

Supplemental Notes:

*The Books
of
Jeremiah
and
Lamentations*

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Jeremiah

Introduction

Jeremiah: longest book in the Bible; probably the most misunderstood and therefore the least read. Many scholars consider Jeremiah the most spiritual person in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah = "the Lord hurls" (often used for "exalts," "lifts up," "holds high"); Ex 15:1.

Jeremiah: one of the most revered prophets; his book is one of the most autobiographical in the Bible; hence, we know a great deal about this man. He is a model for us to follow in the sense that he is deeply spiritual and uncompromising—with himself and his nation Israel (more specifically, the tribe of Judah).

Historical Overview

Time frame: civil war divided Israel into two houses—Israel to the north and Judah to the south. The subsequent kings, particularly in the north, went from bad to worse. The Northern Kingdom, denotatively called Israel, fell into ruin, idolatry, and finally the Assyrians took them captive. Judah to the South survived longer, and Judah will be our focus in this book. (The author might mistakenly use the name Israel, but should be mindful of the fact that he is speaking of the House of Judah, the Southern Kingdom—the Southern half of the kingdom—recognizing that the Northern half has already fallen slave to the Assyrians.)

Ultimately, the Babylonians accomplish two things: they conquer the Assyrians; Nebuchadnezzar is used by God to take Judah captive. Jeremiah is in the strange position of admonishing his country to surrender and to yield to the Gentile ruler since, Jeremiah says, this is the instrument of God for the judgment of the nation. He was treated as a treasonous person. It is during Jeremiah's time that Judah falls and the Babylonian captivity begins—one of the most important portions of Old Testament history, with lots of relevance historically as well as prophetically. It becomes a very crucial period of time, as it is the time of Daniel and Ezekiel and many prophets. It is a period of some power changes that have profound implications on our understanding of the Bible in general (also a period of time that will lend itself to some incredible discoveries relative to our day and Israel today). The chro-

nology of this day is very well documented, which will turn out to be very meaningful for the Believer, as dates will become very significant (May 1948 and June 1967).

Read 2 Chronicles (34, 35) and 2 Kings (22, 23, 24) for historical background. Also suggested: read a book that has nothing to do with Jeremiah, and yet may have everything to do with God's purpose of this study: *The Light and the Glory* by Peter Marshall and David Manual.

Arrangement of the Book

We know more about Jeremiah than any other Old Testament prophet. We know him as the "Weeping Prophet" (and indeed, if the reader touches his work, there is very deep feeling). It is also regarded by many scholars as the most difficult book in the Old Testament for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the arrangement of the chapters. The chapters are more topically arranged than chronologically: Chapters 46-51 occur before the fall of Jerusalem (which is mentioned in Chapter 39); Chapters 37 - 44 seem to be consecutive; Chapters 50 & 51 have special problems (which will be dealt with); and there is a very special problem in Chapter 52. There are some scholastic arrangement problems, however the answer is simple: to take it chapter by chapter and don't struggle with the arrangement, but struggle with what he is saying!

There is a lot of historical background needed, which is well documented in the Scripture and through all sorts of archaeological discoveries. It is pretty well understood what happened in that period. When the reader understands the flow of the kings and the powers, the book of Jeremiah will have more significance.

In the Hebrew canon the Old Testament is divided into three groups: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Prophets were divided into the "Former Prophets" (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and the "Latter Prophets" (Major and Minor Prophets except Lamentations and Daniel), but at the head of the scroll of the Latter Prophets was Jeremiah (re: Mt 27:9).

Style

Jeremiah's style is quite opposite to that of Isaiah, whose style was elegant and lofty—a fabulous writer, but with a very high style. In contrast, Jeremiah is very direct, very simple, but as a result, very

vivid, incisive and clear. He uses a lot of poetry, and is very lyrical, but still direct. Heavy use of nature, he is a man of the earth. He is called the "Weeping Prophet" as he is tender, sympathetic and will almost continually express a deep anguish of soul. This is not casual stuff; it is in the very fiber of his being and will come through even in the translations.

They came from an apostate background. The previous kings were idolatrous and there was a reform. One of the things that happens during the reform: in one of the storeroom chambers, tucked away and lost, was the discovery of the Law (which the author believes is the book of Deuteronomy). That discovery has had a big impact. The book of Jeremiah has 66 passages from Deuteronomy, and also references to Job and Psalms (in effect), and lots of indebtedness, in the minds of some scholars, to Hosea. The book of Jeremiah is quoted over fifty times in the New Testament, and over half of those references are in the book of Revelation. He is regarded by some scholars as one of the greatest spiritual giants of all time.

Prophetic Background

From 800 to 650 B.C. there was a galaxy of prophets in Israel. Zephaniah, Obadiah, and a woman by the name of Huldah, the prophetess; each were contemporaries of Jeremiah in Judah. Huldah shows up in 2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chronicles 34:22; she's a very well known prophetess in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was from Anathoth and, in the early stages, not in the limelight. During the captivity there were also three prophets: Ezekiel, Daniel and Jeremiah. Daniel was deported as a teenager, Ezekiel in the second siege, and then, of course, Jeremiah. There are apparently about 18 points of contact between Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Nahum and Habakkuk were contemporaries, approximately, of this time.

The Time Period

Jeremiah's ministry extends a period of time that spans five kings. Three of them are very important; the other two reign only three months (they are important, but they don't do much damage in three months).

Josiah

The first king is Josiah, he reigned from about 639 to 609 B.C. (He was a good guy.) Prior to him was Hezekiah, then Manasseh, who is reputed,

by tradition, to have sawn Isaiah in half. When Josiah became king, his reign was positive. After he had reigned about 10 years, Jeremiah is called; he was about 20 at the time.

Idolatry Introduced

<u>Time B.C.</u>	<u>Reign</u>	<u>Events</u>
639-609	Josiah	
629		Fall of Jerusalem
612		Fall of Ninevah
609		Death of Josiah At Megiddo
609	Jehoahaz (3 month reign)	
609-597	Jehoiakim	
605		Battle of Carchemish Fall of Assyrians 1 st Siege of Jerusalem (Daniel Exiled)
597		2 nd Siege of Jerusalem (Ezekiel Exiled)
597	Jehoiachin (Coniah, Jeconiah) 3 month reign	
597-586	Zedekiah	
588-586		Final (or 3 rd) Siege of Jerusalem
586		Assassination of Gadaliah

Babylonian Rulers:

625-605	Naboplassar Father of Nebuchadnezzar	Conquered Assyria
605-562	Nebuchadnezzar	

Josiah took the throne when he was 8 years old, and he reigned for 30 years. Important: up until Josiah's reign, Assyria had been so strong that they had taken the Northern Kingdom captive. The previous kings introduced increasing amounts of Assyrian elements in their worship, namely idolatry. Josiah takes charge as king, and God calls him to undertake reforms. God is also raising the strength of the Babylonians, to the south, who are putting pressure on Assyria, giving Judah more freedom from Assyria. With problems between Assyria and Babylon,

there is more opportunity for Judah to get rid of some of these Assyrian practices. It's about 6 years into Josiah's reign that he seeks the Lord (according to 2 Chronicles 34:3), and his reforms begin about 4 years later (2 Chronicles 24:36). It also happens that the book of the Law was discovered in the Temple a few years later (in 2 Kings 22:3-8 and 2 Chronicles 34:8-15). The reforms are detailed in 2 Kings 22 and 23.

Jeremiah is Called

It is under this background (past idolatry into reforms) that Jeremiah is emerging as a prophet. The reforms did not stick. We have evidence of that by Jeremiah's ceaseless condemnation of Judah's sin. As we go through the book of Jeremiah, he is not going to let go of the fact that Judah is sinning and that God is going to use Babylon. He also admonishes them to stay out of this world's politics, but they keep dabbling. God uses their enemies to bring about His judgment.

Jeremiah was called in about 629 B.C. Approximately 17 years later Nineveh falls. In the Southern Kingdom Josiah was doing some reforms, but the Northern Kingdom had fallen to the Assyrians. They're starting to face pressure from this rising power.

Prior to Jeremiah, Assyria, the dominant power, had taken over the Northern Kingdom. There were, really, three major powers at this time: Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. They were fighting each other, allying with each other, etc. Assyria is now starting to face this growing power as Babylon is gradually getting stronger.

Josiah Dies

In 609 B.C. Pharaoh Necho joins Assyria as an ally. Josiah starts to interfere with this and Pharaoh Necho warns him to stay out (but Josiah doesn't listen). There is a battle at Megiddo where Josiah is killed. This is a major tragedy for Judah. Babylon is starting to get stronger than Egypt, which will prove very critical under Nabopolassar of Chaldea. Nabopolassar took charge in a shift of Babylonian kings (about 625 B.C.). He gets strong enough to destroy Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians (612 B.C.). It is his son, Nebuchadnezzar the second, that defeats Pharaoh Necho in the famous battle of Carchemish near the Euphrates River in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 46, 2 Chronicles 35). The important part of this battle is that now Babylon rules the world.

Ninevah falls in 612 B.C. during Josiah's reign. Josiah dies at Megiddo in 609 B.C. and Jehoahaz is on the throne for three months. Jehoiakim follows and, in turn, Jehoiachin.

Jehoahaz

Josiah was a popular king, and with his death the people were distraught. They take matters into their own hands. They set Jehoahaz on the throne. He is the son of Josiah, but not the oldest son. He only reigns 3 months, which is why not much is found of him in the Scriptures. He tends to have an anti-Egypt, pro-Babylonian policy, but Pharaoh Necho in Egypt doesn't like that policy. Pharaoh Necho does four things: he deposes Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:31-33); takes him to Egypt; exacts tribute from Judah; sets the oldest son of Josiah (who happens to be Jehoahaz's half brother) on the throne (2 Kgs 23:34, 36). His name was Eliakim, but Pharaoh Necho changed his name to Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 23:30-35; 2 Chr 36:1-4).

Jehoiakim

Jehoiakim is very important. He reigns 11 years. It is his reign that gives Jeremiah his greatest trial and opposition. He and Jeremiah are at opposite ends on every subject (religion, politics, etc). Jeremiah is calling out for reforms and Jehoiakim ignores him. Jeremiah tries to point out that God is raising Babylon to judge Judah; Jehoiakim wants to resist Babylon and play intrigues with Egypt. Jehoiakim is the worst, most ungodly of all Judah's kings. He is a bloodthirsty tyrant. He is the enemy of the truth. He is uncaring, relative to the worship of the God of Israel. He extracted exorbitant taxes and forced labor without pay.

In Jehoiakim's 11-year reign he sponsors idolatry, and widespread injustice (22:13-19; 2 Kgs 23:37). He's the inveterate foe of God and His Word (26:20-23; 36:20-26), and his revolt (598-597 B.C.) is unsuccessful (2 Kgs 24:1-5). This leads to the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah during this time is persecuted, plotted against, maligned and finally imprisoned. King Jehoiakim destroys his written prophecies. They are later replaced, which may account for some of the reasons that it is not chronological (Jeremiah and his scribe, Baruch, replace the prophecies). During all this trouble, Jeremiah does not swerve from a commitment to the Lord. He has an unpopular theme, is a deep feeling patriot, yet he has to watch his nation sin, refuse to repent, and fall under God's judgment, not heeding his continual and impassioned admonitions.

The Sieges of Jerusalem

Jehoiakim reigns from 609 B.C. to 597 B.C. When the battle of Carchemish takes place and Nebuchadnezzar succeeds in defeating Pharaoh Necho (the Egyptian ally of the Assyrians at that time), he laid siege to Jerusalem. At that siege certain nobles are exiled, including Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar puts a man in office by the name of Jehoiachin. He is so evil that Jeremiah puts a blood curse on him. God puts a blood curse on the royal line!! (This will be covered further, later in the study.)

Jehoiachin intrigues and tries to adopt a pro-Egypt policy against the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar takes a dim view of that which leads to the second siege of Jerusalem, where Ezekiel is exiled. Incidentally, Jehoiachin is replaced with Zedekiah and he reigns for 17 or 18 years. Zedekiah also does some poor politics and intrigues with Nebuchadnezzar's enemies. Nebuchadnezzar has had enough and starts the third siege of Jerusalem.. That is when he levels the city, takes the people captive, destroys the Temple, and appoints a governor: Gedaliah.

Nebuchadnezzar

Jeremiah's call is about 629 B.C. It's four years after Jeremiah starts in service as a prophet. There is a man named Nabopolassar who is emerging as a major figure in Chaldea, the Southern province of Babylon. He ruled Babylon by 625 B.C. and destroyed Ninevah in 612 B.C. He emerges to power and reigns until the battle of Carchemish, the fall of the Assyrian empire. He then dies and his son, Nebuchadnezzar (technically Nebuchadnezzar the Second, or more properly, Nebuchadrezzar - mistranslated for years), carries it through until about 562 B.C. Babylon rules the world.

Servitude of the Nation

A major change in the power structure happened in 605 B.C. with the battle of Carchemish (46:2). Then Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem and made Jehoiakim a vassal king. The nobles were then exiled (2 Kings 24:1), including Daniel (Dan 1:1). This date, the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar (where Jehoiakim was losing), is the first siege of the three, which starts a period of time called "The Servitude of the Nation" (25:11). It was prophesied to last 70 years and it did to the very day! (...more on this later...) The second and third siege happen where Nebuchadnezzar levels the city. The period of time from the first siege to the third is about 19 years.

Desolations of Jerusalem

There is also a prophecy that is known as the “Desolations of Jerusalem,” which is also prophesied to be 70 years. Most scholars get these two mixed up. In my opinion, the Servitude of the Nations starts at the first siege of Jerusalem. The Servitude of the Nation and the Desolations of Jerusalem are not coterminous. Many scholars presume they are, but if you look carefully they are not since Jerusalem continues to exist for those 19 years as a vassal city.

In the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem is destroyed. That starts the period of time known as the Desolations of Jerusalem, which, like the Servitude of the Nation, is also predicted to be 70 years. Later on when the Jews are released from Babylon, they can go home, but they don’t have the authority to rebuild the city. The rebuilding of the city, not the Temple, is one of the main trigger points in the prophecy of Daniel (which occurs later under Nehemiah).

There is a prophecy that will be explored, which mentions 2,484 years, 2 months and 3 days. There is a prophetic outlying of reason to understanding Jeremiah. There is also a personal reason for understanding Jeremiah, to understand his walk, his energy and how he withstood his circumstances. There is a national reason which will be touched upon, also.

Jehoiachin

Jehoiakim dies violently in Jerusalem after his 11-year rule, just as Jeremiah predicted (22:18-19). Chronicles records Jehoiakim’s deportation to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:6-1; Dan 1:1). Jehoiachin, his son, replaces him. He only reigns 3 months. He also appears in Jeremiah as “Jeconiah” (2 Kings 24:8) or “Coniah” (22:24, 28; 24:1). Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, is the one that Jeremiah denounces (22:24-30) and on whom he ultimately pronounces a blood curse (which presents all sorts of Messianic line problems that will be discussed later).

The teenage king, Jehoiachin, is also a wicked monarch; it’s his father’s rebellion that causes Nebuchadnezzar to lay siege to Jerusalem a second time (597 B.C.). Jeconiah, or Jehoichin, capitulates (2 Kings 24:12) and is exiled to Babylon along with many nobles. That is when the Temple is plundered (2 Kings 24:10-16), and Ezekiel is taken captive. King Jehoiachin is exiled in Babylon for 37 years, and is enslaved

there. He is finally released by Evil-merodach, the son of successor to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:27-30). (Belshazzar wasn’t really Nebuchadnezzar’s son, as is translated, he was his grandson.) Belshazzar was Evil-Merodach’s son.

Zedekiah

In Nebuchadnezzar’s second siege, which takes Jehoiachin captive, he finds a son of Josiah by the name of Mattaniah. Mattaniah was a full brother of Eliakim (the one whose name was changed to Jehoikim). Therefore, Mattaniah is the uncle of Jehoiachin, who was just deported. Nebuchadnezzar changes Mattaniah’s name to Zedekiah (2 Kings 23:34; 24:17; 2 Chronicles 36:10; Jeremiah 1:3). Zedekiah is the king that is installed during the second siege. He doesn’t succeed, and falls during the third and final siege. Zedekiah is close to Jeremiah, which is good news. The bad news is that he is a weakling, and, though he tries to help, is useless.

The son of Josiah, Eliakim, and the business of having his name changed, is all confirmed by the Babylonian chronicles, which are archeological finds. In fact, Babylonian chronicles and the Lachish letters are major finds that give us all the background and confirms these events. There was a book published in 1956 by the London Museum called *The Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings, 626 thru 556 B.C.*, written by D.J. Wiseman. We are building our historical background from 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles; there is also a lot archaeological evidence of this period.

Zedekiah was weak, vacillating, deficient, and a puppet of Babylon. The messy part of this is that while he is a puppet of Babylon, his first string officials are all pro-Egypt. Nothing gets done, the official policy being pro-Babylon, and the officials being pro-Egypt. These officials are the ones that give Jeremiah a hard time as he advocates a pro-Babylonian view from a theological position. Even though King Zedekiah is pro-Babylon and Jeremiah’s message from God is that the Babylonians are God’s instrument (“don’t fight them”), this is God’s way of judging Judah. The second string, which are pro-Egypt, say that this is treason, and that is where Jeremiah gets into all sorts of problems.

In the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign he plots against Babylon with the kings of Moab, Edom, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon (27:3-11). They plot, Jeremiah denounces the whole scheme, and nothing happens. In the ninth year of Zedekiah (588 B.C.) he conspires with Pharaoh Hophra against Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar takes a dim view of this

and the city falls in the summer of 586 B.C. (2 Kings 24:20-25:7; 2 Chronicles 26-36:17; and Jeremiah 38:28-39:10).

During this period Jeremiah urges surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. The Egyptian forces show up for a while, but then come back and level Jerusalem. Zedekiah tries to support Jeremiah, but doesn't do anything effective; Jeremiah's enemies treat him badly. Finally, in 586 B.C., Jerusalem falls. The Jews celebrate this date annually on the morning of the ninth of Av.

Zedekiah tries to escape, which leads to an interesting situation as both Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophecy about Zedekiah (Jer 34:4; 2 Kgs 25:6-7; Ezek 12:13). One of them says that Zedekiah will never see the Babylonian captivity and the other says that he will die in Babylon. The taunts are made by the second tier officials. When the city falls, Zedekiah tries to escape but is caught and chained. The first thing they do is slaughter all of his sons in front of him, and then they put his eyes out and carry him to Babylon in chains. Reread the prophecies, He never saw the Babylonian captivity, but he died there. Prophecies are literal.

Jeremiah Forced to Exile to Egypt

Zedekiah is taken away in chains. Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliah as governor. He is murdered by Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, who is of the Davidic house—big plot, assassination, and it comes to nothing. The rebels, the people who were involved in that mess, flee to Egypt for refuge from Nebuchadnezzar. And they force Jeremiah and Baruch, his secretary, to go with them. The great irony here is that Jeremiah, who has always preached against Egypt, and is pro-Babylon, is now forced into exile in Egypt! There is a tradition that some of the people in Egypt stoned Jeremiah. There is another rabbinical tradition: once Nebuchadnezzar defeats Egypt and takes it over, just as Jeremiah predicted, he deports Jeremiah and Baruch back to Babylon.

Jeremiah's Personal Background

Jeremiah was a son of Hilkiah who was of a priestly family—not in Jerusalem, but in Anathoth. It is believed by most scholars that this Hilkiah is the same Hilkiah that found the book of the Law in the Temple. 2 Kings 22:8 notes that it is a priest by the name of Hilkiah that finds the book of the Law (perhaps the book of Deuteronomy). This Hilkiah is the descendent of Abiathar who was the sole survivor of the priests of

Nob (1 Samuel 22:20) and who, later ministering to David, was exiled by Saul to Anathoth (where Jeremiah was raised). He apparently had property there (according to 1 Kings 2:26). Jeremiah was in Anathoth, which may be one of the reasons he wasn't as visible as Huldah, the prophetess, was in Jerusalem (2 Kings 22:14-20). Jeremiah was not married, he was a man of means (purchase of field, ch. 32:6-15). He was called in 626 B.C. and had 40 years of service as a prophet. His closest companion was Baruch, the son of Neriah; Baruch was a scribe and a secretary.

Major Themes

(There are several major themes besides his personal walk and personal passion to be faithful to God...) His basic premise: only faithfulness to God can guarantee a nation's security. His message is probably more desperately needed in our land today. (The U.S. is a disaster, morally.) We have forgotten the covenant on which this country was founded. Our problems are serious, desperate and our answers are no different than Jeremiah had laid out before Judah. Judah was facing its enemies, and we are facing ours. The answers to these problems are in our prayer closet. The problems are solved the same way that they were then: only faithfulness to God can guarantee our nation's security.

Something else which shows up in all of these things is idolatry. We constantly read about idolatry, Josiah got rid of it and it came back. We take this too lightly. Idolatry is always associated with immorality. When idolatry takes over the land, immorality follows, and vice versa. As we understand Jeremiah better we will see, with a new perception, what's going on around us.

Jeremiah 1

The Call of Jeremiah

- 1] The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that [were] in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

"The words of Jeremiah" - should be "the word of the Lord as given to Jeremiah." He doesn't limit his narrative to the words that the Lord gave him in a direct sense. It's the words of Jeremiah in addition to the word that the Lord gives him. You are going to discover that he is very free with autobiographical background, how he felt, what he did,

and so on. There will be an abundance of insight into the politics of the time, the context into which he is dealing, and, perhaps, most important for all of us, what was really going on in Jeremiah's life (not just the unvarnished raw prophecies and such).

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah," - this refers to the Hilkiah that was mentioned earlier who is accredited with the discovery of the missing book of the Law. They had so forgotten the God of Israel that they actually discovered a book of the Law in the Temple. It gives the reader an idea of how destitute they were of orthodox practices during Josiah's reign—and his encouragement brought them back.

"of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin" - Benjamin is quite a place, borders to the south of Judah and to the north of Ephraim. It is the buffer state between Israel and Judah. The land of Benjamin gave us King Saul, succeeded by David, and Saul succeeded by himself as Paul, Saul of Tarsus.

- 2] To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

In the words of king Josiah (even though some of his reforms didn't take hold) he was a good guy. His reign produced Jeremiah; he came, was called, and prospered in a spiritual sense. It also produced Daniel. Daniel was imported as a teenager, but he was impressed by Josiah. You can see that he might not have known a lot about God, but you can inspect his fruits.

- 3] It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

He is skipping ahead to the end. All these guys are the sons of Josiah, the other four besides Josiah had their names changed.

"Until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month" - This is the last siege we're talking about. So this is a sort of overview of his call and his scope.

- 4] Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
5] Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Four things there: he knew, formed, consecrated, and appointed.

"Sanctified" - means set aside for holy purposes, set apart for holy service. You are sanctified independent of time, not by something you did; you are sanctified by something He did. He has done it because He has done it. So let it be written, so let it be done. He can say that He has sanctified you before you came out of the womb, if you are in Jesus Christ.

"Prophet" - called out to forth tell God's plan. A prophet doesn't talk about the future; he talks about the whole view of God's dealing. The part that is fascinating is the part that is coming, but a prophet is more than just a fortuneteller, he is a forth teller, he tells forth God's Word.

Compare this to the call of Amos (Amos 7:10-17), you'll find parallels which you can contrast with the calls of Isaiah (Isa 6) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-26). The one thing that does begin to show up in Jeremiah 1:5, and will be a vivid theme throughout the book of Jeremiah, is relationship. You are going to discover, if you are attentive, that Jeremiah has a relationship with the Lord. It is not what you know, it is who you know. Knowing the book isn't enough, you need to know its author. The most important thing in his life is his relationship, and it is a coupling between his relationship with his Lord and his relationship with his nation. He is close to the Lord, and that leads him to do some surprising things. He calls down vengeance on his enemies. Many scholars are very troubled by some passages in Jeremiah, which they feel are very ungodly. They fail to see where he is coming from and what he is really saying. There is such a thing as righteous indignation. Jeremiah is passionate, forthright, and direct.

- 6] Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I [am] a child.

Reminiscent of Exodus 4, when Moses told God, "I cannot speak, I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." The word 'child,' in our English Bibles is confusing, but the word is *na'ar* (used in Genesis 14:21 of the men in Abraham's army; also used of Absalom's rebellion in 2 Samuel 18:5). So it is youth, not to be confused with child (it is more likely that he is under thirty). He is young for the call, and feels he is immature for the role that God is calling him to.

- 7] But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I [am] a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.
8] Be not afraid of their faces: for I [am] with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

- 9] Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.
- 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.

In other words, “you are going to be my vehicle, Jeremiah.” It is interesting that he just touched his mouth, which is a lot more humane than what Isaiah went through. Recall the coals from the altar, there is a parallel and yet it is different. It might have been the same, yet Jeremiah didn’t choose to elaborate. In any case it is clear that Jeremiah spoke as God specifically, expressly instructed. He also gave him the comfort of the protection. It will be clear that he had the benefit of that protection. Jeremiah goes through all sorts of adversities continually, and all the way through, he never wavers. He evidences, not only God’s word, but the relationship. That is the one thing that is going to come through, and that is what makes him such a spiritual giant.

The Almond Tree

- 11] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

Jeremiah seems to draw a lot upon nature. The almond tree blooms in January, the middle of winter, it blooms early, and so it is considered a precursor to spring. Spring is just around the corner.

- 12] Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

The almond tree is used as a figure of something coming. There is a play on words. Almond tree is *sixed*, *soged* means “God is watching.” There is also a pun of sorts. The Lord is watching over this and he is going to make it happen.

- 13] And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof [is] toward the north.

This is misleading as it is translated. It’s looking toward the north but it is facing this way, south. Babylon isn’t northward, but its path to Israel is (they go on the Crescent, because of the impassable desert). So the Babylonians attack on Israel will come from the North.

- 14] Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

- 15] For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

“...his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem”; in other words, that is where the city business was done, at the gates.

- 16] And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands

Idols didn’t happen, they were the works of man’s hands (secular humanism). That doesn’t mean that achievement isn’t worth pursuing. Our society should develop people who have the drive or skill to achieve, but we don’t worship it. In our society, we do. Idolatry is the root cause of all the things that beset our nation.

- 17] Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.
- 18] For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.
- 19] And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I [am] with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Jeremiah embraced the promise that God would take care of him, he took refuge in it, and was an unfledgling, unfailing prophet that succeeded spiritually because of his ability to take on that. Isaiah speaks of the Salvation of the Lord, Ezekiel the Glory of the Lord, Daniel the Kingdom of the Lord, and Jeremiah the Judgment of the Lord.

Jeremiah 2

The comments that Jeremiah places here are during the reign of Josiah the King. Josiah was the good king that had the revival; however, it didn’t last. He is accredited as a strong king in a spiritual sense, and we see evidence of that not only in Jeremiah, but also in Ezekiel and Daniel, who were brought up in Josiah’s reign.

Daniel was deported as a teenager in the first Babylonian captivity, but as we read Daniel’s life, we recognize that he was the beneficiary of a very sound background. Jeremiah also, in effect, owes Josiah a debt.

One of the things that we will discover in the next several chapters is the eloquence with which it was written. Recognizing what Jeremiah said earlier in 1: 6, as he was trying to get out of the Lord's call, by saying "I cannot speak for I am a child." The spirit of God does remarkable things, because you're going to find that not only is Jeremiah lyrical, but one of the passages that we will encounter in 4:23-26, is regarded as the most forceful passages in prophecy, in terms of eloquence. The reader should recognize that Jeremiah, like Moses, said he didn't have any gifts, but the Lord takes care of that. Jeremiah, who thought he was inadequate, will evidence in the next several chapters what God can do through His Spirit.

We are going to see here the plaintive plea of an insulted Lord. We are going to experience the Lord's indignation, and yet through all this we will see His love for His people and for the land. Yet, He will pronounce the certainty of doom on those who are unrepentant, and also for salvation for the people of faith. We are also going to see a contrast; bear in mind that Jeremiah is speaking to Judah, the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom has been taken into slavery a century before. The house of Israel split during the civil war; the Northern Kingdom went from bad to worse. There is only one king in Northern Israel that did anything positive, and that was only when he was forced to. One of the things that Jeremiah makes a case for is to contrast; he is speaking to Judah the Southern Kingdom, who should have had the Northern Kingdom as an example. They went into idolatry and the Lord punished them. He is saying to Judah that Judah has more visibility; they had the benefit of the availability of prophets and such. So they are held even guiltier than Israel. He is going to make that case as we go here.

Concept of First Love

- 1] Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
- 2] Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land [that was] not sown.

The concept of the first love. Revelation 2: in the first letter the Ephesians did a tremendous job of keeping out false doctrine. The Lord's complaint with the Ephesians was that they left their first love. This is exactly what the Lord is accusing Israel of "having lost their first love." We are going to see this analogy of espousals, a husband and a bride used all through here. Hosea leans on this very heavily, but so do Isaiah and Jeremiah.

- 3] Israel [was] holiness unto the LORD, [and] the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.
- 4] Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel:

Still under divine protection (Gen 12:1-3).

Gone Far From Me

- 5] Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?
- 6] Neither said they, Where [is] the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?
- 7] And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

God took care of them, he brought them to a land of milk and honey, and they have turned this into a land of defilement, a land of abomination. He is talking about it spiritually. They have gone whoring after false idols (1 Kings 16:13; 1 Cor 8:4). We become like the gods we worship.

- 8] The priests said not, Where [is] the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after [things that] do not profit.

Baal - actually means *lord* or *master* in the Canaanite tongue. His personal name was Hadad. He was a chief male object of the Canaanite or Phoenician worship. He was cruel and ruthless.

From verse 9 to the next few verses, we're going to change the style of the idiom; the Lord is going to sound like a prosecutor in a court. He is going to shift the style of his presentation and speak somewhat like an attorney.

- 9] Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.
- 10] For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

Chittim was probably the Phoenician Kition, probably in Cyprus. It is all the way to the west. Kedar is a town on the eastern edge of the Arabian Desert, it is to the east. (It is like saying, "from California to

Maine”).) It is a geographic thing that would be lost on us unless you happen to know your Biblical geography.

- 11] Hath a nation changed [their] gods, which [are] yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for [that which] doth not profit.

People don't change their gods. Even nations that worship idols don't change their gods. So why is Israel changing their god if they have the benefit of the living Lord?

- 12] Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.

“to shudder with a great horror” - it is going to be a vivid, painful, consuming reality that they are going to be faced with here shortly.

- 13] For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, [and] hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

They have committed two evils: they have rejected that which is good, and have embraced that which is worthless.

The fountain of living waters: Isaiah 12:3 and 55:1; John 4:10-14 and 7:37-39. Who claimed to be the Living Water? Jesus Christ. That is the fourth or fifth time He said it. He said it in Isaiah 12:3 and 55:1, in Jeremiah 2:13, and in John 4 and 7.

The Samaritans

It is interesting when Assyria conquered Israel, the Northern Kingdom took them slaves: not all Israelis went, some stayed along with some Assyrians that amalgamated and became Samaritans; the mix of the residual Judaism and some Assyrian background is the root of the Samaritans. Some scholars call them half-Jews. How interesting it is that Jesus detoured to visit with the Samaritan woman. And what was the issue? Living water. Kind of interesting.

- 14] [Is] Israel a servant? [is] he a homeborn [slave]? why is he spoiled?
15] The young lions roared upon him, [and] yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant.
16] Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.
17] Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way?

“The young lions” - some translation issues. Some scholars argue as to which this may really refer to. The children of Memphis and Tahpanhes are two Egyptian cities. Memphis is the classic ancient capital of Lower Egypt and Tahpanhes (which the Greeks called Daphne) was at the northeastern border. So there again you have a span of what is called a synecdoche. Rhetorically, you take the specific for the general and the general for the specific. Sometimes geographically you use the city's meaning for the land. Memphis and Tahpanhes is another way of saying all of Egypt.

This could have reference to some incidences that occurred in 1 Kings 14:25-28, but it is more likely, that what Jeremiah is really making allusions to, is the suffering that they endured when King Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt (2 Kings 23:29). Josiah was a popular king, and became entangled up in some politics; he was advised to stay out of it, but didn't listen and ended up dying in a battle against the Egyptians. That was a great blow to the nation. This could be what Jeremiah was making an allusion to.

Gone the Way of Egypt

- 18] And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?

Sihor is a one way to refer to the Nile.

- 19] Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that [it is] an evil [thing] and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear [is] not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
20] For of old time I have broken thy yoke, [and] burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.

When did Israel say they would not transgress? At Sinai, with the Ten Commandments: “We're going to keep your law Lord.”

Background knowledge of the Canaanite worship, which was basically preoccupied with sex and fertility rites, typically practiced on hills or in what is called groves. You'll find reference to the groves all through the Old Testament. These were not just a group of trees, they were typically carved to form phallic symbols. It is also, which you'll find in the

Torah, why God never wants His altars built near the groves. He never wanted trees near the altar, they are to be separate. The concept of the trees, the groves and the hilltops is suggestive. What He is saying, here He delivers them, He broke their yoke, He took care of them, and they said they would keep His Laws, and they ended "...upon every high hill and every green tree playing the harlot."

The hilltops and trees were the location of these Canaanite fertility rites. Judaism is dead; they are idol worshiping.

- 21] Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?
22] For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, [yet] thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD.

Two kinds of nitre or soda. Nitre is a mineral alkali and the other is a vegetable alkali, but both of them would be the strongest cleansing agents that they would use domestically in their economy. And you can't wash off sin with soap: it has to be washed off with blood. In the Levitical sense, as a prophetic token of Jesus Christ, of course, they have Levitical washings, the sacrifice of blood. But it is pointing to the blood of Jesus Christ. Our sins can be washed white as snow: "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow," Isaiah says. They are washed by the blood of the Lamb, the blood of Jesus Christ.

- 23] How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: [thou art] a swift dromedary traversing her ways;

The idiom is in the form of a female camel in heat. When they are, they go quite berserk and run around looking for a male. This is in fact the general insight here, is when a female camel is in heat, she becomes unmanageable

- 24] A wild ass used to the wilderness, [that] snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.
25] Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.
26] As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets,

The analogy is one of rampant, unbridled lust. Running around whoring themselves rather than staying with the God of their fathers. They love

strangers, they are literally just being prostitutes, literally and spiritually, but the concern of course is spiritually.

"As a thief is ashamed when he is found..." Why? Because they are caught by God.

- 27] Saying to a stock, Thou [art] my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned [their] back unto me, and not [their] face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

God is speaking. On one hand you can sense the feeling, the caring, and on the other hand you can feel almost a sarcasm. It is facetious, it is ridiculous. The predicament is so absurd that it is ridiculous, and that is His point.

- 28] But where [are] thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for [according to] the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

God is saying that they have lots of gods and when they are in trouble, to call on them, not Him. This is similar to Elijah at Mt. Carmel.

- 29] Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD.
30] In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.
31] O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?
32] Can a maid forget her ornaments, [or] a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Interesting view, God expected Israel to use Him as an ornament; God was intending to be an item of identity, of beauty, of relationship. They've forgotten God, and He is saying, "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" It was very popular in that geography for women to place a lot of store on bracelets and ornaments, which is still popular today.

- 33] Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.
34] Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.
35] Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.
36] Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.

- 37] Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

“thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thy head” - Does this mean they are going to be taken captive? Sounds like it. (We will get more into this as we go.) All the way through the last four verses, the underlying thought reminds us: it is easy to justify ourselves, human beings have a ready capacity to rationalize.

Jeremiah 3

Rules on Remarriage

A little background in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which forbids a man to remarry someone whom he has divorced. A Mosaic concept, probably in part to make the original divorce a little more serious. There is an exception: if the wife was originally removed from the man forcibly, then it is okay. This shows up in 2 Samuel 3:14-16, and has to do with David and Michal.

All of these rules have exceptions. I love to use Ruth as an example: she is a Moabitess. In Deuteronomy 23:3 a relationship with a Moabitess is forbidden. But Ruth became not only accepted in Israel, but becomes the grandparent of David and of our Lord Himself. There are always exceptions to the law: grace can go beyond the Law. Part of understanding the thrust of this problem is to try to be a little Jewish, to know enough of the Torah to understand that He is arguing from that background

- 1] They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.

He himself is, in effect, overriding that rule, because in other passages, He not only treats Israel as a divorced wife, He uses the expression “I give you a bill of divorcement.” That is what Hosea deals with. And yet He is saying if they will come back to Him He will receive them, which is contrary to the concept of the Mosaic Law. “Return again to me, saith the Lord. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lain with.” That is a challenge. “Find a spot that you haven't polluted,” in effect.

- 2] Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lain with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness.

- 3] Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

He expressly points out that He has withheld the rain.

- 4] Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou [art] the guide of my youth?

The word *ab* means father, though it is translated father. It is also the kind of word that a young wife might use of her husband. In contrast to allup which is a husband or companion, but can really be translated friend.

- 5] Will he reserve [his anger] for ever? will he keep [it] to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.
6] The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen [that] which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

“...days of Josiah the King,” That gives us some time reference. But one of the problems we are going to have later in the book is, to exactly where do the pieces fit? They are not all in an agreed-upon order. There is a lot of controversy upon the order of these fragments.

He is treating Israel to the north and Judah to the south as if they're two sisters. The northern group has “gone upon every high mountain and under every green tree,” connotation of the idolatry. “and there hath played the harlot.” Cf. Ezek 23.

Example of Northern Kingdom

- 7] And I said after she had done all these [things], Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw [it].
8] And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

He is going to make the case that Judah is in worse shape than Israel, because Judah had the benefit of observing the destiny of Israel.

- 9] And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.
10] And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.

Some pretense of faith, but also analogous to Revelation 3, the letter to Laodocia. He says.. “I would that you were cold or hot. So then thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” And that is exactly what is wrong with Judah. They are not even honest in their backsliding. They are not even honest in terms with their idolatry, they go through the motions as if they were okay, but it is phony. “%and not turned unto me with their whole heart, but feignedly”.

- 11] And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

As Jeremiah is preaching this to Judah, it should scare them, because they know that Israel fell into judgment because of idolatry, and here is Judah being compared and made worse. Backsliding Israel is justified more than treacherous Judah.

Northern King was to be an example to Judah (Ezek 23:11). Only one king (2 Kings 13:45).

- 12] Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; [and] I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I [am] merciful, saith the LORD, [and] I will not keep [anger] for ever.
- 13] Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.
- 14] Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:
- 15] And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

No More Ark?

- 16] And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit [it]; neither shall [that] be done any more.

Interesting verse when you really want to get into discussions about the Search for the Ark. One of the problems is according to Jeremiah; there will be no more Ark. The Ark of the Covenant is gone. There are some books between the Old Testament and the New Testament, they are apocryphal books, that means they are not part of the Hebrew Canon, and most of them are not worth a lot (spiritual background maybe). The First and Second book of Maccabees which is still not part

of the Hebrew Canon but does include a lot of historical background that many scholars feel is very valuable. In Second Maccabees 2:48 it makes reference to a story that other scholars put no credence on, that the Ark of the Covenant was hidden by Jeremiah in some cave. So people are tearing up half of Jordan looking for this cave. There is one school of thought, and it is a very comfortable school of thought from a Scriptural point of view, that says it isn't going to show up any more (The Mercy Seat may be a different story!).

Preview of Jeremiah 31:31-34. In verse 16 of Chapter 3 we have a declaration, which proves that the old economy is going to be dissolved, it will not be in the Millennium. The whole concept of Judaism, of the Torah, the Ten Commandments, the whole Levitical system is going to be dissolved because that whole thing was built on the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, and how God dwelt between the cherubims. That is where the high priest spread the blood on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and only once a year could he go into the Holy of Holies.

He is saying very simply that the religious system at that day will not need visual aids. It won't need something like the Ark to be indicative as a model or a concept, or symbol. Why? Because the Lord is going to dwell among them. He is speaking of the Millennium.

In Ezekiel's Temple, even with all that detail of the Temple, it is a very strange description because the Ark of the Covenant is not mentioned. That bothers a lot of scholars.

The first time the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned is in Exodus 25. The Ark of the Covenant is a prominent fixture in the Tabernacle, and then when Solomon builds the Temple, the Ark is in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:6). The last time it is mentioned in the Scripture is 2 Chronicles 35:3. Most scholars believe that when the Babylonians conquer Jerusalem in the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar, the Ark of the Covenant was stolen along with all the other Temple vessels mentioned. The problem with that is in Chapter 52:17 it lists the things that Nebuchadnezzar took from the Temple; the Ark is not mentioned. That bothers a lot of people because it was of solid gold, you think it would be mentioned. From this, many scholars feel that the Ark was hidden in a secret passage, and that gives rise to some of these rumors that it was hidden away in some cave later on.

[See our Briefing Package, *The Mystery of the Lost Ark*, for a full discussion.]

- 17] At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

God's throne was to be between the cherubim, the Mercy Seat. We have the Ark of the Covenant which is sort of a coffin shape, made out of wood covered with gold; in the inside are the Ten Commandments, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and so on. The lid that has the two cherubim on it, isn't called a lid in the Scriptures; it is called the Mercy Seat. The concept for it is that that is where God sits, and as He looks down on the broken Law, he is assuaged from His anger by the shed blood that is poured on the Mercy Seat on Yom Kippur; that is the idiom that is used in the Levitical symbolism there. God is said to dwell between the cherubim, and in fact He did, there is a Shekinah glory that was above the Ark in the Holy of Holies. Ezekiel describes that it leaves when God finally does leave Solomon's Temple. Ezekiel describes how the Shekinah left and then sort of hovered over in one corner and then went, almost leaving reluctantly. The point is the Ark of the Covenant was going to be no more remembered because Jerusalem would be called the throne of the Lord.

- 18] In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

Evidences of this in Ezekiel 37, two houses united. Some people see in this the immigration of the Jews from southern Russia.

- 19] But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.
20] Surely [as] a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

Daughter inherit? Num 27:1-8.

- 21] A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping [and] supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, [and] they have forgotten the LORD their God.
22] Return, ye backsliding children, [and] I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou [art] the LORD our God.
23] Truly in vain [is salvation hoped for] from the hills, [and from] the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God [is] the salvation of Israel.

In spite of all the insults and despite all their backsliding, God is opening the door for them to come back. He is still offering them salvation.

- 24] For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.
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.

Jeremiah 4

Return to Me

- 1] If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.

In other words they are not going to be taken off into captivity, if they will repent. They don't repent, so they are put into captivity.

- 2] And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

When you swear by God, it involves recognizing Him, it is an act of recognition.

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

Here Jeremiah is going to use two rhetorical analogies, one out of agriculture, and one out of physiology. The first is, he is not speaking about real ground here, he is talking about the untilled heart. No farmer sows on unplowed ground. Their hearts are hardened, and they need to be plowed. "...Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns." Then He shifts the idiom.

- 4] Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings.

Obviously not a literal physiology. He is using it as a rhetorical device. Circumcision is of the heart, we learn this in Deuteronomy 10:16, Romans 2:29. Paul says circumcision is of the heart, he is quoting from the Torah (Philippians 3:3). The inward reality should replace the outward sign. Circumcision was introduced as a sign to Abraham, but what He is saying here is that true circumcision is not an outward sign, it is an inward reality.

- 5] Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

Different trumpet, this isn't the Temple trumpet, this is the trumpet that might be analogous to Revelation 8-9. "...Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities." He is suggesting that the rural people take advantage; it is sort of futile here when He says, "Blow the trumpet." Those that are in the outlying areas, go into the cities to protect yourselves from the coming invasion. It is not going to do any good, but they can hold out for a while. In those days, you retreat to the fortified cities in time of stress.

