Desire and dissemble.

Verse 22 - Do you really want to know?

Job 42:12 and Mordecai (Job 30:20).

Faith over ease must be your choice!

43. Most accept what they want to believe!

Jeremiah, you speak falsely - 1 Kings 21:20.

Acts 27:31.

Johanan takes Jeremiah and the remnant to Egypt.

God tells Jeremiah to take stones and hide them in the brick oven at the entry of Pharaoh's house which will soon be the Babylonian throne.

44. Jeremiah speaks to the Jews in Egypt reminding them of why Judah has fallen.

Verse 8 - Why cut yourself off? So foolish and blind. Rev 11:22; 2 Chron 7:14; Acts 13:46.

Verses 15-17 - We will do as we please.

Verse 17 - Poor vision! (verse 28; Heb 6:18).

No penitence (Rev 9:20; 44:10).

45. Jeremiah plus Baruch plus the Lord.

"Seek not GREAT THINGS FOR THYSELF."

46. God uses Babylon to ruin Egypt at Carchemish in 605.

This is the day of the Lord.

Verse 13 - Jeremiah and Babylon.

Israel (Hos 12:3) is to be punished but restored.

47. God's judgment upon Philistines.

Chief cities - Gaza, Ashkelon cut off.

God's sword can not be returned to the scabbard yet. There is more judgment to come!

48. Punishment of Moab.

God's bottle of wrath (19:11 and 48:12).

Verse 10 - Is a great sermon text.

Verse 25 - Moab's arm is broken.

Verse 26-29 - Pride (Jas 4:9).

As Israel was made ashamed of Bethel so Moab is ashamed of idols' shrine!

Verse 44 - Humor.

49. Stern warnings of Judgment upon Ammonites, Ai, Edom.

Verse 8 - The calamity of Esau (Heb 12:16,17; Psa 137:7; book of Obadiah).

Verses 9,10 - Utter destruction (verse 10; Psa 139:1-11).

Verse 22 and Rev 6:14-17 - Edomites will long for death.

Verse 29 - Damascus too! Fear is on every side.

Elam put down and later restored.

50. The Medes are coming to take Babylon.

Israel and Judah repent (Psa 126:5).

Verse 7 - Babylon using excuses - We did God a Favor!

God helps the arrows of the Persians!

David's stone (Isa 55:11; Jud 7:2).

Verse 17-20 - Assyria and Babylon earned their punishment.

Verse 24 and Acts 5:39 - IT DOES NOT PAY TO STRIVE AGAINST GOD!

Verse 34 - The Redeemer of Israel is strong! The Lord of Hosts! (verse 44).

51. Utter punishment of Babylon - Israel and Judah not forsaken (Rev 13:10).

Sudden overthrow (Rev 18:17) of covetous people (Lk 12:15-21).

Verse 18 - (Eccl 2:1:11).

Verse 36 - God will plead their cause!

Verse 49 - Gal 6:7,8.

Verse 50 - Let Jerusalem come into your mind. (1 Kings 12:28).

Verse 56 - Rom 2:6.

Verses 63,64 - The sinking nation (vivid illustration).

52. Zedekiah's rebellion.

Defeat of the city.

Personal tragedy.

Babylon burns the city, tears down walls and takes the vessels of the Temple away.

Glory of the temple is described.

Jehoiachin is treated kindly.

THE BURNING FIRE

In the Book of Jeremiah we read of a boiling pot, a fiery prophet and the fierceness of God's wrath against Judah. The boiling cauldron represented the teeming horde of Babylon - sent by Jehovah as judgment upon the iniquity of His people. The stalwart prophet was Jeremiah whose lips had been touched by the Lord and, thus, Jeremiah

