

## Text: Jeremiah 1:1-19

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** The book of Jeremiah uses a unique title for God— "the Lord of Hosts is His Name" (10:16; 31:35; 32:18; 46:18; 48:15; 50:34; 51:19; 51:57). In 722 BC the Assyrian army destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In 612 BC the Babylonian army destroyed the Assyrians. When Jeremiah was young, in 605 BC the Babylonian army defeated Egypt. Then, the Babylonians would lay siege on Jerusalem and finally destroy her. You would expect the nations, and particularly Israel, to listen to the One who controls the armies. Yet Israel repeatedly "did not hearken or incline their ear" (7:24; 7:26; 11:8; 17:23; 25:4; 34:14; 35:15; 44:5). Jeremiah was not only a prophet to Israel, but to the nations (1:5, 10). God intended to use the destruction of Judah as an example to the nations (6:18-19; 15:4; 19:8; 22:8; 24:9).

- I) The Lord of Hosts has spoken through an unlikely mouthpiece (v. 1-10; 17-19).
  - A. Jeremiah was the son of a priest who lived among priests (v. 1-3).
    1. God typically uses the weak to confound the mighty (1 Cor. 1:26-27). Jeremiah is yet another example of this. He lived among priests, yet God did not choose the priests, he chose Jeremiah to proclaim His words.
    2. You may be a young person here this morning and feel like you could never be a pastor. But this text reminds us that God often chooses the weak.
  - B. Jeremiah was only a child (v. 4-10).
    1. It is not unusual for God to use children. Samson was chosen in the womb (Judges 13:5). Samuel was called as a child (1 Sam. 3:1-9).
    2. Do you find yourself disregarding the words of a child, simply based on his age? Has it occurred to you that God may use a child to correct you?
  - C. Jeremiah even felt uncomfortable as God's mouthpiece (v. 4-10).
    1. He felt like his age would hinder him (v. 6-7).
    2. He was afraid of what others would think of him (v. 8).
    3. Within the local church, God expects you to use the gifting of the Holy Spirit to build up the body. What excuses do you give for being silent when the Holy Spirit is prompting you to build up the body?
  - D. God promised to protect Jeremiah (v. 17-19).

1. They would certainly fight against him, but they would not prevail. Life would not be easy for him, but God would be with him.

II) The Lord of Hosts confirmed His message through visions (v. 11-16).

A. The almond tree signified that He watches over His words (v. 11- 12).

1. The word for “almond” in Hebrew sounds like the word “watching”. The Lord Himself watches over His words— therefore, they will come to pass.
2. Do you believe that God’s words will come to pass? Does it change the way you read His words?

B. The boiling pot signifies that judgment is coming from the North (v. 13-16).

1. The picture is of a pot filled with boiling water tipping over. The boiling water is a picture of God’s judgment—which is like boiling water.
2. A mother who sees her child coming near a boiling pot, instinctively takes her child away from the danger, but this is not so with the children of Israel. There is a boiling pot getting ready to spill over and there are no precautions being made.

III) The Lord of Hosts will be victorious (Rev. 17:14).

“Look, ye saints! The sight is glorious: see the Man of Sorrows now; From the fight returned victorious, every knee to Him shall bow. Crown Him! Crown Him! Crowns become the victors brow!

## **Text: Jeremiah 2:1-13**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** The next several chapters of the book of Jeremiah present a courtroom setting. Judah has broken her covenant with God—specifically her marriage covenant with God (3:1). Not only did Judah divorce God, but after Judah had gone after idols, she attempted to call out to God for help (3:1). How does God respond? By bringing Judah to court and proving His case against her (cf. 2:9 with Micah 6:1).

I) There was a time when Israel followed after God (2:1-3).

A. In the Wilderness, the children of Israel followed God through the Red Sea (cf. Ex. 14:15-16, 21-22).

B. Israel was set apart for God and whoever abused her in any way felt the wrath of God (cf. Ex. 14:26-28).

II) Was there some injustice that God did to Israel that caused her to forsake Him (2:4-13; cf. Deut. 32:4)?

A. God was not the one who was unfaithful.

1. Israel went far from God (v. 5).
2. Israel pursued emptiness (v. 5).
3. Israel did not ask “where is the Lord?” (v. 6).
4. Even the religious leaders did not know the Lord (v. 8).

B. Has a nation ever changed gods—ever (v. 10-11)?

1. No other nation from the coastlands of Kittim to Kedar have ever changed their gods.
2. But Israel has. C. Even the heavens are appalled by Israel because she has changed her gods (v. 12).