Evil From the North

- 6] Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

retire is retreat, not stay back.

Some commentators say that these invaders from the north are the Scythians, and you will find good scholars that will tell you it is wrong. It is clear that the invaders that Jeremiah is talking about are the Babylonians. It may seem strange to think of Babylon coming from the north, but that is the fertile Crescent issue. Since they have to go around the Arabian desert, they have to go up, and then come down from the north. Even though they are east routed, they have to make that swing. So the enemies of Israel typically come in from the north.

The Scythians have never invaded Judah; Israel maybe, but not Judah. That is a very important fact to know. This will keep you from getting tangled in Jeremiah, you will recognize right up front that we are dealing with the Babylonians and there is lots of evidence (we will get to later) that supports this. But clearly from textual issues we know that Jeremiah had in mind the Babylonians, not the Scythians. The reason it is important is because of Ezekiel 38: there the Scythians come from the uttermost parts of the north, they don't just come from the north. And in fact, that invasion has not yet happened, and is about to. (Maybe relatively soon the way things are going.)

This destruction is going to be the Babylonians under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, who later becomes the king of Babylon. He is the

Lord's anointed, he is used by God to be His instrument of judgment, and Jeremiah understands that, but it makes for a very unpopular theme, since Judah is very pro-Egypt, Babylon's rival. Judah keeps getting into these political alliances. Jeremiah tells them not to do it, the Babylonians are going to win, and furthermore it is of God. Judah doesn't listen, they keep getting into these treaties, and they get smashed. Of course Jeremiah's theme song, even though Zedekiah subsequently is a friendly king, his second lieutenants are the old guard and pro-Egypt. Zedekiah is very useless in trying to protect Jeremiah from his enemies.

- 7] The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; [and] thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

The lion, as a symbol, happens to be the same symbol that Daniel sees in Daniel 7 in Babylon.

- 8] For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.
9] And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, [that] the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

Astounded means flabbergasted. He is speaking here of the prophets. He is including himself because he himself will express amazement over some of the things that God will show him, but he is also speaking of the false prophets, who say everything is going to be alright.

- 10] Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Verse 10 is one of the problem verses: there are some translational problems with it, and so we are not going to focus a lot on it. We know that God never deceives His people so this whole thing is a combination of things: what the translation really says, and there are some arguments about that; and secondly, what does it really mean? There are about three different schools of thought, but none of them are really resolved too well.

"surely thou hast deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace..." Jeremiah never prophesied peace, so it doesn't mean what it says literally, in any case. Part of the problem is translation, and part of it may be trying to get an inference of the tone that presented that

here. It turns out in the Septuagint version, when they translated it into Greek, three centuries before Christ, there they translated it slightly different, implying the tones of the verbs and such that it was the words of the false prophets. Other scholars say that there is a permissive first cause sort of concept here, that God permitted others to deceive them and that is what Jeremiah has an eye toward. (Ex 9:12; Eph 1:11; 2 Thess 2:11; 1 Kgs 22:21-23). There isn't a first cause, second cause kind of structure. (I am not going to belabor this, it is not that important, I just wanted you to be aware that if you stumble over this, it is tricky.) God did not deceive them; he poignantly warned Israel. So this is some sort of expression, partly maybe in the translation, and partly maybe in our understanding of the tone of Jeremiah. "Then said I," doesn't mean he is right. "Ah, Lord God! Surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reaches into the soul." It is an expression, if nothing else, confusion.

- 11] At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,
- 12] [Even] a full wind from those [places] shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them.

The Hebrew word for wind is *ruwach*, which is also the word for "spirit."

- 13] Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots [shall be] as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.
- 14] O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?
- 15] For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim.

Dan was the northern part of the total land. So from Dan to Ephraim is the span of the nation of Israel that is the northern kingdom.

- 16] Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, [that] watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.
- 17] As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.
- 18] Thy way and thy doings have procured these [things] unto thee; this [is] thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.
- 19] My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

- 20] Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, [and] my curtains in a moment.
- 21] How long shall I see the standard, [and] hear the sound of the trumpet?
- 22] For my people [is] foolish, they have not known me; they [are] sottish children, and they have none understanding: they [are] wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

The Most Forceful Passage

The next verses through 23-26 are described by some people as the most forceful passage in all prophetic literature.

- 23] I beheld the earth, and, lo, [it was] without form, and void; and the heavens, and they [had] no light.

The very expression that is Genesis 1 outlined in reverse, in the sense that just the opposite is happening. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. and the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Genesis 1:1-3. It is the same phrase; chosen deliberately right out of the Torah, right out of Genesis.

- 24] I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.
- 25] I beheld, and, lo, [there was] no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.
- 26] I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place [was] a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, [and] by his fierce anger.

Four times you see *I beheld* or *I looked*.

- 27] For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.
- 28] For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken [it], I have purposed [it], and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.
- 29] The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city [shall be] forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.
- 30] And [when] thou [art] spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; [thy] lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

The word *lovers* is not the normal word in the Hebrew, it happens to be the masculine plural participle *agab* which speaks of the inordinate affection.

- 31] For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, [and] the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, [that] bewaileth herself, [that] spreadeth her hands, [saying], Woe [is] me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

He is seeing the onslaught of the Babylonians, but there is also an overview here. Notice here the woman-in-travail idea, the woman at the beginning of birth pains. That smack of Matthew 24, it should ring in your ears of the era.

Jeremiah 5

- 1] Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be [any] that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.

He will pardon the group for one righteous. Cf. Genesis 18:23-33 when the three special visitors reach Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, two angels and the Lord, and the angels go on because they have an errand in Sodom and Gomorrah. And the Lord negotiates with Abraham, or more precisely Abraham presumes to negotiate with God. God agrees with Abraham's logic, but for the righteous He would spare the whole city (Jer 15:1-4).

- 2] And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.
 3] O LORD, [are] not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, [but] they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.
 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.
 5] I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, [and] the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, [and] burst the bonds.
 6] Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, [and] a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, [and] their backslidings are increased.
 7] How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by [them that are] no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.
 8] They were [as] fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

There is an interesting play on words here in the English (if you go all the way through the Hebrew, there are puns). *Tekoah* and the sound of the trumpet are very similar sounding words in the Hebrew.

- 9] Shall I not visit for these [things]? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?
 10] Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they [are] not the LORD'S.
 11] For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD.
 12] They have belied the LORD, and said, [It is] not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine:
 13] And the prophets shall become wind, and the word [is] not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.
 14] Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.
 15] Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it [is] a mighty nation, it [is] an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

Cf. Deut 28:49. Herodotus points out that the Scythians boasted that they were the youngest nation, not an ancient nation. The ancient nation was started by Nimrod the hunter in Genesis 10:10 and 11:31; the founder of Babel, which became the root of *Babylon*. These are the Babylonians that Jeremiah had in view.

- 16] Their quiver [is] as an open sepulchre, they [are] all mighty men.

Their quivers are full of arrows. The quiver (archery) is something the Babylonians picked up from the Assyrians and they were very good at it.

- 17] And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, [which] thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.
 18] Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you.
 19] And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these [things] unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land [that is] not yours.

Prediction of the Babylonian Captivity

- 20] Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,
 21] Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:
 22] Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand [for] the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

- 23] But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.
 24] Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

The linking of the control of the sea and the rain shows up all over Scripture (Deut 11:10-17). In Ecclesiastes and in the Psalms, the linking of the water cycle is explicitly described. Solomon asked, why do all the rivers run into the sea and yet the sea doesn't get full: "...from whence they come thither they return again, the clouds do distill upon them abundantly." The water cycle is described in the Scripture. "He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost. This is a very specific period of time (Lev 23:15-16).

- 25] Your iniquities have turned away these [things], and your sins have withholden good [things] from you.
 26] For among my people are found wicked [men]: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.
 27] As a cage is full of birds, so [are] their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

Matthew 13. The birds that pick away the seed which is the Word, take refuge in the tree. The mustard seed that has become a monstrosity, is of the ministers of Satan.

- 28] They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.
 29] Shall I not visit for these [things]? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?
 30] A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;
 31] 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?

A facetious way of saying the priests rule by their means is like saying they have the finest judges money could buy.

Jeremiah 6

Chapter 6 is the chapter of alarms. Five sections (6, 9, 16, 21, 22).

- 1] O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

Benjamin is the tribe that lies between Judah and Ephraim. The city of Jerusalem, though often associated with Judah, the royal city, is actually on the border and technically is in the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin is often associated with Judah, and to the north of Benjamin is Ephraim, which of course is one of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom, but becomes idiomatic for the whole Northern Kingdom, from time to time. When they speak of Ephraim in a connotative sense, they mean the Northern Kingdom. Benjamin was the source of Saul in the Old Testament, and also Saul in the New Testament.

Tekoa was about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and was the hometown of Amos. There was also a pun here in Jerusalem. The word of *Tekoa* and the word *Tiqu* means sound, like from a trumpet, and so in the actual Hebrew, this whole thing has a certain euphamy—a sonal type appeal as well as a conceptual type appeal. In Hebrew poetry, there is usually the juxtaposition of ideas, no meter. We in English poetry think of meter and rhyme, and such things. We notice that in the proverbs, they say the same thing in two different ways; sometimes there is a very provocative juxtaposition of concepts, which is really what they normally mean in Hebrew poetry. Incidentally, in Jeremiah, some of the passages are quite doubtful in how they should be translated. Fortunately, they are not monumental things, but in many of the passages, there are subtle issues. (It is a rather mild debate because the issues are really quite incidental.)

Beth-haccerem, *Beth* means the house, the house of the vineyard, which has a nice New Testament ring to it. There is a valley between Jerusalem and the land that becomes the land of Benjamin, it is the valley of Hinnom. In later chapters, the valley of Hinnom has some very unusual destinies, which give rise to an idiom among the rabbis. The valley of Hinnom gives rise to a word *gehenna*, which is used by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. Gehenna is not Hades in the English. The Hebrew is *shouwl*, the Greek is Hades. When we use the word hell, what we generally mean is gehenna, and Hades and *gehenna* are opposites. Hades is temporary; *gehenna* is permanent. Hades is probably in the center of the earth, and *gehenna* is probably in the outer darkness. This all emerges out of the valley of Hinnom, and there are some very bizarre practices that go on in the valley of Hinnom. Even here in Chapter 6 it is sort of setting the rhetorical stage.

Later on we are going to hear the tribe of Dan mentioned. Dan was the northernmost tribe. The area called Dan has several connotations, not the least of these being the northern most part of the land of Israel. Their

enemies traditionally entered from the north, because of the impassable desert that was due east, so even though their enemies might not be indigenous to the north, they always attacked from the north (or if you will, from the south, from Egypt). What Jeremiah is going to emphasize here is that not only are they going to have an attack from the north, but this attack is going to be successful, and it is going to be the instrument of God in the form of judgment.

- 2] I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate [woman].
- 3] The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch [their] tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.
- 4] Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.
- 5] Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

He is putting the words in the mouths of her enemies, rhetorically.

- 6] For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this [is] the city to be visited; she [is] wholly oppression in the midst of her.

He is describing this as if it is happening, and it isn't long after this that it does literally happen, that Jerusalem is under siege by Nebuchadnezzar, the general of the Babylonian army. Before the siege is over, Jerusalem falls, and Nebuchadnezzar's father dies; he is now the king of Babylon. He comes to this just after his success at the battle of Carchemish with Egypt. He became the primary power in the region, laying siege to the first of three sieges of Jerusalem that spanned almost twenty years. Nebuchadnezzar executes those things that Jeremiah here prophesies.

- 7] As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually [is] grief and wounds.

This is very graphic: she is so wicked, she spews out violence the way a fountain spews out water. It is in no way as elegant and lofty as Isaiah's writing, but he is very earthy and graphic. He will paint images through here that are, in fact, uncomfortable, they are so vivid.

- 8] Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.
- 9] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets.
- 10] To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear [is] uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

“...their ears are not circumcised.” That is a bizarre metaphor, if you apply it literally. What he is talking about is the concept of circumcision as being spiritually committed. Their ears are uncircumcised, that is, they cannot hear with a spiritually tuned ear.

- 11] Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with [him that is] full of days.
- 12] And their houses shall be turned unto others, [with their] fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.

The reaction to these sayings is one of upset seen in Chapter 7-10, where what is called the Temple discourses, speeches that he made that not only caused him opposition and hatred, but hatred so bitter that it lasted all his life, even to the point of martyrdom. His message was not well received or popular, and the irony of it is, here is perhaps the most inflamed hatred of that day: he was treated as a traitor, and tried for treason.

- 13] For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

His generalization of the society at that time.

- 14] They have healed also the hurt [of the daughter] of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when [there is] no peace.
- 15] Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time [that] I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.
- 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].
- 17] Also I set watchmen over you, [saying], Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.
- 18] Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what [is] among them.
- 19] Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, [even] the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

Concept of obedience. This is going to get its most painful contrast in the next chapter, because they hide behind the rituals in lieu of obedi-

ence, and misconstrue the Mosaic Law. God would have obedience first, then rituals or sacrifice after that as a celebration.

- 20] To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings [are] not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.
- 21] Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.
- 22] Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.
- 23] They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they [are] cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

There is an enormous amount of information here. These are not the Scythians for several reasons, the Scythians did not invade. This idea of using horses as cavalry, not drawing chariots, the Egyptians had been doing this for a long time. There was a lot of trading in chariots in Solomon's day, but the use of horses as cavalry was an innovation the Babylonians did do, and others obviously too. The cruelty of the Babylonians is pretty spectacular, the way they impaled their enemies on poles, and flayed them alive; they were known to be very aggressive. We see some glimpse of that in the book of Daniel when we see Nebuchadnezzar, who was an absolute despot - probably more complete than anyone since. If something didn't agree with him, it was off with that person's head, and the dispossession of all his relatives; the fiery furnace burning people alive, *houses a dung hill*, from Daniel.

- 24] We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, [and] pain, as of a woman in travail.
- 25] Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy [and] fear [is] on every side.
- 26] O daughter of my people, gird [thee] with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, [as for] an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

A mystic can find a message beyond these words, a message that Jeremiah had on his heart. He was dealing with his people and the anguish that is coming right on the horizon, an enemy that God is raising to power to be His instrument of judgment on the nation that has been so wantonly guilty of idolatry and rejection. It is interesting as we go through this: from the hordes to the north in vs. 22, the woman in travail in vs. 24, and this mourning for an only son in vs. 26. It is easy to see behind these some very important prophetic typological themes.

- 27] I have set thee [for] a tower [and] a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.
- 28] They [are] all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: [they are] brass and iron; they [are] all corrupters.
- 29] The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away.
- 30] Reprobate silver shall [men] call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

The imagery in the last few verses is that of a refiner, where you heat things, and the impurities boil to the top, and you skim it off to get the metal pure. They are the *reprobate silver* in the sense that they are the part that is skimmed off and rejected, as opposed to the pure silver that would be used for value. He is indulging in the idiom "the refiner's fire" in a sense. Incidentally, in that message is a hope, because you don't burn silver to burn it up, you burn silver to get rid of the impurities. The process isn't intended to be destroying, it is intended to be purifying.

He loves us too much to allow us to prosper in disobedience (1 Cor 5 vs 2 Cor 2).

Jeremiah 7

Idolatry and the Temple

This next section, Chapters 7-10, is sometimes called the Temple Discourses. There is a lot of evidence that this was presented during the reign of Jehoiakim. Bear in mind that Josiah was killed at Megiddo, the nation is shocked, Jehoaz followed but only briefly (for a few months) and then was removed from office, and Jehoiakim was imposed on them. From Josiah, which instituted a revival, to Jehoiakim which instituted a reversal. A whole religious reversal started where Canaanite idolatry was encouraged. Part of a revival, under Josiah, was to recentralize worship in Jerusalem. They used the Temple; they found in the Temple the book of Deuteronomy, and the Temple became a center of worship. It is also bad news, because the Temple itself becomes a talisman, and that is what Jeremiah is going to attack.

It is believed by many scholars that Chapters 7 and forward are Jeremiah's first public discourse and they have to do with the Temple. (background in 2 Kgs 18:13-19:37, describes the delivery of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. under the reign of Hezekiah)

[See the Expository Commentary set on *Joshua*, also the Briefing Packages *Signs in the Heavens* and *The Mysteries of Mars* for a full discussion on the Long Day of Joshua.]

The Temple itself has become a fetish or a talisman, which gets in the way of true worship. This is what happens in Chapter 7, and it is not distant from the memory of the whole history with Hezekiah. The analogy is, they remember how Hezekiah was delivered: here the Assyrians were camped around and were going to wipe them out, and in one night, the Assyrians are wiped out. They weren't worried about Nebuchadnezzar, and they missed the point. The reason the Assyrians were wiped out was because there was a return, a revival, and God spared them. Jeremiah is pointing out that they are going to get wiped out because of disobedience, but they wouldn't listen. In fact, this speech causes them to hate him for the rest of his life.

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all [ye of] Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.

There is a debate here: some people think it was the eastern gate, sometimes called the Golden Gate; some think it might have been the space between the inner and outer court.

- 3] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

In other words, if you don't amend your ways, you are not going to dwell in this place.

- 4] Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, [are] these.
Notice Jeremiah's tone here: they are using it as a figure of speech or as a talisman of protection.
- 5] For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;
- 6] [If] ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:
- 7] Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Emphasis: it was a conditional grant; when they don't obey, they are in exile. If you dissect the passage we just read, there are four prescriptions

that God puts forth to Jeremiah: one is the desire for justice, reminiscent of Micah 6:8; concern for the fatherless, the aliens and widows; the avoidance of judicial murders (abortion?); to abandon idolatry.

- 8] Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
- 9] Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;
- 10] And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

They not only worshiped idols, some of the idols were in the Temple.

- 11] Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen [it], saith the LORD.

A provocative verse because Jesus Christ combined this verse with Isaiah 56 to make an exclamation in the house of God. The occasion was a cord, a whip, and he went through the Temple and cleansed it of the moneychangers and such. (Matt. 21:13, Mark 11:17 or Luke 19:46). He quotes Isaiah 56:7 which indicates that it was to be a house of prayer, and here in Jeremiah 7:11. It isn't very long when the Lord Himself goes through the Temple and quotes this and Isaiah together. Possibly, in one sense, Jeremiah is a type of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament we find the Lord weeping over Jerusalem, and I see Jeremiah as an expansion of that very incident.

Shiloh

- 12] But go ye now unto my place which [was] in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

Shiloh itself was roughly 18 miles north of Jerusalem, and it is biblically relevant in that it was the place where the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant stood after the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 18:1 and 22:12, Judges 21:19 and 1 Samuel 1:9, 24). Jeremiah mentions this because Shiloh is where Israel, the Northern Kingdom, falls into idolatry. As a result of this, the Philistines at the battle of Ebenezer capture the Ark of the Covenant, and subsequently (roughly about 1050 B.C.), the Philistines destroy Shiloh (Psalm 78:68-84).

Shiloh is to the period of the Judges what Jerusalem is to the period of the Kings (that is the analogy). Prior to the monarchy, the time of Joshua and the Judges and so forth, Shiloh was the place where the Tabernacle stood. Shiloh was the center of worship, and at Shiloh,

idolatry surfaces, and that is where God judges them, using the Philistines. This is a very vivid analogy to Jeremiah especially, because he was of the family of Eli.

So God is using Shiloh, in v. 12 (the word Israel is used here denotatively as the Northern Kingdom), idiomatically, as a comparison, that they were gone for a hundred years—wiped out because of idolatry.

- 13] And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;
- 14] Therefore will I do unto [this] house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

This is a real blow to the Jews because to them the Temple was their salvation, not the God of the Temple. What he is pointing out is that he wiped out Shiloh where the Tabernacle stood and he is ready to wipe out the Temple for your sins.

- 15] And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, [even] the whole seed of Ephraim.

Ephraim is used idiomatically for the whole Northern Kingdom.

- 16] Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

The one thing that gives us comfort is that we have an intercessor, who lives to make intercession for us, right by the throne of God. Don't infer that verse 16 is permanent, it is temporal; that is the ultimate indictment, he won't hear them.

- 17] Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Queen of Heaven

- 18] The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead [their] dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

They are worshiping the “Queen of heaven,” the Assyrian and Babylonian god *Ishtar*; who was also worshipped in connection with the planet Venus; Venus is the Greek or Roman name, but *Ishtar* is the original

Canaanite name (and *Ishtartae* is a variation; Jer 44:17). *Ishtar* is the goddess of love and fertility. She was initiated into the area by Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:1-9, the king who is reputed to have sawn Isaiah in half. It is introduced to Judah by Jehoiakim. The concept of the queen of heaven is not Hebrew, it is introduced externally. But it was embraced here, and God was angry.

(More in Jeremiah 44) But there is also a link to Jezebel, the champion of idolatry and the worship of Baal, but she gets mentioned by the Lord Jesus Christ in the letters to the seven churches, in the incident to the church at Thyatira. There is clearly a prophetic link, although Jeremiah's focus here is the historical occasion that lies before him here.

- 19] Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: [do they] not [provoke] themselves to the confusion of their own faces?
- 20] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

Jeremiah has in focus here the onslaught of Israel's enemies. However, as we study this we should notice that this whole issue is going to be broadened globally, yet future. That is described in detail by the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation will have much more meaning to you after you have had a chance to really study the Old Testament. These phrases, which we will see later, are very “Revelation like” in their style and use of idiom (i.e. God pouring out His fury, not just on man, but also on the beasts, the trees, the fruit of the ground).

Obedience over Rituals and Sacrifice

- 21] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.
- 22] For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:
- 23] But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

He is saying before the sacrifices (Ps 51:16-19) that what He commanded was obedience (Ex 19:3-6): all the rituals were subsequent. Faith was the basis, even in the Old Testament.

“for I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded in the day of the land of Egypt...” (obviously He did). There is a rhetorical device in the

Hebrew, a rhetorical negation, simply as a mechanism to put one thing in subjection to another. He is not really saying, what you and I would say in the English, “I spoke not to your fathers...” what He is really saying is that He spoke not unto them, but spoke this way, meaning that which He did speak is secondary. It is a rhetorical device where you negate something, not to deny it completely but to render it to subjection to the point you’re really making.

He is saying that moral law is paramount over ritual law. What is interesting in the synagogues in Judaism is they read the Torah and the Torah is always scheduled, and there is a certain portion of the Torah read at each electionary period. When they read Leviticus 6-8, they also read what is called the HaphTorah, a portion of the other scripture, the non-Torah that is not the five books of Moses. This passage, Jeremiah 7:22 is the concluding portion when they read Leviticus 6-8. It is used among observers to put in contradistinction to the ritual law.

- 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.
- 25] Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending [them]:

He is describing himself like he gets up early on their behalf, which is a figure of speech.

- 26] Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.
- 27] Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

What a discouraging note that is. (Compare to Isaiah 6:9-11.)

- 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.
- 29] Cut off thine hair, [O Jerusalem], and cast [it] away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

To “cut off the hair” is a figure of speech that emerges out of the concept of the vow of the Nazarite. When you violated your vow, you cut your hair, which was a symbol of your commitment before the Lord (Num 6:5). The word “hair” here is in the feminine in the Hebrew, meaning that the idiom is really the city of Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion.

“...take up a lamentation on the high places...” the high places is where all the idols were, so there is some irony here.

- 30] For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

They were not only worshiping idols, they had brought them into the Temple. (2 Kgs 21:5; 23:4-7; Ez 8)

Tophet and the Valley of Hinnom

- 31] And they have built the high places of Tophet, which [is] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded [them] not, neither came it into my heart.

Here, God is saying that it was unthinkable, speaking in an idiomatic sense.

Tophet - the east side of the southern end of the valley of Hinnom.. We think the word *Tophet* came from the word for fireplace in Aramaic, so the name has an Aramaic connotation to it and a linking with fire in the first place. The way the Hebrew points the text, is actually a synonym for shame, which is also a nickname for Baal. All these ideas are linked up in that word.

Tophet is the place where they adopted the practice to the fire god of Molech (prohibited in Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5). The cult of infant sacrifice, originally from the Carthaginians, and then introduced to the Phoenicians and finally here. (Cult of infant sacrifice: Ahaz, 2 Kings 16:3; Manasseh, 2 Kings 21:6; abolished by Josiah, 2 Kings 23:10; revived by Jehoiakim). They had a brazen pair of arms and they actually sacrificed children. The Carthaginians sacrificed children whenever they had a huge defeat or something. This gets developed into a form of Molech worship.

The archeological evidence is scanty, there is a lot of controversy among some scholars because they can’t believe they actually burned children. Jeremiah tells us that they put them in the fire and burned them. There are actually a half a dozen places in the Scripture that confirms the practice. Tophet is the principle place where the god of Molech was established and this child sacrifice was conducted, and it was in the valley of Hinnom. That starts to paint the irony of all of this because you’re going to see in his words here, that the valley of Hinnom, their

place of worship, is going to become a place of refuse, a dump, that burns continually. That happens subsequently. The pagan sanctuary becomes their cemetery.

- 32] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.
- 33] And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray [them] away.
- 34] Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

Bride and bridegroom are there as an idiom of joy. One thing to understand here is that the ancients really dreaded not being buried (Deut 28:26; Isa 18:6). One of the things they feared was not only to die, but also to not be buried.

Jeremiah 8

The first three verses of Chapter 8, according to some scholars, really belong to Chapter 7 in concept.

- 1] At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves:
- 2] And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

God is upset, seen even by the construction of the sentences. Five groups of people will be disinterred out of their graves before the hosts of heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Then he lists five verbs: whom they have loved, whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they gave sought, and whom they have worshiped. Even the structures of the sentences are tight, tough, and articulate: five groups of bones, five verbs that are sarcastically or cynically modeling their worship of these things when they were alive. As you see this attitude of God to his people for rejecting him and worshiping idols, then move to the book of Revelation. You see God's fury poured out on the whole earth, and discover not only is he mad, he chooses the same idioms all the way through...

- 3] And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

Leviticus 26:32-39; Deuteronomy 28:64-67.

- 4] Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?
- 5] Why [then] is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.
- 6] I hearkened and heard, [but] they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.
- 7] Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

“Turtle” = turtledove. These are references to birds; they know their migratory patterns. These birds are smarter than these people: “But my people know not the law of the Lord.” They turned away from the Lord, but it is time to come back and repent; they are not doing that either.

- 8] How do ye say, We [are] wise, and the law of the LORD [is] with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he [it]; the pen of the scribes [is] in vain.
- 9] The wise [men] are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom [is] in them?
- 10] Therefore will I give their wives unto others, [and] their fields to them that shall inherit [them]: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.
- 11] For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when [there is] no peace.

False prophets were preaching to the people that everything was going to be fine, the Lord is going to take care of it. They were giving a message of hope and peace, but Jeremiah's voice is unpopular, and is in total contrast to that.

- 12] Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.
- 13] I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: [there shall be] no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and [the things that] I have given them shall pass away from them.
- 14] Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

Incidentally, in 8:13 through 9:23, that passage is the portion of Scripture that is read in the synagogue on the ninth of Av, the day of the destruction of the Temple.

They go into the fortified cities to buy a little time, because the enemy is coming.

- 15] We looked for peace, but no good [came; and] for a time of health, and behold trouble!
- 16] The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

The horses they are talking about here are Babylonian horses, the cavalry that made Babylon famous.

- 17] For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which [will] not [be] charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.
- 18] [When] I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart [is] faint in me.
- 19] Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: [Is] not the LORD in Zion? [is] not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, [and] with strange vanities?

Harvest is Past, We are not Saved

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

One of the saddest verses in the Scripture, verse 20.

Barley wheat and spelt were harvested in April, May and June; figs, grapes and pomegranates were harvested in August and September; olives were harvested in October. But the plea here, to the people who understood the cycles, is that there was a time to harvest and if you didn't harvest by that time, it was too late.

- 21] For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.
- 22] [Is there] no balm in Gilead; [is there] no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

“is there a balm in Gilead.” It has become a figure of speech in our language. Gilead is east of Jordan, north of Moab. It is famous for the storax tree, and its resin gum has become a very important healing agent. Gilead was the source in that day for pharmaceuticals. The Balm from

Gilead was in fact used as a healing agent. (Genesis 37:25, Jeremiah 46:11, and 51:8, and Ezekiel 27:17). The daughter here is the daughter of Zion, the city of Jerusalem, the nation of Judah.

Jeremiah 9

Jeremiah Chapters 9-10, Jeremiah's Oxymoronic Phrase

We are continuing through the part of Jeremiah that is sometimes called the Temple sermon. That is misleading since parts of it seem to be parenthetical. Remember the organization has eluded scholastic consensus, because Jeremiah is not chronological, so it is hard to tell which pieces fit where. But our concern for the book is its content, its historical content, and his message to that people at that time. A second level of insight is personal, because the advice and concerns that God gives his people through Jeremiah affect us today. A third level of the book of Jeremiah is the possibility that what God said to Judah through Jeremiah, he might well say to the United States today. God used Judah's enemies to bring judgment on them. He also points out to Judah that they should have had the example of the Northern Kingdom, therefore Israel's punishment may be that much more severe.

- 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!

Probably the most pathetic verse in the book (cf. Rom 9:1-5; 10:1). This is the type of statement that gives him the title The Weeping Prophet. Jeremiah was in deep agony most of his life because he cared for his people. He struggles with the certainty of their disaster as against the hope of their repentance.

Daughter phrase, in a collective sense, refers to the “Daughter of Zion,” i.e. Judah, or Jerusalem; cf. Romans 9 and 11.

Nation Lacks Spiritual Dedication

- 2] Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they [be] all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.
- 3] And they bend their tongues [like] their bow [for] lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

The sins of the tongue: Psalm 12 and James 3:1-12; there are lots of places in Scripture that talk about this unruly instrument of our body. What clearly surfaces as God's first candidate for the most offensive member of our body is our tongue. The tongue as the bow and the lies as the arrow—very graphic. There is a parallel between Jeremiah weeping over his people and Jesus Christ on a mountain, weeping over Jerusalem.

Jeremiah gets very concerned here (vs.1-3) over the adulterers and the assembly of treacherous men.

- 4] Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.
- 5] And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, [and] weary themselves to commit iniquity.

The observation is that as a nation lacks spiritual dedication, human relations become insecure. Society itself is threatened when mutual confidence is lost.

- 6] Thine habitation [is] in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

This description is not unique to just the times that Jeremiah was dealing with in the nation of Judah, but in our society also.

- 7] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?
- 8] Their tongue [is as] an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: [one] speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.
- 9] Shall I not visit them for these [things]? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?
- 10] For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through [them]; neither can [men] hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone.
- 11] And I will make Jerusalem heaps, [and] a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

That *sounds* like flowery language, the visualizing of Jerusalem as a den of jackals; it wasn't many years later when the total captivity of Judah was extent and Jerusalem was, in fact, a heap of rubble. Jeremiah's prophecies came very vividly to pass. His message is not only not re-

ceived, but there was a secret plot to assassinate him. The participants in that plot were from his hometown: his family, and his friends, which we will discover later. He does not have a popular message.

- 12] Who [is] the wise man, that may understand this? and [who is he] to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth [and] is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?
- 13] And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;
- 14] But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

Baalim being the plural of Baal, that is the idols. (Don't get this confused with the man in Numbers.)

- 15] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, [even] this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

The word *lanah*, in Hebrew means bitter food. It is here translated "wormwood," (Revelation 9) The Russian word for wormwood is Chernobyl. The intent here is clear that their waters will be poisoned.

Scattered Among the Nations

- 16] I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

Scatter them among the nations - go to Leviticus 26:33 and Deuteronomy 28:64, as a couple of examples, the classic passages in the Torah where God has prophesied that they would be scattered among the nations. The interesting thing about verse 16 is that Jeremiah's focus is on the Babylonian captivity. That is a singular, although ruling, nation. Here the prophecy is "I will scatter them among the nations," plural.

It is actually a prophecy of the Diaspora, interestingly enough. In Isaiah 11, God promises that when He regathers his people the second time, all kinds of good things happen. The first time he regathered his people was after Babylon and the Seventy Years Captivity When Daniel reads Jeremiah, he discovers that it is almost seventy years, and he prays, and there is a prophecy that indeed gets fulfilled. They leave Babylon after seventy years and go back to the land. That is the first regathering of the nation from captivity.

The second time is after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and his prediction that Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Roman legions under Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D. At that time the Diaspora takes place, which fulfills prophecy that the Jews were scattered throughout the world. They were scattered until May 14, 1948, with the state of Israel being reformed. That started the second regathering. So this second regathering that Isaiah 11 talks about is really a regathering following that Diaspora that (I believe) chapter 9:16 refers to. Whether Jeremiah had that in view or not is primarily a theologian's argument. His focus and passion is clearly the captivity in Babylon, he knows and continually hammers on the fact that Nebuchadnezzar is God's, although the Holy Spirit in his actual selection of language causes the actual horizon to go far beyond the sixth century before Christ.

Professional Mourners

- 17] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning [women], that they may come:
 18] And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.

Some sarcasm here, but what it is referring to is the use of professional mourners. In that society, there was a practice, if you had an occasion to mourn, to get it organized. (2 Chr 35:25; Eccl 12:5; Amos 5:16 and Jairus in Mt 9:23).

- 19] For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast [us] out.

The word spoiled here is used as how they were pillaged. This is a rhetorical dialogue as if they are responding as they will respond subsequently.

- 20] Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation.
 21] For death is come up into our windows, [and] is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, [and] the young men from the streets.
 22] Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcases of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather [them].

Sometimes called the "Poem on Death of the Reaper." The prophet makes his point. One of the overtones here is that not only will they die;

no one is going to gather the bodies. To the ancients, the unthinkable was to die and not be buried; it was viewed as excessively offensive. Wages of Sin: Romans 6:23.

- 23] Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise [man] glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty [man] glory in his might, let not the rich [man] glory in his riches:
 24] But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I [am] the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these [things] I delight, saith the LORD.

"Let not the rich man glory in his riches." Not easy to do. Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7 or 9:10, 1 Corinthians 1:19-25.

"The foolishness of God..." Does God have foolishness? This foolishness of God is a major theme here in 1 Corinthians; you also see it all through Scripture. (Cf. Noah and the ark, Samson defeating the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, Elisha telling Naaman to go bathe in the Jordan seven times, Joshua and the battle of Jericho.) God seems to go out of his way to use bizarre instruments to accomplish his purposes. The most ridiculous idea that God presents is the idea of the son of a carpenter crucified on a Roman cross on a hill outside of Jerusalem, that he would be the center of all time, the basis of which all things are judged, the basis by which God will pour out his mercy on sinners. That is what Paul says here in verse 18.

Romans 1:25-31. These ideas are fundamental to our whole Biblical perception, and it is also fascinating that this passage's roots are in Jeremiah 9:23-24.

Circumcised Punished with Uncircumcision

- 25] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all [them which are] circumcised with the uncircumcised;
 26] Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all [that are] in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all [these] nations [are] uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel [are] uncircumcised in the heart.

In the Hebrew construction that He is going to punish the circumcised with uncircumcision, it is a self-contradictory phrase, and the term is an oxymoronic phrase. Jeremiah means by this is that he is going to use the uncircumcised, i.e. Egypt, Judah, Edom, the children of Ammon and Moab. What is ironic about that is that they are treated rhetorically as uncircumcised. There is some evidence that Egyptians, at some times,

did practice circumcision, but that just confuses the fact. The idea is that they are the uncircumcised because the circumcision was a sign of Abrahah; these are not of Abraham. So he is saying that he is going to use the uncircumcised nations to judge Israel who is supposed to be circumcised.

But he also says, “all the house of Israel is uncircumcised...” He means uncircumcised in the heart. The book of Deuteronomy and some of Paul’s letters say that circumcision is of the heart. For those who are interested in Egypt and circumcision, Herodotus, the Greek historian, in 2 book 36-37 and also in 104, ascribes the Egyptians as practicing circumcision. This also comes up in Joshua 5:9 in terms of Israel not being circumcised because during the wilderness wanderings they were not circumcised. Edom was also circumcised according to Hyrcanus and it is mentioned in Josephus (XIII 257-58, [ix.1]; 318-19 [xi3]). The key idea not having kept the covenant in their heart will be judged by those not of the covenant.

Jeremiah Chapter 10

“Psalm to conclude Chapters 8 & 9.” Sarcastic polemic. Cf. Isa 40:18-20; 41:7; 44:9-20; 46:5-7.

- 1] Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:
- 2] Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

The nations were frightened at the planetary motions. [See our Briefing Package, *Signs in the Heavens*.] The nations are terrified of the signs for very good reasons: because they interfered with their lives, people get killed, and walls tumbled and fell. At 701 B.C. the thesis is that Earth was 360 day orbits, and Mars had 720 day orbits; they had near pass-bys, and it depended upon which one was leading. The other was which one picked up energy or lost energy or added or lost days to their orbit. 701 B.C. was the last near pass-by in which the orbit stabilized. There is a book on this in the bibliography, which is associated with these tapes. The point is that up until 701 B.C. the earth got along just fine on 360-day calendars. But in 701 B.C. something happened that the world had to correct their calendars. Cf. Gen 1:14: God’s signs.

Christmas Trees

- 3] For the customs of the people [are] vain: for [one] cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

- 4] They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Christmas trees do have their roots in Babylon, and are vestiges of pagan legends. But what Jeremiah is talking about here relates only to Christmas trees in an extreme historical sense. The trimming of trees did in fact embody Babylon and has carried over to our culture today, in the form of the way many of us celebrate the holiday. What he is obviously dealing with here is idolatry. He is going to paint the picture that idols as being so much cumbersome baggage. He is pointing out that not only are they not assets, they are liabilities.

- 5] They [are] upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also [is it] in them to do good.

His argument here is that idols are useless; it can’t do you any harm, it can’t do you any good. That happens to not be really true, I don’t want to destroy the thrust of what Jeremiah is saying, but just as a footnote, is that he is dealing here in a poetical summary. To argue that they cannot do evil is wrong, because we know from both New Testament and Old Testament revelation that when you worship an idol you worship Satan. Behind the idols are demons; they are what is called an entry. Don’t believe that a Ouiji board or something like it is harmless.

Palm Trees and Groves

“Palm tree” - the Hebrew word is *tomar*; and it is translated palm tree in the King James, but that is misleading, because it is more like a pillar. What most scholars see in that phrase is what is called a phallic symbol, that they were trimmed and designed to be a fertility symbol. And so when you see pillars or palm trees, in the Old Testament called groves, they are really talking about an area typically on top of a hill, where there were trees. They trimmed the trees, making a pagan fertility offering place for that, so it was a place of sex orgies and such that were involved in the Canaanite sex worship which had to do with their concepts of trying to encourage fertility of the crops. That is why God commands never to have his altars on the hilltops by the trees or groves, because these places would be defiled by these pagan practices.

- 6] Forasmuch as [there is] none like unto thee, O LORD; thou [art] great, and thy name [is] great in might.
- 7] Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise [men] of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, [there is] none like unto thee.

- 8] But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock [is] a doctrine of vanities.
9] Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple [is] their clothing: they [are] all the work of cunning [men].

Blue and purple dyes are non-trivial technology, it turns out that getting garments died in ancient cultures was very expensive.

- 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.

The idea is that the idols are vanity, the actual word is like breath without substance, and they are a burden to be carried like cumbersome baggage.

- 11] Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, [even] they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

Verse 11 is the only verse in this book that is written in Aramaic or Chaldean. There has been a lot of scholars that wonder why Jeremiah wrote this in Chaldean. The reason is: so that even the pagan nations would be indicted by what it says.

In other words, our God, the living God, is going to abide forever, but the gods that they are worshiping are going to be destroyed, and that phrase is written in a language that they could understand.

- 12] He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.
13] When he uttereth his voice, [there is] a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

The book of Revelation describes His voice like the voice of many waters. Between Proverbs, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes you can find the whole water cycle. Solomon asks, why do the all the rivers run into the sea, but the sea doesn't get fuller, and he points out evaporation, clouds, and rain.

- 14] Every man is brutish in [his] knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image [is] falsehood, and [there is] no breath in them.
15] They [are] vanity, [and] the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

- 16] The portion of Jacob [is] not like them: for he [is] the former of all [things]; and Israel [is] the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts [is] his name.

From verses 12-16 we are going to encounter all that again in Jeremiah 51:15-19; this whole idea will be elaborated on later in Jeremiah. It is the whole extolling of the power of God, especially visible in nature, and his unique relationship with Israel is the theme here. Verses 1-16, if you have been really studying this whole passage of 7-10, the last 16 verses are almost a parenthesis.

- 17] Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.
18] For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find [it so].

What we will now get into is a wrap-up of what is sometimes called the Temple Sermon that he is never forgiven for. What we are also going to see here is him indulging in what sounds like a dialogue between Jeremiah and a personified Jerusalem, and the blame for the judgment is on the leadership.

- 19] Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this [is] a grief, and I must bear it.
20] My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they [are] not: [there is] none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.
21] For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

Shepherds here are idiomatic of the leaders of the nation.

- 22] Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, [and] a den of dragons.
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.
24] O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.
25] Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

Really a rhetorical device, trying to say we know you are just trying to punish us, but don't forget those guys, they are even worse. Interesting phrase here "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." It is interesting that no man can decide the course of his life. (How much poetry and schooling have we had to set a direction for our lives?) But

in the last analogy there is no way to get any blessings without God's help. You can find this in Psalm 37:25, Proverbs 16:9, 20:24, but these ideas are all throughout the Bible.

"Lord correct me, but with justice," it is translated "justice" but what he is really saying here is what you and I would call something less than justice. God has to be just, but He has been able to satisfy that justice through Jesus Christ, and He has paid the price to allow God to be merciful to you and I. Verse 25 is recited annually at the Passover Seder.

Jeremiah 11

Chapters 11-20 are basically narrative. It is almost a private journal or diary. There are feelings, messages, and reactions, almost a dialogue with himself and the Lord; he puts words in the mouths of the people.

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
- 3] And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed [be] the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,

Some curse the covenant with Moses (Deut 11:28; 27:26; 28:15-19; 29:20-21). If you compare that, Jeremiah is given the same curse and same covenant that was articulated by Moses. The Lord himself links it up. This is going to be a contrast, because the work that He is going to perform later, will contrast, making the work he did for Israel (taking them out of Egypt in the Exodus) will pale in significance compared to the work that He is going to do. All through the Old Testament, we speak of Him as He Who delivered them out of the bonds of Egypt. The whole Exodus from Egypt is a sign, an identifier that is used all through the Scriptures. We will find a place here that says He is going to eclipse that; the whole Babylonian captivity will be more visible and more known than the Exodus from Egypt.

- 4] Which I commanded your fathers in the day [that] I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

Strange idiom - not in an iron furnace in a literal sense, but in the sense that it was where they were refined, purified. That phrase will also be used in the tribulation. It is interesting that the whole Exodus period is seen as the period in which he is promulgating the Mosaic Covenant.

- 5] That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as [it is] this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

Several things here: he is obviously speaking to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the curse is the same curse as the covenant.

"...a land flowing with milk and honey." That phrase occurs three times outside the Torah; here and in Chapter 32:22, and Ezekiel 20:6,15.

- 6] Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.
- 7] For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day [that] I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.
- 8] Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded [them] to do; but they did [them] not.
- 9] And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 10] They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.
- 11] Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.
- 12] Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.
- 13] For [according to] the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and [according to] the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to [that] shameful thing, [even] altars to burn incense unto Baal.

In the Hebrew there is a play on words because the word "shame" and the word Baal are similar, they sound almost the same. Back in verse nine there is an allusion to a conspiracy, and before this is over we will discover that there is a secret conspiracy, in a very literal, immediate sense.