had to tear down the false standards of a disobedient and gainsaying Judah. God's gadding bride had forgotten her spiritual attire and was out courting the Egyptians. Just as the almond tree was early to blossom so the crumbling walls of Jerusalem had already begun to decay. The external but futile revival under Josiah had waned into a steady drumbeat of sensuality, indifference and even flippancy toward God. The sin and shame of Judah was similar to the wallowing quagmire of the pig-pen. Those who should have wept were instead giddy with their reveling over the altars in the groves. The summer of their discontent had blended into the autumn of defeat, and the gates of Babylon beckoned unto that reprobate generation. Soon would they sing the Lord's song in a strange land to the tempo of a heart that had been broken and contrite far too late to avail for Judah deliverance from Captivity. They had turned from the Great Physician to search in vain for balm in Gilead. No wonder Jeremiah's tears flowed like a waterfall. His lamenting over the city of God had just about reached its piercing crescendo when the vile Jehoiakim ascended the throne. False prophets, evil priests and heartless kings had paved the way to spiritual oblivion for the host of Zion. The tragedy of this dilemma was the fact that the people loved to have it so! No wonder inspiration records these graphic words that so vividly typify the decline of Judah:

"This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth."

Truly, God's backslidden people were "strong in the land but not for truth." The Southern kingdom had been snared in the same trap of folly that had clasped Israel to its bosom. The people of Judah had rejected the counsel of Jehovah to err exceedingly in the way of their own misguided ambitions. Only utter ruin at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar could be the result of the bitter dregs of sin!

Can we visualize the sadness of God's great servant, Jeremiah? How devastating was the echo of the trite refrain:

"The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these."

Their trust in a building - instead of the Builder - was nauseating to the servant of the Lord. His clarion call to spiritual perception went unheeded by the masses who had made lies their refuge. Is it a strange thing that God put these words of stern rebuke here into the prophet's mouth:

"But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walking in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart and went backward and not forward."

Perhaps the saddest verse in the entire book of Jeremiah is verse sixteen of the sixth chapter:

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for

yours souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

Because of this wicked rebellious attitude, Jeremiah was told not to pray for them. Unless and until the sinful nation returned to the spiritual plateau which God demanded, they were to remain in jeopardy and in the bondage of iniquity. The anguish in the soul of the prophet is best seen in the haunting refrain of Lamentations 1:12 and 5:7:

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by”
and

“Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities.”

The wickedness of Judah’s falseness had caused Jehovah’s enemies to blaspheme. In Lamentations 2:15 the wailing prophet speaks:

“All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?”

God had given unto his unfaithful bride a writing of divorcement and “the law was no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.” Indeed, under Jehovah’s shadow they had gone to live among the heathen (Lam 4:20).

Neither the idols of their hearts, the altars in the grove, the constellations in the heavens, the beauty and glory of the temple, nor the expected military might of the Egyptians had stayed the hand of bondage. Judah had sown to the wind and had verily reaped the whirlwind! The crying need of the day was set forth in Lamentations 3:40:

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.”

The great spirit of the prophet Jeremiah was heavy with the weight of Judah’s neglect and pride. When they should have been clothed in sackcloth and ashes they were instead enamored by the fleeting glimpse of material gain and earthly prominence. While the false prophets shouted, “Peace, Peace,” pandemonium was about to break loose. The worst possible calamity, according to the messengers of popularity, would be a two-year probation in Babylon. But Jeremiah knew better and his words boiled over into the unpopular sentiments of 10:10:

“But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.”

It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that the weeping man of Anathoth was always negative, morose and without loving sentiment. His emotions ran the gamut of Judah’s sinfulness and Jehovah’s holiness and beauty. In one of the richest scenes of the entire oracle we read in 9:24:

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

In spite of these marvelous, majestic themes, Judah was bound for captivity and the dearly beloved of the Father was given into the hands of her enemies. This sad day came as a result of rebellion, rejection and remorse. That Judah was responsible for the bed she now lies in is graphically seen in the language of 12:17:

“But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.”

The boiling pot of God’s wrath and the burning fire within Jeremiah’s bones had not been able to stem the tide of apostasy. The sin and shame of Judah had but added fuel to the embers. The Southern Kingdom had come to the crossroads of decision and had gleefully followed the birds of prey into seventy years of tears under the weeping willows of Babylon. They would have a long time to recall the booming words of a sad, rejected prophet: “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if you will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD’s flock is carried away captive.”