D. Israel has committed two evils (v. 13).

1. They have forsaken the Fountain of Living Water.
2. They have hewn broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

**Application:** In chapter 1, God was addressing Jeremiah specifically—which led us to our interpretation and application that Jeremiah was God’s mouthpiece. In contrast, chapter 2 deals specifically with Jeremiah’s message to Israel. As we have already noted, Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (1:5; 1:10). What God did to Israel was intended to be a message to the nations and even individuals within those nations (cf. 6:18-19; 15:4; 19:8; 22:8; 24:9). So, although most of us are not ethnic Israel, as we pass by this text let us take note lest we stumble the same way that Israel did.

I) Can you remember a time when you followed after God?

A. Israel was not perfect in her pursuit of God in the Wilderness.

1. There is no way to read the Wilderness wanderings without seeing multiple examples of Israel failing God. We have an example of Israel worshipping the golden calf (Ex. 32) and examples of Israel complaining to God (Num. 11:1-9).

B. Yet, there were certainly times when Israel pursued after God.

1. For example, Israel gave generously for the Tabernacle (Ex. 35:20-29).

II) If there has been a time when you pursued after God, why have you stopped?

- A. Did you find God to be unjust in some way?
  1. Maybe you had a miscarriage or some other tragedy in your life that made you feel like God was not fair.
  2. To fill that void, you began to pursue empty pleasures— which just led to more emptiness.
  3. Repent!
- B. God is always just and faithful.
  1. In fact, if you find yourself doubting God’s faithfulness to you, remind yourself of the promises of God just like Israel should have reminded herself of God’s faithfulness in the Wilderness.
- C. Where have you looked for satisfaction in this life?
  1. You may not have carved other gods, but you have looked for satisfaction in dried up wells.

## **Text: Jeremiah 2:14-37**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) If Israel is not a slave, then why is she a prey (v. 14-19)?
  - A. Is Israel really a prey (v. 15-16)?
    1. Yes, The lions have roared against her. Assyria had already devoured the Northern Kingdom of Israel (v. 15).
    2. Egypt has utterly humiliated Israel (v. 16). Memphis and Tahpanhes are towns near the Nile.
  - B. Israel’s humiliation is her own doing (v. 17-19).
    1. Israel forsook God (v. 17).
    2. In fact, Israel was on the road back to Egypt and to Assyria asking for help (v. 18).
    3. Israel suffered the consequences of her own sin (v. 19).
- II) Israel is a prey because she broke her marriage covenant with God (v. 20-37; cf. 3:1-5).
  - A. Israel said, “I will not serve” (v. 20-22). Yet, God had planted her as a choice vine.
  - B. Israel said, “I am not defiled” (v. 23-24). Yet, Israel played the harlot with other gods.

- C. Israel said, “it is hopeless” (v. 25). Israel’s shoes were worn down and her throat was thirsty from calling out to other gods.
- D. Israel said to a tree, “you are my father” and to a stone, “you gave me birth” (v. 26-27a). Israel will be ashamed of her idolatry when she is discovered.
- E. In the day of her trouble Israel will say to God, “arise and save us” (v. 27b-28). But God will respond by asking Israel where her gods are.
- F. Israel will say, “We are free to roam” (v. 29-34). Not only will Israel disregard God’s words, but she will also slay the prophets. No amount of discipline will drive Israel back to God.
- G. Israel said, “I have not sinned” (v. 35-37). Because of Israel’s declaration of innocence, God will judge her. In this passage, where is Israel in God’s plan of redemption? At first glance, it may seem like Israel is regenerated but living in sin. For example, God remembers their devotion in their youth (2:2). But even that example is not referring to the Israelites in Jeremiah 2—those Israelites were the ones who fled Egypt. In this passage, Israel has clearly rejected the Good News. For example, Israel went far from God (2:5), walked after emptiness (2:5), defiled the land (2:7), changed gods (2:11), forsook God (2:13, 17, 19), became a prey (2:14), was corrected by her own wickedness (2:19), played the harlot (2:20). The list just continues. Even her words condemn her.
  1. You are under a yoke of bondage (v. 20-22). Either you are under Christ’s yoke or you are a slave to your own sin (Rom. 6:12-19). If you find yourself weary and heavy laden, then you are not under the yoke of Christ. He provides rest for the weary (Mat. 11:28-30).
  2. You are defiled (v. 23-24)! You are either living in denial like the children of Israel or you know from where you came. When Peter got a glimpse of the holiness and power of Jesus, Peter asked Him to depart because he understood his own sinfulness (Luke 5:5-8).
  3. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts (Psalm 95:7- 11). We have had Good News preached to us just like they did (Heb. 4:1-2).