We do know that earlier in Jeremiah's history, that under Josiah, the good king, there was a lot of secret resistance to the reforms of Josiah, so when these evil kings came to power, it was very prevalent for the people to return to idol worship. There is another idea: that no piety or

religious position comes by osmosis, or by being in just the collective group. All repentance to God and His ways has to be individual. They are being collectively judged, but just because they were in that “group” was no excuse. We are dealing not only with the individual, spiritual problems. At the same time we are going to see Jeremiah weep because he is presiding over the death of a nation.

Pray Not for this People

- 14] Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear [them] in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

3x : “therefore pray not for this people.” There is a provocative view which argues particularly out of a passage from Hosea and several others that there is a precedent condition for the second coming of Jesus Christ, for His power and His interruption to save Israel. The precedent condition is that Israel acknowledge their specific iniquity. Some scholars believe that it is the rejection of the Messiah. (If this intrigues you, check out the *Zechariah Commentary* that we have done.)

- 15] What hath my beloved to do in mine house, [seeing] she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.
 16] The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, [and] of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

He is using several different idioms: the virgin in the house, the olive tree. Paul picks that up and runs with it in Romans 11. He builds upon that idiom of Israel as the olive tree and the grafting and so forth.

- 17] For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

He makes reference to the house of Israel as well as Judah. Don’t be confused: the house of Israel had been taken into slavery over a hundred years before. The subtle thought here is that Israel was judged, Judah would be judged no less. In fact, in concept more so because they should have had the benefit of realizing how God treated the house of Israel. They went into idolatry, and didn’t listen. They were warned and didn’t listen and were taken into slavery. A hundred years later, Judah still doesn’t listen or repent and so they will do the same thing.

Plot to Assassinate

In the last part of this chapter, we have a very specific crisis that is the first of many personal crises in Jeremiah’s life. Jeremiah was an aggressive prophet of God, and he was the victim of plots against him. Anathoth was his hometown. It was the home of the priestly house of Abiathar, who was a friend of David, but the house was deposed by Solomon who supplanted with the house of Zadok, the high priest. The people of Anathoth, including his friends, family, and the people in his hometown, didn’t just reject him, they were collectively involved in a plot to assassinate him.

- 18] And the LORD hath given me knowledge [of it], and I know [it]: then thou shewedst me their doings.
 19] But I [was] like a lamb [or] an ox [that] is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, [saying], Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.
 20] But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.
 21] Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophesy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:
 22] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine:
 23] And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, [even] the year of their visitation.

Even Judah will be judged; they will go into captivity, but a remnant will return. The whole ordeal of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the return: there is 30,000 that return, but a remnant of Anathoth will not return. Other tribes will have people returning to reestablish the land; Anathoth gets their due. Jeremiah, in another chapter, will complain to the Lord a little too rashly. The Lord rebukes him, recommissions him and from that time on he never complains again. In fact, the Lord watches over him, but all through he gets opposition. Even from Zedekiah the king he gets no help, because his second tier is rebellious and trying to do Jeremiah in.

Jeremiah 12

The Prosperity of the Wicked

In Chapter 12, we see one of the great problems of the Old Testament, the prosperity of the wicked (Job, David in Psalm 37, Psalm 73 of

Asaph, and Habbakuk). You and I should not be bothered as much as the Old Testament prophets were, because we have 1 Peter 1:3-5 and other passages that allow us to view history from the perspective of the cross of Christ.

- 1] Righteous [art] thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of [thy] judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? [wherefore] are all they happy that deal very treacherously?
- 2] Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou [art] near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

“...thou art near in their mouth and far in their heart.” The most bitter, painful treachery is done to us when you have someone who is near to you in their mouth but far from you in their heart, a Christian brother.

- 3] But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.
- 4] How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.
- 5] If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and [if] in the land of peace, [wherein] thou trustedst, [they wearied thee], then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?
- 6] For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

Interesting problem here, you have to recognize that Jeremiah is really upset, and is making comments here within the family. This isn't some abstraction, in a few verses back, he gets extracted from a plot to assassinate him that included his family.

- 7] I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.
- 8] Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

2 Kings 24:1-2. Jehoiakim revolts after three years of submission. Nebuchadnezzar dispatches Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites against Judah (602-598 B.C.) “My” house, “my” heritage, “my” beloved = his own people.

- 9] Mine heritage [is] unto me [as] a speckled bird, the birds round about [are] against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

Very strange idiom, in fact the Septuagint version translates the speckled bird as a hyena, there is some translational problems. Most of the scholars believe that he is talking about a speckled bird. The point he is making is that birds always attack a strange bird.

- 10] Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

Shepherds = the leaders, the bad leaders of Judah. This is an indictment on the leaders in Judah who have brought about all this stuff.

- 11] They have made it desolate, [and being] desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth [it] to heart.
- 12] The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the [one] end of the land even to the [other] end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.
- 13] They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, [but] shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
- 14] Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.

Incidentally, all this is anticipating Chapters 47-49 which will go into a lot of this in more detail.

- 15] And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.
- 16] And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.
- 17] But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

Remnant returning; Romans 11:15 and Genesis 12:1-3. The same enemy of Judah is also going to destroy the enemies of Judah, i.e. Assyria, Moab, and Ammon; they will be destroyed by the Babylonian forces that God is going to use to judge Judah.

Jeremiah 13

The Linen Belt

In Chapter 13, we have a very interesting event that occurs, and for some reason, it has evoked all sorts of scholastic comment. It is a little

object lesson, very similar to the kind of thing we found in Ezekiel and Zechariah, where the prophet is instructed to do something that has a message to it.

- 1] Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.
- 2] So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put [it] on my loins.
- 3] And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,
- 4] Take the girdle that thou hast got, which [is] upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.
- 5] So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.
- 6] And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.
- 7] Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

Being made out of linen, it was probably mildewed, and the wetness wrecked it. That is the point: it is marred, it is moldy, it is unusable. The translation says linen belt, some scholars believe that this was an intimate undergarment.

Paroth is translated “Euphrates” and the first question here is, did he really do this or is it just a vision? In this case I don’t feel it really matters. The reason so many scholars have a problem with this is that the Euphrates River is a hundred of miles from Jerusalem. The word is Paroth, which is like the Ephrata but with an initial letter missing, so we wonder if it really was the Euphrates or not. There are some scholars who feel it is Para, which is actually Watifara, only three miles northeast of Anathoth (only about 6 miles from Jerusalem).

There was a lot of time during Jeremiah’s ministry where there wasn’t necessarily war. Between the first and third siege of Nebuchadnezzar is 19 years. There is three major sieges and three major deportations and invasions. But there was a lot of time in between in which there was peace. There is some evidence that he went to and from Babylon, and this may have occurred when he was on one of these trips (I think that it was the Euphrates River, but it didn’t have to be, but in my mind it is not a big deal.) The whole idea is that that which is going to spoil them did come from Babylon, and the Euphrates is symbolic of Babylon, so that all sort of fits.

Something else about these linen belts or linen undergarments: they were an intimate garment and they were a symbol of service to the priest.

(Used symbolically in Luke 12:35 and John 13). So it was a symbol of service for the priests, and in this case they are marred and moldy and unusable. This is basically the concept, because of the influence of the Euphrates, i.e. Babylon, idolatry. Priestly linen belt in Exodus 19:6. So there seems to be an identity with the Euphrates; if it wasn’t the Euphrates, it was a name that looked closely enough that we would look at it closely

- 8] Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 9] Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

They are going to be destroyed by these pagan invaders.

- 10] This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.
- 11] For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

Four things that the Lord wanted: He wanted for them to be a people, a name, and for praise, and for glory: but they would not hear.

- 12] Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?
- 13] Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David’s throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.
- 14] And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

Verses 12-14 use another idiom. The English says here, wineskins, which is interesting because the best scholars say the actual word used here was a jar, not a wineskin. They were ten-gallon wine containers.

There are four groups of people singled out: the kings, the priests, the prophets, and the people. This is anticipating what is going to happen in Jeremiah 25:15-28, and 51:7. Cf.: Ps 60:3; Isa 51:17-18; Ezek 23:31-34; Rev 16:19; 17:2.

- 15] Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

- 16] 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.

The prophet Amos says that he will send them a famine, not of meat, but of the Word at a certain time. There will be a time coming that all but the supernaturally protected elect will be deceived, and God permits it.

- 17] 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.

The source of the problem here is pride, and pride leads to darkness. That concept of darkness and light is introduced in Genesis 1 and it is a theme throughout the Scripture, through to Revelation 22. There are three kind of darkness: the natural darkness of the unregenerate heart (Ephesians 4:17-18), a deliberate darkness (John 3:19) and then judicial darkness which we have here (Jer 13:16; 2 Thess 2:11-12).

- 18] Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, [even] the crown of your glory.
19] The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open [them]: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

“Say unto the king and the queen”: You don’t see this mentioned very much. King Jehoiachin and his mother Nehushta, the queen, is mentioned. Because he is eighteen he only reigned three months; she was very influential (1 Kings 2:19; 15:13; 2 Kings 10:13). They were carried away in the first deportation about 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8, 12, 15) which gives us a rough feeling for the dating of this passage.

- 20] Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where [is] the flock [that] was given thee, thy beautiful flock?
21] What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them [to be] captains, [and] as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

Not necessarily northern enemies. Their enemies always came from the north, that was the only way to get around the Arabian Desert. Babylon is actually eastward, but they always attack them from the north. It is interesting how the Lord uses, through these prophets, “like a woman in travail.” Even Jesus Christ used the same idiom in Matthew 24.

Idolatry as Harlotry

- 22] And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, [and] thy heels made bare.
23] Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

This may sound like contemporary language. It sounds offensive, but it is interesting that Jeremiah uses these. Verse 22 is rather risqué so I won’t get into that. In verse 23 he is saying, you guys are so corrupt, so committed to do evil, that your chances to do good is equivalent to a leopard changing his spots.

- 24] Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.
25] This [is] thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.
26] Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

This was a mechanism of shaming a prostitute: to raise her skirt. That is what he saying, figuratively speaking, that Judah is a prostitute; he is going to shame them the same way, figuratively speaking.

- 27] I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, [and] thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when [shall it] once [be]?

He is describing idol worship as harlotries. There are two dimensions to that: there is a practical, vivid one—the Canaanite idol worship was involved in orgies and sexual excess of all indescribable kinds; but the other issue is that it is considered spiritual harlotry—they are going whoring after false gods. Neighings is like an overheated stallion or mare.

The agony of Jeremiah is that he is torn between the certainty of their judgment. He knows it’s coming, and he has the hope that it might be averted, if they would just listen and repent.

Jeremiah 14

Famine: Physical and Spiritual

Chapter 14 and 15 are actually one unit. We are going to talk about famine. Two kinds of famine: temporal, tangible, touchable type of famine and the spiritual famine from within. It is a very difficult passage

to date. It is probably the fourth year of Jehoiakim, but we are not sure. Another issue: the fact that Judah was dependent upon rainfall - we find droughts throughout the Bible (Gen 12:10; Ruth 1:1; 2 Samuel 21:1; 1 Kings 8:37). Droughts are threatened for disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:23-24, so Israel was used to the idea that rainfall or the absence of it was God's way of rewarding or punishing them. (In Israel, "chance" is not a kosher word.)

- 1] The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth.
- 2] Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.
- 3] And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, [and] found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads.

The cisterns were large reservoirs that were designed to catch rainwater, so the little rain they had would be saved. But the cisterns were empty.

- 4] Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.
- 5] Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook [it], because there was no grass.
- 6] And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because [there was] no grass.
- 7] O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou [it] for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.
- 8] O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man [that] turneth aside to tarry for a night?

Jeremiah uses one of his favorite phrases, the hope of Israel (17:7, 13; 50:7; Paul uses it in Acts 28:20; Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1). It is also a subtle way to say, like Joshua, the Egyptians will hear about it God, which is hinted at in this title. Jeremiah is reminding him, the savior in time of trouble.

- 9] Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man [that] cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, [art] in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.
- 10] Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.
- 11] Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for [their] good.

Third time forbidden to pray for the people (v 11; 7:16; 11:14).

- 12] When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

The sword, the famine and the pestilence, those three things are linked together as a trio seven times in the book of Jeremiah.

- 13] Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.
- 14] Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

The prophets are saying to them that they won't see the sword, famine or pestilence, they were reassuring the people that every- thing was going to be alright.

- 15] Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.
- 16] And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

The people were suffering from unwarranted complacency, Jeremiah was trying to wake them up to realize their peril. It is interesting that the first prophecy in the Scripture surfaces at a time of failure: Genesis 3:15. God sends prophecy in time of trouble. It is interesting that in time of prosperity, we get complacent. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and 2 Peter 3:3-4 are examples that prophecy is never popular.

- 17] Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.
- 18] If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not.
- 19] Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and [there is] no healing for us? we looked for peace, and [there is] no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!
- 20] We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, [and] the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.
- 21] Do not abhor [us], for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us.

- 22] Are there [any] among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? [art] not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these [things].

thy, thy, thy... - it is interesting that you hear in Jeremiah's words the same line of reasoning that you hear in Joshua.

Jeremiah 15

- 1] Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, [yet] my mind [could] not [be] toward this people: cast [them] out of my sight, and let them go forth.

God is upset. He makes mention to Jeremiah of two previous men who were also intercessors on behalf of the people. Even Moses and Samuel couldn't move the people (Ex 32:11-14, 30-38; Num 14:13-23; Deut 9:18-20, 25-29; 1 Sam7:5-9;12:19-25; and Ps 99:6-8). Moses and Samuel had petitioned the Lord on behalf of the people, and the Lord went forward. In the mind of Jeremiah's readers, those were the two pillars, Moses with the Torah, and Samuel more recently.

- 2] And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as [are] for death, to death; and such as [are] for the sword, to the sword; and such as [are] for the famine, to the famine; and such as [are] for the captivity, to the captivity.

Similar phrase in Revelation 6:1-8.

- 3] And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.
- 4] And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for [that] which he did in Jerusalem.

The reference here is Manasseh, who, at least by tradition, sawed Isaiah in half. Manasseh was the one who really led into idolatry, and all of the troubles that Judah is experiencing now derives from their foregoing of the worship of the Lord (2 Kings 21:3-7, 10-15; 23:26-27; 24:3-4).

- 5] For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?
- 6] Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

- 7] And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave [them] of children, I will destroy my people, [since] they return not from their ways.

Widows as Sand of the Seas

- 8] Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused [him] to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

"A lot of widows", this is literal but in a more generic sense. There is a concept in Judaism that if you kill a man you destroy a nation, because if you kill a son you have, in effect, annihilated a nation that would have come out of his bowels in subsequent generations. Cf. 2 Chr 28:6.

- 9] She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while [it was] yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

Intrinsically Jewish. The concept of happiness for a woman is to have sons, complete happiness is to have seven sons, but here the woman with the seven sons has a very short happiness because they are killed in one day. Contained in the next couple of verses is one of the most moving confessions that a man could give. Jeremiah here is going to profess his loneliness.

- 10] Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; [yet] every one of them doth curse me.

This concept of lending or borrowing is usually in business (at least, that is the usual basis for a disagreement). He is not saying that there is anything wrong with borrowing or lending, he is saying that there is no commerce upon which someone would be frustrated or upset with him.

- 11] The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee [well] in the time of evil and in the time of affliction.
- 12] Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. In this era, there was an unusually hard iron that was available from a region near the Black Sea, and as a result, there were certain kinds of iron that were sometimes translated by the King James translators differently. Steel didn't come until later.

- 13] Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and [that] for all thy sins, even in all thy borders.
- 14] And I will make [thee] to pass with thine enemies into a land [which] thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, [which] shall burn upon you.

God is upset, and as a result they are going to be enslaved in a land which they do not know: Babylon in the primary sense. And in many of these passages, you will get the sense that many of these go beyond the Babylonian captivity, which is very definitive, a major milestone in their history. Some of the language you will get the sense that it goes to the Diaspora, after the crucifixion of Christ, where they are scattered to all nations. There are many times where there is almost a slip of the pen with Jeremiah, where he talks about them scattered about broadly. In Jeremiah's mind, he may be dealing with the Babylonians as generic Gentiles, but in fact the prophecy is fulfilled after the crucifixion of Christ where they are scattered among many nations for almost 2,484 years, 2 months and 3 days. (But that is another story.)

- 15] O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.
- 16] Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Revelation 3:8; 2:13 - avenge me of my persecutors. I thought we were supposed to turn the other cheek. The idea of Jeremiah calling down God's anger on his enemies sounds so non-New Testament, but in Revelation, study the pleas of the souls who are under the altar. That is a concept of being collinear with God's righteous indignation

Ezekiel 3:1-3, we have a similar passage. It actually starts three verses earlier in the end of chapter 2. Ezekiel 2:8-10. He is saying that you need to digest His food, His word. The scroll that is written inside and out and sealed with seven seals is the scroll that is in the Revelation 5,6. Rev 10:9.

- 17] I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.
- 18] Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, [which] refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, [and as] waters [that] fail?

“deceptive brook” - a brook that only occurs during flash floods, or snow melting; not a brook that you can count on to be there all the time (cf Job 6:15-20). He is really upset and God answers him.

- 19] Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, [and] thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.
- 20] And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I [am] with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.
- 21] And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Jeremiah had been grumbling and complaining and God stopped him right there. He is, in effect, to stop being so hasty in accusing the Lord and not to waste His time on worthless statements. Cf. Ex 4:16. Jeremiah from this point on doesn't complain anymore. Some scholars view this passage like a recommissioning of Jeremiah (cf. 1:18-19). God does protect him. When we were talking about the plot to assassinate Jeremiah, consider that the people did succeed in assassinating Gedaliah (41:1-3).

Separatist: cf. 2 Cor 6:14-18; Isa 52:11. “He that departest from evil maketh himself a prey” - Isa 59:15. “Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth?” - Paul in Gal 4:16.

Jeremiah's joy and refreshment in the Word of God is a theme that is popular throughout the Scripture. There is a Psalm that is called the Psalm of the Laver (Psalm 119). Every verse extols the Word of God and its benefit to you, and how you should eat it, digest it, refresh yourself in it, etc. Look at verse 3, 97, 113, 119, 128, and 163.

Jeremiah 16

Withdrawal From Daily Life

Chapters 16-18 are sometimes considered a unit. It is more of this doom mixed up with bright promises for the future. Its dating is unclear, but it is probably in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim's reign (2 Kgs 24:1-2). In the first part of this chapter, God is going to lay another trip on him, another requirement, another part of his ministry, which he doesn't take to comfortably.

- 1] The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,
- 2] Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place.

That is a blow, particularly to a Jew. This is very unusual. In Israel specifically, but in general in the Middle East, being married was normal and having children was part of one's goal in life (Lev 1:28; 2:18; Deut 7:14). It is more than just the marriage thing, it is buried in the passage, in which Jeremiah is admonished to withdraw from the daily life. He is not to marry, he is not to have children, he is not to celebrate joy nor grief with these people. God is instructing him to demonstrate his lack of identity with their culture to demonstrate his awareness that it is over; they are going into captivity.

- 3] For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land;
- 4] They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; [but] they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.
- 5] For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, [even] lovingkindness and mercies.
- 6] Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall [men] lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them:
- 7] Neither shall [men] tear [themselves] for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall [men] give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.

Bread + cup = mourning for dead.

- 8] Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink.
- 9] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

Jeremiah gets his point across. God is upset, it is coming near term, it is coming on the people, so don't have children because there is just going to be more carcasses on the battlefield. This idea of not being buried is particularly offensive to the Jewish mind, because one of the things they focused on was to be buried properly. To be unburied was a form of shame.

This idea of cutting themselves and making themselves bald were practices that they obviously practiced there (41:5; 47:5; Ez 7:18; Amos 8:10; Mic 1:16), but they were also forbidden under the Torah (Leviticus 19:28; 21:5 and Deuteronomy 14:1,2).

These are classical Canaanite forms of expression, to cut yourselves and to make yourself bald, and to tear your clothes. All these things were expressions of grief. They were forbidden to be done. Jeremiah is saying that they won't do that, because it is over. Jeremiah's withdrawal both from the joy and the grief is intended by God to be a sign to them that He is serious, that it is about to happen, God's messenger is not partaking.

- 10] And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what [is] our iniquity? or what [is] our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?
- 11] Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law;
- 12] And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:
- 13] Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, [neither] ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

It is like God is saying, "You want to serve other gods, great, I will send you to a land where all they do is worship them day and night." Babylon, the seat of idolatry...the name Babylon is almost synonymous with idolatry. It is rather ironic that they were sent to a place for seventy years where the worship of idols was enforced.

Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt

- 14] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

God who took your fathers out of the land of Egypt. The miracle of the Exodus is an identity event all through the Old Testament.

It is interesting that the Holy Spirit gave Jeremiah words here that go far beyond the Babylonian captivity. I don't believe that this prophecy is fulfilled under Ezra and Nehemiah. It says that he will be known as that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north. All invaders came from the north, because of the fertile Crescent, so even the Babylonians which were eastward attacked them from the north, but from the land of the north is something else. In our newspapers about once a week, is something about Soviet Jewry being allowed to

immigrate. “...and from all the lands from which he has driven them..” Isaiah 11:11 when I gather them the second time, the outcasts of Judah, from all over the world, back in their land. The first regathering was after Babylon, the second was May 14, 1948, and is going on today. That is the fulfillment of this prophecy—the invasion of the Soviet Union of Israel is going to happen soon. Cf. Gen 12:1-3, 7; Rom 11:25, 26, 27.

- 15] But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.
- 16] Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.
- 17] For mine eyes [are] upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

The “hunting and fishing” is the professionals of Nebuchadnezzar digging in the rocks and stuff to make sure they are enslaved. We are back to the local immediate idiom of Jeremiah’s prophecy here.

- 18] And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

God is upset. Some of you may be bothered by the word double here. The word here is actually *mishneh* which means “ample” or “full.” The word is an idiom meaning “proportionate” or “plenty”: they won’t be short the full measure.

Lifeless forms= idols or sacrifices. Polluted body (Lev 26:30; Num 19:11).

- 19] O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and [things] wherein [there is] no profit.
- 20] Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they [are] no gods?
- 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.

The verses are Messianic (analogous to Isaiah 2:1-4; 45:14, Zechariah 8:20-23). The word *yadda*, which is “to know,” is used three times in verse 21.

Jeremiah 17

- 1] The sin of Judah [is] written with a pen of iron, [and] with the point of a diamond: [it is] graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;
- 2] Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

Judah’s sin is indelible, therefore their judgment is inescapable. God’s law is engraved in stone, their sin is engraved in their heart. The precision of that engraving is dramatized by these tools (pen of iron, point of a diamond). Job 19:24: engravings cannot be erased. The heart is declared not only sick, but incurably sick. God himself does not change the heart, He gives you a new one. Cf. Hammurabi Steele, Moabite Stone, and Behistun.

Temple: Blood on 4 horns of the altar, Lev 16:18.

- 3] O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance [and] all thy treasures to the spoil, [and] thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders.
- 4] And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, [which] shall burn for ever.

The underlying thought here is “You want to dedicate your lands to the idols, you got it. You go to the land of the idols.” Asherim (sacred tree Asherah; Baal cult, symbol of Canaanite goddess Athtart): poles beside Canaanite altars.. Prescribed by Mosaic Law (Deut 16:21).

[2 Chronicles 36:21 not equal to this passage; 25:11, 29:10..]

- 5] Thus saith the LORD; Cursed [be] the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Cursed be the man who trusts flesh. There are three words for “man” in the Bible: *geber* is used here which means man (vs. children) with strength in battle - to be mighty. [vs. Adam which is mankind, humanity, or basar which is “flesh”: man’s frailty vs. God’s omnipotence.]

Jehoiakim? Zedekiah? (Reliance on Egypt vs Nebuchadnezzar). Cf. Ps 1:3.

- 6] For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, [in] a salt land and not inhabited.
- 7] Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.
- 8] For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and [that] spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

This is very similar to the first three verses of Psalm 1.

The Heart is Wicked

- 9] The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?

There is nothing more deceitful than the heart. And desperately wicked: the word here is *anash*: it means beyond cure, it is sick. God does not try to cure your heart. David when he prays in Psalm 51 prays, “Create in me a clean heart.” This idiom is used throughout the entire Scripture. God gives a new heart. Heart is the source of all human frailty (Pro 4:23). From the heart come all deeds. See also Isa 44:20; Deut 11:16.

- 10] I the LORD search the heart, [I] try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, [and] according to the fruit of his doings.
- 11] [As] the partridge sitteth [on eggs], and hatcheth [them] not; [so] he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

Partridges don’t sit on eggs they don’t lay. The partridge can be used here generically and the idea becomes clear.

- 12] A glorious high throne from the beginning [is] the place of our sanctuary.
- 13] O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, [and] they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

“written in the dust” - that is in contrast to being written in the book of life (Exodus 32:32, Luke 10:20, and Revelation 20:12, 21:27). Cf. John 8. Ps 22: dust of death, separation curse: Gen 3. They are written in the dust because they have forsaken the fountain of living waters.

- 14] Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou [art] my praise.
- 15] Behold, they say unto me, Where [is] the word of the LORD? let it come now.

(False Prophet, Deut 18:22)

- 16] As for me, I have not hastened from [being] a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was [right] before thee.
- 17] Be not a terror unto me: thou [art] my hope in the day of evil.
- 18] Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

Again the word *amash* meaning complete, not double destruction. Notice that these pronouncements of doom are always ethnically conditioned.

- 19] Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;
- 20] And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:
- 21] Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring [it] in by the gates of Jerusalem;
- 22] Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

This may sound strange, because a few chapters ago, Jeremiah was on their case. They were obeying the literal law but without their heart. He is just reminding them of the Sabbath day for some very specific reasons. The Sabbath was a two-fold sign . It was in the Decalogue, it is emphasized in the Ten Commandments.

The Sabbath day emphasizes two relationships with God: one, the Creator, the Sabbath day commemorates the seventh day on which God rested; it also speaks because of its place in the Decalogue as a sign of the Covenant between Israel and the Creator, that they too would observe the seventh day as a day of rest, just as the Creator rested on the seventh day. That idea is ingrained in Genesis and engraved in the stone in Exodus 20:8-11; 2:13; Ezek 20:12. Jeremiah is pointing to that which is, in effect, a metonym (it is the general for the specific). He is calling them to an acknowledgment of their Creator and their covenant relationship.

- 23] But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.
- 24] And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow

the sabbath day, to do no work therein;

- 25] Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever.
- 26] And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.

This will happen in the Millennium.

- 27] But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Jeremiah 18

Potter's House = Divine Sovereignty

- 1] The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Jeremiah is going to get a special object lesson. He is going to go down to the valley, which is probably the valley of Hinnom. There was both clay and water down there and the potters were typically at the base of that.

- 3] Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.
- 4] And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make [it].

This was a common artisan's craft; 1 Chronicles 4:22,23 says that potters would work for kings. Pottery was a big deal. So Jeremiah is watching this very common thing but with a different insight. God is saying, "I want to talk to you about this." So he goes down to watch the potter, and something goes wrong and the clay doesn't come out the way the potter wants, so the potter puts it all back together and builds something else.

- 5] Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
- 6] O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as

the clay [is] in the potter's hand, so [are] ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

- 7] [At what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy [it];
- 8] If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.
- 9] And [at what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant [it];
- 10] If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.
- 11] Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.
- 12] And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

One small thing we saw in verses 11 and 12: we have the word *yoser* = preparing, dividing; in the verb form it means preparing and in the noun form it means potter. It is a play on words.

- 13] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.

"Lord repenting" is a misused word. The Lord doesn't change His mind, He changes what He was going to do based upon our perspective. The Lord can't learn, He knows all things. So when it says the Lord will repent of what He was doing, it is really a figure of speech (Nu 23:9).

The idea of the potter occurs so often in the Scripture (Job 10:9, and 33:6; Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, 60:40). There is another way that this is used (Psalm 2:8-9) Just because they are made by the potter doesn't mean they are made to honor, they are made to dishonor, whatever pleases the Lord. This is used as an identity phrase in Revelation 2:27 in the seven letters to the seven churches. Also used by Paul in Romans 9:20-21.

Couple of observations: the clay is in His hand and under His control. The defects are not in the potter but in the clay. The potter is very persevered, he doesn't give up. The principle lesson here is the Sovereignty of God, His power over the clay is unlimited. The purpose of molding the clay is to change it into something, i.e. design.

- 14] Will [a man] leave the snow of Lebanon [which cometh] from the rock of the field? [or] shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?

The word *rock* there is the word Sirion, a Phoenician name for Mount Hermon, which is about 9100 feet high and typically has snow on it most of the year. Cf Deut 3:9; Ps 29:6.

- 15] Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways [from] the ancient paths, to walk in paths, [in] a way not cast up;
- 16] To make their land desolate, [and] a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

Until May 14, 1948, that is exactly how the world looked at Palestine: marshes, mosquitos, desolation. If you visit Israel today, you can't believe the change.

- 17] I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.
- 18] Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.
- 19] Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.
- 20] Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, [and] to turn away thy wrath from them.
- 21] Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their [blood] by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and [be] widows; and let their men be put to death; [let] their young men [be] slain by the sword in battle.
- 22] Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet.
- 23] Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay [me]: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal [thus] with them in the time of thine anger.

Jeremiah 19

Zedekiah's Prophetic Future (ch 19-21)

There is a contrast in Chapters 18 and 19. In Chapter 18 we had the potter, and in Chapter 19 we have a sort of demonstrated oracle. God is going to instruct Jeremiah to do something physical, something dramatic, an act of declaration. This act is going to get him into a lot of trouble.

- 1] Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and [take] of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;

This is not some sort of object lesson, it is going to be a formal announcement of God's judgment. Many scholars believe that this actualized, or triggered the judgment.

The ancient of the people and the ancients of the priests, the leaders and the men with the seniority.

- 2] And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which [is] by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

The word 'bottle' is actually clay jar; in the Hebrew the word is *bagbug* which is almost onomatopoeic (sounds like a gurgling jar). This was four to ten inches in diameter, and it was intended to be a vessel for water. In Chapter 18, we had the potter forming vessels, here we have a vessel that is done, it is brittle, it is not repairable. Chapter 18 emphasized to Jeremiah that the object was for Jeremiah, not the people, and the potter story in Chapter 18 dealt with the sovereignty and patience of God.

Now there is a shift, this is going to be a very public and formal declaration. There is an analogy in 2 Kings 19: 2 where there is a formal presentation; in this case we are going to have a formal presentation by Jeremiah. We will have a contrast to the patience of God; it will be the irreversible judgment that is coming. This vessel is going to be shattered shortly, and when a vessel like this is shattered, it is discarded. The message to the people is that they are going to be discarded.

This gate is called the potsherd gate, it leads to the valley of Hinnom; the Hebrew word is *harsit* and it occurs only here. It leads at the base of the mount to the valley of Hinnom. This gate is what is between the pottery industrial area and the valley of Hinnom. The valley of Hinnom is associated with child sacrifice. As a result of that, in previous administrations, mainly Josiah makes it a garbage dump for Jerusalem (2 Kings 23: 10). It is in the New Testament where it becomes the *gehenna*, meaning the valley of gehenna. It becomes a cliché, not geographically for the specific area, but as an idiom in language referring to the outer darkness. Not Hades, the center of the earth, but the place of ultimate punishment. In the Targim, this gate is called the dung gate, as in Nehemiah 2:13; 3:13-14, and 12:31. In Jerome, we find in the Vulgate and some links to the name of that gate to earthenware.

So Jeremiah is taking the leadership out to this gate to make an announcement, and he carries with him this clay jar.

- 3] And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

Notice the plural there (O kings of Judah): it isn't just the ruling king at that time who is bad news, but this is a sort of climax to the kings of Judah collectively.

Foreign Gods

- 4] Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

Referring to the child sacrifice and many more.

- 5] They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire [for] burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake [it], neither came [it] into my mind:

The thought in Hebrew: not only is this offensive, it never occurred to God to prohibit it. He is being anthropomorphic there, you can't really surprise God, but He is expressing His offense in that what they have done is so extreme that it goes beyond all the things that occurred to Him to prohibit in the Law of Moses. What He is saying is that they have made the land foreign by making foreign gods at home in it.

- 6] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

Valley of Slaughter - v. 6, 11-5; Isa 30:33.

- 7] And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.
- 8] And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

There are a lot of plays on words here in the Hebrew. The word that means to "ruin the plans of Judah," to make vain their counsel, there is *baqqaq*, which means to make empty and pour out. This word has an almost identical sound to the word *baqbuq* which is the name for the clay jar.

- 9] And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

In verse 9, God is going to describe some things. Things will get so bad that they will be driven to cannibalism. God is not ordaining cannibalism here, it is strictly prohibited in the Law of Moses: Leviticus 26:29, and Deuteronomy 28:53-57 where it is predicted (cf. 2 Kings 6:28-29; Lam 2:20; 4:10). There is sort of an irony here, because they, earlier, had sacrificed their children to the god Molech. It is interesting that they are going to be under such stress from the siege that they are going to be driven to consuming that flesh. That actually happened twice in their history. Once was in 586 B.C. as Nebuchadnezzar's army indeed finally sieged Jerusalem in the third siege where they ultimately level the whole city. That becomes such a desperate siege.

It happened a second time in Jerusalem under Titus Vespasian in 68 to 70 A.D. when the four Roman legions sealed off the city and ended up slaughtering a million, six thousand inhabitants and burning it to the ground. That is why Jesus Christ wept over the city and prophesied the week he was crucified. God says "I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters." He is saying because of the judgment brought upon them, they will be driven to do that. Jeremiah is instructed to say that up until verse 9

- 10] Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,
- 11] And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as [one] breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury [them] in Tophet, till [there be] no place to bury.

This event is seen by most scholars as activating the Lord's destruction. This gets Jeremiah into a lot of trouble in Chapter 20 (Pashhur's violent reaction).

Historical context: The Egyptians had a practice that if you had someone you did not like, you put their name on a jar and then you broke the jar in a sacred place. There does seem to be a parallelism here, idiomatically at least. The main idea here is that clay can be shaped and reshaped but a jar that is not useful is broken and discarded, and they are going to be broken and discarded.

- 12] Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and [even] make this city as Tophet:

- 13] And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

Roofs in the Middle East. Houses are often typically on a hillside, and the roof of the house is also like a garden or a patio. (Judg 16:27; 1 Sam 9:26; Neh 8:16; Acts 10:9) After dinner, you typically went out there and enjoyed the sunset or whatever; it also was the place that you entertained. You may recall that Jesus, when he was giving his Olivet discourse in Matthew 24, said, let not a man go down from his rooftop to get his cloak, but let him flee. So think of roofs as a second story patio and you will get a better feel for the lifestyle.

The roof also is a place of idolatry (Jer 32:29, 2 Kgs 23:12, and Zeph 1:5). The rooftop being the center of activity in the house is also the scene where corruption is seen if they go bad. Here specifically, God indicts them for having set up incense to the hosts of heaven. This raises a whole other thing. The planets in the ancient world interfered with their lives. Because they allowed their houses to be defiled by idol worship, God is going to defile their house. Cf. Josh 10.

- 14] Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people,
15] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

Harden their necks or stiff-necked people. Even Stephen in Acts 7:51 speaks of Israel as a stiff-necked people. This term refers to oxen that are unruly and will not follow the yoke. Jeremiah doing this formal public demonstration, not saying that God is going to punish them in the usual sense, but dramatizing this breaking of the jar and declaring it actualized. This did not make him popular with the leadership.

Jeremiah 20

Pashur

- 1] Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who [was] also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

Pashur is not the same guy in 21:1 or 38:1 (cf. 1 Chr 9:12). It is possible that the word Pashur is as much a title as it is a name, analogous

to an executive priest. He is the governor of the house of the Lord. He is apparently number two in charge and is in charge of keeping order. He has, at his command, the Temple guard. Pashur himself, as a result of what he does to Jeremiah, is going to end up being judged by God and will be taken captive about 597 B.C. (recorded in Jer 29:25-26, and in 2 Kgs 24:15).

Incidentally, the timing of Chapter 19 might have been analogous to the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. where Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, is in charge of the forces of Babylon that are against both Judah and Egypt, and defeats Egypt at the battle of Carchemish. Because of Jeremiah's prophecies, he is going to be denied access to the Temple (chapter 36). Jeremiah is a threat to Pashur because Pashur, even though he is a priest, has also falsely assumed the office of a prophet in his duty (cf. Amaziah in Amos 7:10-17).

- 2] Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that [were] in the high gate of Benjamin, which [was] by the house of the LORD.

Pashur had him beaten. The Benjamin gate was the northern gate at the upper part of the Temple Court. These stocks were designed for torture (2 Chr 16:10). The word in the Hebrew is *mahpeket*, which means "causing distortion." His ankles, wrists and neck were in this, but in such a way as to be very uncomfortable. This is a public thing, and, according to the Hebrew, painful.

- 3] And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib.

Pashur may mean *prosperity* and Magor-missabib means *terror on every side*. This phrase, *Magor-missabib*, actually 6 times in Jeremiah 6:25; 20:3, 10; 46:5; 49:29 and once in Lamentations 2:22.

- 4] For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold [it]: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.
5] Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.
6] And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

There is more to this than the fact that he is a false prophet, he is a priest, he is not supposed to prophesy. God very diligently separates the roles of prophet, priest and king, except in one person, Jesus Christ. Pashur has assumed the office of prophet and has prophesied lies. He beats up Jeremiah, puts him in the stocks, and next day turns him loose and, Jeremiah, rather than being humble and quiet, makes this speech on behalf of the Lord, that we have just read. Pashur was probably also the head of the pro-Egypt group in Judah.

Incidentally, verse 4 first mentions Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as the conqueror of Judah and that causes us to think that this is prior to the battle of Carchemish. That is why the announcement in Chapter 19 and this incident in Chapter 20 may be at or just prior to the battle of Carchemish in which Nebuchadnezzar has his major final victory over the Egyptians that makes Babylon the world power at that time. It also happens that while he is laying to the first siege of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar dies and make Nebuchadnezzar king. This first deportation is where Daniel and his friends are taken captive. It is the second siege when Ezekiel and Mordecai get taken, and the third siege is when the city is leveled. There is a space of nineteen years between the first and the third siege. Pashur is exiled and Zephaniah replaces him.

In the next few verses, we are going to find the last of what is Jeremiah's so-called confessions. Jeremiah is going to lay out his heart before the Lord. The main insight here is to recognize the reality of this man and his feeling and his candor in pouring out his guts before the Lord.

- 7] O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.
- 8] For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

He says, God has deceived me. God does not deceive. The word there is *patah*, it almost carries more like the word, seduced. A more precise way to say it is that you over-persuaded me. The Lord told him it was going to be a tough time, he is sort of saying, Lord you didn't tell me the half of it. Jeremiah never publicly winces at declaring God's word. Privately, he is very upset.

- 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].

Every time Jeremiah opens his mouth publicly he catches it. He is not going to deny the Lord, but he tried to shut up and he can't; it is burning inside of him, it has to come out. You almost get the impression that he is almost unwillingly articulating God's word, because he knows that as soon as he opens his mouth, he will get beat up.

- 10] For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, [say they], and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, [saying], Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.
- 11] But the LORD [is] with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: [their] everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.
- 12] But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, [and] seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.
- 13] Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.
- 14] Cursed [be] the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.
- 15] Cursed [be] the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad.
- 16] And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;
- 17] Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb [to be] always great [with me].
- 18] Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

Very unhappy guy. Don't take him too seriously, this is just his rhetorical way of describing how unhappy he is. He does not mean this literally, he does not curse his parents. This is just his Jewish way of describing how unhappy he is. He is not really cursing his parents. This is all very parallel to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-3.

Jeremiah 21

Comments on the Kings

This happens to be a start to a very major section. The first 19 chapters have a certain style. Chapters 21-25, in some respects, may sound very much of the same thing, but you may notice a change of style: there is more reference to times, places and persons. Chapters 21-23 are a series of messages delivered under four kings. Some people call these sections the Comments on the Kings. They are not necessarily in chronological order. Chapter 21 appears to have been delivered about

588 B.C. The Babylonians are advancing on Jerusalem, but they haven't been besieging it at close range yet. In 586 B.C. they will besiege it and level it. That is the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar, it is the brutal one, and that is forthcoming. This is going to occur in about the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. The siege is going to come up shortly and they are besieged about a year and a half. They are slaughtered and they resort to cannibalism.

Chronologically, Chapter 21 falls between Chapters 37 and 38. Zedekiah was the last king, he was a vassal king that was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. You will find this in 2 Kings 24:17. He was the uncle of Jehoiachin. Zedekiah likes Jeremiah; he wasn't as bad as Jehoiachin. One of Zedekiah's problems was that the Jews never really accepted him because Nebuchadnezzar put him on the throne. That was in the second siege. Zedekiah would like to be nicer to Jeremiah but his second-in-command hated Jeremiah, and since Zedekiah is weak and vacillating, he is therefore damaging. Chapters 21-29 lay the groundwork for a period of time which, in the Scripture, is called the "Time of the Gentiles." In Luke 21:24, the Lord Jesus uses that phrase. This period starts with Nebuchadnezzar and concludes probably with those alive today.

- 1] The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

Don't confuse this Pashur with the one in chapter 20 (yet same as one in 38:1). The name Pashur is probably a title of sorts. A significant period of time, something like 15 or 17 years occur between these two chapters. The Pashur of before is long gone.

Zephaniah was successor to Jehoiada the Priest (29:25-26; 37:3; 52:24) and second in rank to High Priest. Slain by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah.

- 2] Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

Nebuchadnezzar's name is actually Nebuchadrezzar. It is transliterated from other languages. Basically here, Zedekiah is soliciting from Jeremiah what he hoped would be a favorable oracle. (Other examples: 2 Kings 18 - 19 Hezekiah did the same thing to Isaiah. Jehosaphat in 2 Chronicles 20). Zedekiah is hoping that Jeremiah will give him

a favorable message, yet there is no repentance or commitment to do God's Will.

- 3] Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:
- 4] Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that [are] in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and [against] the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.
- 5] And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

God is saying that not only is he not going to help them, but he is going to fight against them.

- 6] And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.
- 7] And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.
- 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.
- 9] He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

Jeremiah is saying that those who give up will at least live, the others who fight will die.

Zedekiah's Oracle

- 10] For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

Zedekiah was hoping that he would get the same response that Hezekiah got from Isaiah. God gives three oracles here: one against Zedekiah, one against the people, and one against the Davidic house (Jer 34:1-5). While Jeremiah is writing here in Jerusalem, in the second deportation, Ezekiel writes at the same time, but is a slave in Babylon (Ezekiel 12:13). Zedekiah's first-string guys made fun of the prophets, saying that they couldn't even get their stories straight. 2 Kings 25:6-7 is where Nebuchadnezzar takes Zedekiah captive. The first thing they do is slaughter

his sons, then they put out his eyes and take him away captive. Now when you go back and read the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the creepy thing is that they are very literally fulfilled. Zedekiah did not die by the sword, they put out his eyes. The last thing he saw was his sons being slaughtered, and they carried him off to Babylon where he died. Zedekiah never saw Babylon just like Ezekiel said, because his eyes were put out. ¹/₄Take God literally. The Jews were slaves in Babylon for seventy years to the very day. The slavery of the nation and the desolation of Jerusalem are not coterminous. There is a nineteen-year offset, but each one is to the very day.

Jeremiah, who is prophesying their doom, politically, was labeled a traitor (cf 38:17-18). He was charged with treachery in chapters 37:13-14 and 38. These charges were proven false because when the city fell, he chose to remain in the devastated land rather than go to Babylon.