I have no doubt that finally, in that wretched, foreign land of bondage, God’s burning fire broke their hardened hearts and they shared in the tears of Jeremiah. That little spark of a contrite remnant would one day kindle, by the grace of God, a fire of shining radiance - the Lamb of God whose covenant of love would be emblazoned upon the hearts of men!

The boiling cauldron had overflowed into redemption’s sweet song. We can only hope that Jeremiah was able to see, from the portals of glory, the fruition of his work. Thank God for men like him!

WE HAVE BEEN TO THE TEMPLE

In Jeremiah, chapter seven, we have one of the most vivid pictures of degradation in Jewish history. We have therein one of the major weaknesses of God’s people that culminated in the seventy years of captivity down in Babylon. Because their decline in Jehovah’s favor so closely parallels one of our paramount problems today, we deem this lesson from “the weeping prophet” an absolute “must” for Christians today. What is this common spiritual tragedy? **WORSHIP THAT DOES NOT HAVE THE NEEDED RESULT!**

Jeremiah, God’s voice to the people, strongly denounced the elect who put more trust in

the temple than in Who was there and what transpired there. Instead of showing the fruit of transformed, spiritual lives in the vineyard of God, they could only reply incessantly. "The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD" (Jer 7:4). The Creator challenged their minds by virtually asking, "What good has it done you to come to the temple for worship? You still live as before; you still reject my counsel." And then, in an indirect, scathing rebuke to Zion, He tells Jeremiah to abstain from praying for folk who are so steeped in sin. Temple worship had not benefited those people. They had been to the temple, but what happened there did not phase them.

Yes, we are about to draw a parallel. It is true that God no longer "dwells in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48). Anywhere and any time a person worships "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:24), Jehovah heareth. But, the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3). Therefore, when the church assembles for worship, (Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 11) we have the same general situation as the one mentioned in Jeremiah 7. The place is not holy but the events are! I am also personally confident that the tragic results of Jeremiah's day are being repeated in our own era, too. After the assembly:

1. Do I truly feel nearer to heaven?
2. Do I love the Lord and His church more?
3. Am I more determined to teach others of the way?
4. Is my love for the brethren stronger? Am I more forgiving?
5. Am I more determined to purge out my sinfulness?
6. Do I now look forward eagerly to the next assembly?
7. Have I begun to partake of the peace passing understanding?
8. Is there an urgency within to share my joy with others?
9. Am I determined to improve my participation in the worship?
10. Am I looking for work that needs to be done for the Lord?

The scriptures point out that uplifting, spiritual homage, devotion and praise are calculated to produce such noble aspirations. But, it is apparent that we are not deriving such rich benefits from our periods of public worship today. Every congregation for instance, has a lot more worshipers than workers! Actually, just as in Jeremiah's day, we can let assembly worship hinder us unless we practice what we preach (Phil 1:27). When we "rest our case" upon the subtle idea: "We have been to the building" ("I never miss a service"), notwithstanding, our lives remain unchanged, and

we have actually become hypocrites of the deepest dye.

Does worshiping help or hinder you? True worship was designed for the purpose of drawing us nearer to our Maker that we might draw others to Him. How many souls have you saved as a result of your worship? Personal worship will result in personal evangelism. Isaiah's individual communion with God caused him to volunteer for service (Isa 6:8). The best soul winners I have known keep in close touch with Jehovah.

Indeed, the most wonderful motivation for Christians comes from soul-stirring, Bible-centered, God-ordained worship. May we always avail ourselves of every opportunity to grow spiritually thereby. The result of such occasions will shake the earth. Souls by the thousands will be redeemed. Our own experience will be doubly enriched. And, on the other shore, we shall be better prepared to join in the eternal adoration of our Father.

Beloved brethren, do we really worship? Or, have we just been to the temple?

A LINEN GIRDLE, A BROKEN BOTTLE, AN EMPTY THRONE

Before "the Lord our Righteousness" could be promised (23:6), the debris of a sinful, shameful nation had to be removed. Jeremiah becomes a dramatist to get the message across to a people filled with the bitterness and giddiness that rebellion always brings.

The story of his marred linen girdle was but a sad reminder and graphic foretelling of the deterioration of Judah. Just as the linen belt clung so closely to its wearer and performed an important function, so had the Jews once lived near to the heart of God. They had, in glorious days of the past, functioned in concert with the will of heaven. But now, the sun of God's wrath was being poured out upon a wicked, slothful nation that was marred, ruined and good for nothing. The only proper thing left to do was to "throw them away" down in Babylon. The pride of Judah, yea, the enormous arrogance of Jerusalem, had opened wide the gates of captivity. The sins of the Jews had been very oppressive to their Creator. Now they shall be oppressed for 70 years because of their iniquities (2 Chron 36:14-23). Because Judah chose not to cleave to the Lord, they had become drunk with authority and were wandering in aimless stupor. A great comment upon the need of their lives can be found in 2 Chronicles 7:14:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

But, alas, the pride of their heart had deceived them and their ways were firmly established. It would be just as easy to change the leopard's spots or the Ethiopian's skin as to divert the tragedy awaiting Judah. They had trusted in falsehood and the filth of sin had overshadowed their vain attempts at godliness. They could have been God's

beautiful flock in a golden land, but they chose instead to be the stubble grass by the roadway of despair. They truly had exchanged glory for dishonor and would have “a long dry spell” to rue the day they had taken the wrong turn at the crossroad of decision.

Prophets, whom the Lord had not sent, had lulled them into a great spiritual famine. So corrupt had Jerusalem become that Jehovah affirmed that even a Moses or a Samuel could not change his mind - Get Judah Out of My Sight! However, even though that generation was worse than their fathers and into captivity they would go, still the name of the Lord would not perish (Ezekiel 36:21-24). Judah's evil was so apparent that God replied: “You have kindled a fire in my anger.” The danger of trusting in man and earthly might is clearly evident as Judah's allies fail one by one. God's people are exhorted in tones of clarity:

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD and whose hope the LORD is” (17:7).

The foolish man is one who gathers riches and has no hope in the day of evil, for he has turned away from the fountain of living waters and shall be “destroyed with double destruction.” The servant of the Lord stands in the gate of the city and warns the stiff-necked people of their doom.

The next scene on the stage of drama is the famous potter's house. A marred vessel – due to clay that will not bend to the Master's touch - is highly illustrative of the unyielding nature of the Southern Kingdom. Good clay is pliable, free from impurities and has the proper consistency. Judah possessed not one of these necessary traits. If ever a passage emphasized the sovereignty of God and the belligerent nature of man it is this chapter (18) concerning Jeremiah's trip to the potter's house. As a result of the prophet's application of the incident, his enemies conspire against him. “Let us smite him with our words” becomes the epitome of expression from evil hearts.

Adding insult to injury, the prophet goes next to the valley of slaughter and breaks a potter's vessel upon the ground. This clearly indicates that God will break his people.

All this evil will come upon them because they hardened their neck.

Pressure is heaped upon Jeremiah from without and within but imprisonment, isolation, and hatred cannot stay his lips. Tempted sorely to quit, the fire of God's word and love burns even more intensely within him. His most unpopular message was, “Do not fight captivity because Babylon is a part of God's plan to punish you according to the fruit of your doings.” His words were disdained.

The house of Judah's king (Jehoiachin or Coniah) is now informed that none of Coniah's seed would ever again reign on David's throne. It is highly significant that in the very next paragraph we are introduced, prophetically, to the Lord our Righteousness who now rules as King of Kings.

“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!” (22:29).

RICH BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT

I. Introduction:

In your Bible you have TWO major sections or divisions - The Old and New Testaments.

There is a vast difference between the contents of each.

NOTICE THE CONTRAST

OLD

Given: Sinai.

Scope: To Jews (Ex 20:1; Deut 5:3) (Mt 10 versus Mt 28).

Purpose: To preserve seed (Gal 3:19).

Nature: Carnal - (2 Cor 3:6-16).

NEW

Given: Jerusalem.

Scope: Everyone (Acts 2:39).

Purpose: To preserve and save world (Mt 26:28).

Nature: Spiritual (Gal 4:21-31).