- 11] And touching the house of the king of Judah, [say], Hear ye the word of the LORD;
- 12] O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver [him that is] spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings.
- 13] Behold, I [am] against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, [and] rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?
- 14] But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

Jeremiah 22

Introduction

The chapters are not chronological. These collected presentations happen to be going through the kings particularly (See 2 Kings 24). Chapters 22 and 23 are related by themes not chronology, especially orientated of the kings. Chapter 22: the blood curse on Jeconiah. Chapter 23 focuses on the Messiah. Jeremiah is not described as a Messianic prophet like Isaiah, but there are some very interesting things here.

Throne of David

- 1] Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,

- 2] And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:

Talking to the king of Judah, but the emphasis is on the throne of David. The throne of David is going to end before this chapter is over, this may be a surprise because the throne of David was never supposed to end (Isa 9:6-7). Jeconiah is the last of the line of Judah in the Solomonic line (Jer 22:30).

- 3] Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.
- 4] For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.
- 5] But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.

The Lord swearing by Himself because there is nothing higher to swear by. He is swearing that if they don't perform righteousness and justice from their throne the house of David will be desolation. This poses a problem because the Messiah is going to sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:31-33).

The book of Jeremiah focuses on the righteousness and justice. There are at least two dimensions to the book of Jeremiah, the historical literal Jeremiah: there was a Jeremiah and a literal Judah that was sinning against God that did go into captivity as God predicted. The second level: the personal dimension. There are admonitions here to these people about what they should and should not do and what their relationship to the Lord should be. We could apply these to our lives. This idea of personally applying these insights to ourselves is the practical value. The third level is that as Jeremiah was presiding over the death of the nation in a sense so likewise we might be presiding over the same. The Lord emphasizing in this passage not the idol worship, just justice. He is telling the leadership "administer justice from your thrones." Our courts are courts of law, not justice.

- 6] For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou [art] Gilead unto me, [and] the head of Lebanon: [yet] surely I will make thee a wilderness, [and] cities [which] are not inhabited.

Gilead and the *head of Lebanon* were poetically and rhetorically positive words in their vocabulary.

- 7] And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast [them] into the fire.

Cedars of Lebanon: 1 Kgs 5:6, 8-10; 7:2-5; 10:27.

- 8] And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?
9] Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.
10] Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: [but] weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.

Focusing on those who are going to be enslaved in Babylon for seventy years. A remnant will return (their offspring typically), but most of the captives will not see their land again, and they are the lucky ones.

Shallum, Son of Josiah

- 11] For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more:

No mention of Josiah in this list of kings, only the bad kings listed (2 Kgs 23:29-35; 2 Chr 35:25; Zech 12:11).

Shallum (a pre-reginal name for Jehoahaz) is the one who is elevated after the death of his father in 1 Chronicles 3:15. He displeased Pharaoh Neco who was still in power, this was prior to Nebuchadnezzar's success. He was deposed in three months and exiled to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco. His older brother Eliakim (name changed to Jehoiakim by Pharaoh Neco) is put on his throne.

- 12] But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

Prophecy about Jehoahaz or Shallum who dies in Egypt. Now we get to Jehoiakim who is the king that Pharaoh Neco puts in Jehoahaz's place.

Jehoiakim

- 13] Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; [that] useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;

- 14] That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and [it is] cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

Forced labor without wages was prohibited by the law of Moses (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15). Jehoiakim is essentially emulating Manasseh; the bad king in 2 Kings 24:3-4 who also used forced labor to build his own house.

- 15] Shalt thou reign, because thou closest [thyself] in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, [and] then [it was] well with him?
16] He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then [it was] well [with him: was] not this to know me? saith the LORD.

Referring to Josiah, who also had a nice house but he put first ruling the land properly with justice and knowing the Lord. He managed all right. You are not a king because you live in a house of cedar; you live in a house of cedar because you are king. He means to judge justly with righteousness and judge the cause of the poor and needy.

- 17] But thine eyes and thine heart [are] not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do [it].

A Donkey's Burial

- 18] Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!
19] He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Very expressive; a donkey's burial. Don't mourn for a donkey, which means that he was just cut up and left for the beasts and the birds (2 Chronicles 35:24-25). No mourning for Jehoiakim in contrast with Josiah.

- 20] Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.
21] I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; [but] thou saidst, I will not hear. This [hath been] thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice.
22] The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.
23] O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!

God's judgments upon Israel and Judah are always described through the idiom of a woman in travail. Jesus Christ uses this illustration in Matthew 24. Exile began in 3rd year of Jehoiakim's reign (2 Kgs 24:1; 2 Chr 36:3).

Coniah

- 24] [As] I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

Coniah, the *je* is removed (appears here in Jer 22 twice: v. 24, v. 28, Jer 37:1); the reference to God in his name has been dropped. It is a name that the Holy Spirit has reserved for His use in Jeremiah. Alternate for Jeconiah, which means *the Lord will establish*. Jehoiachin = his throne name. Son and successor to Jehoiakim. Exiled in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8-17; 25:27-30). Reigned for three months and then carried off to Babylon and was there thirty-seven years. Archaeologically, he is mentioned in the Weidmer Tablets unearthed at the Ishtar gate in Babylon.

Signet ring: Haggai 2:23.

- 25] And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand [of them] whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Chaldea is the synonym for the Babylonians, Chaldea is the general community.

Nebuchadnezzar is actually more technically correct, and it shows up this way in several places, the Hebrai use is Nebuchadnezzar, but it is the same guy. Jeconiah gets the prophesy here by the Lord that he is going to be handed over to those who seek his life and to those whose face he fears, the Babylonians.

- 26] And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

He will be enslaved and die in Babylon. Jehoiachin's mother is Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8) who also suffers exile and they die in Babylon despite the prophecies of the false prophets (v. 25-26; 52:31-34). The people had an expectation that Jeconiah would return which is one reason Zedekiah had such a hard time maintaining order. He was a weak king but he was also fighting this crown prince bit. Jeremiah kept saying that no he would not return and God is going to use the Babylonians to judge you too. That made him very unpopular. This all happens in the second deportation which is also the one that takes away Ezekiel and Mordecai.

- 27] But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.
28] [Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol? [is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

They are Jeconiah and his mother and those who are in exile with him

These are rhetorical questions, he is a despised broken idol, a vessel wherein there is no pleasure.

Jeconiah's Blood Curse

- 29] O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.
30] Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man [that] shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Verse 28-30 are awesome words. Jeconiah had seven sons (1 Chr 3:17; Matt 1:12). None of his sons succeeded him on his throne. Zerubbabel who was his grandson is governor of the land, but he is not king and he does not sit on the throne of David, a technicality that is important. Zedekiah his uncle is reigning after him but dies before him (52:10-11). In the Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions there is a list of Jeconiah and his seven sons, they have the list of the oil that was provided to Jeconiah and his seven sons. This is important because Jeconiah is the last of the Solomonic line; Jeconiah is the last of the Judean kings of the house of David.

It is complicated because the Lord says, "*Write this man childless.*" He was not childless, he was not childless but it is like he was blotted out. "*A man that shall not prosper in his days...*" indeed he wasn't, he was in slavery. This curse created a rather grim and perplexing paradox: the Messiah had to come from the royal line, yet now there was a "blood curse" on that very line of descent!

The Solution

The answer emerges in the *differing* genealogies of Jesus Christ recorded in the gospels. Matthew, a Levi, focuses his gospel on the Messiahship of Jesus and presents Him as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Thus, Matthew traces the *legal* line from Abraham (as any Jew would) through David then through Solomon (the "royal" line) to Joseph, the *legal* father of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17).

On the other hand, Luke, as a physician, focuses on the *humanity* of Jesus and presents Him as the *Son of Man*. Luke traces the blood line from Adam (the first Man) through to David—and his genealogy from Abraham through David is identical to Matthew’s. But then after David, Luke departs from the path taken by Matthew and traces the family tree through *another* son of David (the second surviving son of Bathsheba), Nathan, down through Heli, the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38). See chart on previous page.

Zelophehad

One should also note the exception to the law which permitted inheritance through the *daughter* if no sons were available and she married within her tribe (Num 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:2-12; Josh 17:3-6; 1 Chr 7:15). The daughters of Zelophehad had petitioned Moses for a special exception, which was granted when they entered the land under Joshua.

C.I. Scofield was the first who noted that the claims of Christ rely upon this peculiar exception granted to the family of Zelophehad in the Torah. Heli, Mary’s father apparently had no sons, and Mary married within the tribe of Judah. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, of the house and lineage of David and carrying legal title to the line, but without the blood curse of Jeconiah!

Notes for the Genealogy of Jesus Christ Chart (right)

- * Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah all died violent deaths; God thus dealing with idolatry literally “to the 3rd and 4th generations” (Ex 20:4,5); their names therefore “blotted out” according to the Law (Deut 29:20). Jehoiakim and Jeconiah likewise, since the kingdom ended as an independent kingdom with Josiah’s death at Megiddo. Thus these were “blotted out” of the groups of “14 generations” in Matthew’s account. [E. W. Bullinger’s *Companion Bible*, Appendix 99.]
- ** Salathiel, the son of Jeconiah (Mt 1:12 1Chr 3:17) is also called the son of Neri (Lk 3:27). If these are the same person, a probable explanation is that the son of Neri, the descendant of Nathan, was deemed heir to the throne of David on the death of Jeconiah (Jer 22:30) due to the blood curse.
- *** There is a peculiar exception recorded in the Torah, the result of a petition by the daughters of Zelophehad, which provided for inheritance through the *daughter*, if no sons were available and she married within her tribe. (Num 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:2-12; Josh 17:3-6; 1 Chr 7:15.) It became traditional in such cases that the father would legally adopt his son-in-law (Ezra 2:61; Neh 7:63; Num 32:41, cf. 1 Chr 2:21-22, 34-35; Num 27:3-8). Joseph was the *son-in-law* (νομίζω, *nomizo*) of Heli.

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Luke	Matthew & Luke	Luke	Matthew
Adam		Nathan	Solomon
Seth		Mattatha	Rehoboam
Enosh		Menan	Abijah
Kenan		Melea	Asa
Mahalalel		Eliakim	Jehoshaphat
Jared		Jonan	Jehoram
Enoch		Joseph	Ahaziah*
Methuselah		Juda	Joash*
Lamech		Simeon	Amaziah*
Noah		Levi	Uzziah
Shem		Matthat	Jotham
Arphaxad		Jorim	Ahaz
Salah		Eliezer	Hezekiah
Eber		Jose	Manasseh
Peleg		Er	Amon
Reu		Elmodam	Josiah
Serug		Cosam	Jehoiakim*
Nahor		Addi	Jehoiachin*
Terah	→	Melchi	Salathiel**
	Abraham	Neri	Zerubbabel
	Isaac	Salathiel**	Abiud
	Jacob	Zerubbabel	Eliakim
	Judah	Rhesa	Azor
	Pharez	Joanna	Sadoc
	Hezron	Juda	Achim
	Ram	Joseph	Eliud
	Amminadab	Semei	Eleazar
	Nahshon	Mattathias	Matthan
	Salmon	Maath	Jacob
	Boaz	Nagge	Joseph
	Obed	Esli	
	Jesse	Naum	
	David	Amos	
		Mattathias	
		Joseph	
		Janna	
		Melchi	
		Levi	
		Matthat	
		Heli	
		(Mary)***	

Jeremiah 23

Pastors That Scatter

- 1] Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

A figure of speech, referring to their leaders and kings.

- 2] Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

These shepherds have scattered His flock and He says *I will visit upon you the evil of your doings*. The kings have been unfaithful, the people have been unfaithful to the Lord and so they are going to reap their just rewards. The Babylonian captivity and in a broader sense, the Diaspora.

Out of All Countries

- 3] And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

“Countries” - (plural). When Cyrus the Persian releases them they only come out of one country. God predicts that they will be regathered not once but twice. (Isaiah 11:11-12 - this is the not the Babylonian return this is the second return that we have been witnessing since May 14, 1948 and in spades since June 1967. Both these dates are anticipated precisely by the Lord later on in the book of Jeremiah.)

- 4] And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

Cf. shepherds vs “we have no king but Caesar!”

This has not happened yet. There will be twelve men sitting ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel. These are the Apostles, (don’t count Paul as one of them). They are presented Biblically are going to rule over the Twelve Tribes as in Matthew 19:28. That is Millennial.

New King to be Raised of the Lord

- 5] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

“Behold the days come,” This phrase occurs 15 times in the book of Jeremiah. This phrase links linguistically to a whole thread of prophecies starting in Genesis 3:15, and takes us through 2 Samuel 7:8-16 where we have the son of David and through the servant in Isaiah 42-53.

The word *Branch* is one of the most important prophetic titles of Jesus Christ: Isa 4:2-4, Zech 3:8-9 (stone as being an idiom for Jesus Christ, here it says one stone shall have seven eyes. In Revelation it says of Jesus Christ that He has seven eyes, He doesn’t have it literally, it is a Jewish expression meaning *complete visibility*.) Zech 6:12-13 (*He is a king and a priest*, unique, no one in the Bible is a king and priest except Melchizedek by type and Jesus Christ in terms of His office and you and I are prophesied to be kings and priests because we are in Him. This is a very special situation the Scripture emphasizes as being quite unique.)

Righteous Branch is *tsemach*, in the constellation Virgo or Virgin the number one magnitude star is the tsemach, the branch. The Mazzeroth is the twelve portions that the sun passes through between the ecliptic and the equinox collum which we call the Zodiac describes God’s whole redemptive plan through the names of the stars in the Hebrew. The word tsemach includes the concept of Jesus Christ being the *Branch* implanted even in those ancient names for the stars. [For a complete study do see the Briefing Package, *Signs in the Heavens*.]

- 6] In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this [is] his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The Lord our Righteousness or *Jehovah tsidheu* (1 Tim 1:16; Phil 3:9; 1 Cor 1:30). Zedekiah was the king when Jeremiah was writing this, *Zedekiah* is translated *the Lord is my righteousness*. He really wasn’t that was just the name that was given him. The Lord will be called *the Lord our Righteousness*, *Jehovah tsidheu* which is different. It will be earned and appropriate and truthful in contrast to the false label of Zedekiah. Verse 5 in effect says, *Behold the king*.

- 7] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

All through the Bible, God is described as the Lord God of Israel that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. When they praise Him they say the Lord God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. The Exodus is His identity, His rather theatrical way of saying who He is.

- 8] But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

His identity will be the God that brought the children of Israel out of all countries. The Lord is going to be identified as *the Lord who regathered His people in the land out of all countries even the north country*, or Russia. Ezekiel 38 identifies Russia that way, he also identifies it by their tribal names and he also from the uttermost parts of the north. Don't get confused about their invaders because all invaders invade Israel from the north like the Babylonians. Isa 11:11,12.

[For an in-depth study do see our Commentary on *Ezekiel* or our Briefing Package, *The Magog Invasion*].

False Prophets Denounced

- 9] Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.
- 10] For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force [is] not right.
- 11] For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

In my house is even in the Temple. Jeremiah is going to be starting to renounce the false prophets. (equivalent passages in Isaiah 28:7-13, Ezekiel 13:1-16, and Micah 3:5-12). Denouncing the false prophets, old news but specifically announcing the ruin of the nation because of the false prophets.

- 12] Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery [ways] in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, [even] the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.
- 13] And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.
- 14] I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.
- 15] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

Wormwood, familiar phrase from Revelation 9 (*wormwood* in Russian is *Chernobyl*). Cf. Rev 11:8. (Jerusalem = Sodom)

Part of what he is talking about here is the prophets and the priests, the prophets are assisted by the priests, they are working together. Judgment is going to start at the house of God.

- 16] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, [and] not out of the mouth of the LORD.
- 17] They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.
- 18] For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard [it]?
- 19] Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.
- 20] The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

Cf. 30:23-24.

- 21] I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.
- 22] But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

God is Inescapable

- 23] [Am] I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

God is saying that He is inescapable. (Psalm 139: 7-10).

- 24] Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Jonah tried this. You can't get away from Him, wherever you are, He is there.

The Prophets Lie

- 25] I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

- 26] How long shall [this] be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own heart;
- 27] Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

Anything you put or substitute instead of the Lord is an idol!¼

- 28] The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What [is] the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.
- 29] [Is] not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer [that] breaketh the rock in pieces?
- 30] Therefore, behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

Matthew 13, the birds that pick the seed that falls by the way. Those birds are Satan's, they steal His word.

- 31] Behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

It is their tongues, but attributed to the Lord.

- 32] Behold, I [am] against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

No matter how enticing the words are, if the Lord hasn't sent them, they are dangerous and deceptive.

- 33] And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What [is] the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.
- 34] And [as for] the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

In the Hebrew here there is a pun, the word *massah* means oracle like a prophet, and the word pronounced with a different accent means to *lift up like a burden*. So the word *burden* and *oracle* are homonyms in the Hebrew.

- 35] Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

Zipf's Law

- 36] And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

In the field of linguistics, it has been observed that in any substantial corpus of text, when the vocabulary (or phonemes) used is ranked in order of frequency of use, the rank of a term times the frequency of its use always approximates a constant. This phenomenon is called *Zipf's Law*, named after George K. Zipf, a lexicographer who first discovered this phenomena. It also turns out that deviations from this phenomena are always less efficient, therefore it is also called *The Principle of Least Effort*. (Excerpted from *Cosmic Codes*, pages 79-80, do see the book for a more in-depth discussion on languages and hidden codes.)

- 37] Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?
- 38] But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD;
- 39] Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, [and cast you] out of my presence:
- 40] And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

They will be forgotten, but their shame won't be.

Jeremiah 24

Two Baskets of Figs

- 1] The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs [were] set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

Nebuchadrezzar is the same as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. These two baskets of figs are strange idioms. What is strange is the good ones are the ones who go into captivity. This sounds backwards until you understand what God is saying.

- 2] One basket [had] very good figs, [even] like the figs [that are] first ripe: and the other basket [had] very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.
- 3] Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.
- 4] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 5] Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for [their] good.
- 6] For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull [them] down; and I will plant them, and not pluck [them] up.
- 7] And I will give them an heart to know me, that I [am] the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

He is really looking ahead. Was He their God, that is the people He is talking to? No, they were worshiping idols. He wanted to be their God. The day will come when He brings them back from the Captivity and then they will in fact worship Him with their whole heart.

The exiles that were in Babylon, the good figs here, prospered even though they were slaves (2 Kgs 25; 27-30; Jer 29:4-7). In fact they prosper so well that after they were free to return to the homeland after Cyrus issues a decree to free them, only 37,000 return to the land. The rest stayed behind in prosperous Babylon.

- 8] And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

Remained: Ez 11:5-6, 14-21; 33:24 (Bleak).

- 9] And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for [their] hurt, [to be] a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.
- 10] And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

Strange idiom here. Basically the idea is another way of amplifying is that Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant. The enemies of Israel have been raised by God to be His instrument of judgment. Jeremiah is telling them to repent or submit, that is not to fight Babylon. Zedekiah and his princes were pro-Egypt, the contrary power and kept having intrigues to their own detriment. It is an interesting idiom in that the good figs

are the ones that are taken into captivity. Even though they are slaves in Babylon, they will return to the land, and they will also be submitting to God when they submit to Babylon because they will be submitting to the instrument that God has raised. The bad figs are the one who resist. This theme of Jeremiah becomes very unpopular. He is tried for heresy in chapter 26. Chapter 26 is actually an amplification of the Temple address in chapter 7. Remember that these are not in chronological order. The point is that Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant and Jeremiah is God's messenger and trying to get this across. Strangely enough in the Gospels Jesus talks about a fig tree in a vineyard. The fig tree is Judah and the vineyard is Israel in a collective sense. What is interesting here that the figs ripen in June (Isa 28:4; Hos 9:10), study the Six-Day War. Them being removed (Deut 28:25, 37) is fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar and the fall of Jerusalem under Titus Vespasian.

The Times of the Gentiles

Chapter 25 is earlier in time from the point of view of Jeremiah it actually occurs between chapters 35 and 36. The important battle of Carchemish, where Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Neco at the Euphrates, is one of the most decisive battles in the history of the whole world. It alters the whole future of West Asia. This sets up the rise of Babylon, and the rise of Nebuchadnezzar.

It also launches a period of time known in Luke (21:24) as the "Times of the Gentiles," which spans the time of Nebuchadnezzar's rise to be king of Babylon through the rise of another world leader who is probably alive today--there are two chapters in the book of Daniel that chronicle specifically the Gentile history. Most of the Bible deals with the history of Israel, there are a couple of exceptions, the most prominent ones being Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 which deals with specifically the times of the Gentiles. [Do see our Briefing package on *An Empire Reborn* or our commentary on *Daniel* for an in-depth study of these two chapters.]

Supplement:

Ezekiel's 430 years

There is a puzzling prophecy in the book of Ezekiel that speaks of 430 years of judgment pronounced upon Israel. (Ezek 4:1-8) 70 years are clearly accounted for by the Babylonian Captivity. But that leaves 360

years that do not seem to fit any specific interpretation of history. There are also passages in Leviticus that indicate that if Israel doesn't obey the first time God will multiply her punishment by seven. (Lev 26:18, 21, 24, 28.) 360 years times 7 equals 2520 years.

Calendar Reconciliation

Sir Robert Anderson, in his classic work, *The Coming Prince*, noted that the Bible uses 360-day years in both Genesis and Revelation. In attempting to reconcile the 2520 360-day years to our Roman calendar, one is faced with the discrepancies between the sidereal year and the solar year. (The Julian year is 11 minutes and 10.46 seconds longer than the mean solar year.)

In 1582, it was recognized that errors had accumulated to 11 days too many, and adjustments were required. In the Gregorian Reform, September 4th was declared September 14th, and the formula for leap years was changed to exclude centuries unless divisible by four (and millennia by 400). Thus, 2520 360-day years contain 907,200 days, which are accounted for on our current calendar as 2483 years₃₆₅ plus 9 months and 21 days:

2483 years ₃₆₅	906,295 days
plus, for leap years	614 days
9 months	270 days
21 days	<u>21 days</u>
2520 years ₃₆₀	907,200 days

But where does one apply this interval?

Terminus Ad Quem

Another problem occurs when we examine more closely the “Babylonian Captivity.” There are two different periods that are candidates: “The Servitude of the Nation,” and the “Desolations of Jerusalem.” Each of these was prophesied to be seventy years in duration and many assume they are synonymous of each other; however, they are not.

There were actually three sieges of Nebuchadnezzar upon Jerusalem. The first siege began the “Servitude of the Nation” and was prophesied to last 70 years (and it did, to the very day—Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10. When Cyrus conquered Babylon he encountered the amazing letter written to him by Isaiah a century and a half earlier, which addressed him by

name, highlighted his meteoric career, and predicted that he would free the captives. His astonishment resulted in his releasing the Hebrew captives to return to Judea to rebuild their temple.)

The vassal king that Nebuchadnezzar left later rebelled; a second siege resulted in his uncle, Zedekiah, being appointed to the throne. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel both went on to warn that if they persisted in rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed. Yet Zedekiah ultimately yielded to the false prophets and rebelled.

A third siege resulted in the destruction and desolation of the city of Jerusalem. The “Desolations of Jerusalem” also lasted 70 years, until Nehemiah ultimately succeeded in getting the authority to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. This, too, was precisely 70 years. To which of these two periods should we apply the 2520 years?

The Servitude of the Nation

The 70 years of servitude, to be consistent, should be reckoned as 25,200 days, or two days short of 69 years on our Roman calendar. The *first* siege of Nebuchadnezzar, which began the “Servitude of the *Nation*” in 606 B.C. lasted until the summer of 537 B.C. With July 23, 537 B.C. as the release from servitude, then

$$\begin{array}{r}
 -537 \text{ y } 7 \text{ m } 23 \text{ d} \\
 \quad \quad \quad 1 \qquad \qquad \qquad \text{(No “year 0”)} \\
 2483 \text{ y } 9 \text{ m } 21 \text{ d} \\
 \hline
 1948 \text{ y } 5 \text{ m } 14 \text{ d} = \text{May 14, 1948}
 \end{array}$$

On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion, citing the book of Ezekiel as his authority, proclaimed Israel as the new Jewish homeland. The nation Israel was reestablished on the very completion of this interval from the end of the “Servitude of the Nation” under Babylon. Isaiah 11:11,12. What a “coincidence.”

The Desolations of Jerusalem

The third siege of Nebuchadnezzar, which began the “Desolations of Jerusalem” in 587 B.C., lasted until 518 B.C. With August 16, 518 B.C. as the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, then

-518 y 8 m 16 d
 1 (No "year 0")
 2483 y 9 m 21 d

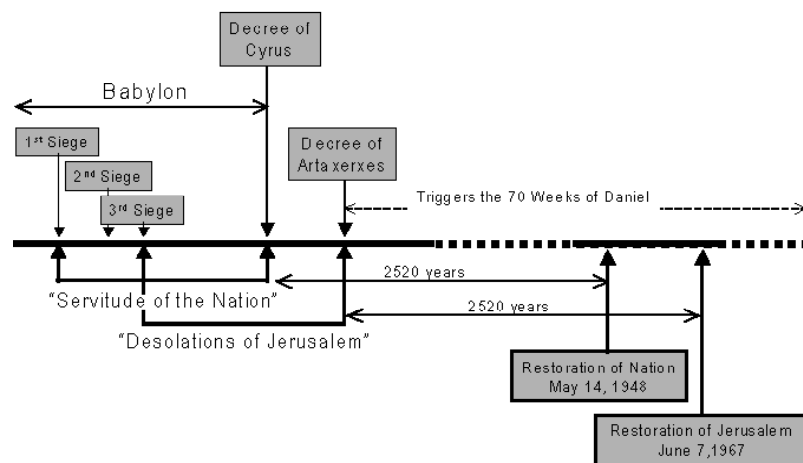
1967 y 6 m 7 d = June 7, 1967.

On June 7, 1967, as a consequence of the "Six Day War," the Old City of Jerusalem fell under Israeli control for the first time since Jesus' prediction: "...Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Luke 21:24

Israel regained Jerusalem at the very completion of this same interval since the "Desolations of Jerusalem" under Babylon. What a "coincidence." (The rabbis say that "Coincidence is not a kosher word.")

[It should be borne in mind that the "starting" dates are *not* known precisely *to the day*. More research needs to be done. But this certainly seems provocative enough to ponder.]

Ezekiel's 2520 Years?



Jeremiah 25

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that [was] the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

- 2] The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

Very precisely dated, *the first year of Nebuchadrezzar*, roughly 605 B.C. (Chapter 36:1, 45:1, and 46:2). Compare this with Daniel 1:1 and you may see a slight discrepancy, because there is two ways of reckoning a year when a king succeeds to a throne. There is the succession year and the non-succession year. Judah did it one way; Babylon did it another way, the two actually agree, even though it may not look like it at first.

The first year of Nebuchadrezzar this is the first invasion (chronicled in 2 Kings 24:1-2). The first siege of Nebuchadrezzar starts a period called the "Servitude of the Nations." In verse 9-11, the duration of this servitude is prophesied to be seventy years from Nebuchadrezzar through Cyrus when he conquers Babylon and lets them go home and build their Temple.

This chapter is going to deal with the Servitude of the Nation. In verse 1 where Jeremiah spoke unto all the people he is going to review 23 years of faithful ministry. He has served 19 years under Josiah the king and 4 years under Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin were both three-month kind of tenures. Concurrent prophets with Jeremiah include Uriah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk, and Daniel and Ezekiel who were in Babylon at the time.

- 3] From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that [is] the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.
- 4] And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them]; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

These prophets are not necessarily alone. There is often multiple prophets.

- 5] They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:
- 6] And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

This judgment is conditioned upon their lack of repentance. Promise of foregoing all of this is there if they will repent.

- 7] Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord's Servant?

- 8] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words,
9] Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

Nebuchadnezzar is listed as the Lord's servant three times in the book of Jeremiah. This pagan idol-worshipping ruler called the Lord's servant in chapter 25:8, 27:6, and 43:10. Cyrus the Persian is referred to as the Lord's anointed twice in Isaiah chapter 44:28 and 45:1. These are strange names for pagan kings. The Lord is capable of using tainted vessels.

Daniel 4 is written by Nebuchadnezzar in a form of a memo that was put on every telegraph pole around the known world. When you read it opens and closes as *I Nebuchadnezzar*. He tells the story of how through his pride God subjects him to seven years of mental derangement. At the end of which he regains his mental faculties and through this announces that the God of Daniel is indeed the God of the universe. During those seven years there is a tradition that he was under the personal care of Daniel. As you study the book of Daniel you will understand that Daniel has a deep affection and respect for King Nebuchadnezzar and even later when he is brought out of retirement to interpret this peculiar handwriting on the wall he puts down the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was probably the most absolute despot that ever has been on earth. He is the one who God raises to judge Israel. This gets all entangled throughout the Scripture, there are several milestones in Israel's history. The seventy year Babylonian captivity is one of them. It also launches the period of the Gentiles.

- 10] Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

Quoted in Revelation 18:13. In chapters 17-18 of Revelation, John deals with an idiom called *Mystery Babylon*. We are going to discover that literal Babylon is prophesied to be doomed and never again rebuilt. There are some scholars that argue that the language here doesn't mean that Babylon will never be rebuilt, just not for a long time. What seems

to be more consistent is that Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar it will never be rebuilt. When you get to Revelation and it deals with *Mystery Babylon*, the writer is dealing with Babylon idiomatically. You need to understand Babylon spiritually to understand the book of Revelation. Back in Genesis the first empire under Nimrod the hunter is Babel and the tower of Babel. In the middle of chapters 17 and 18 in 18:23 you will find this verse essentially quoted in the book of Revelation.

[See our Briefing package on *The Mystery of Babylon* for a current update on this subject.]

70 Years

- 11] And this whole land shall be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

One of several places that this phrase will occur.

- 12] And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

'Perpetual desolations' - Jer 50:11-13, the same prophesy is mentioned in Isaiah 13:19-22. God used Babylon but not because of its merit, but because of Israel's sin.

Leviticus 25. The Sabbath for man, six days you work, the seventh you honor the Sabbath day. There is also a Sabbath for the land, The land is an integral part in understanding the relationship between God & Israel and Israel's history. The law of redemption of the land Leviticus 26:32-35; 2 Chr 36:20-21. For 490 years Israel failed to keep the Sabbath year of the land. The Sabbath for the land was 6 years to cultivate, the seventh to rest. Since they failed to keep the Sabbath of the land for 490 years, the Lord said you owe me 70 and sent them into captivity in Babylon. He forgave them for 70 X 7 times and then called what was due. (For an in-depth study of this unique prophecy, see *Daniel's Seventy Weeks* Briefing Package.)

Four 490-year Intervals in History

From Abraham unto the Exodus in Egypt 75+430= 505 (75 from promise in Gen 12:4; Gal 3:17 says 430) Except there are 15 years there were there was a usurper with Ishmael. So 505 - 15= 490.

From the Exodus to the Temple (1 Kgs 6 is 591 years; 1 Kgs 8 dedicated Temple with another 10 years involved. = 601 years.) However, if you go through the servitudes in the Judges; it was under Mesopotamia for 8 years; under the Moabites for 18 years; under the Caanites for 20 years; under the Midianites for 7 years; under the Philistines and Ammonites together for 18 years; and under the Philistines later for 40 years: The 6 servitudes in the Book of Judges add up to 111 years. 601-111=490 years.

From the Temple dedication (1 Kgs 8 roughly 1005 B.C.) **to the edict of Artaxerxes** (Neh 2:1 in 445 BC). 1005-445=560 years. But also included is the 70 years in Babylon. 560 -70=490 years.

From Artaxerxes to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is 490 years, but counting only those years that Israel is under God's directive (and not dispersed or in captivity). Seventy times Seventy Week Prophecy of Daniel is 490 or 483 plus seven with a gap in between which is the Diaspora or the Times of the Gentiles.

Judgment of Nations

- 13] And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, [even] all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.
- 14] For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.
- 15] For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.
- 16] And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.
- 17] Then took I the cup at the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:

These verses are connected by the Septuagint to Jeremiah chapters 46-51. *The cup of His fury* used in Jer 49:12; 51:7; Job 21:20; Ps 60:3; Isa 51:17,22; Ez 23:31; Mark 10:39; 14:36; John 18:11; Rev 14:8,10; 16:19; 18:6. (occurs 14x). The cup can be used as a *blessing* as in Ps 16:5; 23:5, Luke 22:17, 20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:24-25 (occurs 7x). It is an idiom used broadly, but we are used to it being used as a cup for His wrath or fury.

- 18] [To wit], Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as [it is] this day;

Judgment of all these nations - nations are detailed in Jer 46-51. The judgment begins with Jerusalem and Judah. Judgment always begins in the house of God.

Mixed Blood

- 19] Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;
- 20] And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,
- 21] Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,
- 22] And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which [are] beyond the sea,

Egyptians themselves were of mixed blood. Uz (Job 1:1) is northeast of Edom. The Philistine cities are mentioned, all but Gath (2 Chr 26:6; Amos 6:2). Remnant of Ashdod was mentioned because it was destroyed after a twenty-nine year siege and it was rebuilt in Nehemiah's day. Edom, Moab and Ammon were blood relations with Israel, and Tyre and Sidon.

The Arabian Tribes

- 23] Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all [that are] in the utmost corners,

Dedan from Ezekiel 38 was a son of Abraham by Katurrah (Gen 25:3). Tema was a son of Ishmael (Gen 24:15; Job 6:19) and is 250 miles southeast of Edom. Buz is descended from Nahor, brother of Abraham (Gen 22:21) and generally speaks of the northern Arabian tribes.

- 24] And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,

"People that dwell in the desert" - Bedouins (9:26; 49:23) and the Cushites.

- 25] And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

Not sure where Zimri was, he shows up in Numbers 25:14; 1 Kings 16:9-20; 2 Kings 9:31; 1 Chronicles 7:6; 8:36; 9:42. It is possible that it is the same as Zimran who was a son of Abraham by Katurrah in Genesis 24:2, if so he dwelt between the Arabian peninsula and Persia.

Elam and Media are east of the Tigris river, Elam is east of the Persian Gulf about 200 miles east of Babylon. Media is north and west of Persia and forms an alliance with Persia and becomes the Medo-Persian empire that subsequently put down Babylon and in turn is captured by the Greeks.

- 26] And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which [are] upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

The word *Sheshach* happens to be an encrypted form of the name Babylon. There are secret codes or encryptions in the Scripture. There are three kinds of encryptions in the Hebrew that are found in the ancient text. This one is called ATBASH it comes from a contraction of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Encryptions occurs in chapter 25:26 and in 51:1, 41 and Isaiah 7. Jeremiah would speak of Babylon in cryptic, He always speaks of them freely but not derogatorily, and this may have been written when Nebuchadnezzar was at the gates.

[For a look at encryptions, see *Cosmic Codes*, book or tapes.]

- 27] Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.
- 28] And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink.
- 29] For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts.

Subject change. This prophecy is not constrained to the judgment on Babylon later, it is not the judgment of the invasion of Jerusalem, the scope of this prophecy goes far beyond the immediate horizon of the prophet (Dan 11:36,40, Isa 14 and Ezek 28).

One thing is being addressed but the language very quickly shifts gears and broadens its real subject to something much more broader. *"A sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth saith the Lord of hosts,"* Zechariah tells that He gathers them together to battle against Jerusalem. *"I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling; I will bring all nations against Jerusalem."* There is not a battle at Armageddon, that is just the staging area. It is the gathering area for the nations to go against Israel.

Treading the Grapes

- 30] Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread [the grapes], against all the inhabitants of the earth.

Treading of the grapes - Isaiah 63:3 and Revelation 14:19-20. Revelation 19:15 and Isaiah 63 describes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in which He has a vesture dipped in blood, the blood of His enemies. Very different from the Lord as He is depicted in His earthly ministry. This is a powerful commander coming to take possession of that which He has purchased and dispossess the land of its usurpers. Graphically portrayed throughout the Old Testament prophecies and yet those same idioms are climaxed in the book of Revelation (structurally modeled after the book of Joshua).

The Lord shall roar from on high. Satan is the one who goes about the world like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. This phrase is Satan attempting to be a counterfeit; the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lord as He is described in the Old Testament. Paul talks about Satan going about as a roaring lion, even in this he is a counterfeit.

- 31] A noise shall come [even] to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them [that are] wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.
- 32] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.
- 33] And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.
- 34] Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves [in the ashes], ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.
- 35] And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.
- 36] A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, [shall be heard]: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture.
- 37] And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
- 38] He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

Jeremiah 26

Trial for Heresy

This is not in chronological order, it actually occurs before chapter 25. The Holy Spirit dates this letter by referring to the kings. *Jeremiah 26:1 In the beginning of the reign*, the Hebrew grammar means the first half of the reign. This section, Chapter 26 through Chapter 45 combine all kinds of events in the life of Jeremiah.

In Chapter 7, Jeremiah conducted what we call his Temple Address. He very publicly stood at the outer court of the Temple and it was apparently at a major feast time when there was a lot of people there, and he gives his presentation. It was not very popular. Jeremiah's message from the Lord was that the Lord was not going to protect, He has raised up Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians to be His instrument in judging Judah for their idol worship. This was an unpopular message and it was regarded as treasonous. This was also at a time when a leadership in the Court was trying to make an alliance with Egypt. Jeremiah warned them not to do it. This message that was mentioned in Chapter 7 is summarized in the front of Chapter 26 and what 26 deals with is not the message but some of the events that were precipitated by that message.

Verses 1-3 are a summary of the Temple address. Verse 2 and 3 is a summary of Chapter 7.

- 1] In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:

Earlier than 25:1. Jeremiah charged to stand in Outer Court (v. 2; 19:14).

Speak to all the cities of Judah - possible at the Passover, the Feast of Booths, and the Feast of Tabernacles and Feast of Trumpets. All able bodied males were required to go up to Jerusalem to recognize these three feasts. So it is on this kind of a festive day that the Lord tells Jeremiah to go up into the Outer Court and speak to all the cities of Judah.

- 3] If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

- 4] And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,
- 5] To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending [them], but ye have not hearkened;

Temple as a Talisman

- 6] Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

The first six verses are a precis of Chapter 7.

I will make this house like Shiloh, the term can mean a Messianic phrase; it is not so used here. *Shiloh* is an actual location, historically relevant to Israel because the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Tabernacle at Shiloh when they came into the land, until it moved into Solomon's Temple. The connotation here is that Shiloh was one of the holy places because the Ark of the Covenant rested there when they entered the land, but at the time that he is saying this, Shiloh is in desolation.

The suggestion is that Jerusalem, even though they have the Temple, it is going to be desolate just as Shiloh is. There is a parallel that there is an attitude among the priests and the people that the Lord won't let anything too bad happen to them because the Temple was there. Scholars refer to this notion as the Temple Fetish, the Temple as some kind of talisman, this notion that because God established the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, He won't let anything too bad happen to them because after all this was His house.

Part of Jeremiah's burden is to get across that this didn't matter. Ezekiel who was writing at this time describes the Shekinah glory leaving the Holy of Holies. Jeremiah had the painful burden of being a prophet to a dying nation, God was saying through Jeremiah that Judah wasn't listening, you will not do my ways, you should have learned from the Northern Kingdom a hundred years before. Judah your burden is even greater, you should have learned but you haven't. God raised the enemies of Judah, mainly the Babylonians to be His instruments of judgment. Judah took false confidence in the fact that the Temple was in Jerusalem.

- 7] So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord: Don't misunderstand. It doesn't

mean that they heard them like they really understood them or swallowed that, they just acknowledged receipt. They respond to this in verse 8.

The Prophets Response

- 8] Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded [him] to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

They are presuming that their posture is the same as Isaiah and King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah was under attack and Isaiah comforted the people and said that God was going to deliver them. Their presumption here is that God is again going to deliver them. So when Jeremiah said that they had had it, they just looked at this like heresy. Isaiah 37:36-37. Cf. Deut 18:20.

- 9] Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.
- 10] When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S [house].
- 11] Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man [is] worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

He prophesied against the city and the Temple.

The Lord's Prophet

- 12] Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

Jeremiah is making the declaration that the words he is speaking are given to him by the Lord himself. Jeremiah is in a context where he is enduring the penalty of death if he is wrong, blasphemy (Deut 18:20). He is not backing down or mincing his words, he is in fact unflinchingly ascribing his message to explicit specific instruction from the Lord Himself. (Direct, courageous, appropriate).

- 13] Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

- 14] As for me, behold, I [am] in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.
- 15] But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

In privacy of his dialogue with the Lord where he sort of complains which we mentioned earlier, but publicly Jeremiah never flinches or backs off from what he is saying . He does not beg for his life (Matt 27:24-25; Acts 5:28).

The Civil Authorities Intercede

- 16] Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man [is] not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

The trial that he is on was in the Temple and was brought on to him by the priests and the prophets, he is under ecclesiastical indictment, a heresy trial. The Holy Spirit uses the civil authorities to save him. It is the princes and the people that say he is not worthy to die, his accusers are all these false pseudo-prophets.

- 17] Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,
- 18] Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed [like] a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.
- 19] Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

How, by ignoring this message. This tremendous spiritual insight comes not from the denominational leaders.

Urijah the Prophet

- 20] And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah:
- 21] And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;

- 22] And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, [namely], Elnathan the son of Achbor, and [certain] men with him into Egypt.
- 23] And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

The point he was making here was that he was denied due process and he was also denied burial in the normal way.

- 24] Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

This is not the only time hat Jeremiah is under trial, but in this case the civil authorities succeed in delivering Jeremiah from the hands of his enemies. Micah also prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, roughly about 800 B.C. (direct correlation with Micah 3:12 and 2 Kings 18:3-6). Amos and Isaiah were also co-inhabitants of that particular period of time.

Urijah is mentioned, he is a true prophet, Kirjathjearim is about 7 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Japheth (Joshua 9:17; 1 Samuel 7:2). Urijah is extradited after he flees to Egypt. Jehoiakim is a vassal of Egypt, so it wasn't hard for him to bring him back and slaughter him. Jehoiakim is the grandfather to Jehoiachin or Jeconiah the one that we talked about that had the blood curse on him. Elnathan is apparently the grandfather of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:8), father in law of Jehoiakim a man of status (36:12, 25). Ahikam is an official under Jehoiachin (2 Kings 22:12, 14). He is the father of Gedaliah who becomes the governor of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (39:14; 40:13-41:3; 2 Kgs 25:22).

Jeremiah 27

Message to Ambassadors

- 1] In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- “Jehoiakim” but a lot of good evidence that this is a copying error, that this is actually Zedekiah (scribal error). Marginal notes may make reference to that. The best manuscripts actually say Zedekiah.
- 2] Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,

(Reminiscent of Ezekiel). An object lesson. A yoke, which is a classical and Biblical symbol of servitude (1 Kings 22:11 and Ezekiel 7:23). Jeremiah runs around with a yoke on his neck. Some scholars say that this was just symbolic, but later on it mentions that his enemy breaks it (28:10-11).

- 3] And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah;

Zedekiah shows up here (more evidence for scribal error). So he doesn't make just one, he makes a bunch of these yokes and sends them to these kings, and he wears one himself. These are all kings that are going to be subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar.- Jeremiah's way of getting his point across.

- 4] And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters;
- 5] I have made the earth, the man and the beast that [are] upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

God gives these yokes to whom He desires. He is presenting this issue on His authority as the Creator.

Nebuchadnezzar as God's Servant

- 6] And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

The God of Israel identifies Nebuchadnezzar as His servant. This phrase is used three times of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Jeremiah. Isaiah uses even a stronger term of Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus is in charge of the Medo-Persian empire, he is confronted when he conquers Jerusalem at the gates with a dusty old scroll of the book of Isaiah where they read from Chapter 44 and 45 where God addresses a letter to him by name calling him *Cyrus mine anointed, I have surnamed thee... because I am naming you by name you will know that I am the God of Israel...* This was written 150 years before Cyrus was born!

Cyrus was impressed. He was impressed enough to turn them loose and let them go home. That is what starts the return from the captivity.

Nebuchadnezzar spoken of as “my servant.” Daniel was a very effective student of the Bible, specifically we know that he read the book of Jeremiah because he makes that reference in Chapter 9. So it is no surprise than that Daniel had no trouble with Nebuchadnezzar, he didn’t compromise his posture with him as a follower of the God of Israel, when he was deported as a teenager in the first deportation to Babylon, he talked his supervisor into letting them keep their Jewish traditions. So this led to Daniel impressing the king with his spiritual gifts in Chapter 2.

He always treats Nebuchadnezzar with respect. When he is an old man called out of retirement by Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson to read the writing on the wall even their Daniel doesn’t just interpret the handwriting on the wall, he puts Belshazzar down, saying, “Your grandfather, there was a king, not you , punk.” That is almost the way he deals with it. Nebuchadnezzar also wrote a letter describing how he was king of the world and on an ego trip and how God warned him that on that ego trip He was going to bring him down for seven years. Nebuchadnezzar doesn’t listen and sure enough the Lord renders him with a mental illness for seven years. At the end of the seven years he returns and realizes that the God of Israel was the God of the universe and so says in a letter posted throughout the known world. “...and the beasts of the field I have also given to serve him.” It is interesting that the particular form of delusion that God gave him was like cantrophy, he was to be like the beasts who ate of the grass.

Third Generation

- 7] And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

All the known world at that time becomes subject to Nebuchadnezzar. Not only was the Babylonian captivity prophesied to be seventy years, but their freedom will be linked to the end of the Babylonian rule... not only are they going to be slaves seventy years, three generations: Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evil-Merodach, and his son Belshazzar. The Chaldean and Hebrew languages does not have a word for grandfather. A son is simply a pro-gender or in other words it isn’t an immediate son. Nebuchadnezzar’s son is his grandson also.

Up until a few generations ago the version of the fall of Babylon was regarded as quaint myths because of the historians because they had

all kinds of reasons to believe the fall of Babylon happened quite differently. It was several decades ago that archeologists discovered that there were co-regents at the time and the king of Babylon was absent he didn’t get killed that night as the Bible says, according to secular history. Except it turns out there was co-regents and Belshazzar was there and did die that way, and in fact it not only corroborates the book of Daniel but there is evidence that it had to be written by an eyewitness. [See our expositional commentary on *Daniel*].

Here it says that not only will Nebuchadnezzar rule all these nations but through three generations, but it also says that the third generation, *until the time that his land come and then many nations and great kings shall enslave him*. Notice the plural here, the Medes and the Persians (52:31; Dan 5:1, 30).

- 8] And it shall come to pass, [that] the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Tough for the Jewish listener to hear, that Jeremiah is telling them that God is behind this pagan idol worshiping king and that anyone that doesn’t submit to this heathen will be put to death, *by the sword, by famine or by pestilence*.

Attack on False Prophets

- 9] Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanter, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:
- 10] For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

He is attacking the false prophets. Matthew 24-25, Jesus says that many false prophets will arise and they should deceive if it were possible the very elect. The Greek really says that prophets will arise for the purpose of deceiving the very elect if it were possible. Fortunately it is not possible. In the Greek grammar the language implies that the reason that the false prophets will arise is for the purpose of deceiving the very elect. That should be pretty obvious because the others don’t need deceiving. The topic of false prophets is worthy of study as in Jeremiah that is his whole burden. Also, in the book of Revelation there is a whole emphasis on false teaching, the deviant doctrine.

- 11] But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.

He is speaking to these heathen nations, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, not the nation of Judah.

- 12] I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.
13] Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?
14] Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

The false prophets were going around saying that even though things looked grim, God wouldn't let anything happen to them, after all they were God's people. In verse 14, the prophets here are pseudo-prophets.

- 15] For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

Not only are false prophets misguided, they are the pawns of Satan. There are three things: the doctrine, the error, and Balaam. Balaam was an instrument of evil because he was the mechanism by which Israel's enemies found out how to thwart them and fall from favor from God. 1 Timothy 4:1 speaks of the doctrines of demons.

Any idea or teaching that is deviant from the Gospel of Jesus Christ is Satanic. There is only one real protection and that is the whole counsel of God.

Temple Vessels

- 16] Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Harken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

At the first siege by Nebuchadnezzar he took the vessels of the Temple and a deportation, and set up a vassal king (2 Chr 36:5-7; 2 Kgs 24:13). There is actually a nineteen year period during which there is a second

rebellion and a siege and finally a third siege where Nebuchadnezzar lays siege, levels the place and takes them all captive. During that era the false prophets were saying that the Temple vessels are in the trophy room of Babylon, but they are coming back, God is going to bring those back, and Jehoiakim is enslaved in Babylon but he is coming back. That is why Zedekiah had such a hard time is because the heir to the throne was enslaved in Babylon. This is what the false prophets were saying all the time that the Temple vessels were coming back.

- 17] Harken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?

In other words if you don't yield to Babylon, he is going to level this place.

- 18] But if they [be] prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and [in] the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

If these guys are really prophets, let them pray that the rest of this stuff doesn't go there.

- 19] For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city,

Referring to the other Temple vessels. Not all the Temple vessels were taken in the first siege. What is left now are the pillars, the bronze pillars that were named Joakim and Boaz, counsel and strength (1 Kgs 7:15-22).

God says, "ye are the temple of God" and there is a New Testament architecture there. There are aspects to the Temple that are different from the Tabernacle. The bronze portions include these two pillars and the exterior pieces of furniture, known primarily as the Molten Sea, the brass laver. An unfortunate translation, it is really a giant bronze laver or wash basin. Molten is a Hebrew word that really means bronze. The Sea means a laver; it is a brass washbowl (1 Kgs 7:23-26). In a Tabernacle sense, it was a portable thing that you carried on poles. When they get to the Temple of Solomon, all these things with a few additions are codified to the permanent house of God. What was this portable bronze laver was now a very large bronze bath and it was on the backs of twelve bronze oxen. It was big enough for priests to be immersed in

ritual washing. There were also ten smaller bronze lavers that were on stands that were on wheels (1 Kgs 7:27-37; 2 Chr 4:6). They were also used for ceremonial washing.

The pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases... These are the things that Nebuchadnezzar did not take the first time because they were bronze and not gold.

- 20] Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;
- 21] Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain [in] the house of the LORD, and [in] the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;
- 22] They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

Tough words for the resident of Judah, because Nebuchadnezzar is coming back for the rest of these things.

The vessels were all returned under Cyrus the Persian in about 536 B.C, seventy years later (Ezra 1:7-11). The book of Ezra is the return into the Temple under Cyrus the Persian. It is some years later that Nehemiah the cupbearer to the subsequent king Artaxerxes Longimanus is given the decree that triggers the Seventy Week prophecy in the book of Daniel.

There is a distinction between the release of the captives to go back and rebuild the Temple and some 19 years later when Nehemiah gets the authority to rebuild the city. One ends the Servitude of the Nations and the other ends the Desolations of Jerusalem. If you take the 2,484 years, 2 months and 3 days from the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar, you come to May 14, 1948 when the nation is back in the land.

If you take that same period of time from the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar the Desolations of the Cities of Jerusalem you come to June of 1967, which is the first time since the crucifixion of Christ where the city of Jerusalem is under non-Gentile dominion. So when he says that Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, you rejoice as of June of 1967.

Jeremiah 28

Hananiah

- 1] And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, [and] in the fifth month, [that] Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which [was] of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,

Hananiah is a false prophet, he is claiming *“thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts...”*

“Beginning” - 1st half of reign.

- 2] Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.
- 3] Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD’S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:

Here is one of those false prophets saying that in two years all the things that were stolen from the Temple will be returned.

- 4] And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.
- 5] Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD,
- 6] Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD’S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

Jeremiah has a note of sarcasm here.

- 7] Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people;
- 8] The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.
- 9] The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, [then] shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22, the test of a prophet. If the thing that the prophet says is of the Lord, it will come to pass, if it doesn’t, kill him.

Hananiah Breaks Yoke

- 10] Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.

Hananiah takes the symbolic yoke that Jeremiah has on his neck and breaks it.

- 11] And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.
- 12] Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah [the prophet], after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying,
- 13] Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.
- 14] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

It is fascinating that this is always in there. He is the only king in the Gentile dominion that I know of that has the beast of the field also.

- 15] Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.

Jeremiah is confronting Hananiah, "*the Lord has not sent thee,*"

- 16] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.
- 17] So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

If you go back to verse one, the Holy Spirit took the trouble to show that this started in the fifth month and this boastful false prophet said that in *two years I will have all this stuff back here*. He dies in two months. *Lo selah ko* in Hebrew means the *He has not sent you*, (v. 15) in other words, God has not sent Hananiah, the word here in terms of casting you off the face of the earth is *Me salleh ke*, which is almost the same word, it is almost a play on words. *Lo* means *not*, *He has not sent you*, but he is going to *send you off the face of the earth*. What is hidden in the pun in the Hebrew what God is saying through Jeremiah is you came to be sent but you are not, I am going to send you off the face of the earth.

At the time that Hananiah is going through this false prophet routine we know from archeological evidence called the Babylonian Chronicle that at this time Nebuchadnezzar had his hands full quelling a local revolt in Babylon itself. It starts to give you a feeling why Hananiah had the audacity to be optimistic that Babylon was going to fall.

Jeremiah 29

Letters to the Captives

First letter in the Bible. (2 Chr 21:12-15; 30:1, 6-9; 32:17; Ezra 1:2-4; 4:9-22; 5:7-16; 6:3-12; 7:12-26; Dan 4!?).

- 1] Now these [are] the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

A group of letters to those who are captive in Babylon. These people were the people that were taken captive in the first siege. So Jeremiah is sending letters from Jerusalem to these slaves. These captives are not in chains in prison, they are in villages farming and they are given instructions that they observe throughout the Diaspora. He is writing to these captives, the elders, priests, and to prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel and to the people.

- 2] (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

Here is a parenthetical edition that Jeconiah the king with the blood curse and Nehusta the queen is always mentioned with Jeconiah because he was only around eighteen. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered someone, he picked the best, the brightest young men, like Daniel and his three friends. He took the craftsmen and the artisans to beautify Babylon.

- 3] By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

Bear in mind there is an emissary going from Zedekiah the puppet king to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, with Zedekiah's permission, Jeremiah is allowed to send some letters along to the captives.

Elasah the son of Shaphan is the brother of Ahiakim (26:24; agreed with Jeremiah, welcomed in Babylon), and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah is probably Josiah's high priest. (2 Kings 22:3-4).

- 4] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;
- 5] Build ye houses, and dwell [in them]; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;
- 6] Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

Settle in; they will be there for a couple of generations. This is exactly the kind of posture that the Jews took after the dispersion by the Romans. In 70 A.D. when Titus Vespasian and the four legions level Jerusalem and disperse the Jews throughout the world and for 1900 years they wandered homeless. During that period of time they did exactly this. Wherever they found themselves, they built houses, dwelt in them, planted gardens, ate from them, took wives. There is no indication that they are to take pagan wives, Deuteronomy has not been repealed. But they populate and have families. Centuries of dispersion, they follow the same pattern.

- 7] And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

Pray for captors (cf. Matt 5:43). The only place that you can find it where they are to pray for peace of the city in which they are captives. That is exactly what they do and in Ezra Cyrus the Persian asks them to pray for him (Ezra 6:10; 1 Macc 7:33).

Forgive offenders, learn from offence (Cf. 1 Pet 2:11-17; 1 Tim 2:1-4).

- 8] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that [be] in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.
- 9] For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

70 Years

- 10] For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

- 11] For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.
- 12] Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.
- 13] And ye shall seek me, and find [me], when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

After the seventy years, an opening into Daniel 9:2. Daniel was reading this knowing that the seventy years were about accomplished. He begins to pray and Gabriel interrupts and gives Daniel the mathematical prophecy that predicts the very day that Jesus Christ presents Himself as King that we celebrate as Palm Sunday. 173,880 days in advance God calls His shot. [See *Daniel's Seventy Weeks* for a complete study.]

- 14] And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

Not the return from Babylon. The Lord says through Jeremiah "*And I will be found of you saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations,*" He specifically says here from all the nations, not just Babylon. *Isaiah 11:11*. The second regathering started May 14, 1948. The climax for God's entire plan for man is being set up.

- 15] Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon;
- 16] [Know] that thus saith the LORD of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, [and] of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity;
- 17] Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

The duet of fig trees.

- 18] And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:
- 19] Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending [them]; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.

The Lord is the author of the exile.

- 20] Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Ahab and Zedekiah, False Prophets

- 21] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes;

He will make them a reproach to all the nations of the earth, not just Babylon. Don't get these two names confused, they are not the Ahab from the Northern Kingdom and this is not the Zedekiah the King, they are two false prophets mentioned by name.

- 22] And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which [are] in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

Nebuchadnezzar had a thing about roasting with fire. Daniel 3 (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as a type, Nebuchadnezzar as the anti-Christ and the three Jews as Israel going through the tribulation). Fire is an Old Testament idiom for the Tribulation. [Do see our expositional commentary on *Daniel* for complete details.]

There is another play on words here. Ahab the son of Kolaiah, because Kolaiah as a noun means *curse* and as a verb means to *burn or roast*.

- 23] Because they have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and [am] a witness, saith the LORD.
24] [Thus] shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,

Nhelamite sounds like a geographical place, it also means *the dreamer*.

Zephaniah

- 25] Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that [are] at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

This Zephaniah is like the sergeant of arms, he was the chief warden in charge of the police regulations of the Temple.

- 26] The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man [that is] mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks.
27] Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?
28] For therefore he sent unto us [in] Babylon, saying, This [captivity is] long: build ye houses, and dwell [in them]; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.
29] And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

A letter of reproach from this character.

- 30] Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,
31] Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:
32] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

Jeremiah Chapter 30

Jeremiah 30-31, Time of Jacob's Trouble

Chapters 30-33 are the high point of Jeremiah. Some scholars call the next four chapters "The Time of Consolation." At the time that this is written, Jerusalem is in the final stage of an 18-month siege, in the tenth year of Zedekiah. The Babylonians have laid siege, the alliance with Egypt failed as Jeremiah predicted it would. Jeremiah is in prison because of the popularity of his message. His views were regarded as treasonous. He was telling Jerusalem that the Babylonians were instruments of God and not to resist them. The false prophets were saying that God was going to deliver them just as He did Hezekiah. At the point where they are at their darkest hour, there is famine and disease widespread in the city. Jeremiah is in prison but he does not get really gloomy, God's speaks to Jeremiah to predict a glorious future for Israel and for you and I.

In the passages to follow, Jeremiah is going to assure them that Israel is permanent forever. This is a remarkable thing for God to do because they were in peril and they were going to be taken slaves. The good news was that it was only going to last seventy years and then they would be back, and they would be back forever. What makes this amazing is that one after another, political powers for hundreds of years have tried to

make that untrue. They have tried to wipe out Israel. Every nation that has tried to do that has been destroyed. Every nation that has favored Israel like the Greeks and the Persians are still around.

He is going to describe that Israel is going to be permanent and He is also going to predict the coming of the Gentiles to the truth. That is not a popular theme in the Old Testament. We are going to see the institution of God's new Covenant for redemption. This is actually the concept from where the New Testament gets its name although we are going to try to make some distinctions in the New Covenant here and the way it is applied. We are going to find that God here predicts the rule of a Davidic king from a cleansed Zion. The Davidic Throne will be reestablished on the planet Earth in Jerusalem. This was the very specific promise that Gabriel gave Mary when he announced the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. All these ideas are going to emerge in this passage which leads you to footnote in your notes that Jeremiah was not a pessimist; he was actually an incredible optimist. One of the main things you need to know, is to recognize that there is in the Bible a literal Israel forever. Cf Matt 24, 25; Rom 11; Daniel; Rev. Israel is distinct from the Church. [Do see our Briefing Package on the *Prodigal Heirs*]

These ideas are not unique to this portion of Jeremiah. These same ideas are hinted at in Chapters 2,3,16,23 and 24.

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.

The Book of Consolation. Chapters 30-33 hang together.

- 3] For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord^{1/4} That formula in the Hebrew is eschatological, or end times stuff. There is several phrases in the Hebrew that the more you become immersed in Old Testament passages, the more those phrases will trigger a particular style or emphasis.

The actual Hebrew says *turn again* or *almost reverse*. Notice that he is speaking of his people and the people are specifically the whole nation. The term Israel here refers to the Northern Kingdom as opposed to the Southern Kingdom, The myth of the so-called Ten Lost Tribes; not so. The Northern Kingdom after Solomon dies and the Civil War, that

divided the nation into two halves, the Northern Kingdom was named Israel and the Southern Kingdom was named Judah. The Northern Kingdom involved the territories that are associated with ten tribes, but don't assume the ten tribes stayed there. Because of the move to idolatry in the North, the faithful migrated south to Judah. Judah had its problems later and a hundred years later we are going to see they are going into captivity. However there was a period of time there under Josiah and others that if you were faithful, you migrated. The house of Judah was two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, don't get too territorial about that because the Southern and Northern Kingdom called Israel and Judah. The term Israel denotatively of the Northern Kingdom and connotatively can include both the house of Israel and of Judah. Here to make it clear, he is talking about both houses. "*I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord*^{1/4}" What is remarkable about this is that Israel went into captivity 100 years earlier by the Assyrians. The Northern Ten Tribes are in slavery in Babylon at this time because the Babylonians conquered the Assyrians^{1/4} This passage is directed to Israel and Judah.

Jacob's Trouble

- 4] And these [are] the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.
- 5] For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.
- 6] Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

Terror, of anguish, analogous to childbirth, but not limited to women having children. A figure of speech. The concept of terror and anguish being spoken of as travail occurs seven times in the book of Jeremiah, 4:31, 6:24, 13:21, 22:23, 30:6, 49:24, 50:43. The Lord Himself in Matthew 24 and 25 speaking of this period says all these things are the beginnings of sorrows in the King James but He actually says the beginnings of birth pains.

The same passage also says there will come a time of trouble such as the world has never seen up to that time nor would ever see again. He quotes there from Daniel 12 and from the Lord's quote of Daniel 12 comes the label that we apply to that period of time that we call the Great Tribulation. That word is misleading because it sounds like everyone is equal. In the next verse the Holy Spirit gives it another label that is more specific.

- 7] Alas! for that day [is] great, so that none [is] like it: it [is] even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

Jacob's Trouble (not Babylon's; nor the worlds...) Mt 24:21; Dan 12:1; Isa 2:12-21; 13:6; 39:1-8; Ez 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1-2, 11; Amos 5:18-20; Micah 1:2-5; Zeph 1:2-3:8; Zech 14:1-8, 12-15.

The seventy-week prophecy of Daniel describes a period of time well prophesied on the planet earth that is going to be approximately seven years long, the seventieth week of years of Daniel's famous prophecy in Daniel 9. The amplification of that week is in part described in Matthew 24-25, Luke 21-22, Mark 13-14.

The amplification of that week also constitutes Chapters 4-19 of the book of Revelation. This is basically an expansion of what is going on that seven-year period. In the middle of that seven year period there is going to be a particular political event, it is also the last half of that week is also the Great Tribulation. We often glibly call the seven year period the Great Tribulation, that is technically clumsy because the Great Tribulation is the last half of that week, it is 3 ½ years long. There is more prophecy specifically enumerating and timing that week than any other period in the Bible. Here it points out that the focus of the great Tribulation is Israel, it is even the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Hint of Daniel 12 in Christ's quote here saying none is like it. The Great Tribulation (Jeremiah 46:10; Daniel 12:1). All the pain and suffering and abuse that Israel has gone through in generations 2,000 years worth, there is going to come a time that will be even worse. The good news is that they will be delivered out of it. (See Isaiah 2, 13 and 34 and Ezekiel 30 and Matthew 24). Some passages imply that it is world wide, but its focus is Israel. One view is that because of some of the passages in the Old Testament one can defend the argument that before the Messiah comes back to redeem them they have to repent of their sin and ask Him back. The remnant does that; their prayer is described in Hosea 5 and 6. See Zechariah 12-14. Satan's strategy is to destroy the remnant. The source of anti-Semitism is Satan. [See our study of Revelation 12 and *The Prodigal Heirs* Briefing Package].

Note that Jacob will go through that period but the church will be saved out of it. Revelation 3:10. The Lord deals with the Church and with Israel almost mutually exclusive. The Seventieth Week of Daniel can not start while the Church is on the earth, technically called a pre-Tribulation rapture. This letter to the church in Philadelphia contains a

very interesting promise. The earth dwellers are a special category in the book of Revelation, this is one of several promises that promises the Church will not even endure the hour of trial that will come upon the earth. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul promises the Church that they are not called to wrath but salvation. Another example of that is Isaiah; this is a glimpse of the rapture of the Church in the Old Testament. *Isaiah 26:19-21* "Come my people..." This is the same phrase in Revelation 4:1 that breaks the book in half. God's indignation, His wrath being poured out upon the earth and you are supposed to come, the same phrase that was given to John when he was called up into heaven in Revelation. The chambers that He is talking about is answered in *John 14:2*. I believe this is alluding to very mystically, *Isaiah 26:20*. During the indignation the Church is not going to be around.

Thus, the Old Testament phrase for the Great Tribulation is the Time of Jacob's Trouble. The seven-year period is a time of a treaty between a world ruler and Israel in the middle of that seven year period he violates the treaty and forbids their normal worship and forces them to worship him. This is analogous but in a larger scale to what Nebuchadnezzar required in Chapter 3 of Daniel and what Antiochus Epiphanes did that led to the Maccabean revolt from which we understand the technicalities of the abominations of desolation is.

This will occur again in Israel after the Temple is rebuilt and dedicated and when that happens the Lord Jesus Christ, detailed in Matthew 24 and 24 will pertain. Those who are in Judea who will see the Abomination of Desolation which will occur in the Holy of Holies, which is a secret place. They will be able to see it on T.V. When they see it they are not even supposed to grab their coat, they are supposed to split and leave town because that is leading to this horrible period of time.

David's Throne

- 8] For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, [that] I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

Most scholars recognize in the Hebrew language that this is a Davidic King, the son of David their King. It is linked with God and David. A Messianic king (Isaiah 55:3-4; Ezekiel 34:23; Hosea 3:5; Matthew 11:28-30). The 'second David' which is equal to the last Adam or the second man. Paul uses these phrases of Jesus Christ. The *one who will inherit David's throne* is also a Messianic title.

Ezekiel 37:24. This is one of many passages which speaks of David coming back. Now there is two views: some take this very literally and look for the resurrection of David, but it is more broadly understood both Rabbinically and Christian authors point out that this is Messianic. In the English it reads like it is literally David; what it really is the son of David, the Messiah.

Luke 1:30-33, the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ is 1000 years on the earth but He reigns forever and ever. This millennial reign is a thousand-year reign between two resurrections, the first and second resurrection during which Satan is bound and all sort of strange things happen during and after. (Isaiah 65 and a little from Revelation).

Isaiah 9:6 The word “Wonderful” in Judges 12 that is His title, the parents of Samson, what shall I call your name, His name was called Wonderful. He is not on David’s throne. This is just to emphasis that Jesus Christ has a political destiny and it is non other embodied in the promise that Gabriel made to Mary during the enunciation. He did not sit on David’s throne; David’s throne did not exist during His ministry. Judea was under the rule of the Romans. The only throne that was around was an Idumaeon throne on which Herod, a non-Jew sat upon. So Jesus Christ could not have sat upon David’s throne during His earthly ministry. The only time He allows them to worship Him as a King is on Palm Sunday in accordance to Daniel’s prophecy to the very day. When He presents Himself as King and the very people that were laying down the palm branches that very same week are yelling before Pilate “Crucify Him!” He is now sitting on His Father’s throne, Revelation 3:21, Hebrews 1:3, until the Father is ready to make His enemies His footstool, Hebrews 1:13; Ps 110:1.

- 9] But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.
- 10] Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make [him] afraid.

This has not happened yet. When they returned to the land under the edict of Cyrus, King of Persia, they had all kinds of problems. (Ezra and Nehemiah). Then the Romans came and they did not have rest and quiet, and after the Romans they were dispersed all over the world. When the Roman rule ended in 70 A.D. they get dispersed all over the world. The history of any portion of the last 2,000 years shows the oppression that they have faced. So this verse is Messianic, it is yet to happen. *Isaiah*

11:11. This second time is going on right now since May 14, 1948. They are not in quiet rest, they are still facing this kind of trouble.

Judgment of the Nations

- 11] For I [am] with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Matthew 25. The judgment of the sheep and the goats; the nations are judged based upon how they have treated Israel. Israel will get punished but she will survive. He will judge Israel.

- 12] For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise [is] incurable, [and] thy wound [is] grievous.
- 13] [There is] none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.
- 14] All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; [because] thy sins were increased.

Revelation 17 and 18 - mystery Babylon. Mystery Babylon at her peak makes a strange boast she says that *I am not divorced and I am no widow*. What she contrasts herself to is Israel, which the Scriptures speak of her being divorced as in Hosea. She is also viewed as a widow. *Lovers* means here the idols that they worshiped...

- 15] Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow [is] incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: [because] thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.
- 16] Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.
- 17] For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, [saying], This [is] Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

The nations that persecuted Israel no longer exist, but the ones who bless Israel survive. One of the things that you can take comfort in is that the U.S. has been on a large part pro-Israel.

- 18] Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

“Heap” in the Hebrew is *tel* it means *mound*. The word here is that *they will be rebuilt upon their heaps* the same word, and in ancient sites they become a mound and when you rebuild the city and it starts rising in elevation and it ends up that most of these ancient cities are built on mounds. In fact at Megiddo you can go down 20 levels in archaeology.

Ex: Tel Aviv - Ez 3:15; Tel el Amarna (Egypt); Tel Assar - 2 Kgs 19:12; Tel Harsha - Ezra 2:59.

- 19] And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.
- 20] Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

Zech 8:4,5.

- 21] And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who [is] this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD.

A promise that they will be ruled by themselves. The context here is Babylonian vassal king or under the Romans where they put in the Herod Idumaeon Dynasty.

This governor is probably the same guy who shows up in the last four chapters of Ezekiel, the prince, a rather mystery figure. On one hand he is a good guy, but yet he is not the Messiah. He is some kind of governor that God appoints and puts in place there and this is a hint of the same situation.

Verse 21 and 22 is one of the most beautiful Messianic promises in the Old Testament and the climax of it is, the old covenant and the new covenant, everything that God does has verse 22 as its object.

- 22] And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Here it is said in the specific Jewish context, Paul says this in his epistles. “This governor shall proceed from the midst of them and I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach unto Me” which implies that he is a priest as well as a governor. Zechariah 6:12. The net of this that this guy is greater than David or Solomon because they were kings only not

priests. A king is warned in a number of places never to usurp the role of priest, priests and kings were separate. Priestly position and ministry (Ps 110:4; Zech 6:13). (1 Kings 12:26-33; 13:1-6) Jereboam is an example, Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16-20) makes the same mistake.

The governor that is hinted at here will be after the order of Melchisedek. There are only two people in the Bible that have the role of king and priest, Melchisedek and Jesus Christ. The writer of the book of Hebrews makes a big point that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedek, not Aaron [For an in-depth study see our commentary on *Hebrews*].

There is another group of kings and priests and that is you and I. This becomes very important as you try to understand who the Twenty-Four elders represent in the book of Revelation

- 23] Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.
- 24] The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done [it], and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

Regard it or count it.

Jeremiah 31

Judah and Israel Restored

Judah restored. Whole nation (v 1); Israel (2-22); Judah (23-26); both (27-40).

- 1] At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

Israel Restored

- 2] Thus saith the LORD, The people [which were] left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; [even] Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.
- 3] The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

The clans of Israel, the language here in the Hebrew implies in a connotative sense the Northern and Southern Kingdom. Suggests the Twelve Tribes. Cf. Ez 20:34-38.

- 4] Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy taborets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.
- 5] Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat [them] as common things.

Samaria is what the newspaper call the West Bank, which is extremely offensive to an Israeli.

Law of Moses: prohibit fruit of the 1st 3 years; 4th given to God (Lev 19:23-25; Deut 20:6; 28:30).

- 6] For there shall be a day, [that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

Watchmen imply that the Temple is back in service. That was a job, they had a plurality of guys watching for the new moon, because the new moon started the new month and that is usually the trigger point for Temple services. Roshashanah, the feast of trumpets the beginning of the new year. Watchmen here are not military or guards.

- 7] For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.
- 8] Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, [and] with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

Five verbs: sing, shout, proclaim, praise, and say. He will gather them from all of the earth, not just Babylon. The scope of Jeremiah is far beyond just Babylon. “*Here*” is Israel.

- 9] They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim [is] my firstborn.

The water speaks of refreshment in a spiritual sense not just a literal sense (Isaiah 41:18; 43:20; 49:10).

His concern for them has to do with His elective purpose (Ex 4:22; Deut 32:6). Ephraim is a firstborn, Ephraim is a derivative from Joseph and Joseph had the right of the firstborn, the birthright because it was forfeited by Reuben because of Reuben’s sin. See the book of Genesis (repeated in

1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Here the phrase is used connotatively of the nation. Ephraim can be and often is used as an idiom for the nation.

- 10] Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare [it] in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd [doth] his flock.

Israel was scattered after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian and the four Roman legions in 70 A.D. The Diaspora as it is called, the legend of the Wandering Jew, for 1,900 years they have been dispersed. On May 14, 1948 David Ben Gurion cited an authority from the Old Testament named the new Jewish homeland Israel after the authority in the Bible. The return has been undertaken by the God of Israel.

- 11] For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of [him that was] stronger than he.
- 12] Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

Very literal prophecy, nothing allegorical or spiritualized.

- 13] Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.
- 14] And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.
- 15] Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, [and] bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they [were] not.

Rachel weeping for her children because they have been killed. Several different meanings. First of all Rachel as opposed to Leah is the first love of Jacob. She was the ancestress of the Northern Tribes through Ephraim and Manassah through Joseph as well as Benjamin to the south. Benjamin in Genesis is referred to as the son of my right hand.

All our maps have north at the top, that is western civilization tradition. In the Middle East, they put east at the top of the map because that is where the sun rises. The name for the east has to do with in many different language *sun rising*. The west is the sun setting, north is on the left, south is on the right and evil comes from the north, Babylon attacks from the North because of the Fertile Crescent. Benjamin was from the right, the son of my right hand, he was a Southerner. Some of these things are idiomatic.

Ramah has several meanings: five miles north of Jerusalem; mentioned in Joshua 18:25 but it also happens to be the birth place of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19; 25:1). The staging area where the exiles were deported to Babylon. So when Rachel is weeping for her children it is on one hand because they were gathered for deportation to Babylon.

They Shall Return

- 16] Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.
- 17] And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

Reinforces the interpretation of verse 15 as referring to the lament because that was the springboard to their deportation to Babylon as slaves. (Matthew 2:15-18; Hosea 11:1).

- 18] I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus]; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke]: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou [art] the LORD my God.
- 19] Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon [my] thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.
- 20] [Is] Ephraim my dear son? [is he] a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.
- 21] Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, [even] the way [which] thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

This next verse (22) has more scholars going in many different directions because the obvious way may not be correct.

- 22] How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

Two views and they each have serious problems when you get in behind the language. The earlier ancient view was that this was sort of a strange allusion to the virgin birth. The language has some problems, not the least of which the word *woman* here is the general word for female, with no definite article. It is a woman, it is not necessarily a virgin, and it is just in contrast to a man.

The word *sabab* which is *surround or compass* is a word that is just the opposite kind of a word if you talk about conception. The classical view is that this is alluding to the virgin birth, some Hebrew scholars say that is really stretching things because they dissect everything.

There is a more modern view that the woman here is Israel and she is going to woo the Lord, that is sort of backward because the woman doesn't do the wooing, the man does. What is implied in the Hebrew is that it is new thing it is a reverse where she will woo the Lord. All through the Old Testament the Lord is wooing Israel and some scholars say that this is the intent of the Hebrew there.

However, there are four facts that cause you to go back to the traditional view. There is a new thing here on the earth. The word *create* here implies divine intervention and causing it to happen, the *woman* implies an individual not a collective noun, the *man* here is the same in Isaiah 9:6 which is a word used of God.

These two views are both valid but don't just accept these glibly; it is a strange passage. I have a third view. If it is in Israel and it is a virgin birth, there is a woman in the New Testament that might be alluded to here, the Church. I have no idea if this is correct or not.

Judah Restored

- 23] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, [and] mountain of holiness.

This probably means *use this speech* this blessing.

A prophecy in Zephaniah 3:9, not obvious in the English translation of the King James. In the English Bible it says *for then*, speaking of the end times, he is prophesying is that when we gather in the land we will return to pure Hebrew as the language. You can actually find commentaries from about a hundred years ago that point out that the literal part of that can't be true. Never in the history of man has a dead language been resurrected to be a live language. There are lots of languages that die and are only used scholastically. Latin is a good example. Hebrew was the same way, from the Babylonian captivity on they spoke Chaldean. When Persians took over Babylon they let them go back to the land and then the Greeks took over and Alexander the Great enforced Greek as the international language.

If you were a Jew living in an Orthodox household, the only Hebrew you knew was the Catechism. Hebrew was a scholars' quaint undertaking. What is fascinating is that if you went to Israel today, you would see that they speak Hebrew.

Jeremiah 31:23, the text does not require it but I personally have no trouble with the Lord inferring a prophecy like Zephaniah's that at that time they will use the speech that Jeremiah was writing in.

- 24] And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they [that] go forth with flocks.
- 25] For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.
- 26] Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

Not allegorical, they are in the land of Judah. It implies that this vision was in a very special kind of dream. He is in good company, Jacob, Joseph, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams.

Restoration

- 27] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.
- 28] And it shall come to pass, [that] like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.
- 29] In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.
- 30] But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

This has to do with a little proverb that they had. What it refers to is not that if the fathers eat a sour grape the children's teeth will be set on edge. The children are not being punished for their father's sin, they are being punished for their own. They may have inherited it from their father but they are punished for their own sin. The rebuttal of this is *v. 30*.

New Covenant

- 31] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
- 32] Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

This passage is what the book of Jeremiah is so famous for. You can feel His wound here. He can't even make reference to this without pointing this out.

- 33] But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 34] And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
- 35] Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, [and] the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts [is] his name:
- 36] If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, [then] the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

In other words, the sun will stop shining for a light and the moon and the stars will no longer shine when Israel is no longer. That is a rhetorical way of saying it will never happen.

This is the covenant; it is the climax of Jeremiah's teaching. Some could say it is the climax of the Old Testament, in a doctrinal sense. It is the New Covenant. This covenant is a new covenant for them.

The covenant has at least nine things:

- 1) Time - this is coming.
- 2) Maker of the covenant is the Lord.
- 3) New covenant, Romans 11:27; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:14-18; 9:15; Matthew 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25).
Passover = old; Lord's Supper = new.
- 4) Parties to the covenant are the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Ezekiel 37:15-19; Romans 9:4-5).
- 5) Contrasted with the old. The old covenant was based on the Mosaic Law, merits and works and it was susceptible to infraction. Moses had not even come down from the mountain and they were breaking it. This is what He is hurt by. The old covenant had no enablement, there was no mechanism to it to give you the ability to keep it. The old covenant could not give life, Galatians 3:21.
- 6) New covenant deals with your nature, the laws are written in the heart and they will yield an intimate a non-teachable knowledge. They will know God.
- 7) Immutable: an unchanging purpose. It is linked to the fixed part of our nature.
- 8) Physical covenant: rebuilt Jerusalem which will be rebuilt with holiness and permanence (Revelation 22, the New Jerusalem).
- 9) The Lord Himself is the guarantor of the covenant. Hebrews 6:17-

18 gives us the hint that He can swear by no other, He swears by Himself.

- 37] Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.
- 38] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.
- 39] And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.
- 40] And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, [shall be] holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

Jeremiah 32

Ancient Title Insurance

God's dealings with Israel are all tied up with the land, especially dealing with Abraham and that portion of Genesis. There is a very special relationship that God indulges with the land and Israel. After the conquest in Joshua, the tribes divided the land up. They drew lots, God assigned portions of the land to each of the tribes. Under the Torah, a whole special way of dealing with the land, it was very difficult to disassociate the land from its genealogy. If you were in a tribe and had your portion of the land, you could sell it, but there was procedures by which your heirs could redeem it. The procedures were such that you could sell it, but the ownership of that territory would gravitate back into the tribe. When they speak of a sale in the Bible, it is a transaction that we would see as a lease. There were procedures by which a kinsman could come back and redeem the land by paying a certain price and by complying with certain requirements. The person who would redeem the land had to be a kinsman, had to be able to perform, and he had the choice whether to redeem the land on behalf of his kinsman. It is important to understand this, especially to understand a strange thing that occurs in this chapter of Jeremiah.

Background in Leviticus 25:23

The earlier part of this chapter in Leviticus has to do with the Sabbatical Year, the concept that the land enjoyed a Sabbath. Just like man had a Sabbath, six days a man worked and the seventh day he rested, the

land was tilled for six years and the seventh it was allowed to rest. This is an essential piece of background to understanding the Babylonian captivity and also Daniel's Seventy Weeks.

The land is His, one can sell it, but it is not forever. A sale here is a transaction that involves a temporary holding of the land. If you are going to sell it, you have to provide for it to be ultimately redeemed by your family. The jubilee year, you till the land six years and in the seventh you allow it to lay fallow. When you have had seven of those, that is forty-nine years total, the next year, the fiftieth year was the Year of Jubilee. So all land in the year of jubilee returned to its original owners. They were really leasing the land. Example of redemption in Ruth 4:1-6 [See *The Romance of Redemption: the Book of Ruth* Briefing Package for a complete study.] Only account of a purchase of this kind (Cf. Rev 5).

Jeremiah and Zedekiah

Jeremiah 32: Jeremiah is in a peculiar position here, he is in prison for treason. Zedekiah has had a belly full, he has been preaching treasonously, he has been telling them not to fight the Babylonians. This was a very unpopular, treasonous message. Zedekiah is not the one that is really upset with Jeremiah, but his first string of advisors is, and Zedekiah is a weak king. What is important to recognize is that the siege is on, the Babylonians are out there. It is a very strange time to buy real estate, especially for Jeremiah, because he knows that soon the entire country will be in shambles and they will be under the heel of a conquering world empire.

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which [was] the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar.
- 2] For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which [was] in the king of Judah's house.

He is not in a dungeon, King Zedekiah permits a form of imprisonment that is more congenial. He is in the court of the prison which was in Zedekiah's house. (38:13, 28; 39:14; 37:11, 16).

- 3] For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;
- 4] And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall

- 5] speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes;
And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

Zedekiah questions; capture foretold (37:17).

Background as to why Jeremiah is imprisoned. Jeremiah is apparently there until the fall of Jerusalem (Chapters 37 and 38). Not necessarily in chronological order. This is in the middle of a three chapter chunk called the Book of Consolation. The city of Jerusalem is under siege and so the outlying properties are conquered by Babylon. 2nd year of siege (587 B.C.). Babylon siege by approval of Egypt's army (37:4-12).

Field in Anathoth

- 6] And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
7] Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that [is] in Anathoth: for the right of redemption [is] thine to buy [it].

Anathoth was Jeremiah's hometown. This son of his uncle will come to suggest to him to buy his land. The land was already captured by Babylon. This was not the best business proposition. This here is a prediction that his uncle's son would come and approach him to buy his land.

- 8] So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that [is] in Anathoth, which [is] in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance [is] thine, and the redemption [is] thine; buy [it] for thyself. Then I knew that this [was] the word of the LORD.

Put yourself in Jeremiah's shoes; in prison, preaching for almost forty years that the Babylonians would come and take over the land and take the entire nation into slavery for seventy years, what good would owning some real estate do? But the Lord wants Jeremiah to buy this property so he does.

- 9] And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that [was] in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, [even] seventeen shekels of silver.
10] And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed [it], and took witnesses, and weighed [him] the money in the balances.
11] So I took the evidence of the purchase, [both] that which was sealed [according] to the law and custom, and that which was open:

There were two copies of the deed and one copy was sealed, put in an earthen jar. The other one was open and it will give the requirements needed to open the seal and this was all looking toward a day, Jeremiah knows, he is not going to be able to take possession of the land. He is in prison now and he knows the Babylonians are going to take over the land and take them into captivity for seventy years. Jeremiah will not live another seventy years so Jeremiah's descendants will have the location of where this jar is hidden with the deed in it, sealed, and they will have this open copy which will explain where the land is and what requirements there will be to redeem it. They will show up some day with evidence that they are the kinsmen and they are able to perform and they will execute the requirements on the deed, break the seals and posses that which was theirs by right. This is the only account of a purchase of this kind in the Scripture and the Holy Spirit has a specific reason to go through this.

- 12] And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's [son], and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

Baruch is Jeremiah's secretary; he does all the writing for Jeremiah. He gives it to Baruch in the presence of the witnesses.

- 13] And I charged Baruch before them, saying,
14] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.

When you put something in an earthen vessel, it turns out pretty well (Ex. the Dead Sea Scrolls).

- 15] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

There are many lessons here but we won't take the time to go through them all. First of all, it is an act of faith. Jeremiah may or may not have understood why God told him to do it but he did it. We don't know the motives of Jeremiah's uncle's son. Hanameel obviously has a distress sales situation here. He is not going to find many people who will be interested in buying his piece of property because there are armies rolling chariots over Anathoth. No Jew would buy it because they are about to be taken slaves and they would not be in any position to own anything and Hanameel is no fool he understands that. But he figures

he can separate and get whatever he can from his relative and here he gets seventeen shekels.

Title Deed to the Earth

Leviticus 25—the basic legal perspective, and another example of an account in Ruth 4. In Revelation 5:1-10—the sealed title deed to the earth. A title deed not for the land of Israel, but a title deed of the earth. Its dominion was originally given to Adam and Adam forfeited it by yielding to Satan. So the earth is under the jurisdiction of a usurper. The Bible speaks of *the god of this world*. Jesus Christ is not the God of this world. This world belongs to Satan. In the temptations Satan is offering Jesus a shortcut instead of the Cross. Jesus Christ purchased the world, remember the parables of Matthew 13, the field and the treasure. He didn't want the field, He wanted the treasure that was in it. The field was the world and the treasure was within it.

Jesus purchased everything on the cross. That gave Him title, not possession. He has not taken possession yet. He is not seated on His throne, He is seated at the right hand of the Father. We talked about the Fullness of the Gentiles. God's people are numbered, they are not infinite. The Lord Jesus is waiting for the Father to tell the Son when that number is complete. Among the things that happen that Revelation describes, there will be this seven-sealed book, that is the title deed and it has to be taken by a kinsman, and He has to be pure and righteous and has to be able to perform. He is, and that is why there is this incredible adoration by all of creation and the four super cherubim around the throne, the twenty-four elders.

The amazing thing is not that God became man, the amazing thing is that there is now a man at the throne of God. When you really understand what righteousness demands there are, the concept that there is a man at the throne of God. Don't think of Jesus Christ as being a man for 33 years, think of Him of being a man forever. As such, Jesus is qualified to be our Kinsman Redeemer.