(Jeremiah 31, Heb 8)

OLD

Law Given: Tables of stone
Inherited
Sins Remembered

Duration: Till Christ came

NEW

Written in the heart.
Know the Lord.
Sins forgiven.

Age-lasting

- versus -

Mt 28:20; Heb 13:20; Gal 3:24; 2:21; Rom 7:4; Rom 10:4.

Mediator: Ex 34; Jn 1:17; Heb 8:6; 9:15; (Moses versus Christ).

The rich blessings of the New Covenant.

- 1) "The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets."
- 2) Stanza 3 of "Count Your Many Blessings."

II. Blessings of the New Covenant.

A. A Personal Savior: Acts 2:38 ("Every one of you"). Heb 7:25,26; 2:9,10; Phil 3:20 "from whence we look for our Savior." Heb 8 "They shall know me." Not a chosen people - but redeemed persons. (Very important). 1 Jn 4:14; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Tim 2:10; Mt 1 21; Tit 2:11-14.

B. The blood of Christ: (Ex 12 Passover; I Cor 5:7).
Day of Atonement - Jn 1:29; 1 Pet 1:18,19; Eph 1:7; Rev 1:5.

Heb 10:1; 4,11 - Col 1:20; Zech 13:1; Jn 19:34.

Heb 10:19 - We have boldness to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7).
Heb 6:19,20; Heb 9:24.

Mt 26:28 - Acts 20:28 (Note carefully)

C. Forgiveness of Sins: Heb 8:12 - 10:3 (note Heb 7:12) But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year."

Heb 10:18 - "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

Lk 24:47; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 13:38; 1 Jn 2:12: "Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

Eph 4:32 - "forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

D. Direct Access To Heaven:

Stephen - Acts 7.

Priesthood system - Rev 1:6; 1 Pet 2:9.

Mt 7 - Ask - Seek - Knock.

John 4:23,24 - (No special time; place such as Jerusalem; temple; three times a year; no "Holy Days").

1 Thess 5:17.

James 5:16.

1 Jn 5:14.

E. Simple Plan of Salvation.

The Entire book of Leviticus gives the plan for Judaism! In the Great Commission Jesus sums up the terms of the New Testament in two or three verses!

2 Cor 11:3 - Acts 8 and 16 - Eunuch in deserted place; Lydia by seaside!

F. Encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

Jn 16:3, 8 "of sin, righteousness of judgment to come."

Acts 5:32; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 6:19; Rev 22:17; Gal 5:22; 2 Pet 1:20,21; Rom 15:4.

G. Working with God for Christ:

Jn 14:12; Acts 1:8; Mt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 6:1; Mt 25:37 ff.

The word Covenant means "an agreement between TWO PARTIES."

GOD HAS DONE HIS PART (Jas 1:16,17) HAVE WE? Psa 116:12.

A little girl playing with her doll and wanting to hear Mommy say, "I love you." It is more enjoyable to love someone who can love you in return.

III. Conclusion:

Perhaps, the greatest blessing of all: A living hope!

Heb 11:1 - Faith is the substance.

Rom 15:13 - That ye may abound in hope.

1 Pet 1:3 - A living hope.

1 Cor 15:19 - Hope in Christ.

Eph 2:12 - No hope, without God, in the world.

Col 1:27; 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Pet 3:15.

NOTICE CAREFULLY - Heb 10:26-31.

“OUT OF THE EMBERS A TORCH!”

Jehoiakim's Pen Knife - Jeremiah 36

Six centuries after Jeremiah's gigantic struggle with Jehoiakim, the Hebrew writer wrote these powerful words:

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 10:31; 12:29).

In view of this momentous truth was not Judah's king the apex of folly in his disdain for God's oracle? Could the coals of a winter fire dissolve the Lord of heaven and earth? The smoldering embers of an ancient fireplace have not the power to remove the hand of Jehovah. Did not His finger emblazon the law on tables of stone, and had not His mighty voice caused Sinai to quake? How could a puny mortal so flippantly disregard the awesome strength of the Mighty Maker of the universe? Why would the creature reply against The One who had made him? Perhaps Jehoiakim was the epitome of the vessel marred in the potter's hand or the flask broken upon the ground - shattered, scattered and forever good for nothing! In the swelling of the Jordan, he would be consumed!