Revelation 4-19 is His taking possession of that which He purchased. It involves dispossessing the land of the usurpers. If you want to understand this in smaller model terms, go to the book of Joshua, where Jeshua dispossess the land of the usurpers and conquered it with his chosen people, in that case it was Israel taking the land of Canaan, dispossessing the Canaanites, the seven tribes that remained, three were put down and there were seven left and the seven tribes were the subject under the

conquest of Joshua but actually under Jesus Christ if you read Joshua 5 carefully. It becomes a model of the book of Revelation.

The point is that this concept that we have introduced in Jeremiah, the title deed, the purchasing of this land is the Holy Spirit's way of alerting you about title insurance, alerting you to the idea of a title deed and to fill out the model in Jeremiah 32 you have to visualize after the captivity when Jeremiah's kinsman redeemer will show up and perform the requirements on the deed, break the seals and take possession of the land that was purchased at Anathoth. This is a small microcosm example of what is going to happen when Jesus Christ will take the title deed, break the seals and take possession of that which he purchased so long ago to be our inheritance, not just the land of Israel. There is nothing local about the book of Revelation; it is very Jewish on one hand but very global in its idioms.

- 16] Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying,
- 17] Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, [and] there is nothing too hard for thee:

A great opening. Starts with adoration. This is quite an example to us. It gets us in the right scope; it reminds us who we are talking to.

- 18] Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, [is] his name,
- 19] Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes [are] open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

Scary. This is still adoring, but there is some heavy stuff. Fortunately later on he talks about mercy.

- 20] Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day, and in Israel, and among [other] men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day;
- 21] And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror;

All through the Scripture uses the Exodus from Egypt as a sign or real authentication for God.

- 22] And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;

- 23] And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:
- 24] Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest [it].

He is not prophesying here, he can look out over the wall and see the siege mounds and the clamor of the troops on the siege.

- 25] And thou hast said unto me, O Lord GOD, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.
- 26] Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,
- 27] Behold, I [am] the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Chaldeans to Burn the City - Deuteronomy 13

- 28] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:
- 29] And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

Burning the city with fire (Deuteronomy 13:12-16): there is a law about what they are supposed to do if they come across idol worshiping nations. That was the punishment, that was what they were supposed to do if they encountered idolatry. Jerusalem is worshiping idols; God is using the Babylonians to enforce Deuteronomy 13. It is fascinating how God uses His law consistently.

When Joshua entered the land, and the nations federate themselves under Adonizedec this king that calls himself the lord of righteousness, he ends up defeating Adonizedec in the battle of Beth-horon in Joshua 10, the famous chapter where the sun stands still, the sun and the moon and all that. What defeats them, is that they are stoned. The capital form of punishment for blasphemy is stoning. In the book of Revelation, in the analogous passage what falls on the men is 200-pound hailstones. You burn a city that is worshiping idols. Peter in his epistle reminds us that God would not flood the earth with water, he points out that God would not flood the earth with water, next time it will be with fire. Why, because

of Deuteronomy 13. When you really have the cosmic perspective of God's plan, you go back and read the book of Genesis and the Torah, you realize all these seeds are planted way back there.

Going back to the prayer, it begins with the person and the work of God, speaks of His boundless grace, speaks of His wisdom in terms of all deeds and His justice, His mercies and it points out the response confesses the sin of Israel in having ingratitude and having an ungrateful response to God's mercies.

- 30] For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.
- 31] For this city hath been to me [as] a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face,

"from the day they built it," Solomon the first king that finished the Temple. Solomon also was the one that led them into idolatry.

- 32] Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 33] And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching [them], yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.
- 34] But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it.
- 35] And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through [the fire] unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

An anthropomorphic phrase, it is so absurd that He never thought to forbid it. Obviously He knows all things, it is just a way of communicating.

- 36] And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

Worldwide Gathering

He shifts gears here, he is looking ahead, not to the regathering after the return from Babylon but far ahead. Worldwide diaspora.

Unity characterizes Messianic era (Zeph 3:9; Zech 14:9; Jn 10:16). Covenant never again broken (Isa 55:3; Ezek 37:26).

- 37] Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:
- 38] And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:
- 39] And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:
- 40] And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Echo of Chapter 31.

- 41] Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.
- 42] For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.
- 43] And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, [It is] desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.
- 44] Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal [them], and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

Captivity returning means reversed. Benjamin is mentioned first because Anathoth the place where Jeremiah did the token example was in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. This is the whole digression by the Lord Himself is a reference to the fact that He has had Jeremiah do the first one, to purchase a piece of property and seal the deed. Verse 44 ties it up in a broader sense.

Jeremiah 33

Court of the Prison

- 1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

Zedekiah was facing the Babylonian siege. Jeremiah was in the court of the prison. Zedekiah turns out to be sort of a double-minded man. Scripture tells us that he is unstable in all his ways. He likes Jeremiah

but his court advisors are very anti-Jeremiah. Jeremiah's message is pro-Babylon and that the Babylonians are God's instruments of judgment and they will prevail. Most of Zedekiah's advisor's were pro-Egypt and they kept intriguing in the hopes that Egypt will be a strong enough ally to fend off the Babylonians. Jeremiah predicts that this isn't going to work and so from time to time he is attacked by the court leadership and Zedekiah will sometimes protect him, sometimes seeks his counsel and in this case, sometimes put him in prison

- 2] Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it; the LORD [is] his name;
- 3] Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Promise from the Lord. He gives you great and mighty things. God will reveal Himself to you if you seek Him. But you have to ask. *Proverbs 3:5-6*. He will direct you.

- 4] For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword;
- 5] They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but [it is] to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.
- 6] Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

Captivity of Judah and Israel

- 7] And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.

The captivity to return = He will undo it. The promise of returning not just to Judah, also to Israel. Israel here is used denotatively as the Northern Kingdom, Judah being the Southern Kingdom after the division of Israel in the days of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. There is no such thing as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Called the Ten Tribes because the Northern Kingdom consisted essentially of ten tribal areas. Judah and Benjamin are the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Ten tribes to the north and 2 tribes to the south is a very naïve notion, because there was thirteen tribes due to Levi. The Northern Kingdom drifted into idolatry, the faithful migrated south. The Northern Kingdom was taken captive by Assyria because of their idolatry some hundred years prior to the writings of Jeremiah. The Assyrians were taken cap-

tive by the Babylonians and ultimately inherited their captives. When Babylon prevails over the Southern Kingdom of Judah, which is not just two tribes, it is a mixture of the faithful of the Northern Kingdom. They become co-mingled with the other slaves so the concept of the Ten Lost Tribes is a little naïve. The promise here that both Judah and Israel will be returned.

- 8] And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

A prophecy, yet future.

- 9] And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

Encouragement right in the middle of all this judgment, The Book of Consolation.

- 10] Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say [shall be] desolate without man and without beast, [even] in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,
- 11] The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD [is] good; for his mercy [endureth] for ever: [and] of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

The closing part of the benediction in Jewish marriages.

- 12] Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing [their] flocks to lie down.
- 13] In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth [them], saith the LORD.

Interesting that Benjamin is mentioned because of the property that was bought in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. It ties it to the other chapter.

The rest of this chapter (v. 14-26) happens to not appear in the Septuagint version, and that causes all kinds of scholars to ponder it. Most

of what is here is also found elsewhere and so there is no reason not to include it.

- 14] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.
- 15] In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

Sounds like Isaiah. One of the titles of Jesus Christ is *the Branch*. One Hebrew rendering is *netzar* upon which there is a pun built in the New Testament, the concept of a Nazarene and the concept of a branch. A Messianic prophecy.

Jeremiah's pictures: *Spring of living water* (2:13), *Good Shepherd* (23:4; 31:10), *Righteous Branch* (23:5), *Redeemer* (50:34), *the Lord our Righteousness* (23:6), a linking of David the King as a Messianic title (30:9), and the Agent of the New Covenant (31:31-34).

- 16] In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this [is the name] wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

Jehovah *Zidkenu* - The Lord our Righteousness ; a name by which the Lord will be called, and the city of Jerusalem is linked to the Lord through this name (Ezekiel 48:35, it is also tied to His altar in Judges 6:24). Cf. 2 Cor 5:21.

Throne of David

- 17] For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

Blood curse on Jeconiah, (see Jer vol 2, pages 8 -11) and today there is only one left and He is at the throne of God.

- 18] Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

The Levitical priesthood is permanent. In the book of Hebrews Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. [Do see our *Hebrews Commentary*.]

Promise to Phinehas (Num 25:13), that the Levitical priesthood would be forever. Jesus Christ is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.. Continuing covenant with Levi in Malachi 2:4 and Numbers 17.

Can't Break the Lord's Covenant

- 19] And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,
20] Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;
21] [Then] may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

Not to worry, if you can stop nights and days then you can break the covenant He has made with David. A way of saying you can't do it.

- 22] As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.
23] Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,
24] Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.
25] Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant [be] not with day and night, [and if] I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;
26] Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, [so] that I will not take [any] of his seed [to be] rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

The end of the chapters called the Book of Consolation, particularly this last chapter, very straightforward passage of encouragement, quite a contrast with gloom and doom which Jeremiah has been nailing them with in previous chapters.

Jeremiah Chapter 34

Chapter 34-38 is going to be five chapters that essentially cover Jeremiah's experiences during the sieges of Jerusalem; it is very narrative and biographical.

Chapter 39 will be the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. after a two-year siege. Chapters 40-44 will be the events after the fall. These are essentially historical passages. Incidentally, the book of Daniel 3:2-4; 4:1, Nebuchadnezzar's reign during that time is very widespread. (chapter 34).

City to be Burned

- 1] The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying,
2] Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire:

The Lord focuses very specifically, indicting Zedekiah, who actually did better than the kings that preceded him. Babylonians temporarily retire from siege to meet with Pharaoh Hophra (37:5).

- 3] And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

Jeremiah talking to Zedekiah the king. Zedekiah is going to have to be face to face with Nebuchadnezzar. Insight as to how much Nebuchadnezzar was feared (cf. Ez 12:13; Jer 52:11). He was probably one of the most absolute despots that has ever ruled on the planet earth. In the book of Daniel, when he thought someone didn't perform quite up to snuff and through them into the fiery furnace. When his advisors weren't quick to give him the answer he wanted, he wanted to tear them limb from limb and make their houses a dunghill. It is interesting that it is hinted at when the Lord tells Zedekiah that he will not escape.

- 4] Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword:

Some people assume that this is cremation, as a historical point, cremation was not the norm in the history of Israel. Burnings referred to here and other places, is the burning of spices (2 Chr 16:14, 21:19). Other Jews practice cremation, especially if there is a fear of the body being desecrated.

- 5] [But] thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn [odors] for thee; and they will lament thee, [saying], Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD.
6] Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem,
7] When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

These two cities are southwest of Jerusalem about the southern extent of the siege in the land of Judah. Lachish (now *Tel-ed-Daweir*) is about 35 miles southwest and Azekah (now *Tel-ez-Zakhriyeh*) is about 50 miles southwest. The Lachish letters give vivid descriptions of all of this.

Laws of Slave Trade

Laws of slave trade. Exodus 21:1-11. The concept about the ear and the doorpost is to be a slave for life. Leviticus 25:39-55. A man can indenture himself to pay off a debt. Indenturing can only go to the year of jubilee. Every seventh year was a Sabbath year and after seven weeks of Sabbath years (forty-nine years) was a Jubilee Year. Could not indenture oneself beyond the year of jubilee.

Deuteronomy 15:12-15. The law of the slave was linked to the fact that they were slaves in Egypt and God redeemed them. They are not to abuse the slaves. The 8th century prophets, Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, and Amos have special passages telling them not to do social injustice to their slaves. The fact that they were indentured servants was no reason to abuse them. No one paid attention to the Law. The last 30 chapters in Jeremiah show how liberally Judah obeyed God's rules, so it is no surprise that they were abusing this. The place is under siege and they recognize that the place is about to go down. There is nothing like a terminal countdown to bring them all to repentance. For a little there is while a commitment by them to get their act together and repent.

- 8] [This is] the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which [were] at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them;
- 9] That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, [being] an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, [to wit], of a Jew his brother.

They had abused all these limitations for slaves. They were in violation of the Torah. Zedekiah had the people in Judah let them all go, which they do for a little while. Under siege they are suddenly becoming very pious. The Babylonians fold up their tents and leave for a while to meet Pharaoh Neco. When the Babylonians retired, these people reneged on their covenant. They made a covenant to release them, once the threat was gone, they forced them back into labor. God is offended by that, which we will see in chapter 34. They make this covenant, Zedekiah has a new covenant, they are going to free up the Hebrews that are in a form of servitude.

- 10] Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let [them] go.
- 11] But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

Returned = repented. They reneged on their deal. They made a solemn covenant before the king that they were going to turn them loose but they changed their mind.

- 12] Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 13] Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying,

Specific reference to their own origin, He made a covenant and He keeps His covenants.

- 14] At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.
- 15] And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name:

Apparently, Zedekiah had this covenant ratified in the Temple and God honored it, now they reneged.

Polluted God's Name

- 16] But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.

When they make a covenant before the Lord and don't keep it, they pollute God's name. That is what makes vows so dangerous. Resolve to do things, but don't make vows.

- 17] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

- 18] And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

The Assyrian inscriptions make reference to an ancient practice in making an agreement. They would take an animal, typically one who is offered for an offering, and would cut it in pieces and set the pieces aside and then would pass between them. In going between the pieces, they seal the covenant. The idea in the Assyrian inscriptions is if they break the covenant they will be cut in pieces. This is just a gesture to seal the bargain. For example: Genesis 15:9-17. God entered into such a covenant with Abraham. (No pledge for Abraham, therefore pure Grace).

When Boaz seals his redemption act in Ruth 4, the guy that refuses to do the kinsman part hands Boaz his shoe. In the early days of Israel, when a widow put upon a kinsman to do the kinsman's part, he didn't have to, but if he didn't he was disgraced. So if he did the kinsman's part and take her to wife to raise up seed for a dead brother or take the land, if he didn't do that she was to spit on him and he hands her his shoe as a testimony of disgrace. Obviously over time that becomes just a gesture. So when this near kinsman can't follow through he hands him his shoe in gesture and that shoe becomes a marriage license for Boaz.

- 19] The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf;

The ones who didn't keep the covenant will be cut in pieces.

- 20] I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.
21] And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.
22] Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

God is going to command them to come back, they have gone for a while, and the princes of Judah assumed they were gone.

Jeremiah 35

Chapter 35 is about the Rechabites, a strange collection of people. Chapter 35 is out of place, it takes place 17 years earlier. The book of

Jeremiah is not in chronological order. Some scholars say it is kind of a hodgepodge of pieces it, but in this case there is a reason why Chapter 35 is inserted here.

- 1] The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

Previously discussing Zedekiah the last king, here Jeremiah goes all the back to Jehoiakim the king of Judah where this peculiar event occurs.

The Rechabites

- 2] Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.
3] Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites;

Jaazaniah—leader of the group, common name.

- 4] And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which [was] by the chamber of the princes, which [was] above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door:

Maaseiah = father of Zephaniah the priest? 21:1; 29:25; 37:3.

- 5] And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.
6] But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, [neither ye], nor your sons for ever:

Rechabites - a strange separatist nomadic group. They are descendents of Jonadab or Jehonadab who shows up in about 840 B.C. (2 Kgs 10:15-23). They are somehow associated with the Midianites because we know that their kindred Jethro was of them. Jethro was Moses' father-in-law. Jethro was a Kenite and it was not an Israeli or Hebrew sect or tribe. At the time of Jehu, they were very prominent in purging the Northern Kingdom of Baal worship.

Heber was a Kenite and his wife was Jael. Israel was at war with Canaanites and Sisera was the big ruler, he tried to hide in Jael's tent and she killed him, and that is a very important factor in the defeat to rid the land of Baal worship. The Kenites, even though they were not Hebrew,

they were helpful in purging the land of idols. They generally lived in the Southern deserts (1 Sam 15:6) and in Israelite territory (Judg 4:17 and 5:24). They are a very mysterious group which we don't know a lot about them. At the time that the Northern Kingdom fell, the Kenites moved south, so we do get the impression that they are faithful to the God of Israel even though they are not Hebrews. They are assimilated into Israel even though they do not have ethnic roots there.

They had a major leader about 840 B.C. called Jonadab and he is the one that gave them some rules. His positioning of them was to be a nomadic tribe and not to do anything that interfered with being nomadic. Therefore they did not build houses, they lived in tents where they could move. They did not raise wine, they did not raise any kind of crops, nomadic tribes can't do that.

A lot of misunderstandings have come out of this because it sounds like wine is bad but recognize that the main thing here is that Jonadab gave them all kind of rules incident to them maintaining a nomadic existence, he banned all sorts of sedentary occupations.

What is interesting is that the Rechabites some three hundred years later were faithful to Jonadab's instruction. Their patriarch was Jonadab and here Jehoiakim invites the current Rechabites into the house of the Lord and he gives them pots full of wine and cups and says for them to drink some wine. There is nothing wrong with drinking wine or building houses, that was just the instruction that they were given.

- 7] Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have [any]: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye [be] strangers.

This advice is good, we should have a very light touch with the things of this world for our citizenship is in heaven.

- 8] Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;
 9] Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:
 10] But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.
 11] But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.

They are not city people. They retreated to the city because of the pressures of war. They are not normally in a city, but this is where we find them. Cf. Nazarites; Nu 6:1-21.

- 12] Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,
 13] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD.
 14] The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.
 15] I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending [them], saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

The Lord is drawing a contrast: here is this strange nomadic mystery group, but they are faithful to the voice of their instructor. The Lord is not making an issue of the wine, He is making an issue of their faithfulness to their prophet. He is contrasting their faithfulness and Judah's disobedience.

- 16] Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:
 17] Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.
 18] And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you:
 19] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Isaiah 1:2-3. Our Lord's frustration is that the ox knows his master and his master's feeding trough, but Israel doesn't know the Lord. This is why I am intrigued with this whole positioning of Chapter 35 and the Rechabites. It has nothing to do with the story, it is going back 17 years in the days of Jehoiakim. However, the contrast is that the princes of Judah didn't keep the covenant. Five contrasts here:

- 1) The Rechabites followed a fallible leader, Jonadab was human, Judah disobeyed the eternal God. (Mal 1:6)
- 2) Jonadab gave his commandments once, God put down His rules repeatedly (verse 15).
- 3) The Rechabites had their restrictions only on temporal issues. No evidence that there is any profound spiritual issue, yet they have specific set of rules to deal with their physical life. God's rules are on both, there is some temporal issues but mostly eternal issues.
- 4) The Lord's people continually disobeyed for hundreds of years. The Rechabites obeyed three hundred years.
- 5) The final contrast is the Rechabites fidelity to their leader is rewarded. And the disloyalty of Judah is punished.

There is another issue here that causes a lot of puzzlement (verse 19). God is saying the descendants of Jonadab, that is the Rechabites, are going to be before the throne of grace forever. That leaves all kinds of questions. This question of stand before me or serve me typically implied to mean a priesthood, however it actually is used of the prophets (1 Kgs 17:1), of the priests (Num 16 :9) and of kings (1 Kgs 10:8). So what is exactly meant by a Rechabite standing before the Lord forever is not that clear. The term is also used of patriarchs (Gen 19:27) and of Moses and Samuel both (Jer 15:1) and of the nation when they are worshiping the Lord (Jer 7:10).

Apparently the Rechabites are in fact destined to stand before the Lord. There is a strange passage in the Targim, one of the Jewish commentaries, which implies the Rechabites were somehow incorporated into the tribe of Levi. That is not Scriptural, it is not known for sure. Jeremiah's book was written twice and we will see why in chapter 36.

Jeremiah 36

The Roll of a Book

- 1] And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, [that] this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2] Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.
- 3] It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.
- 4] Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the

mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

Baruch = the trustee on the title deed (Jeremiah's).

- 5] And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I [am] shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD:
- 6] Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD'S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.
- 7] It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great [is] the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.
- 8] And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house.

These people are getting a full dose of Jeremiah's presentation in their hearing.

- 9] And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, [that] they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.
- 10] Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house, in the ears of all the people.
- 11] When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD,
- 12] Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, [even] Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.
- 13] Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.
- 14] Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.
- 15] And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read [it] in their ears.
- 16] Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.
- 17] And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

- 18] Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote [them] with ink in the book.
- 19] Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be.
- 20] And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.
- 21] So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

The Book Is Burned

- 22] Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and [there was a fire] on the hearth burning before him.
- 23] And it came to pass, [that] when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast [it] into the fire that [was] on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that [was] on the hearth.
- 24] Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, [neither] the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.
- 25] Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them.
- 26] But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.

They burned the book. That sealed it, they had their chance.

- 27] Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,
- 28] Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.
- 29] And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?
- 30] Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

He is going to be denied a king's burial. Even being denied a burial was a fearsome thing to a Jew, and the king to be denied a royal burial is a deeper form of indictment

- 31] And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

- 32] Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

Jeremiah 37

The Final Siege of Jerusalem

The historical part of the book. It is not in chronological order, and therefore it causes a lot of confusion. Fortunately most passages are fairly well dated by their context but it is an assemblage of various presentations.

At this point it is in order, dealing with King Zedekiah. About 18 years have passed since chapters 36 and 37. The fall of Jerusalem is in these three chapters. Jeremiah has been talking about it for forty years; Zedekiah has been reigning for about 11 years since the previous rebellion. Zedekiah is obviously not faithful to the word of God. He seeks counsel with Jeremiah, doesn't like what he hears so he doesn't listen and hopes that the message will change. Zedekiah is not hostile in an open aggressive sense like his advisors are to Jeremiah, in some soft ways he helps Jeremiah but he is a weakling. Weak men in positions of leadership hurt people. Zedekiah is neither cold nor hot (Rev 3.)

- 1] And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah.

Coniah is another word it is the throne name for *Jehoiachin*. He was the one who had the blood curse pronounced upon him.

Josiah was the good king who did a lot of good things but after him it went back to idol-worshiping.

Zedekiah was an heir but his source to power was Nebuchadnezzar's authority after the second siege of Jerusalem. He was a vassal king. His second string of command was pro-Egypt. Pharaoh Hophra was an ally and they continually try to make alliances with Egypt in hope that Egypt will somehow help them throw off the Babylonian siege, it doesn't work. Jeremiah continually tells them it won't work, they don't listen. The Babylonians withdraw from the siege and the people think that they have given up, they don't understand that they will be back;

Nebuchadnezzar has just gone to take care of Pharaoh Hophra. They return, lay siege, level and burn the city.

- 2] But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.

The same story, they wouldn't listen. He knew they wouldn't but his burden was to tell them in any case.

- 3] And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

Zephaniah - same as in Chapter 21 and 29. Not all Zephaniah's are the same some of them are different. They are seeking God but selfishly. They come to Jeremiah for him to pray. Sounds great but they are asking Jeremiah to pray to God to let God know what their will is.

- 4] Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison.

He has plenty of time in prison, but he is not in prison yet.

Pharaoh's Army

- 5] Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

This army is Pharaoh Hophra, these are the enemies of the Babylonians. The Judean leadership under the king was very pro-Egypt and they kept hoping that God would use an alliance with Egypt to spare them. They thought that God would see them through the way He saw Hezekiah through in the days of Isaiah. Wrong, because in the days of Hezekiah, they listened, repented and sought the Lord and He delivered them. That is the fine print. They thought, we are God's people, this is His city, this is His Temple, He is not going to let it go down. Wrong, He does what he preaches again and again.

So Pharaoh's army was come out of Egypt. The inference here is that this alliance that Zedekiah and the people were hoping for was maybe taking root. When the Babylonians recognize this, they detach themselves from the siege for a while and go and take care of Pharaoh Hophra, then they come back and finish the siege.

Chaldeans is for our purpose a synonym for the Babylonians. Technically they are not, as Chaldea is the general land, Babylon is the city-state that heads it up. So when you say *Chaldeans* in this context, the term refers to the Babylonians.

In the book of Daniel, the term *Chaldeans* can mean that but it is used denotatively to mean the mystics of that religion. Sometimes the word *Chaldean* implies a magician because of the way the language is used in the Aramaic. They did not depart from Jerusalem out of fear. There is a false euphoria that sets in Jerusalem

- 6] Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

They are still under siege but they think that they may not be. In other words they recognize that the Babylonians are gone away, at least for a while.

- 7] Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.
8] And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

God is saying, don't put your hope in Pharaoh, he will go home and the Chaldeans will come again and reestablish the siege, they will fight against the city, take it and burn it.

- 9] Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart.

They departed only in a tactical sense, they will be back. They have not abandoned the siege of the city.

- 10] For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained [but] wounded men among them, [yet] should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

He is making His point and He explains it. "*For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans*" you could knock them all off until you have nothing left but the helpless and wounded, and the helpless and wounded would still win. It is sort of like an underscore; don't put your hopes in the Egyptians or anything else, they are going to cut you down.

Jeremiah Accused of Desertion

- 11] And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,
12] Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.

Jeremiah was going to the land of Benjamin, his hometown, Anathoth. He is going to get accused of desertion, treason in effect, which was nonsense for lots of reasons. What he was probably doing, some people think he was there to straighten out the land that he just bought from his uncle, but that hasn't happened yet.

There is all kinds of evidence that point out that he had no intention of escaping, he wasn't trying to escape while the Chaldeans were off taking care of the Egyptians, he just used that as an opportunity to go to Anathoth to straighten out his personal affairs. However he gets caught, so to speak..

- 13] And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward [was] there, whose name [was] Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans.

Irijah accuses Jeremiah of treasonous desertion like he is trying to slip away. What makes that all so silly is if he was trying to slip away to the Chaldeans, he wouldn't wait until the Chaldeans were gone, he would have had lots of opportunities. Irijah's grandfather death (Hananiah's) was prophesied by Jeremiah in Chapter 28:16.

So there is some view that because Jeremiah prophesied his grandfather's death, Irijah has a thing in for Jeremiah, spots him and lays an accusation in on him. That is the most rational view.

- 14] Then said Jeremiah, [It is] false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes.

The princes are the second tier, the people that are reporting to the king and are not Jeremiah's buddy. Jeremiah has been preaching for forty years that the Babylonians have risen to power by God's mechanism to judge Judah for their idol worshiping.

The message is so unpopular that they seize upon this to accuse Jeremiah of treason.

In Prison

- 15] Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison.

There is lots of archaeological evidence that they often had certain homes set up outside to include a prison. In any case these guys nail Jeremiah for his unpopular message.

- 16] When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days;
17] Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there [any] word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

The princes put him in the dungeon. The king is senior to the princes but he doesn't rule with a free hand, this is realistic. It is interesting that Zedekiah gets him out of the dungeon but does it secretly. Jeremiah who is a prisoner is sought out by the throne. Zedekiah who sits on the throne is tiptoeing around secretly counseling with Jeremiah. Jeremiah has something the king wishes he had, the word of the Lord. When he solicits it and gets it, he doesn't like what comes, but he seems to understand that God does speak through Jeremiah. It is hard to tell where Zedekiah is coming from.

Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. " Zedekiah was hoping that Jeremiah had some kind of good news. Not only will he be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, he will have to face him face to face. Nebuchadnezzar was something to fear, being enslaved by him was one thing, to confront him face to face caused trembling.

Where are the False Prophets Now?

- 18] Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?

Very strange situation is happening here. For forty years the false prophets have said that God is going to deliver His people, don't sweat it, God will deliver us just like He did in the days of Hezekiah and of Isaiah. Wrong, they were false prophets. The Torah is very explicit as to what you do to a false prophet, they had a very effective self-correcting professional

development program. If you said “Thus saith the Lord” and it didn’t come out, they killed you. Jeremiah was all this time saying that those guys were false, this is what is going to happen, the Chaldeans are going to win and God is going to use them to judge you. Zedekiah is nervous because he recognizes that this is happening, he is reconfirming that this is really what God’s message is. He has been told and he doesn’t seize that data and respond by putting the false prophets in prison and taking Jeremiah out and listening to God’s counsel.

- 19] Where [are] now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?

Good question, those people on your payroll for at least 11 years now have been saying that the king of Babylon will not come against you or this land. That would make them false prophets, where are they now?

- 20] Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.

So Jeremiah gives him the word of the Lord, then raises this interesting challenge of why is he in prison and these false prophets aren’t, but then makes one petition, don’t send me back to that dungeon, he didn’t want to die there.

- 21] Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers’ street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

He is still under arrest but he is not in the dungeon for the moment. The point is that Zedekiah does give Jeremiah a measure of relief by not sending him back to the dungeon. He is given a daily ration of bread, which may not sound like much but the city is under siege, rations are scarce.

“a piece of bread out of the bakers’ street...” only street name in the Bible (also a street called Straight).

Jeremiah 38

- 1] Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

- 2] Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.
3] Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon’s army, which shall take it.

He is preaching desertion. He is preaching for them to give up, surrender in effect. “*He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by the pestilence...*” these are glib words, this is a serious game and these people are going to be slaughtered, starve and die of disease. Those that leave and yield themselves to the Chaldeans will still be slaves but at least they will live. That is what Jeremiah is saying that God is saying. These princes get really angry with Jeremiah. It is easy from a spiritual point of view to indict them but from a secular point of view it is a natural reaction from the princes of Judah.

- 4] Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.
5] Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he [is] in your hand: for the king [is] not [he that] can do [any] thing against you.

Zedekiah in his weakness doesn’t protect Jeremiah. He had the perception to secretly seek out Jeremiah and ask what the Lord has to say, he must ascribe to Jeremiah some degree of spiritual insight. He may not have liked the message, he might even have discounted it, but for him to yield and allow these guys to take Jeremiah with the intent of killing him, is pretty weak. If Zedekiah was totally secular and hated Jeremiah, fine, he is wrong. What is disturbing is that he is just weak. He agrees with whoever spoke to him last.

Into the Mire

- 6] Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that [was] in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon [there was] no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

The court of the prison is apparently a very large but secure place. There is another dungeon, not the house of Jonathan, another dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech. They let Jeremiah down with cords. In the dungeon there was no water but mire so Jeremiah sunk in the mire. Apparently an unused cistern. They lower him down, they had

the permission to kill him. They would kill him publicly, but they don't because he had a following, they choose to have him disappear quietly. They won't advertise that he is dead for practical purposes; they put him in the cistern with the intention apparently of just letting him die there. From their point of view and probably Jeremiah's, he was a goner.

Ebedmelech

- 7] Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;

This guy had guts; the princes that put Jeremiah in the dungeon were not trivial men, they were enough that the king didn't confront them. Ebedmelech sees the injustice and goes to the king. The king is sitting at the gate of Benjamin, probably doing some official administrative procedure. Being at the gate is analogous to being in court, hearing cases and making judgments.

- 8] Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,
9] My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for [there is] no more bread in the city.

That is a gutsy thing to say, Jeremiah isn't too popular.

- 10] Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

Whoever talks to him last gets an okay. The first group wants to kill him and he says to go do it, this guy says that this is sin and he says to go get him before he dies. Not too impressed with Zedekiah and his lack of backbone. In fairness to him, he must have some feeling for Jeremiah, and he does give the authority. It is interesting that it takes thirty men to get him out. Certain manuscripts say three rather than thirty, but it turns out that the thirty seems to be the better manuscript. The reason thirty men was probably a couple to pull him out and the rest to keep away interference. The king is authorizing to get him out and to take enough men with him so that he wouldn't be harassed.

- 11] So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

This is an act of caring, because Jeremiah is emaciated, probably ill, and so take cloth and make a sling for him to slip into to haul him out of there.

- 12] And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now [these] old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.
13] So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

He is still in prison, but he is out of this mire. Ebedmelech is untranslated it means *servant of the king*. In the Scripture when the Holy Spirit our Comforter shows up by type, He is always an unnamed servant. Right after Abraham offers Isaac in Genesis 22, in Chapter 24 he takes an unnamed servant (we know his name from other passages), but he is in the role of the Holy Spirit in getting a bride for Isaac. The book of Ruth, Boaz is introduced to Ruth by an unnamed servant. John 14 tells us why the Holy Spirit shows up by type as an unnamed servant, "*He will not bear witness of Himself...*" I am intrigued that this Ebedmelech is a comforter to Jeremiah, he is a type of the Holy Spirit in a sense. Jeremiah is a type of Christ. Ebedmelech is not his name it is translated as his name, but his name, Ebedmelech means *servant of the King*.

- 14] Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that [is] in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me.

Jeremiah gave him pretty straight answers earlier. However Zedekiah has just saved Jeremiah's life, so he can ask a favor.

- 15] Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare [it] unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?
16] So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, [As] the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.

This court must have been a mess because this king is tiptoeing around the politics of the princes of Judah. He apparently is in a pretentious position. Zedekiah is giving Jeremiah a commitment of protection.

- 17] Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house:
18] But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

Nebuchadnezzar has his second string watching the siege. This isn't a varsity deal, he has his second string in there. Nebuchadnezzar is up at Riblah which is quite a ways away. He set up his command post up beyond Gilead to the north, a long way from Jerusalem. His princes are the ones running this siege. It is interesting that the text is sensitive to that.

- 19] And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.
- 20] But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver [thee]. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.
- 21] But if thou refuse to go forth, this [is] the word that the LORD hath shewed me:
- 22] And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house [shall be] brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those [women] shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, [and] they are turned away back.
- 23] So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.
- 24] Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.

Zedekiah gets the message, doesn't heed it, and asks that this all be kept quiet.

- 25] But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee:

The princes = the princes of Judah.

- 26] Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there.

Zedekiah asks him to keep quiet about what he really talked to Jeremiah about.

- 27] Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived.

A lot of people are upset with Jeremiah because they feel he lied to the princes of Judah, he didn't lie, he just didn't tell them the whole truth.

He told them that he made these supplications but he didn't explain that he gave the king the message that the king told him to keep a secret.

- 28] So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was [there] when Jerusalem was taken.

Jeremiah 39

The Fall of Jerusalem

- 1] In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.
- 2] [And] in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth [day] of the month, the city was broken up.

The fall of Jerusalem. Up to now, we have been predicting it and talking about it; it now happens. The ninth day of the fourth month in the eleventh year of Zedekiah; that date is extremely important in the history of Israel. It is the date that Jerusalem fell. Recognize that this date is nailed down in the word of God four times: Jer 52; 2 Kgs 25; 2 Chr 36; here.

- 3] And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, [even] Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

Not sure how many people are really mentioned because some of these names, Rab is a chief, it is a title not a name. Nergalsharezer is both a title but apparently there are two of them. The first one was Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law and he succeeds him. Sarsechim is the chief of the eunuchs and Rab-mag is the chief of the Mages, possibly a predecessor to the Magi which the Persians subsequently develop into their Zoroastrianism.

Zedekiah's Prophecy Fulfilled

- 4] And it came to pass, [that] when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.
- 5] But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.

- 6] Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

He starts at the top and slaughters them, starts with the king's sons and then the princes. *Ezekiel 12:13* This is a strange prophecy, he is writing this while a captive in Babylon. Also, notice *Ezekiel 17: 12-21*.

Riblah: 34 years earlier Pharaoh Necho bound Jehoahaz.

- 7] Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

Can't blame the Babylonians, Judah has caused them nothing but grief. He has had to lay siege to this place almost two years to bring it to their knees and to clean this mess up. Bear in mind, Zedekiah was in power by Nebuchadnezzar, he was his boss so it is a rebellion situation as far as Nebuchadnezzar is concerned. He has had it with these guys. It is very common to put out the eyes of the defeated king. Often the championing king would do it himself, that was part of the zest. The last thing that Zedekiah would ever see would be his sons being killed by the Babylonians. It is so to speak deference that they didn't kill him because he was king, they put out his eyes, chained him and took him off to Babylon and he died there. They also slew all the nobles of Judah and start taking charge.

- 8] And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

When the Chaldeans burn the king's house = start of the desolation of Jerusalem a very special period of time, that also goes seventy years. The first siege of Nebuchadnezzar terminates the nation, the Servitude of the Nations begins in effect with the first siege. It goes seventy years to the day, under the authority of Cyrus the Persian they are allowed to go home and rebuild the Temple. They are released under Artaxerxes Longimanus. Nehemiah the cupbearer to the king is burdened by the fact that city of Jerusalem is still in rubble. Nehemiah goes to the king and gets the authority to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and triggers a prophesy that has a very important date. It happens to be seventy years to the day from the destruction of Jerusalem of the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar. The Times of the Gentiles have begun by many peoples reckoning. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, there is one last Gentile ruler to be in charge and he is going to be a wild one.

- 9] Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.
- 10] But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

Princes are slaughtered, everybody else is taken captive and they are slaves for seventy years = worse than wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

Zephaniah 3:12. An interesting fulfillment of prophecy, God leaves a remnant of the poor there that trusted Him and had nothing. The captain of the guard of the Chaldeans was used to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy, God uses whatever instruments to fulfill His word. (*Zephaniah 3:9*- pure language, Hebrew brought back after people regathered.)

- 11] Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,

No surprise; Jeremiah has been prophesying for forty years, Nebuchadnezzar's intelligence forces are pretty bright and reasonably well effective at their job and they found out that there is this strange prophet among the Hebrews that has been telling them not to fight but to give up. It is just a simple administrative act, he has been a friend to Babylon so he sets up the authority that they won't harm Jeremiah, they let him do whatever he wants. It is understandable, even in secular terms. What makes Nebuchadnezzar such a fascinating character is that he has a spiritual experience and he writes it as a testimony and orders that it be posted throughout the known world, we know it as *Daniel 4*. [For a complete study, see our *Expositional Commentary on Daniel*.]

- 12] Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.
- 13] So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabсарis, and Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;
- 14] Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

Gedaliah becomes the governor. The Hebrews are taken as slaves but Nebuchadnezzar puts Gedaliah in charge, a military governor. In Chapters 40-44, Gedaliah means well but is not too smart. He is very pious and is taking care of Jeremiah, but he is naive in that he trusts people he

shouldn't and that becomes his undoing. There is a lesson there to be *wise as serpents but harmless as doves*. Gedaliah isn't and he ends up being killed as a result. He is apparently the man that saved Jeremiah's life back in Chapter 26:24. He is friendly toward Jeremiah and so these guys, the princes that execute Nebuchadnezzar's instructions commit Jeremiah to Gedaliah. Jeremiah is put under the charge of Gedaliah, keep in mind that he is probably getting on in years, and in poor health.

Ebedmelech Will be Delivered

- 15] Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,
- 16] Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be [accomplished] in that day before thee.

Flashback. This is a major insight into Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, an interesting point that which was not in the narrative before but here is confirmed. Ebedmelech went to Zedekiah to plead for Jeremiah's life in Chapter 38:7. Ebedmelech is a senior guy on Zedekiah's staff and Nebuchadnezzar ultimately kills all the senior guys except for Ebedmelech because God is taking care of him. Ebedmelech has the guts to stand up and free Jeremiah the prophet. The insight that is implied is that Ebedmelech is spiritually at standing for Jeremiah. God is rewarding Ebedmelech for his service to the Lord in effect by watching out for the Lord's servant by extracting Jeremiah from that slime pit.

God here tells Jeremiah to tell Ebedmelech, who is probably in bad shape here in two ways. He is not in favor with the Judean princes because he thwarted their plan to kill Jeremiah but he is caught between the two because he is certainly not a friend of the Chaldeans.

- 17] But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou [art] afraid.
- 18] For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.

God will give him a life as a gift, which would normally be forfeit because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

Lamentations

Appendage to the book of Jeremiah; it is a little five-chapter book attached to the book of Jeremiah. It bemoans the fall of Jerusalem and Chapter 1 verse 1 mentions an interesting Poetic mark. Israel (specifi-

cally the city of Jerusalem) is described as a widow, usually a widow is one whose husband has died. The husband here is God and He is not dead, but they are separated. The separation is poetically described a widow. There are other places also that Israel is described as a widow. She is widowed when Jerusalem fell and she is enslaved. That is just sort of the climatic act.

Revelation 17 and 18 of the book of Revelation deal with mystery Babylon, don't confuse it with literal Babylon but there is something that God is dealing with that is spiritually or mystically Babylon. The harlot that emerges in Revelation has on her forehead a name written *Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots* and so forth. Mystery Babylon makes a boast that she is not a widow. No one said she was, she is contrasting herself with Israel, who is divorced and a widow. This is just a mystical link for further study.

Jeremiah 40

Chapters 40-44 describe a series of events that occur after the fall of Jerusalem. Chapters 40-42 are events that occur in Judah after Babylon has succeeded in crushing Jerusalem and taking Zedekiah captive.

Chapters 43-44 involve a flight to Egypt and what happens there. Jeremiah sort of becomes the unwilling prisoner of a group that are taken into Egypt. In Chapter 40 Gedaliah is appointed governor of Judah. After the third siege when Nebuchadnezzar takes the people off to Babylon except the poor. Nebuchadnezzar has a sub-governor by the name of Nebuzaradan who is familiar with Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's writings. He recognizes that Jeremiah was trying to warn his people not to resist. He speaks to Jeremiah in Jeremiah's idiom. The Babylonian leadership had a belly full of the house of David because they had one rebellion after another so they had enough.

Gedaliah is not of the royal line and they appoint him as governor. By the way, the name *Gedaliah* was found in a seal at Lachish. Gedaliah is a pretty good guy towards Jeremiah. He has shown up several times before in the book of Jeremiah, he protected Jeremiah (26:24) and is mentioned in 2 Kings 22:12, 14. He is the deputized governor of the area. Gedaliah means well, but he is naïve. He is brave and honorable but he is unsuspecting which is a failing in a leader. He was warned twice that his most trusted aides were going to assassinate him. A very diabolical conspiracy, led by a man named Ishmael—Ishmael, I believe,

owed his life to Gedaliah, so he is quite ungrateful. He succeeds in assassinating Gedaliah and leads a band of guerillas to do some pretty wild things. Chapters 40 and 41 are almost a narrative of this whole political intrigue.

Jeremiah is Unchained

Now this Babylonian leader, Nebuzaradan, is going to free Jeremiah. It is unclear why he had to be unchained. Some scholars believe that Jeremiah fettered himself in brass to identify with the captives. The Babylonians wouldn't have it, they unshackled him, they were honoring the role that he had in trying to convince his people not to resist the Babylonian siege. They even speak to Jeremiah in his own idiom, but that doesn't mean they are believers, they just talk in terms that Jeremiah could relate to. Jeremiah is free to choose where he wants to live. He declines to go to Babylon and live under the protection of a somewhat position of stature in the Babylonian court, in Babylon itself. He would rather stay in the land and so Nebuzaradan assigns him to Gedaliah the governor. Jeremiah attaches himself so to speak to Gedaliah. It would appear on the surface that the Babylonian leader understood Jeremiah's message better than the leaders of Judah.

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.
- 2] And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.
- 3] Now the LORD hath brought [it], and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

A Babylonian general speaking here in a reference that he knew that Jeremiah could speak to, and yet it is very provocative because there is more insight by this declaration by this Babylonian military leader than was evidenced in this entire book by any of the leaders of Judah, from the king on down. Even Zedekiah who sought out Jeremiah from time to time, did not seem to comprehend that God is set to bring this about as a form of judgment. From the victors, we have this interesting insight saying "*The Lord thy God,*" not "*the lord my god.*"

A summary of the Babylonian. As a minimum it implies that they are pretty knowledgeable of their writings, people that have studied the text carefully feel that there is evidence that they understood not only

Jeremiah's writings but also Ezekiel who was a captive in Babylon at the time.

- 4] And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which [were] upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land [is] before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.

This is a special dispensation given to Jeremiah and a few poor (Chapter 39) who were turned loose and left to stay in the land. This is no empty opportunity. This guy is heavy leverage, probably number 2 or 3 leader in the land. He is the military leader in the area, having appointed Gedaliah. He is making Jeremiah an offer to come to Babylon not as a slave, he would have some restricted freedom.

He also recognizes Jeremiah's emotional identity, his cultural background, his commitment to the land and the Lord might cause him to be uncomfortable even in the capital of the world, but he understands if Jeremiah refuses.

- 5] Now while he was not yet gone back, [he said], Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go.

So he has food, a reward and is turned loose. From Jeremiah's point of view, he probably thinks this is a dismal climax to a forty-year ministry. Over the time of five kings, he has had a bitter message, preaching to a people that he knew wouldn't hear and he had to preside over the decline of his nation. His ministry is not over, but the main event is behind him, Jerusalem is finally fallen and the nation is enslaved and are on their way to serve in Chaldea.

- 6] Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

Mizpah shows up a lot in the times of the Judges, the early days of the kings. It is going to end up being a sort of major capital and administrative center, that is where Gedaliah chooses or is assigned to minister from. It is not surprising that the Babylonians would take a jaundiced view of them administering from Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been a source of grief to the Babylonians, so operate out of Mizpah, not Jerusalem.

It is interesting to see Jeremiah's choice, because Jeremiah could indeed have chosen to go to Babylon. There were many men of God who assisted the people by attaining leverage at the palace on behalf of the people. Mordecai in the days of Esther, Nehemiah the cupbearer to the king seventy years later benefitted the nation by getting the authority to rebuild the city. Moses is another example, but he is perhaps a more interesting example because he made the same choice that Jeremiah did, chose rather to live on the back side of the desert than to enjoy the wealth of the court.

Jeremiah, not knocking these other people, appears to be led, not to be at the court of Babylon, where his career and concept could have paralleled Daniel's, by being faithful to Judaism. Jeremiah appears to be led to take his lot with his people. How many of us have the insight to be in the world but not of it.

Jeremiah clearly was making some choice here; he in effect was turning his back on the cruel tyranny of paganism. He wanted no part of the Babylonian court, but rather to eke out what existence he could in his famine ridden land that has been left to the few survivors.

The Guerillas

The Babylonians weren't absolutely thorough, there were those that in the siege and in the tumult of the battle, hid and went for the hills, becoming a group that we would be tempted to call guerillas. They were military guys by no means unskilled but not submissive, they recognize that it might be smarter to hide out and live to fight another day. This group of guerillas that end up in the hills become not only a problem, but a source of some conspiracies.

- 7] Now when all the captains of the forces which [were] in the fields, [even] they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon;
- 8] Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

Ishmael is the leader of this bunch, and Johanan is a pretty aggressive guy. These men were professional military men, the revolutionaries.

- 9] And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.

These renegade men were in the fields, and had hid out in the mountains and when they heard that Gedaliah was put as the governor, and so they go there. Apparently Gedaliah had the authority to grant them some kind of amnesty, fundamentally they were like deserters or they were targets, there were probably warrants out for their arrests in effect. Gedaliah points out, don't make any trouble, be subservient to our new rulers and it will be all right. You won't be carried off in shackles to Babylon. You can dwell in the land, but he wants peace. The presumption is that as governor he could grant them the authority to remain.

- 10] As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put [them] in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken.

These men have taken cities, they had their hideouts, they apparently had their places where they operated from, they were not just vagrants, they were men that represented semi-rural power blocks. What is implied here is that Gedaliah had the authority to grant this kind of relief of exposure. These guys were in effect fugitives but he is saying, If you serve the Chaldeans, everything will be fine. We are pledging allegiance to our new bosses, they are in charge.

Jews Returned

- 11] Likewise when all the Jews that [were] in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that [were] in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan;

Moab, Ammon and Edom were some of the places that the Jews had fled to when they were under persecution.

- 12] Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.

The Babylonians are not stupid. Instead of having a "scorched earth policy" their concept was instead of just going through and slaughtering everyone, leave the remnant, the poor stay there, and also they delegated the authority that those who would come back and wanted to settle and

keep it peaceful. They just want it quiet, and they also did an interesting thing by appointing a Jew in charge, Gedaliah.

Gedaliah was not of the house of David: he was appointed by the Babylonians to be in charge. He is a pious man that the people would rally around. When they heard that the Babylonians had left a remnant there, they just didn't scorch it, they put Gedaliah in charge.

What Gedaliah didn't think through because he wasn't very political savvy, he should have thought about Ishmael who was of the house of David. He is not of the royal part of the family, but he is one of the other descendants of David, he could claim Davidic ancestry. It comes behind that phrase any intelligent administrator would say to mark that he was ambitious, watch him, he is dangerous. A cynical Macheavelian prince would knock him off before he got a chance because of the implied threat in the situation. Gedaliah is not cut of that cloth. He is a peacemaker, unfortunately a naïve peacemaker, and that is the most dangerous kind.

Gedaliah Is Warned

- 13] Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,

Johanan is alleging that Ismael prior to this was in the country of Ammon and had made a deal with the king of Ammon, Baalis, to kill off Gedaliah. Baalis would want to kill Gedaliah, because the Ammonites are uncomfortable with a strong Judah. He is afraid that Judah may rise to power again, he doesn't have any stock with the Babylonians, and they are really running things.

Baalis was an ally of Zedekiah, and he was also an enemy of the Babylonians. He couldn't get too frisky because they are obviously very powerful. The family of Gedaliah is Ahikam and that family opposed a league that Baalis wanted in Chapter 27, so there is some bad blood. First of all Baalis had a friend in Zedekiah, and he was brutalized by the Babylonians, his sons were slaughtered and his eyes were put out and he was taken captive, so he recruits or at least extracts a promise out of Ishmael to take out Gedaliah, and Ishmael obviously had his own agenda, being of the house of David.

The name of King Baalis was found in a Siran bottle that is dated 667-580 B.C., which is very possible to be the very Baalis that we have here.

Ishmael appears to have made this pledge. His fellow guerilla leaders, one of them Johanan, are not to excited about the idea. Johanan is not some weakling, he is a fellow guerilla leader but he goes to Gedaliah and tips him off. If you and I were Gedaliah, we would at least get suspicious.

- 14] And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.
- 15] Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know [it]: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?

Apparently the first time may have been in public, maybe in some kind of administrative counsel chamber, and there could be some very good reasons for an administrator to say that it is nonsense, but Johanan goes to Gedaliah in private.

We don't know if this is just an argument, or just where Johanan is coming from. What he is really worried about and it is valid, isn't Gedaliah's life, that is just one aspect the personal aspect, but he recognizes the value in that the person of Gedaliah being acceptable to these tribes and groups gave at least some hope of gathering in the land peaceably. If he is slaughtered by some assassination plot, it can't bode well for the people. Johanan is right, he is smart, there is a very real issue there.

- 16] But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

For Gedaliah to put the kibosh on an assassination plot and Ishmael it is understandable and appropriate, but for him to just somehow not take other precautions is irresponsible. He has an obligation to his office as well as to his life.

Jeremiah 41

Gedaliah Is Slaughtered

- 1] Now it came to pass in the seventh month, [that] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

“of the seed royal” - if you knew that early, you would say that is part of the dynamics going on here.

“even ten with him” - you will be amazed at what these eleven guys pull off. These guys are roughnecks.

This is a scene sort of analogous to the scene in the upper room. Gedaliah is there, and a group of people that included these eleven guys, and they are eating bread together. There is a tone here of trust, candor and fellowship, but his own familiar friend in whom he trusted lifts up his heel against him (Psalm 41:9). It is applied to the Messiah but there is an analogy here.

- 2] Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

It is just a brutal, bloody scene where Ishmael and his ten rise up and slaughter Gedaliah. He was forewarned.

- 3] Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, [even] with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, [and] the men of war.

The whole administration of the land was at Mizpah. There was apparently some Babylonians, administrators of various kinds. They are obviously Gedaliah's staff, and also some men of war. They are all slaughtered by Ishmael and these ten guys, they were obviously skilled. They are devious, conspiratorial, but also skilled, they knocked this all off in such a way that they are going to try to keep it a secret for a while. They slaughtered everyone involved.

- 4] And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew [it],

This whole thing was kept secret, there were no witnesses, they didn't take any prisoners.

Eighty Men

- 5] That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, [even] fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring [them] to the house of the LORD.

These people are from an area that is today called Nablus. This is a very dangerous place to go today, for not very different reasons. It is interesting how history continues.

There were eighty men, by the way all but ten of them are going to get slaughtered by these eleven. The ten were taken prisoners because they got greedy; they figured they had stashed some food in a cistern and so they kept ten as hostages. A couple of things that are complicated; Josiah had thrown down all the altars of the idols up north. These particular guys are a strange mix of things. On the one hand they have come here to offer, to worship, so they are faithful at least in some sense of direction and yet they also evidence heathen manners. The fact that they have shaven beards is inappropriate, ceremonially rent clothes was inhibited in the Torah, and they also had ceremonial gashes. This is also a pagan rite that is associated normally with Baal worship. They had a style of cutting themselves ceremonially as a mechanism of expression (prohibited in Deut 14:1). Some evidence of this at Mount Carmel with Elijah.

This may be confusing at first, because they are victims of that cultural background, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are unbelievers. There is a lot of debate about exactly who they were and why and such. These eighty guys come to Mizpah, which was sort of the current administrative capital, to offer offerings.

They are at least in some sense believers; they are not idol worshipers except having this penalty of tradition with them.

- 6] And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.
- 7] And it was [so], when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, [and cast them] into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that [were] with him.

The pit built some 400 years earlier, a very famous cistern (1 Kgs 15:22; 2 Chr 16:6) and that is where he threw all these bodies. This was stupid, the bodies pollute the water system to Mizpah, it was a cistern. It was a convenient place to cover up the slaughter. When these eighty show up we don't know if it is the eighty plus their entourage, in any case this group comes and they go out to meet them and through deviousness and subterfuge let them think every thing is great, weeping, and brings them into town for an ambush. He slaughters all but ten. It has been

traditional in groups like that to leave the victuals in cisterns and fields on the way for the trip back or whatever. Bear in mind that this land has been famine ridden so food is a nontrivial resource. The presumption that seems to underline the story is that there was either information or a presumption that these people had placed provisions along the way typically hidden them in cisterns for their route back home. They don't slaughter all eighty; they keep ten for hostages. Then they torture them to find out where there is more food hidden.

- 8] But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.
- 9] Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, [was] it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: [and] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with [them that were] slain.
- 10] Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that [were] in Mizpah, [even] the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

Ishmael is very much the pawn or the cat's paw if you will of King Baalis of the Ammonites. He promised that he would kill Gedaliah which he did. There is some debate over when this exactly occurs. Some think it is no longer than three months after the fall of Jerusalem. Other scholars think that it is several years later. There is evidence both ways.

Needless to say, Johanan who is a guerilla leader of sorts isn't too pleased by all of this. He was obviously frustrated that Gedaliah didn't listen; he tried to warn him twice at least, and it didn't do any good.

Gibeon

- 11] But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,
- 12] Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that [are] in Gibeon.

The city of Gibeon shows up in Joshua 18:25; 21:17 and several other places. It was a city in the tribe of Benjamin and it is about a mile from Mizpah. This is a familiar name; Gibeon is where Joab and Abner contend (2 Sam 2:12-17). This is where Joshua and his men had a victory over

the allied groups of the Canaanites in defiance of the men of Gibeon. All through this there is deep history and irony, the ultimate irony is for them to return to Egypt which is coming in a couple more chapters.

Certain numbers in the Scripture seem to be suggestive of certain concepts. 7 is completeness; 5 is grace, it seems; 4 is of the earth and world, and so on. The number 10 is sort of a mystery; it seems to connote responsibility. Ten commandments, when Boaz wants witnesses to the marriage with Ruth he gets the ten men of the city, it is always ten this or ten that when there is sort of an accountability or responsibility implied. Ishmael had ten men with him, there is eleven really if you count him, but it is always the ten men. There are ten Johanans in the Old Testament, not that prominent but there happen to be ten. With this reoccurrence of ten and perhaps the Holy Spirit is giving us some hints there and there is a real prize for the one who digs into that and unravels. I haven't found that yet myself.

- 13] Now it came to pass, [that] when all the people which [were] with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him, then they were glad.

Sort of a strange reaction, and it seems that the people weren't too impressed with Ishmael. They are glad to see Johanan and the men.

- 14] So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.

Ishmael is a formidable force, and he is taking slaves and so when Johanan shows up there is obviously a following that he can take advantage of.

- 15] But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.
- 16] Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after [that] he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, [even] mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:
- 17] And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

Chimham is not far from Bethlehem and is on the route to Egypt. Therefore, fears wrath of Chaldeans.

- 18] Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

The book of Jeremiah is piece-mealed. These insertions, whether by Baruch or whatever keep repackaging the context. All the commentators have a problem with the fragmentary nature of the styling. In this case, there is no chronological problem because it is all-continuous. There is a repeating of context as if they are pieced together.

Jeremiah 42

Request for Jeremiah to Pray

- 1] Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,
2] And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, [even] for all this remnant; (for we are left [but] a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)
3] That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

They are going to Jeremiah for leading. The real problem is that they have already charted their course, they are looking for God to ratify it. They are not going there to really seek his counsel. They don't say *the Lord our God*. Distance between them and the Lord, they are wanting Jeremiah to intercede and be a middleman. It is interesting when people pray, you often get a sense of their distance from the Lord.

- 4] Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard [you]; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, [that] whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare [it] unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

Jeremiah is not going to bite off on this idea of getting caught in between, he won't hold back anything that the Lord is saying to them, it is their problem.

- 5] Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.
6] Whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

First person possessive pronoun.

- 7] And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

They are waiting for 10 days and we presume that Jeremiah is in prayer. Jeremiah doesn't rush out and give them his first impulse, he waits to make sure the Lord is communicating. 10 = responsibility.

- 8] Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which [were] with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,
9] And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;
10] If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull [you] down, and I will plant you, and not pluck [you] up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.
11] Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I [am] with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.
12] And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.
13] But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,
14] Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

There is always these three things, war, famine and pestilence that reoccur as a theme throughout the rest of this passage.

- 15] And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;
16] Then it shall come to pass, [that] the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

Interesting that the Lord still sanctions them despite all the ministry of the forty years of Jeremiah, He says if you will just abide here, I will protect you. That is quite an offer on the part of God. They are afraid of the king of Babylon because they have been rabble-rousers, they have bloodied the hillsides, they have created nothing but problems for the locals, they are nervous and frightened of Babylon. Their plan all along as it turns out has been to flee to Egypt, Babylon's traditional enemy. That was the whole problem under Zedekiah, they kept making

intrigues with Egypt, hoping that Egypt would prevail over Babylon. Jeremiah warned them against it and they wouldn't listen. Even now, they somehow have this notion and they go ahead to Egypt. Their land is bloodied, bodies everywhere, pestilence and sword, Egypt is peaceful and Judah is the wartorn battlefield and they don't trust the Lord to stay there, they are going to go where the grass is greener, presumably.

Flee to Egypt

- 17] So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.
- 18] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

The Lord can get right down to street level when He wants to, and He lays it on them right there.

- 19] The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.
- 20] For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do [it].

Deceitfulness revealed. They were not sincere in approaching Jeremiah in finding out the Lord's real will. What they were hoping to do is to ratify or sanction what they had in mind to do all along. How often do we treat the Lord in the same way?

- 21] And [now] I have this day declared [it] to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any [thing] for the which he hath sent me unto you.
- 22] Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go [and] to sojourn.

They were not to go to Egypt. They were in the land and they were assured in the land that they would be under the Lord's blessing. They chose to go to Egypt. Generations before the Lord went through a lot of trouble to get them out of Egypt, and now they are going back. Egypt was modeled then as the world. We are to be in the world and not of it (1 John 1:9).

Jeremiah 43

Accusation on Baruch

- 1] And it came to pass, [that] when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, [even] all these words,
- 2] Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:
- 3] But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.

They are saying that he is being managed by his secretary/scribe, his messenger. Baruch was his loyal faithful supporter. Here is Jeremiah who stood undaunted before the kings when they were confronted by his unpopular messages, harassed Jeremiah to the brink of death, and he didn't bend. They are accusing him of being managed by his secretary.

- 4] So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah.
- 5] But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;
- 6] [Even] men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah.

Jeremiah appears to be somewhat of a prisoner of this band, and he is unwillingly forced to go with them to Egypt. This is a strange irony. Here is a guy that preached pro-Babylon and now he is being taken to the land that is the enemy of the Babylonians.

Stones in the Pavement

- 7] So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they [even] to Tahpanhes.

Tahpanhes in the Greek called Daphne, in northeast Egypt, the northern border of Lower Egypt. It is about 20 miles from Pyphon, which is in the land of Goshen—which is ironic because that is where the Lord

extricated them. He is there apparently against his will (Jer 32:6-15; 40:1-6; 42:13-18). There is some evidence that at the time this was the capital because Pharaoh was there.

- 8] Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,
9] Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln, which [is] at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah;

Not sure if this was in the kiln or simply in the pavement that was being laid. The point is that he took some stones symbolically and put them in the pavement or in some clay work that was going on there as a symbol.

- 10] And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.

In other words this is going to be his very seat, right here.

- 11] And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, [and deliver] such [as are] for death to death; and such [as are] for captivity to captivity; and such [as are] for the sword to the sword.
12] And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace.
13] He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that [is] in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

Images of Bethshemesh = the obelisks and so forth.

Incidentally, there are seven things that Jeremiah predicts here: that Nebuchadnezzar is going to invade Egypt, that he is going to have victory over Egypt, the place of his throne, the decorations of his throne, the lives that he would destroy, the temples that he would demolish, and the gods that he would take away captive.

Jeremiah 44

- 1] The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,

Migdol is the royal fortress and Noph in some of your Bibles is, of course Memphis, the ancient capital of Upper Egypt. Implies that the colonization is spread over a large area.

Lord's Expectations

- 2] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein,
3] Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, [and] to serve other gods, whom they knew not, [neither] they, ye, nor your fathers.
4] Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them], saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.
5] But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.
6] Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted [and] desolate, as at this day.
7] Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye [this] great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;
8] In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?
9] Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?
10] They are not humbled [even] unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers.
11] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.
12] And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, [and] fall in the land of Egypt; they shall [even] be consumed by the sword [and] by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, [and] an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.
13] For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:
14] So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

Women Lead

- 15] Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

It is interesting how the entrance of false teaching and doctrine seems to enter man's predicament through the women (apply Acts 17:11). Remember Eve in Genesis 3, Solomon, God's anointed, and idolatry entered through his foreign wives. Paul warns us about a woman being uncovered, where was Adam in Genesis 3? She wasn't under his covering. The woman who is uncovered by the man is vulnerable; she seems to be Satan's instrument for false teaching and false doctrine and heresy. Many of the great pseudo-Christian cults who have entered through the zeal of a woman.

- 16] [As for] the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.
- 17] But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for [then] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

Queen of heaven, Ishtar (Akkadian), Ashtoreth (Hebrew - astrological), Ashtarte (Greek), Diana (Latin) and Artemis (NT, Acts 19), depending upon the language.

- 18] But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all [things], and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

They have a misguided concept: they point back to when they did these things and things seemed to be okay. So they are saying, as long as we were worshiping idols, everything was fine. They got it backwards: because they were worshiping idols, God brought the judgment.

- 19] And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?

Idols Brought Judgment

- 20] Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him [that] answer, saying,

- 21] The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it [not] into his mind?
- 22] So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, [and] because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.

This is why God judged Judah, and this is why God will judge America.

- 23] Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.
- 24] Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt:
- 25] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.
- 26] Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth.
- 27] Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.
- 28] Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.
- 29] And this [shall be] a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:
- 30] Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.

The Lord doesn't mess around, He is serious. He will have His name honored, and when the nation turns against Him, He judges.

Jeremiah 45

A slightly different period now, and this is appended after the other session, not necessarily in chronological order as you will see shortly

but on a different subject. The subject up till now has been Judah. Jeremiah had the burden of presiding over the death of his nation. He had to tell them that judgment was coming, that they were going to be made slaves in Babylon for seventy years and it all happened. It was not a popular ministry, an agonizing ministry actually, therefore he's called the Weeping Prophet.

Message for Baruch and Us All

After Chapter 44, we have this little five-verse appendage. Bear in mind that Jeremiah is not in chronological order; it is a compilation of his various writings. Chapter 45 is a special message to Baruch. He was a grandson of Mahseiah who was the governor of Jerusalem, under Josiah the good king (2 Chr 34:8). His brother was the chief chamberlain in the court of Zedekiah (51:59). Baruch, while he was professionally a scribe, was apparently of noble birth.

- 1] The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

When Pharaoh Necho first asserted himself, he put Jehoahaz in charge, but only for 90 days, and then he put Jehoiakim in charge and he was bad news. A major duration of the rulership was under Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was succeeded by Jeconiah or Jehoiachin but only for a short time; he was subsequently replaced by Zedekiah and that displacement was by Nebuchadnezzar. This is the writings that Baruch did during the earlier king, Jehoiakim.

- 2] Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch;
- 3] Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.

Baruch is exhausted, he is anxious, worried and concerned.

- 4] Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, [that] which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.
- 5] And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek [them] not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

A strange kind of encouragement: bear in mind that Baruch is faced with replacing the copy that the king burned. He apparently got very

discouraged; the word of encouragement to him is out of order, it happens to be right here. He reminds him that God is in charge and He is going to put up and take down as He will. Exemplified in the next four to five chapters prophetically as far as the nations around Israel are concerned.

Wrong time for personal ambition. A crisis time, not the time to be making long-term plans. Parallel passages, the days of Elisha, Gehazi Elisha's servant deceived Namaan to his own advantage and Elisha scolds him. It was not the appropriate time for Gehazi to be looking out for himself (2 Kgs 5:26). Similar passage in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31. Normal plans would be overshadowed by the crisis times in which they will live. He is also giving him along with this caution a word of encouragement. He says that his life is secure. That may not sound like much, but these are the days of the Babylonian captivity, the city under siege, he is essentially putting Baruch under God's special protection. So Baruch does not have to be concerned with his life, but it is not the time for other concerns because they are about to encounter the events that we talked about in the last chapter or two where Nebuchadnezzar does succeed and they are forced to go to Egypt.

Jeremiah 46

Chapters 46-49 are a little different in that they are not directed against Israel; they are prophecies given through Jeremiah to a group of nations. Some Bibles may have this organized as either nine or ten, depending on how they are counted. There will be Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus which implies Syria, and then Kedar and Hazor which should properly be separated into two. Some Bible scholars have them clustered together as Arabia. Arabia was not a cohesive nation at that time, but we would associate Kedar and Hazor with the tribes that make up Arabia, and the last one is Elam. This gives you ten.

Ten Nations

Ten nations. When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, they faced ten nations. Three of them were put down before they crossed the Jordan under Joshua, so Joshua faced seven nations when they conquered Canaan in the book of Joshua. It is interesting in the book of Revelation in the end times, the western European nations will be aligned as a confederation of ten, a ten nation thing and three of them are put down first and the dictator takes place (Daniel and Revelation 13 & 17). Ten nations when God speaks to Jeremiah (some Bibles will call it nine).

Another point—Jeremiah was a prophet to Israel, but in Jeremiah 1:5 he is a prophet to the nations, plural. Jeremiah had a world view; he served under five kings of Judah and during four different kings of Egypt and two different kings of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar inherited the kingdom when his father died during the first siege). So one of the messages is to recognize that the Bible emphasizes that God is the God of all nations and His demands of holiness apply to all nations.

Chapter 46 Directed to Egypt

Chapter 46 is essentially in its entirety a prophecy against Egypt, but there are two different prophecies. Verses 2-12 have to do with one particular focus on Israel that will turn out to be Pharaoh Necho. The rest of the chapter is another prophecy against Egypt, but it has to do with events after the fall of Jerusalem.

This passage is going to deal with Pharaoh Necho's invasion against the king of Babylon. Egypt is a powerful nation at the time; Babylon is on the rise. Pharaoh Necho is the man that engages in the battle at Megiddo. Megiddo here is the location where Pharaoh Necho slays King Josiah the good king about 609 B.C. He placed Jehoahaz on the throne, three months later removes him and imprisons him at Riblah, and Jehoiakim is in charge.

Battle of Carchemish- Review

The fourth year that Jehoiakim is in charge is the battle of Carchemish. Pharaoh Neco gets defeated by a young general in charge of the Babylonian army a man named Nebuchadnezzar. That battle alters the subsequent course of history in the world. Pharaoh Neco and Egypt from that time on are contained and Babylon is one the rise.

- 1] The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles;
- 2] Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.
- 3] Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle.
- 4] Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with [your] helmets; furbish the spears, [and] put on the brigantines.
- 5] Wherefore have I seen them dismayed [and] turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: [for] fear [was] round about, saith the LORD.
- 6] Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.

Reference to the Babylonian strength surfacing. Taunts by Jeremiah against Egypt. Bear in mind that Jehoiakim and the leaders were pro-Egypt and Jeremiah is pointing out that they are going to lose and that Jeremiah is called by God to win.

- 7] Who [is] this [that] cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers?
- 8] Egypt riseth up like a flood, and [his] waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, [and] will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.
- 9] Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle [and] bend the bow.

Cush and *Put* are Ethiopia and Libya as we would think of them and they are allies of Egypt.

- 10] For this [is] the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.
- 11] Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; [for] thou shalt not be cured.

Medicines, a small historical point, apparently the field of medicine was introduced to Europe by Egypt and India. Interesting reference to their medicinal arts. Not to disparage them, but they are going to be no avail for the problems that they have.

- 12] The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, [and] they are fallen both together.

Jeremiah's poetic way of describing the futility of Egypt going against Babylon, their ultimate destruction and almost a taunt that they are going to go down. While this is directed at Egypt, Jeremiah is trying to convince Jehoiakim not to make an alliance with Egypt because Egypt was going to lose.

Prophecy #2 - After the Fall

- 13] The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should come [and] smite the land of Egypt.

Most scholars believe that this is a separate prophecy against Egypt, referring to a different time.

- 14] Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee.

The prophecy is aimed at Egypt's heartland. Different than the conflict between Pharaoh Necho and the Babylonian which was fulfilled in most scholars eyes at Carchemish. This is subsequent, after the fall of Jerusalem. Once again, Nebuchadnezzar focuses on Egypt. Thinking that they would be safe in Egypt, Jeremiah and Baruch were forced by this rebel group to go. He says to no avail, that Nebuchadnezzar would even get to Egypt. Most scholars feel that this gets fulfilled several years after the fall of Jerusalem. The cities here are the cities we reviewed before pretty much in Egypt.

- 15] Why are thy valiant [men] swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them.
16] He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.
17] They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt [is but] a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.
18] [As] I live, saith the King, whose name [is] the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor [is] among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, [so] shall he come.

Daniel 4 and 10 make the broader point that God is the God of the nations.

- 19] O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.
20] Egypt [is like] a very fair heifer, [but] destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north.

Due to the Fertile Crescent geography, Babylon even though it is way to the east really attacks from the north.

- 21] Also her hired men [are] in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back, [and] are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, [and] the time of their visitation.
22] The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.

Serpent was on their Egyptian banners, etc. Commentators point out the word play. In the English we miss that; often through these places in the Hebrew there are puns and plays on the words. Just be aware that we are dealing with a translation. The Babylonians did use battle-axes and in those days it was bizarre, different and a surprise. Common

in medieval times but this goes back six centuries before Christ. The battle-axe was a peculiar weapon that the Babylonians introduced and it was an aspect of awe to come against.

- 23] They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and [are] innumerable.

Grasshoppers were an idiom of a plague, they were without number, and they were like a swarm.

- 24] The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north.
25] The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and [all] them that trust in him:
26] And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD.
27] But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make [him] afraid.
28] Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I [am] with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

Where has the Lord driven them? Everywhere. A promise to Israel, she will not go unpunished, she will be corrected, like a father corrects his child, but He is also going to punish the other nations.

Egypt here is prophesied against twice but what is not visible here, Egypt is the beneficiary of an ultimate promise to survive. She will be restored and strengthened during the Millennial period (Isaiah 19:24-25). Ezekiel 29:8-14 describes an ultimate restoration and time of blessing on the land of Egypt. That is kind of strange; Egypt is Israel's enemy that was what the Exodus is all about. God promised Abraham, I will bless them that blesses thee and curse him that curses thee. Strangely enough I am sure that Egypt doesn't claim that promise, but God keeps it.

Jeremiah 47

Philistia

This chapter is on another nation, namely the Philistines and some of their allies, Tyre and Sidon.

By the way, some other people like to make types out of these. On the one hand, Egypt is a type of the world, the Philistines a type of the unconverted men of the world. This is a different thing. Philistines had their origin in Egypt, they lived along the strip there. The Philistines in those days had their five major cities along the strip: Ashkelon, Ekokon, Ashdod, Gaza, and Gath.

- 1] The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza.

Sets the time, a time when Pharaoh Necho attacked Gaza.

- 2] Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

Speaking metaphorically. The flood = the armies that are coming. This prophecy is apparently given about the same time that 46:1-12 was given.

- 3] At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong [horses], at the rushing of his chariots, [and at] the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to [their] children for feebleness of hands;

Tyre & Sidon

- 4] Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, [and] to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.

Tyre and Sidon are allies of Philistia. The word *Caphtor* really means a strip of country, actually an Egyptian word which is another indication that many scholars believe the Philistines had their origin from the south from the Egyptians.

- 5] Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off [with] the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?
 6] O thou sword of the LORD, how long [will it be] ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.
 7] How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.

Baldness is come upon Gaza, Gaza (Josh 10:41, Jdg 1:18, 1 Kgs 4:24). The gates of Gaza: Samson's feats, again Philistine country. Baldness

has been prophetically and idiomatically a term of desolation. (Isa 7:20, Ez 5:1,2, Amos 1:8,10) Sort of in contrast to hair which is sometimes used idiomatically as a symbol of strength. (Ex. Samson and the Nazarite vow, with women it is their glory). So hair being strength and baldness being the absence of strength is the root concept. A poet's way of describing that they are experiencing judgment.

Now, buried in the Hebrew language not visible in your English is a reference in verses 5-7 to the Anakim. (just a footnote). That is the "tall nation" these unusually tall people that also dwelt among the Philistines (Josh 11:22) and of course the Philistines invoke Goliath who was of the Anakim. He was unusually strong and David took the five stones when he slew Goliath was because of Goliath and his four brothers. He was ready to take on them all. The Anakim show up in some of the root words and they dwelt near Hebron in the prehistoric times. Other prophecies concerning Philistia (Isa 14:28-31, Ez 25:15-17, Amos 1:6-8, Zeph 2:4-7).

Jeremiah 48

Against Moab

Chapter 48 is a prophecy against Moab. There are two groups here, the Moabites and the Ammonites. Both of these groups show up a great deal in Old Testament history. The Moabites are the descendants of the firstborn daughter of Lot, a result of laying with her father (Gen 19:37). The two illegitimate offspring through his daughters are the Moabites and the Ammonites. The Moabites dwelt east on the shores of the Dead Sea. From a typological point of view they are a large and careless class that have a name but are not heirs (Hebrews 12:8 bastards and not sons). They ally themselves with Nebuchadnezzar against Israel (2 Kgs 24:2; Jer 12:7-13). They also revolt with Israel against Zedekiah (Jer 27:1-11). They are a strange inconsistent bunch. The land of Moab includes Mt. Nebo, where Moses saw the Promised Land. References to Moab and its relationship to Israel in Genesis 19:30-38; Numbers 22:24; 2 Kings 3:4-17 and elsewhere.

Their main deity is *Chemosh*, in fact the battle of Carchemish is not in the land of Moab but it the fortress of Chemosh. The name Chemosh as a god that they worship shows up a number of times on the Moabite Stone. (Chemosh in Num 21:29, 1 Kgs 11:7,33, and so on). Ruth was a Moabite and she ends up marrying Boaz. They are also the grandparents of King David.

- 1] Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded [and] taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.

Nebo is the mountain that is in Moab but it is well known from the days of Moses. Kiriathaim is a city name (Numbers 32:37).

- 2] [There shall be] no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from [being] a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee.
3] A voice of crying [shall be] from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.
4] Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.
5] For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.
6] Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.

The shrub here is a heath or technically a naked tree. This is a desert shrub that whenever a branch breaks off and blows in the wind, wherever it lands it takes root. In that sense it is like a weed; it is easily grown. The thought here is save your lives and be like the shrub in the wilderness and flee before the wind but take root wherever you end up, a nomadic kind of overtone. The other insight is that Moab is going to get judged, but she is not totally destroyed. Moab will also be promised restoration at the end.

- 7] For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity [with] his priests and his princes together.

Their main idol, the patron deity of the nation is going to be shamed.

- 8] And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken.
9] Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.
10] Cursed [be] he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed [be] he that keepeth back his sword from blood.
11] Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.
12] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.
13] And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.

Bethel: calf worship under Jeroboam. This introduced idol worship and shamed the nation, causing the Northern Kingdom to eventually go into captivity under the Assyrians. Just as that was a shame to them, Chemosh will be a shame to Moab. God doesn't tolerate idol worship anywhere.

- 14] How say ye, We [are] mighty and strong men for the war?
15] Moab is spoiled, and gone up [out of] her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name [is] the LORD of hosts.
16] The calamity of Moab [is] near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast.
17] All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, [and] the beautiful rod!
18] Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from [thy] glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, [and] he shall destroy thy strong holds.

Obviously Nebuchadnezzar is going to take care of Moab before this is over.

- 19] O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, [and] say, What is done?
20] Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,

These are all cities in the Moab region.

- 21] And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath,
22] And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim,
23] And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon,
24] And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

Bozrah is close to Petra. [For a complete study of Petra, see our Briefing Package, *The Next Holocaust and the Refuge in Edom.*]

- 25] The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD.

The horn of Moab - the horn of an animal is its strength or its authority, its power. Moab's horn is cut off, meaning he is powerless, he has lost the ability to wage war.

- 26] Make ye him drunken: for he magnified [himself] against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.
27] For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy.

- 28] O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove [that] maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.

Moab's Pride

- 29] We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogance, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.

God hates: pride. Pride caused Satan to fall and pride always leads to destruction. Here the same term is used and is the basis by which God is justifying the judgment of Moab.

Moab's pride being the basis is mentioned six times, structurally interesting.

- 30] I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but [it shall] not [be] so; his lies shall not so effect [it].
31] Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; [mine heart] shall mourn for the men of Kirheres.
32] O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach [even] to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage.
33] And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; [their] shouting [shall be] no shouting.
34] From the cry of Heshbon [even] unto Elealeh, [and even] unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar [even] unto Horonaim, [as] an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.
35] Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.

Again the high places were classically the locations of the idol worshipping altars and the burning of incense to idols.

- 36] Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches [that] he hath gotten are perished.

Flutes = associated with funerals, a funeral dirge instrument.

- 37] For every head [shall be] bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands [shall be] cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.

All forms of mourning. Some are not condoned in the Torah, prohibited to Jews, but these are Moabites. Even their style of mourning, mainly to shave (a form of humility), the hands gashes and the idea of ritual slashing is part of idol-worshipping traditions in those days.

- 38] [There shall be] lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure, saith the LORD.
39] They shall howl, [saying], How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him.
40] For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.
41] Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

The term is like birth or labor pains. All through the Old Testament and Jesus in the New uses that phrase of judgment and trouble in a country, the birth pains, starting slowly and increasing in frequency and intensity.

- 42] And Moab shall be destroyed from [being] a people, because he hath magnified [himself] against the LORD.
43] Fear, and the pit, and the snare, [shall be] upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.
44] He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, [even] upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

An Old Testament variation of “out of the fire, into the pan.”

- 45] They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.
46] Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.
47] Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far [is] the judgment of Moab.

Prophecy of Balaam (the man in Num 24:17) with the prophecy on Moab from Balaam. Other prophecies against Moab: Deut 23:3; Psalms 60:8; 83:6-7; 108:9; Isa 15 and 16; 25:10-12; Jer 9:25-27; 25:21; 27:3; Ezek 25:8-11; Amos 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-11.

Jeremiah 49

Against Ammon

Both Moab and Ammon have passages focusing on them. Ammon has just six verses, but Edom will have a lot. Ammon lived north of Moab also east of the Dead Sea. Lot's younger daughter gives birth to Benami

having been made pregnant by her father (Gen 19:38). Ammon is restless, predatory, and more of a nomad. No cities nor roots like Moab did and they were less civilized than the Moabites. They are the enemies of Israel. Moses sought to “distress them not” (Deut 2:19).

[Don’t confuse them with the Ammorites, they had Jericho as the capital, somewhat similar territorially but different group.]

Enemies of Israel (2 Kgs 24:2) and they participate in and rejoice over the fall of Jerusalem (Jer 40:11-14). The Ammonites dwelt near the territories of Gad, Reuben and Benjamin, but particularly Gad, which was a tribal area. Rabbah is their capital. They live near Gad and as Israel is in trouble from her enemies, the Ammonites take advantage of it and occupy Israel’s cities improperly and that is what is going to explain the opening of this passage. Nebuchadnezzar is going to destroy the Ammonites, the fifth year after the fall of Jerusalem. A six-verse prophecy against Ammon.

Ammon = Type of those who prey upon the Church?

- 1] Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why [then] doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?

Gad is a tribal area allocated to Israel. They are occupying Israel’s territory.

- 2] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the LORD.

Rabbah is the capital of the Ammonites. Israel, even though she is in trouble right now, she is coming back. There is also a veiled promise and word of encouragement to Israel because they are going to return to these cities later, so Ammon isn’t going to stay there.

- 3] Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, [and] his priests and his princes together.

This Ai is not the Ai of Joshua.

- 4] Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, [saying], Who shall come unto me?

- 5] Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth.
- 6] And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.

Other prophecies on Ammon: Ezek 21:20,28-32 and 25:1-7; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11.

Edom

- 7] Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; [Is] wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?

Genesis 36:1-19, Jacob outwits Esau for his birthright. Esau and Edom in effect are synonyms, they both mean “the red.” The land of Edom is the land of Esau. Esau hated Jacob. So later on when the Israelites were leaving Egypt and they want to go through Edom, they are denied that, they have to around. Saul is in conflict with them (1 Sam 14:47), David subdues them in garrisons in the land of Edom (2 Sam 8:14). Joab attempts to eradicate all the males of Edom, he has a six-month campaign (1 Kgs 11:15,16). Hadad the royal prince escapes to Egypt and he is a source of annoyance to Solomon. Solomon develops the copper and iron in the caravan trade that the land of Edom provides. Under King Jehoshaphat Edom adjoins the Ammonites and the Moabites in an attack on Judah (2 Chr 20:1). Edom governed by deputy (1 Kgs 22:47), under control of Judah, joined coalition between Israel and Judah on Mesha King of Moab (2 Kgs 3:4-27).

Edomites, Ammonites and the Moabites are classic enemies of Israel. The allies come to blows and they fall apart (20:22,23). Under the rule of Babylon, Edom declines, they pay heavy tribute. They’re allied with Nebuchadnezzar at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and they are overjoyed at the fall of Judah, their traditional enemy (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:21,22). The whole book of Obadiah is a prophecy against Edom.

The Edomites become Idumaeans. Idumaea has a governor by the name of Antipater about 63 B.C. who gives birth to a man by the name of Herod who becomes Herod the Great, and thus is the beginning of the Herodian dynasty, that is about 37 B.C. Petra is their capital, they are overrun by the Nabateans. The point is under the Roman dominance in that part of the country, Edom or Idumaea becomes the source of the Herodian dynasty, so King Herod is not Jewish, he is an Idumaeans.

That explains why the Jews hated Herod, they didn't only hate Rome, perhaps if handled properly they could have been philosophical about that, but the Romans appointed Herod the king from an ethnic root that is their traditional enemy. Herod tried to win favor of the people, that is why he built all these places, the Temple and all this stuff. It was his attempt through civic works to become popular, and he never made it. Edom is censured by all the prophets; their hatred of Israel is censured by all the prophets, Amos 2:1, book of Obadiah, Psalm 137:7, and their desolation is promised in Isaiah 11:14, and 34:5-17, Ezekiel 35:1-15 and so on.

Typologically: Edom = flesh lusting against the spirit.

- 8] Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time [that] I will visit him.

Dedan is not necessarily Edom. Dedan is really south and they're warning to stay away from Edom. Dedan we associate with Arabia more than Edom.

- 9] If grape gatherers come to thee, would they not leave [some] gleanings? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.
 10] But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he [is] not.
 11] Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve [them] alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

The widows and fatherless children the Lord will spare, but the rest of them have had it.

- 12] For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment [was] not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and [art] thou he [that] shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink [of it].
 13] For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.
 14] I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, [saying], Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle.
 15] For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, [and] despised among men.
 16] Thy terriblest hath deceived thee, [and] the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

- 17] Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.
 18] As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour [cities] thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

There is no restoration for Edom. All the others have a judgment coming, punishing them for their ungodly posture but they have a promise at the end, but Edom is in real trouble, like Sodom and Gomorrah.

- 19] Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who [is] a chosen [man, that] I may appoint over her? for who [is] like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who [is] that shepherd that will stand before me?
 20] Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them.
 21] The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea.
 22] Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

Edom: Ezekiel 25:12-14 and 35:1-15; Joel 3:19; Amos 9:12; Obadiah 1-16; Isaiah 21:11-12; 34:5-7; Isaiah 63:16 because when the Lord Jesus Christ is there seen covered with blood fighting for the enemies and He comes from Bozrah. Edom was the home of Eliphaz (Job 2:11). Job was published in the days of Joseph in Egypt, it is one of the oldest books in the Bible, he came from the land of Edom apparently which was known for its wisdom according to Ezekiel 25:23.

Dedan is really south of Edom; really part of Arabia, Bozrah is a capital in Jeremiah's time. Edom can also mean *the rock*. The word is *selah* and is also the word *petra*. So the city of Bozrah and the city of Petra are not co-located but they are very close. They poetically become synonyms.

Edomites cheered at the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, and the Edomites were the ones defending Jerusalem when it fell under the Romans in 70 A.D. you see the irony of the inversion.

Against Damascus

The next five verses are against Damascus, that is the city, more of the territory of Syria, because it is going to mention Hamath and Arpad.

- 23] Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; [there is] sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.

Damascus judged. The palace Ben-Hadad is going to be destroyed, Israel's old enemy. Hamath is 110 miles north of Damascus and Arpad is 95 miles north of Hamath so don't think is just a city thing, it is really Syria.

- 24] Damascus is waxed feeble, [and] turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on [her]: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.
25] How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy!
26] Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts.
27] And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad.

Similar to the previous, just nailing another enemy of Israel.

Kedar & Hazor

The next few verses are two cities, Kedar and Hazor close to Arabia, it wasn't Arabia then it was a tribal environment.

- 28] Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the LORD; Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east.

Jeremiah is going from west to east essentially, nailing the enemies of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar is going to conquer over these two and of course he did. It is fulfillment of prophecy, not very impressive to us because all of this is so far past that it is not a proof of text kind of thing but it is just consistent with the rest of the message that we have been hearing.

- 29] Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear [is] on every side.
30] Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you.
31] Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, [which] dwell alone.
32] And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them [that are] in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD.

- 33] And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, [and] a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor [any] son of man dwell in it.

...*dragons* = more proper use of the Hebrew word is *jackals*.

Hazor, not the fortress in northern Palestine, this is the desert region (different from Hazor mentioned in Joshua 11:1-13). The Ishmaelites, the offspring of Hagar's son of Abraham, typologically associated with the offspring of a bondwoman versus the free (Gal 4:30). Kedar: Gen 25:13; Isa 21:13, 16; and Eze 27:21. Basically, judgment against Arabia.