How tragic it is for men to reject the counsel of God and thus deem themselves unworthy of eternal life. There is no sadness comparable to the loss sustained when men do not like to retain Jehovah in their knowledge. Jehoiakim has some twin brothers today who rip, tear, slash, corrupt and wrest the Scriptures to their own damnation. But one day, in the Lord's own good time, out of the burning embers will

arise the torch of truth, the eternal verities by which we shall all be judged. And I am persuaded that men like Jereboam, Jehoiakim and Judas will wish they could go back and tear down those altars at Dan and Bethel, amend their attitude toward sacred truth, and make no agreements with the Devil. For truth, crushed to earth, will rise again unshackled by the burning embers of idolatry, indifference and lust. The banner of the King and the fiery gospel torch will shine in splendor in the hearts and lives of the redeemed. No earthly, time-bound, temporal ruler can thwart the everlasting Father. Indeed:

“From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

God's word was a burning fire shut up in Jeremiah's bones. The childish action of a wicked, slothful king could not destroy it. And today, the gospel era, when God's law is written in our hearts and not upon tables of stone we should, out of the overflow of gratitude, follow the advice of Lucretius (70 B.C.):

“And like runners hand on the torch of life.”

Jehoiakim stoked the fire of Jehovah's wrath and fanned a flame that glows in Hell. When will men learn that out of the burning embers of their mundane affections arises God's torch of truth and sickle of judgment? In many ways sinners hone to a white-heat sharpness the two-edged sword. There is no escaping from the evident fact that “each one of us shall give account of himself unto God.” I plead with men everywhere to receive with meekness that Lord which is able to save our souls, or one day we shall pray for the mountains to fall upon us to spare us from the One who, in Justice, sits upon the great white throne.

“For the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?” (Rom 6:17).

THE ONE SURE THING Jer 40-52

In the midst of changing scenes and crumbling dynasties, Jeremiah could speak of one certain landmark; Jehovah's immutable word and heaven's unwavering judgments. Had the weeping prophet led the singing in the assembly, no doubt his first selection would have been:

“Time is filled with swift transition -
Naught of earth unmoved can stand -
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Trust in Him who will not leave you,

Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling.”

How vividly does God’s solidarity ring forth in the closing sentiments of the great book of Jeremiah. Indeed, how art the mighty fallen! The giants of the earth, once stable empires with heralded rulers and fierce armies, now fold their tents and slowly dissolve. The barren plains cry out, the echo of the wild beasts beat silently against the ancient hills. The rugged valleys seem to tremble with the solemn wind that blows against the trees. The ground almost cracks as the stranger timidly asks, “Where is the power of Egypt, the glory of Babylon, the strength of Moab, the beauty of Ai and the arrogant Edomites? Surely such majestic monuments of earthly dominance cannot perish from the earth!

And, yes, where is that walled city of the Jews? And the glorious temple of ivory overlaid with gold? Do not tell me the ground opened up and swallowed them, for they often boasted to travelers passing this way that the God of that temple would always deliver them! It does seem strange that the city, its walls and the temple have disappeared! Have I just dreamed that once upon a time Jehovah of Hosts had a chosen flock in a special land?

What ever happened to that man of Anathoth who was such a fanatic? You know, the one who always spoke of doom and even foolishly told the citizens of Judah to quit trusting in Egypt? Is it really true that he counseled the people to surrender to Babylon and honor the king of the Chaldeans? I really thought he would learn to keep his mouth shut after Pashur and Zedekiah got through with him. One thing for certain, one hour in that filthy dungeon of Malchiah ought to make any preacher more agreeable and less dogmatic. However, some people are just naturally cantankerous. Maybe Jeremiah just has “a martyr complex.”