Against Elam

- 34] The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,

Elam was the son of Shem in Genesis 10:22. Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and four other kings with Abraham in Genesis 14:1-17. Abraham mounts an army of over three hundred servants raised under his own roof, gives you a sense of Abraham was probably one of the most powerful men in the world at that time. He himself defeats this alliance and rescues Lot.

Elam is traditionally an enemy of Jerusalem (Isa 22:6; Jer 47:35). Elam is about 200 miles east of Babylon. They align themselves with a group called the Medes who in turn ally themselves with the Persians. At the time that Jeremiah is writing this, Babylon is on the rise. The Elamites form an alliance with the Medes and the Persians that ends up putting down the most might nation, the world empire called Babylon. They in turn are going to be put down by the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. So in view you have the rise and fall of three of the most powerful world empires, Babylon succeeded by the Medo-Persian Empire, succeeded by the Greeks under Alexander.

Elam's doom is prophesied (Jer 25:25; 49:34; Eze 32:16, 24), and they ultimately resettle in Samaria when the Assyrians conquer them (Ezra 4:9,10). Susa is where the book of Esther took place and that is an earlier capital of Elam. Elamites are mentioned in Acts 2:9 at the day of Pentecost. Today Elam would be associated with a portion of Iran.

- 35] Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might.

- 36] And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.
- 37] For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, [even] my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them:
- 38] And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD.
- 39] But it shall come to pass in the latter days, [that] I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.

Finished ten Gentile nations that God has prophesied to judge through Nebuchadnezzar. God is dealing with these nations in the same way that He deals with Israel. He judges them and punishes them for their conduct.

Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel 4 is written by Nebuchadnezzar. He opens and closes the chapter, it is his testimony how through pride he was lifted up, God judged him for seven years he suffered mental derangement. By tradition, not the Scripture, it is Daniel who took care of him. Nebuchadnezzar himself points out that the God of heaven is the one who raises kings up and brings them down. He writes his testimony and posts it throughout the known world in those days. God puts him in charge of everything, Biblically he is in charge of everything, the animals, the world he is in charge.

In Daniel 10, the Bible gives us the impression that there are powers behind the major world powers. The prince of the power of Persia, the prince of the power of Grecia—these is a supernatural agency behind that. The Scripture gives us the impression in several places and perhaps the clearest is that behind nations there is supernatural warfare going on. God is ultimately in charge, Satan is the god of this world, but God rises up kingdoms and brings them down and that is what He is doing in Jeremiah, He uses Nebuchadnezzar to judge His own people and to set the record straight on the ten nations.

Jeremiah 50

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Chapters 50 and 51, are on Babylon (Rev 17 and 18). Babylon, a city that finds itself in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, in a sense, is alluded to three times, in effect the deportation of Judah to Babylon. This event

of the last 49 chapters of Jeremiah, the whole idea of Babylon taking Judah into captivity, is a major milestone in God's timeline. It might be kind of fun to start where it all began.

Genesis 10 deals with Noah's family. It's called the Table of Nations because many of the ancient names that become tribal names for the principle races on the planet earth. Nimrod actually was a mighty one in defiance of the Lord. He was the first world dictator. He was a leader a militant mighty hunter of men, and he became the first despot in a sense. Shinar is the region, a large plain, the word becomes a synonym for Babylon or Babylonia. Babylon was a city; Shinar the general terrain.

Babylon's main city was fifteen miles on a side, surrounded by a double wall. The wall was 350 feet high, it was 87 feet wide at the top, they used to have chariot races six abreast along the top of the wall. There were 250 watchtowers along the wall and some of them extended 100 feet higher than the wall or to be more precise about 450 feet high. In it there was the Tower of Bel, the name Bel is the Arcadian name for Baal, Arcadia was the predecessors at the time. Similar to the sun god thing with Zeus, Jupiter, Merodach in the Bible or Marchuch as the inscriptions would say is the same name for Baal, a more recent name. Baal is the ancient name, the name Bel occurs 7 times in the Bible, twice in Jeremiah and about four times in Daniel.

In 1968 they uncovered a 197-foot by 164-foot court, that adjoins a throne room that is 165 feet long and a 143 feet wide. This may very well have been the place where Belshazzar saw the writing on the wall.

[For a complete up-to-date study of the city of Babylon, see our Briefing Package, *The Mystery of Babylon*. For a discussion of the emerging one world government, see our Briefing Packages *The New World Order* and *Behold a White Horse*. For an in-depth study on Daniel, see our Commentary on *Daniel*.]

Against Babylon

- 1] The word that the LORD spake against Babylon [and] against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

Eight gates in the city of Babylon opened up by his spies.

In Babylon there was the sanctuary of Merodach, their main idol. The house their was called *Esagila* which means *the house whose head is*

raised up. It is not clear whether that is just the king's pride or something else. The tower that becomes the main thing is *Etemenanki*, which means *the house of the foundation of heaven and earth*. These titles echo Genesis 10 if you will; even then in the sixth century before Christ.

Jeremiah for 49 chapters and for forty years of his ministry has been hammering away to Judah that the Babylonians are God's servants raised to power to punish Judah for their idolatry. Jeremiah weeping and caring passionately for his people, but burdened with the office of having to preside over the death of his nation. He foretold them not to resist the Babylonians because God has raised up the Babylonians to be His instrument to punish Judah.

These two chapters were delivered to Babylon. Seraiah is going to take it to Zedekiah and have it delivered to Babylon when Zedekiah went to there in matters of court. The same Jeremiah that foresaw through God that the Babylonians were going to conquer Judah also knew that Babylon was coming down and was going to be destroyed (Chapters 50 and 51). Babylon shows up in the book of Revelation. Scholars are divided over this. Some scholars believe that the Babylon in Revelation will literally be Babylon rebuilt. Other scholars believe that the Babylon in Revelation is mystical, symbolic and allegorical.

- 2] Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, [and] conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

Heavy stuff; the ancient kingdoms, the kings success or failure was a success of failure of their idols. Bel and Merodach are their chief idols and they are losing.

- 3] For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

Predicting the ultimate invasion of the Medo-Persian Empire which was to the north.

- 4] In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.

Cyrus was impressed. He initiated a pro-Israel policy at this point that sets the stage for them to go back to Jerusalem. Later a successor of his

under Nehemiah gives him the authority to build the walls of Jerusalem and that triggers the beginning of Daniel's Seventy Week prophecy.

Everlasting Covenant

- 5] They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, [saying], Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant [that] shall not be forgotten.

Reference to the everlasting covenant, occurs 4x in Jeremiah.

- 6] My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away [on] the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.
- 7] All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.
- 8] Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.
- 9] For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows [shall be] as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.
- 10] And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah here is predicting that this enemy God has used to take Judah into punishment is going to get hers and Judah will return to Zion. It is a message of hope to Judah because they know that they are coming back.

- 11] Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;
- 12] Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations [shall be] a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.
- 13] Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

Jeremiah here through the Holy Spirit is pointing out that Babylon will be brought down permanently. They are going to get destroyed. "*It shall not be inhabited...*" Babylon has not yet been completely wiped out, therefore this is yet future.

Revelation is talking about literal Babylon. [Do see our Briefing Package *The Mystery of Babylon* for an up-to-date discussion of Babylon.]

Vengeance by the Kinsman

- 14] Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD.
- 15] Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it [is] the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.

God takes care of vengeance. The concept of the kinsman redeemer includes more than just redeeming the land, they were responsible for the relatives' person and property. He also took the responsibility of avenging for the murder of a relative. He was responsible for purchasing alienated property as in Ruth 4. He also had the responsibility to marry his relative's widow or provide for her (Lev 25, Num 35 and Ruth 4).

God is the kinsman redeemer of Israel, which puts Him protecting His relative's person and property, avenging the murder of His relative's and purchasing any alienated land, and marrying the widow. Lamentations opens up with Judah as being described as a widow. Mystery Babylon boasts in Revelation that she is neither widowed nor divorced. Two strange phrases that are used of Israel. Mystery Babylon contrasts herself with Israel in a very strange way.

So here we have the enemies of Israel indeed God brought them up to punish Judah but not with immunity. God is going to punish Babylon for her idolatry and for her ungodliness.

- 16] Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.
- 17] Israel [is] a scattered sheep; the lions have driven [him] away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.
- 18] Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.
- 19] And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.
- 20] In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and [there shall be] none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.
- 21] Go up against the land of Merathaim, [even] against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.

Basically suburbs of Babylon.

- 22] A sound of battle [is] in the land, and of great destruction.
- 23] How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!
- 24] I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD.
- 25] The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this [is] the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.
- 26] Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.
- 27] Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.
- 28] The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.
- 29] Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.

The style of indictment = same style in Revelation 17 and 18.

- 30] Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD.
- 31] Behold, I [am] against thee, [O thou] most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time [that] I will visit thee.
- 32] And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.
- 33] Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah [were] oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go.
- 34] Their Redeemer [is] strong; the LORD of hosts [is] his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.
- 35] A sword [is] upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise [men].
- 36] A sword [is] upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword [is] upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed.
- 37] A sword [is] upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that [are] in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword [is] upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed.
- 38] A drought [is] upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it [is] the land of graven images, and they are mad upon [their] idols.
- 39] Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell [there], and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.
- 40] As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour [cities] thereof,

saith the LORD; [so] shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

Babylon was the mother of every heathen system. Everything in rebellion of God had its roots in Babylon. Nimrod found the city (Gen 10). Egypt is the world, but Babylon is idolatry. Roots in Babylon: 60 seconds in a minute and 60 minutes in an hour; 360-degrees in a circle; science of astronomy. Alexander the Great was going to make Babylon his headquarters before he died. Their knowledge of the celestial system was tangled up in their false worship that gives us the field of astrology, the worship of these heavenly things.

The constellations, the Zodiac, are all corruptions of what God originally gave Abraham. In the Babylonian traditions, Nimrod takes a wife Simeromith and they have a supernaturally born son called Tamaz. The first letter of his name which you and I would call a T was written in a way that you and I would call a cross, that becomes his symbol. He is a sungod-worshipping kind of idol. He is considered to have died at the winter solstice, that time of the year when the days are the shortest and the nights the longest, the sun god is thought to have died and they did a ceremony to bring him back to life. What they did was to burn a log and the name for infant in Chaldea is *yule*. It was a yule log and the log was burned one night in a ceremony and the next morning they took a trimmed tree in the house to celebrate the rebirth of Tamaz. They did that around the winter solstice which occurs on our calendar about December 21 or 22. What happens about this whole concept of this mistletoe, the wassel bowl, the fertility thing—all this stuff had its roots in Babylon. [See our Briefing package on *Signs in the Heavens*, *Mystery of Babylon* and *The Christmas Story*.]

When the Persians conquer Babylon, that religious system gets transferred to Pergamus the Persian city (the letters to the seven churches have a letter to the church at Pergamus where Satan's seat is). The Persians get conquered by the Greeks and the Greeks get conquered by the Romans. That whole system moves to Rome. The leadership in Rome take on the titles of these high priests from Babylon and the Romans give their names to the same gods. All the pagan idols are Latin names for the same gang of characters that were worshiped by the Babylonians.

In 312 A.D. Constantine gets converted. Whether it was shrewd politics or something else, he recognizes that the underground religion called Christianity is so widespread it is a very popular strategic political move to declare that it no longer illegal but to declare it the state religion, and

from the rags of the caves they exchanged it for the silks of the king. Christianity becomes fashionable. The whole population is used to worshipping all these pagan rites. One of them was the Saturnalia, about December 25. They adapted and renamed these things to the new deal. So much of what you and I embrace as church tradition, if you can't substantiate it in the Bible directly, the chances are very good that you will find that practice in a textbook on ancient Babylonian rites and mysteries. [See *The Christmas Story*, for the origins of our traditions.]

Addendum:

Babylon Under Saddam: Nebuchadnezzar V

Saddam Hussein was born in 1937 in the village of Tikrit, 100 miles north of Bagdad on the Tigris River. (About 800 years earlier, Saladin, the greatest Muslim warrior of the 12th century, was born in the same village. It was Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187 that resulted in the Third Crusade.)

Saddam Hussein's exploits on behalf of the Baath Party became legend and when they seized control in 1968, Saddam Hussein at the age of 31 became a leader in Iraq. A few weeks after becoming president of Iraq in 1979, he executed some of his closest friends and fellow members of the ruling Baath Party. Saddam Hussein has spent almost 20 years—60 million bricks, and many hundreds of millions of dollars—rebuilding the city of Babylon as a deliberate stratagem to identify himself with the Nebuchadnezzar of old. Part of his strategy is to vigorously build his Babylonian identity to appeal to the entire Arab world to unite against Israel and the “infidel West.” Between 1938 and 1988, Iraq spend \$34 billion to outfit and modernize Saddam's army. Saddam was deposed by the U.S. and its allies during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Captured by U.S. forces on December 13, 2003, Saddam was brought to trial and on November 5, 2006, he was convicted of charges related to the executions of 148 Iraqi Shi'ites suspected of planning an assassination attempt against him, and was sentenced to death by hanging. Saddam was executed on December 30, 2006.

The city of Babylon was being rebuilt by Saddam, including Nebuchadnezzar's throne room, Ishtar Gate, Processional Way, the Ninmakh Temple, the Ishtar Temple are all completed. The Tower of Babel was being planned as a hotel and there were plans for connecting a monorail around the city. [See *Mystery of Babylon* for a complete update.]

People from the North

- 41] Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.
- 42] They shall hold the bow and the lance: they [are] cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, [every one] put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.
- 43] The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, [and] pangs as of a woman in travail.

Here again is that phrase, the birth pangs of a woman.

- 44] Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who [is] a chosen [man, that] I may appoint over her? for who [is] like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who [is] that shepherd that will stand before me?
- 45] Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make [their] habitation desolate with them.
- 46] At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

Jeremiah 51

Flee Out of Babylon

- 1] Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;
- 2] And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.
- 3] Against [him that] bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against [him that] lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host.
- 4] Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and [they that are] thrust through in her streets.
- 5] For Israel [hath] not [been] forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.
- 6] Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this [is] the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Seven times in the Bible there is the command to come out of Babylon and the context is always to come out of Babylon and go to Jerusalem.

Here in a very literal sense, and in the New Testament you have it in a broader sense.

- 7] Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.
- 8] Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.
- 9] We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to the skies.
- 10] The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.
- 11] Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device [is] against Babylon, to destroy it; because it [is] the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.

There is specifically the alliance—the Medes and the Persians—who are both mentioned here and are the ones who in fact do rise up against Babylon.

- 12] Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.
- 13] O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, [and] the measure of thy covetousness.
- 14] The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, [saying], Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillars; and they shall lift up a shout against thee.

Indicative of a plague or like locusts or a pestilence going through and eating everything in sight, stripping the land.

- 15] He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.
- 16] When he uttereth [his] voice, [there is] a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.
- 17] Every man is brutish by [his] knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image [is] falsehood, and [there is] no breath in them.
- 18] They [are] vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.
- 19] The portion of Jacob [is] not like them; for he [is] the former of all things: and [Israel is] the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts [is] his name.

There is a special relationship between Jacob and Israel and the God who created the universe. The link between the creator of the universe and His proprietary interests in Judah.

- 20] Thou [art] my battle axe [and] weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;
- 21] And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;
- 22] With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;
- 23] I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.
- 24] And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.
- 25] Behold, I [am] against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.
- 26] And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.

Interesting phrase that was picked up later by Paul.

- 27] Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars.

Ararat mentioned in Genesis 8:4. Minni is the Minnians, south of Lake Ermiya, this is west Iran.

Ashchenaz is identified with the Scythians, nomads east of Lake Ermiya (Gen 10:3). The word Scythian becomes synonymous with barbarian. Herodius points out that the Scythians conquered the Samaritans. They in turn conquer Gomer and Gomer is Germany; today “Ashchenazi” in Hebrew implies a German background, not necessarily Armenian and Scythian but the word originally comes from that root. [For a detailed discussion of the Scythians do see *The Magog Invasion Briefing Package*.]

- 28] Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.
- 29] And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.
- 30] The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in [their] holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken.
- 31] One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at [one] end,

- 32] And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.
- 33] For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshingfloor, [it is] time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.

Judgment as a threshing floor. In the book of Ruth, Boaz and the threshing floor scene, Ruth is at Boaz’s feet. Strange idiom but if you press the type it is kind of interesting.

- 34] Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicacies, he hath cast me out.
- 35] The violence done to me and to my flesh [be] upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say.
- 36] Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.
- 37] And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.
- 38] They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions’ whelps.
- 39] In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD.
- 40] I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.
- 41] How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!

Sheshach in Jeremiah 25 an inscription of the word Babylon.

- 42] The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.
- 43] Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth [any] son of man pass thereby.
- 44] And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.
- 45] My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.
- 46] And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come [one] year, and after that in [another] year [shall come] a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler.
- 47] Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.
- 48] Then the heaven and the earth, and all that [is] therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.
- 49] As Babylon [hath caused] the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.

- 50] Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.
- 51] We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house.
- 52] Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan.
- 53] Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, [yet] from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

Here is that strange overtone from Genesis 10.

- 54] A sound of a cry [cometh] from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans:
- 55] Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered:
- 56] Because the spoiler is come upon her, [even] upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompenses shall surely requite.

Recompenses: Psalm 94:1, Romans 12:19, Hebrews 10:30, Deuteronomy 32:35. *Vengeance is mine saith the Lord.*

- 57] And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise [men], her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name [is] the LORD of hosts.
- 58] Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.
- 59] The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And [this] Seraiah [was] a quiet prince.

Seraiah was a messenger, attended the comfort of Zedekiah and went to Babylon.

- 60] So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, [even] all these words that are written against Babylon.
- 61] And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;
- 62] Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.
- 63] And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, [that] thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:
- 64] And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far [are] the words of Jeremiah.

This must have been a popular letter. He was to read it aloud when he gets to Babylon. Here is that phrase again, *It shall be desolate forever.*

When Cyrus the Persian took over Babylon, they didn't destroy it. They decimated it and killed off the rulers but they didn't destroy it; when Alexander took over it became a very important city. He maintained thoughts of making it a major headquarters. When Alexander dies his four generals fought over everything, and from that time on it decayed and was plundered and finally destroyed. So scholars feel the real ultimate destruction is yet future, that is the argument, that it will rise again and then be destroyed like all of this, that this is all yet future. Revelation 17. [Do see our *Revelation Commentary* or *The Mystery of Babylon* for a complete discussion.]

Jeremiah 52

Historical Appendix

In a sense the book of Jeremiah is already finished with the 51 chapters. There is a 52nd chapter, the scribe of which we don't know. It is classically conically part of the book of Jeremiah. it appears to be something that a scribe added, like an appendix to the book. It includes essentially the material found in 2 Kings 24:18-30 through 25:30. There are a few things that are different, a few details added. There are a few things that might appear to be discrepancies but not really when they are studied. It appears that this historical appendix is here to demonstrate the fulfillment of God's prophecies.

The context is the conclusion of a forty years ministry by Jeremiah in which he particularly predicted that Zedekiah would be defeated by Nebuchadnezzar; that Judah would fall to Babylon.

Jeremiah throughout his whole ministry was in effect harassed by a large group of false prophets emphasizing the opposite of what Jeremiah was predicting. The false prophets were predicting in detailed, articulate terms that King Zedekiah would be victorious over King Nebuchadnezzar. They could easily draw many analogies in Israel's history, particularly the one that surfaces in Isaiah when he comforted Hezekiah by pointing out that it was going to be all right and it was.

How dangerous it is to accept at face value an appealing message.

Zedekiah

- 1] Zedekiah [was] one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name [was] Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

This is not the Jeremiah that was the author of the book. *Jeremiah* was apparently a common name and this was a different Jeremiah. Again, Zedekiah is the brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim and therefore a son of Josiah and thus an heir to the throne.

- 2] And he did [that which was] evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

Zedekiah was not a winner.

- 3] For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Zedekiah is here accredited with ignoring Jeremiah and listening to the false prophets.

- 4] And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth [day] of the month, [that] Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.
5] So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

That is a long time, almost two years. Now, the fall of Jerusalem recorded four times in the Old Testament: 2 Kgs 25, 2 Chr 36:11-21, Jer 39:1-14 and Chapter 52.

- 6] And in the fourth month, in the ninth [day] of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

The city was under siege; it was sealed off. There was famine and there was cannibalism. There was the anguish of the mother's watching their children starve. There was pestilence and disease.

- 7] Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which [was] by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans [were] by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.
8] But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him.

- 9] Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him.

In other words Nebuchadnezzar had his command post in Riblah some distance from the actual siege going on in Jerusalem and here is where we have recorded where Zedekiah is judged.

Zedekiah's Prophecy Is Fulfilled

- 10] And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.
11] Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

This is the fulfillment of the prophecy that Zedekiah would not see the Babylonian captivity even though he would die there.

- 12] Now in the fifth month, in the tenth [day] of the month, which [was] the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, [which] served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,
13] And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great [men], burned he with fire:
14] And all the army of the Chaldeans, that [were] with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Their obvious intention was to destroy it so that it would never be rebuilt again. Nebuchadnezzar had endured three rebellions; he had enough of this, this time it is over. He burns it to the ground.

- 15] Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive [certain] of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.
16] But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left [certain] of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen.

Remember that was also a prophecy. Nebuzaradan did not know he was fulfilling prophecy.

- 17] Also the pillars of brass that [were] in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brazen sea that [was] in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon.
18] The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

- 19] And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; [that] which [was] of gold [in] gold, and [that] which [was] of silver [in] silver, took the captain of the guard away.
- 20] The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brazen bulls that [were] under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.
- 21] And [concerning] the pillars, the height of one pillar [was] eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof [was] four fingers: [it was] hollow.
- 22] And a chapter of brass [was] upon it; and the height of one chapter [was] five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all [of] brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates [were] like unto these.

(*chapitar*) *top of bronze* - Two pillars, Jachan and Boaz (they had names, *strength* and *counsel*) that was part of the porch. There is a structure of the Temple that becomes the structure of the believer in contrast to the structure of the unbeliever in terms of the body, soul and spirit. Body, soul, spirit, heart, and mind, in the Scripture they have very precise meanings and they mean some things that are different from what you and I may normally perceive. The Holy Spirit has diagramed us if you will in the Temple. [For a complete discussion on the Temple of God, see *The Way of Agape* and *Be Ye Transformed* series.]

- 23] And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; [and] all the pomegranates upon the network [were] an hundred round about.

Temple implements returned under Cyrus the Persian (Ezra 1:7-11) vs. Babylon in Dan 5.

- 24] And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:
- 25] He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city.
- 26] So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.
- 27] And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.
- 28] This [is] the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty:
- 29] In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons:
- 30] In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons [were] four thousand and six hundred.

These numbers are only the Jews and only the males so that alone implies that there were a lot more than mentioned here.

Evil-Mardoch

- 31] And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth [day] of the month, [that] Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the [first] year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison,

Evil-Mardoch sounds like a strange name in the English but it is actually Avil-Marduke in the Babylonian records. Evil is not an adjective in describing his character, it is a name. Maradoch is the Hebrewization of Marduk. He was a son or two down from Nebuchadnezzar.

- 32] And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that [were] with him in Babylon,
- 33] And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.
- 34] And [for] his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

There is a Jewish tradition that during the period that Nebuchadnezzar was indisposed, Daniel was the one who cared for him. Evil-Mardoch was in charge for a while, but there is also a tradition that he screwed up and got caught doing something that he shouldn't have and was put in prison for a while. While in prison, he gets acquainted with Jehoiachin so later on when he gets out and Nebuchadnezzar dies and Evil-Mardoch is in charge he remembers Jehoiachin in prison. He doesn't free him but he takes him out of prison and puts him on special rations, after all he is a king in exile under arrest, but he is not abused. All that is just a tradition. Cuneiform tablets were found with lists of the rations that Evil-Mardoch provided Jehoiachin. His daily diet has been found.

So that is the book of Jeremiah.

This Bible study was recorded at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa in 1987.

* * *

Lamentations

The book of Lamentations is a complete book in itself, a five-chapter book that is sort of an appendix to the book of Jeremiah. The book of Lamentations is his outpouring, where he essentially mourns for Jerusalem. The poor guy on the one hand was faithful in his office as a prophet, he told forth what God had told him to tell forth, and Jerusalem was going to be judged for her iniquity. On the other hand, Jeremiah was a patriot, his roots were there and his emotional commitment to Judah was absolutely uncompromising.

In the Hebrew it is composed almost like a symphony, it has a very unusual linguistic structure. The first 4 chapters are an acrostic: Chapters 1,2,4 consist of 22 verses each and there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse starts with the next letter. Chapter 3 is the fullest confession of sin, the sin of Judah. That has sixty-six verses, six is the number of man one short of seven, incomplete, it is also the number of sin. In this case, the first three verses start with alph, the next three verses start with beth, it is an acrostic but in groups of three. Psalm 119 sort of does this also. Now for some reason, Chapter 5 the last chapter of the book also has 22 verses, however it is not in acrostic.

There is frequent use of the *qināh* meter in chapters 1-4: in this rhythmic pattern, the second half of a line of verse has one less beat than the first half of a line. This forms a 3 + 2 “limping meter,” which conveys a hollow, incomplete feeling to the reader.

The whole style of the book is deep poetry of a mournful, sorrowful, lamenting sort of nature. In verse 1, this phrase *widow* is provocative; there are several places in the Scripture where Jerusalem or Israel is spoken of as a widow. But specifically in Revelation 18:7, where mystery Babylon specifically is depicted and she boasts that she is no widow.

Recognize that this is deliberately structured to be contrast with Israel. One way to learn about words conceptually is to learn the opposite of. You recognize Mystery Babylon, whatever she is, setting herself *in contrast* to Israel, God's chosen (Lev 21:14). Interesting that our High Priest (metaphorically speaking) is described by Paul as taking to Himself the Church not as the adulterous widow, not the divorced widow of Jehovah, our High Priest takes to Himself the virgin bride. Ephesians elsewhere Paul uses that idiom of the Church.

Geopolitical Background

The armies of Babylon burned the temple, the king's palace, and all the other major buildings in the city; they also tore down the walls of the city which provided her protection. When the Babylonians finally finished their destruction and departed with their prisoners, they left a jumbled heap of smoldering rubble. Jeremiah witnessed the desecration of the temple and the destruction of the city (Jer 39:1-14; 52:12-14). The once-proud capital had been trampled in the dust. Her people were now under the harsh hand of a cruel taskmaster. With all these events stamped vividly on his mind, Jeremiah sat down to compose his series of laments.

5 Poems/Hymns

Chapter 1: The prophet dwells on the manifold miseries oppressed by which the city sits as a solitary widow weeping sorely.

Chapter 2: These miseries are described in connection with the national sins that had caused them.

Chapter 3: Speaks of hope for the people of God. The chastisement would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them.

Chapter 4: Laments the ruin and desolation that had come upon the city and temple, but traces it only to the people's sins.

Chapter 5: A prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people.

Chapter 1: Jerusalem sits as a solitary widow weeping sorely

First Dirge: Jerusalem's Desolation because of Her Sin

- From outside looking in Lam 1:1-11
- From inside looking out Lam 1:12-22

- 1] How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

The city that had once been great among the nations was now reduced to the status of a widow. The concept of widowhood is used throughout the Old Testament to depict a position of helpless despair; it is often linked with aliens and orphans as individuals who could not protect themselves (cf. Ex 22:22; Deut 10:18; 24:19-21; 26:13; 27:19; Isa 1:17).

- 2] She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

Cf. Matthew 23:37-39: Jesus wept over the same city about six centuries later because of what was going to happen to her. To Jeremiah the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of history. To Jesus the destruction of Jerusalem was a matter of prophecy.

- 3] Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits.
- 4] The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.
- 5] Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.
- 6] And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.
- 7] Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.
- 8] Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

“Jerusalem hath grievously sinned”—this is the first explanation for the fall of the city. Her nakedness was revealed...

- 9] Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.
- 10] The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.

The Temple

The building the people had falsely relied on for their security (Jer 7:2-15; 26:2-11) was now defiled before their eyes by Gentiles who were not supposed to enter it. Evidently the Jews viewed their temple as a giant talisman or good luck charm. They felt that Jerusalem was safe because God's house was there. He might let other places be destroyed, they argued, but surely not His own house. The people learned too late that God does not hold stones in higher regard than obedience. Disobedience brings destruction.

- 11] All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile.

- 12] Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

God judged Judah because of her sin, and He still will judge sin today. People don't like to hear about the fierce anger of God today.

The Greatest Sin

God has a remedy for the thief. The thief on the cross was saved. Paul was guilty of murder: he was responsible for the death of Stephen, but he got saved. Moses also was a murderer. God has a remedy for the murderer, the thief, and the liar. But God does not have a remedy for the man who rejects Jesus Christ. That is the greatest sin you can commit.

The second half of this first lament now changed its focus. Instead of standing on the outside looking in, Jeremiah moved inside and looked out. Jerusalem herself called to those around to take note of her condition : Verses 12-19: Jerusalem's call to those who had observed her desolation; Verses 20-22: Jerusalem's call to the Lord

- 13] From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.
- 14] The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.
- 15] The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress.

The winepress is often used as a picture of divine judgment (Isa 63:3; Rev 14:19-20; 19:15).

- 16] For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.
- 17] Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.
- 18] The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.

This key verse explains the reason Jerusalem lay in ruin. Jeremiah mourned the destruction of Jerusalem alone. He stood among the ashes

weeping. Why had the city been destroyed? The city had sinned. The second explanation is “The Lord is righteous.” He cannot shut His eyes to evil.

- 19] I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.
- 20] Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.
- 21] They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.
- 22] Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

The Wailing Wall of the Bible

It is a paean of pain; a poem of pity; a proverb of pathos. It is a hymn of heartbreak; a psalm of sadness; a symphony of sorrow ...and a story of sifting.

Chapter 2: The national sins that had caused their miseries

The Second Dirge: God’s Punishment of Jerusalem’s Sin

- God’s anger Lam 2:1-10
- Jeremiah’s grief Lam 2:11-19
- Jerusalem’s plea Lam 2:20-22

- 1] How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!
- 2] The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.
- 3] He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about.
- 4] He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire.
- 5] The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.

God took full responsibility for what Nebuchadnezzar did. God allowed him to destroy the city of Jerusalem. God used him as a rod, just as He had used the Assyrians against Israel for their punishment. [Learn to recognize the hand of God in your life.]

- 6] And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.
- 7] The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast.

The very temple which God had blessed—He had given the instructions for building it, His very presence had been there at one time—now He says, “The day came that I abhorred that temple.” [Is your church situation something that God delights in? Or is it something that actually hurts His cause?]

- 8] The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together.
- 9] Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.
- 10] The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

...outward gyrations of grief...

- 11] Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.
- 12] They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers’ bosom.

...Jeremiah: tears, health, etc. He was *more* than involved...

- 13] What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?
- 14] Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

Jeremiah focus was of false prophets hastening rather than hindering Jerusalem's downfall. God had threatened to destroy Jerusalem because of her sin, and the prophets were supposed to announce this impending disaster and exhort the people to repent. Unfortunately, though Jeremiah and Ezekiel were faithful prophets of God, others were tickling the people's ears with rosy predictions of peace and prosperity (Jer 28:1-4, 10-11; 29:29-32).

Jerusalem chose to ignore the true prophets' warnings and to listen to the flattering and therefore misleading lies of the false prophets.

- 15] 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?
- 16] All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it.

The enemy without is elated at the misery of Jerusalem. (The Edomites; Cf. Ps 137:9?)

- 17] The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.
- 18] Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.

Sometimes God must act in sovereign judgment to fulfill His Word (Lev 26:16; Deut 28:15).

- 19] Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.
- 20] Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

This action was predicted in graphic detail by **Moses** when he warned Israel of the consequences of disobedience to God's Law (cf. Lev 26:27-29; Deut 28:53-57). This reprehensible practice surfaced only during the most desperate times (cf. 2 Kgs 6:24-31).

- 21] The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied.

- 22] Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

When Babylon finally did break through Jerusalem's defenses, its soldiers were angry because Jerusalem had kept them at bay for 30 months. They made no distinction between age and sex; the blood-thirsty Babylonians butchered uncounted thousands.

Next Session

Review Chapters 3 through 5.

Lamentations Chapters 3-5 When Tomorrows Become Yesterdays

Major Themes

Jeremiah's basic premise is that only faithfulness to God can guarantee a nation's security. His message is probably more desperately needed in our land today. The U.S. is a disaster, morally. We have forgotten the covenant on which this country was founded.

Our problems are serious, desperate and our answers are no different than Jeremiah had laid out before Judah. Judah was facing its enemies, and we are facing ours. The answers to these problems are in our prayer closet. The problems are so the same way that they were then: only faithfulness to God can guarantee our nation's security.

Something else which shows up in all of these things is idolatry. We constantly read about idolatry, Josiah got rid of it and it came back. Idolatry is always associated with immorality. When idolatry takes over the land, immorality follows, and vice versa. As we understand Jeremiah better we will see, with a new perception, what's going on around us.

Five Poems/Hymns

Chapter 1: The prophet dwells on the manifold miseries oppressed by which the city sits as a solitary widow weeping sorely.

Chapter 2: These miseries are described in connection with the national sins that had caused them.

Chapter 3: Speaks of hope for the people of God. The chastisement

would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them.

Chapter 4: Laments the ruin and desolation that had come upon the city and temple, but traces it only to the people's sins.

Chapter 5: A prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people.

Chapter 3: Hope for the people of God

Their chastisement would be for their own good. A better day would dawn for them. This is the heart of Jeremiah's short book. This chapter gives the book a positive framework around which the other chapters revolve. The blackness of sin and suffering in chapters 1-2 and 4-5 serves as a fitting backdrop to display the sparkling brilliance of God's loyal love in chapter 3.

The chapter itself differs markedly from the first two: instead of 22 verses it has 66: three verses for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet .

Chapter 3

Third Dirge: Jeremiah's Response

- Jeremiah's afflictions Lam 3:1-18
- Jeremiah's hope Lam 3:19-40
- Jeremiah's prayer Lam 3:41-66

- 1] I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.
- 2] He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.
- 3] Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.
- 4] My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.

This man Jeremiah has seen and gone through great trouble. His health is wrecked because of his concern for Jerusalem. Jeremiah was not unmoved by the destruction he had seen come to the nation. He did not run around saying, "I told you so!"

- 5] He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.
- 6] He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.
- 7] He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.
- 8] Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.
- 9] He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.
- 10] He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places.
- 11] He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate.

- 12] He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.
- 13] He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins.
- 14] I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day.
- 15] He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.
- 16] He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.
- 17] And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.
- 18] And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:
- 19] Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.
- 20] My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.
- 21] This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

Jeremiah is now looking back upon the past. He had predicted the judgment that came upon Jerusalem, and Jeremiah sits in the rubble and ruin of Jerusalem weeping as he writes this lamentation.

- 22] It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

These verses are the only bright spot in all of the five lamentations.

Jeremiah can see the hand of God's **mercy**: They would have been utterly consumed had it not been for the mercy of God. If they had received their just deserts, they would have been utterly destroyed—they would have disappeared from the earth.

- 23] They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
- 24] The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Deserved Deliverance?

No, it was all due to the faithfulness of God:

- He had promised Abraham that He would make a nation come from him—and this was the nation.
- He had promised Moses that He would put them into the land.
- He had promised Joshua that He would establish them there.
- He promised David that there would come One in his line to reign on the throne forever.
- The prophets all said that God would not utterly destroy this people but that He would judge them for their sin. God is faithful. He has judged them, but He will not utterly destroy them.
- A faithful remnant has always remained, and ultimately they will become a great nation again.

- 25] The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.
 26] It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.
 27] It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.
 28] He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.
 29] He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.
 30] He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.
 31] For the Lord will not cast off for ever:

God is unchanging, compassionate and merciful. He wants to reveal His heart to Job—and to us.

- 32] But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.
 33] For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.
 34] To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth,
 35] To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,
 36] To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.
 37] Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?
 38] Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?
 39] Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?
 40] Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.
 41] Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.
 42] We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.
 43] Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.
 44] Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.
 45] Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.
 46] All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.
 47] Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.
 48] Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

In verse 48 Jeremiah abruptly shifted from the plural to the singular. Verses 48-51 provide a transition: from the people's confession (vv. 41-47) to Jeremiah's example (vv. 52-66)

- 49] Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,
 50] Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.
 51] Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.
 52] Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.

Jeremiah's ministry during Judah's final days created many enemies: the people from his own hometown plotted to kill him (Jer 11:18-23) and everybody at the temple demanded that he be executed (Jer 26:7-9); he was beaten and thrown into prison as a traitor (Jer 37:11-16); and was

later, near the end of Nebuchadnezzar's siege, lowered into a muddy cistern to starve to death (Jer 38:1-6).

- 53] They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.
 54] Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.
 55] I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon.
 56] Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry.
 57] Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.
 58] O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.
 59] O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause.
 60] Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.
 61] Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, and all their imaginations against me;
 62] The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day.
 63] Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their musick.
 64] Render unto them a recompence, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.
 65] Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.
 66] Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.

Will God judge America? A great many people think not, but I think He will.

Lamentations Chapter 4: The ruin and desolation of Jerusalem and Temple is traced to the people's sins

This fourth lamentation is a meditation: sitting amidst the debris and ashes of Jerusalem, Jeremiah describes the horror of the destruction of his city and the carrying into captivity of the people by Nebuchadnezzar.

Fourth Dirge: The Lord's Anger

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| – Contrast before & after the siege | Lam 4:1-11 |
| – Causes for the siege | Lam 4:12-20 |
| – Call for vindication | Lam 4:21-22 |

Chapter 4 parallels the judgment discussed in chapter 2. After describing the response of an individual in the midst of judgment (chapter 3), Jeremiah again returned to survey the scene of calamity in Jerusalem.

- 1] How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street.
 2] The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

Jeremiah is comparing gold to the young men of Zion. The fine young men of Judah who were like gold vessels are now like earthen vessels of

clay. They have been broken. That is the terrifying thing about warfare: it eliminates the finest young men of a nation Paul likens the believer to a clay vessel (2 Tim 2:21; Rom 9:21). However, the issue is not of what material the vessels are made, but *how they are being used*. ***Are we vessels for the Master's use or for our own use?***

- 3] Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.
- 4] The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.

The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was a horrible thing. The people suffered inside the city. Instead of surrendering, they held out and saw their little babies die.

- 5] They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.

They had lived in luxury, they had had big supermarkets, but now the shelves of the supermarkets are bare. They no longer can enjoy the conveniences they once had—in fact, they don't have any at all.

- 6] For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.

God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, but God judged Jerusalem more severely. Why was that? Because the sin of Jerusalem was *worse than* that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

- 7] Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire:

A Nazarite was one who took a voluntary oath, and many did it. They were complimented; they looked good. But it was all on the outside; their hearts were not changed.

- 8] Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.
- 9] They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.

He would rather be dead than alive, for the condition of those who remained was so terrible.

- 10] The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

- 11] The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.

The same thing took place when Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. The people got so hungry that mothers had to give their own babies to be eaten! ***[To abort a pregnancy is also the murder of a human being]***

- 12] The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.

Verses 13-14 give a drastic example of the far-reaching consequences of corrupt spiritual leadership...

- 13] For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her,
- 14] They have wandered as blind men in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments.

Because the false prophets and the priests did not tell the people the truth, they are guilty of murder—that is God's estimate of it. ***A preacher who won't preach the Word of God and tell the people how they might be saved is put in this classification.***

- 15] They cried unto them, Depart ye; it is unclean; depart, depart, touch not: when they fled away and wandered, they said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn there.
- 16] The anger of the LORD hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favoured not the elders.
- 17] As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.
- 18] They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come.

The people paid no attention to the priests who *were* giving out the Word of God. Jeremiah was a prophet of God, and they paid no attention to him at all. God judged the people for that. The Lord says that the problem was that Judah was looking to Egypt for help, and Egypt was *not* a help; they were an enemy. [Are we, too?]

If the first cause of Jerusalem's siege was the sin of the prophets and priests (vv. 13-16), the second cause was the futility of foreign alliances: Instead of trusting in God, Jerusalem had turned to Egypt or protection from Babylon. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had warned against the futility of trusting in Egypt for protection (Jer 37:6-10; Ezek 29:6-7).

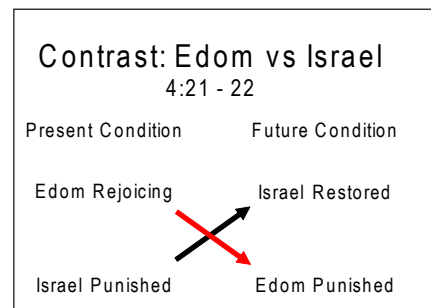
That false hope brought only bitter grief when Babylon's armies, swifter than eagles (Hab 1:8) finally captured Jerusalem, pursuing those who tried to escape, and the end came.

- 19] Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness.
 20] The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.

What a picture of that people as they are today! They are scattered among the heathen. The third cause of Jerusalem's siege and fall was Zedekiah her king. The leader Jerusalem looked to for security (her very life breath and her shadow) was powerless to protect her.

- 21] Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked.
 22] The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.

After the judgment, God has promised that He will **permanently** place them in the land (after the "Time of Jacob's Trouble...").



Lamentations Chapter 5: A prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people

Fifth Dirge: The Remnant's Response

- The remnant's prayer for remembrance Lam 5:1-18
- The remnant's prayer for restoration Lam 5:19-22

In many ways chapter 5 "breaks the mold" established in the other chapters and offers a response to the suffering.

Structural Changes

- The first four chapters are acrostics; chapter 5 is not.
- The first four chapters frequently use the *qînâh* meter; chapter 5 does not.
- Three of the first four chapters begin with '*êlâh*' ("Alas"; ch. 3 is the only exception among the acrostic chapters); chapter 5 does not.
- This chapter begins and ends as a prayer (vv. 5:1, 21).
- In chapter 5 Jeremiah presented the response that the remnant needed to make to God.
- God's chastisement was intended to lead to repentance.

- 1] Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach.
 2] Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.
 3] We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.
 4] We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us.
 5] Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest.
 6] We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.
 7] Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities.
 8] Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth deliver us out of their hand.
 9] We gat our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness.
 10] Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine.
 11] They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah.
 12] Princes are hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honoured.
 13] They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood.

Their women were ravished, and their princes hanged; they had lost everything. The young men who survived were put into slavery .

- 14] The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their musick.
 15] The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.
 16] The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!
 17] For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim.
 18] Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.
 19] Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.
 20] Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?
 21] Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.
 22] But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us.

This is the prayer of Jeremiah for his people. We could learn a lesson from this: before it is too late, we had better turn to the Lord. This was not a doubting cry from a discouraged remnant; rather, it was the response of faith from those captives who had mastered the lessons of Deuteronomy 28, prophesied 600 years earlier by Moses.

Hardships Prophesied by Moses

The author of the Lamentations was attempting to show the fulfillment of the curses presented in Deuteronomy 28 600 years earlier: Cf. John A. Martin, “The Contribution of the Book of Lamentations to Salvation History,” Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975, p. 44.
If religious books are not circulated among the masses and the people do not turn to God, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy. If the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will. If the power of the Gospel is not

Lamentations	Deuteronomy
1:3	28:65
1:5	28:44
1:5	28:32
1:6	28:25
1:18	28:41
2:15	28:37
2:20	28:53
2:21	28:50
4:10	28:56,57
5:2	28:30
5:5	28:65
5:10	28:48
5:11	28:30
5:12	28:50
5:18	28:56

felt through the length and the breadth of the land, anarchy, misrule, degradation, misery, corruption, and darkness will reign without mitigation or end.
—Daniel Webster

The longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of the truth that God governs in the affairs of men.
—Benjamin Franklin

Unless a marked change takes place in the United States of America, it’s doomed just as sure as was ancient Babylon.

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* * *

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



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