Say, do you remember Johanan and his friends? They were considered heroes for awhile, were they not? That was good of them to run those Ammonites back home after they had killed King Gedaliah. Well, anyway, I understand that Johanan is really mad at Jeremiah. It seems that several men asked Jeremiah to pray for them and ask God’s blessings upon their ventures. First of all, that prophet made them wait ten days before he would even talk to them about their request, and when he finally did talk, it was all negative! He told them the same old story about Egypt being a bad place to live in, and all those lies concerning Babylon gaining the ascendancy. The thing about it, though, is that right now, over by the Euphrates at Carchemish there is a massive battle building up between Pharaoh and the Babylonians. Would it not be amusing and surprising if old Jeremiah guessed that one correctly? The uncanny thing about this whole situation is the fact that he has consistently been lucky in his predictions. I guess that really aggravates the folk he has been pestering all these years!

One of the funniest things happened over at Pathros, Egypt the other day. After

Jeremiah had begged and cried and pleaded with those Jews who had wandered off to Pharaoh, do you know what they told him? They told him, 'Mind your own business; we will do exactly as we please.' They even burned incense to the queen of heaven and really made that prophet look ridiculous. He ought to learn that he just is not wanted. I really wonder if he has sense enough to know that he is not welcome here.

Jeremiah must truly be impossible to work with because someone told me that even his best friend Baruch felt the sting of his rebuke recently. Jeremiah blurted out these words to his close companion, 'Quit seeking great things for yourself.' I guess the man of Anathoth wants all the glory for himself. Come to think of it, though, there is not much glory down in those dungeons, is there?

It would seem to me that several years ago when King Jehoiakim burned that scroll in the fireplace that any normal, intelligent person would realize that journalism just was not his calling. It was almost humorous, however, when Jeremiah just wrote another message and made it hotter than the king's fireplace! You have to admire his courage and tenacity even though he evidently has lost his mind.

The strangest thing about Jeremiah, to me, is his continual use of objects and illustrations. To get his point across he has talked about a bride's wedding attire, a broken flask, a linen girdle, a wooden yoke, salve from Gilead, God's sword and scabbard, and a nation sinking into the sea. He also said that a woman would give birth to a child without man's intervention, and then spoke about writing laws upon men's hearts. What a strange fellow!

I think he is angry at everybody because someone heard him say that even Babylon, his favorite nation, would soon be destroyed also. Is that not hilarious? And do you know who is going to do the job? Do not laugh, but he actually chose the Medes to lead the slaughter. That is like saying a catfish will swallow a whale! Jeremiah is truly not being sensible this time.

There was a really lovely sentence he spoke to his brethren the same day he announced the end of captivity in Babylon. He said to them, 'Let Jerusalem come into your mind.' Those people have been so sad in Chaldea they have even stopped singing those beautiful Hebrew songs. They have ached for the hills of home and have yearned for the precious memories of the past. Many of them promised to rebuild the temple and the walls of the city, and to even restore their worship if God would only let them leave their bondage of shame. As determined as they are capable of being, I often wonder if we will live to see that beautiful city again? To be honest I will have to admit that down deep one has to admire Jeremiah. He has really been steadfast and persistent in the face of opposition from within and without. There is no telling what would have become of the small remnant of Jews that remain had it not been for him. There is one thing though that I never will understand. I wonder what he meant when he spoke about that burning fire in his bones? Some thought he had indigestion or perhaps a bleeding ulcer or possibly cancer. But whatever it was he certainly has been

a powerful preacher. Maybe we ought to all pray for that kind of sickness. What do you think?"

"But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forebearing, and could not stay" (20:9).

The one sure thing is God's Eternal Flame - His Holy Word!

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

I. Introduction:

A much neglected Book - yet filled with pathos and power.

A five-chapter book between Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Generally ascribed to Jeremiah, the weeping prophet of Judah (see 2 Chron 35:25).

Its name suggests the sadness and lamenting of the prophet of God.

Notice the contrast between Isaiah (Messianic prophet) and Jeremiah (close contact with immediate problems of Jerusalem and Kingdom of Judah).

Josh 23:14-16.

Israel taken into Assyrian Captivity in 722 B.C. - Judah into Babylonian in 586.

Terrible desolation of the city, people scattered and enslaved; the cause of God looked hopeless indeed! Jeremiah wept bitterly over this tragic turn of events!

Jehoiakim and penknife - Jer 36.

The prophet had fulfilled his duties (Eze 3:17 ff).

Still, as he views the once powerful city of God in ruins, his soul is stirred within him (Acts 17:16). His warnings had gone unheeded! How doth the city sit solitary (1:1).

Passages of importance:

Notice 1:2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 15, 22.

2:9, 13; 15,16, 18.

3:19-25; 31,32; 40.

4:13, 22.

5:4, 8, 16, 20-22; Cf. Rom 11:22.

II. Practical Lessons:

A. Children of God Can Fall From Grace:

Babylon - Every sinner is in captivity.

1 Cor 10:1-12; Heb 3:19.

Gal 4:9-11; 2 Pet 2:20-22.

*603; 548 either died or fell from grace in wilderness wandering.

B. What Sin Can Do:

Rom 6:23, Num 32:23; Psa 1:4-6; Isa 57:20,21; 59:1,2.

1. Separate.
2. Humiliate.
3. Bring Utter Desolation.
4. Produce Untold Sorrow.

Think about Israel's folly whenever sin is appealing (Gal 6:7,8; Hos 8:7).

C. There Is Hope For The Humble Penitent:

1. Psa 51:1-17.
2. Not enough weeping over sin.

Abraham over Sodom.

Jesus over Jerusalem (Psa 137:4).

Paul over Athens.

Jeremiah over Jerusalem.

Nearly always it is the righteous who are touched by awfulness of sin (Abraham over Sodom; Paul over Athens; Jeremiah and Jesus over Jerusalem).

3. But - 2 Cor 7:9,10.

Acts 8:22 - Example of Saul of Tarsus.

D. God's Constant Providential Care:

Phil 4:13.
Psa 23:1.
Heb 13:6.
Rom 8:31.
Psa 46:1.

God used the Babylonians to bring Judah to her senses (Jeremiah 25:9).

“THE WEeping PROPHEt; A BROKEN NATION AND
A SOUL-SEARCHING GOD.”
Lamentations

It would be difficult to find a book in the Bible that is so apropos to our day as the little, unknown book of Lamentations. We can identify with Jeremiah as he wept over the decaying ruins of a once proud nation. The powerful preaching of God's prophet had not stopped the rushing tide of apostasy in Judah. The inevitable downfall that sin always brings had brought havoc and shame to Jerusalem. Out of the north God's avenger, Babylon, had rushed through the sleeping Southern Kingdom and had battered down the walls of the once majestic city of God. Egypt had not been the strong arm Judah depended on for deliverance. Now, finally, the children of Jehovah were slowly turning back to the oracles of heaven. But, the damage had been done! The deep love of a saddened servant, Jeremiah, comes shining through in the tear-stained lament of this book. Some of the real “heart” passages of the whole Bible can be found in Lamentations. However, it would be a mistake to think tears and power cannot blend together. There was no greater preacher in Old Testament days than Jeremiah! His tears evidently made his messages salty! His burning, ringing rhetoric would long echo in the ears of his impenitent contemporaries.

Rather than basking in the comfort of “I told you so”, Jeremiah is genuinely broken and contrite in spirit over the devastation of his beloved city. Jerusalem is in shambles and the prophet is in tears. It gave him no pleasure to realize that Judah's sins had produced such a calamity. He only regretted that their hardness of heart had made captivity a reality. If ever a scene brought vividly to mind the caustic wages of sin it was the burning destruction of a once glorious Jerusalem. The temple, which had been a superstitious shrine to the Jews, was just a passing shadow as the prophet gazed sadly upon the panorama that had been the glory of bygone years.

Jeremiah's reflections at this time remind us of the Psalmist:

“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD, I wait for the LORD,

my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope" (Psa 130:1,5).

Indeed, the wailing man of Anathoth made his feelings known when he exclaimed, "I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath" (Lamentation 3:1). The only hope of Judah was to "search and try their ways and turn again to Jehovah." They should have been forever grateful for God's spokesman who made the way back toward heaven a possibility. Perhaps we should lament over the fact that so few Jeremiah's exist today!

Praise the Lord for such a man and his magnanimous spirit.

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