**Conclusion:** A passage like this may be concerning to you. Even though Christ has brought you to life, you see the blemishes in your past and present. But the story doesn’t end in Jeremiah 2. Ephesians 5:25-27 picks up the idea that we are the bride of Christ. Christ washes His bride with the word and presents her to Himself without blemish and spot— like a spotless lamb. So, even though you see yourself in this chapter, remind yourself of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

Remind yourself that He who began a good work in you will continue until the day Christ returns.

## **Text: Jeremiah 3:1-25**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Israel's unfaithfulness to God is pictured by the unfaithfulness of a harlot to her spouse. The woman has gone after many lovers. Then, when she is in need, she calls her former husband—the one to whom she has been unfaithful. What does the first husband do? He points out the many places that she has been unfaithful to him.

- I) Israel's unfaithfulness illustrated (v. 1-5).
  - A. Israel is like a woman who has left her husband to be with many lovers (v. 1).
    1. Israel's sin has polluted the land (v. 1; cf. Deut. 24:4).
    2. Although insincere, she turned back to God for help (v. 1, 10).
    3. Everywhere you look, she has been immoral (v. 2; cf. "violated" Is. 13:16; Zech. 14:2).
    4. God's blessing has been withheld (v. 3).
    5. Yet, God will not be angry forever (v. 4-5).
- II) Even though Judah saw Israel's unfaithfulness—including the consequences—Judah was also unfaithful (v. 6-11).
  - A. What Israel did was observable for Judah (v. 6-8a).
    1. Note the words "have you seen" & "Judah saw it".
  - B. Judah even saw the consequences that Israel faced (v. 8).
    1. "Wrote a certificate of divorce" refers to the Assyrians capturing Israel in 722BC.
  - C. Yet, Judah pursued the same adultery (v. 8b-11).
    1. Judah committed adultery with the stones and trees.
    2. Judah did not turn back with all her heart (v. 10).
- III) Israel's unfaithfulness is a marvelous display of the graciousness of God (v. 12-25).
  - A. The Lord is gracious (v. 12-14).
    1. God will not be angry forever (v. 12; cf. Ex. 20:5)

2. Only acknowledge your iniquity (v. 13).
  3. They were giving their gold and silver to other nations for protection instead of trusting in God (v. 13; 2 Kings 23:35).
  4. God calls them to return to Him (v. 14).
  5. He is their Master (v. 14).
  6. He will always provide a remnant (v. 14).
- B. The Lord will provide good shepherds for them (v. 15-18).
1. Shepherds after God's own heart (v. 15).
  2. Ultimately, the Lord will rule over them. There will no longer be a need of the Ark of the Covenant because the Lord will sit on His Throne (v. 16-18).
- C. God desires to bless (v. 19-20).
1. He would make the adulterous wife like a son who receives an inheritance (v. 19).
  2. In spite of how wicked she has been, God was still merciful (v. 20).
- D. The marks of true repentance (v. 21-25).
1. True repentance shows genuine sorrow over sin (v. 21; 24- 25).
  2. True repentance returns to the Father (v. 22).
  3. True repentance recognizes that sin only deceives (v. 23).

**Conclusion:** In what way is God's forgiveness different than our forgiveness? When I forgive someone the sin is never fully dealt with. I may punish too severely or I may not punish at all. God actually deals with sin through Christ! God is both just and a justifier (Rom. 3:26) because of Christ. He poured out His wrath on Jesus Christ for our sins, so that when the Father looks at us our sins have already been dealt with.

## **Text: Jeremiah 4:1-4**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** There are 2 sets of if/then clauses in the opening 2 verses of Jeremiah 4—(1) if you will return, then return; and (2) If you will put away your detestable things, then the nations will bless themselves in Him.

- 1) If you will return to God, then actually do it (v. 1).

- A. Jeremiah is using the marriage language from chapter 3 (3:1, 7, 10, 12, 14, 19, 22).
    - 1. God calls the unfaithful spouse to return back home.
    - 2. This requires that the unfaithful spouse put away her lovers to never return back to them.
  - B. Jeremiah is alluding to Hosea (Hos. 2:7).
    - 1. God uses Hosea's adulterous wife as a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to Him.
    - 2. When Israel responds in true repentance, God responds by creating an everlasting covenant with them (Hos. 2:18-20).
- II) If you will turn from your sin, then the nations will bless themselves in Christ (v. 1b-2).
- A. They needed to turn from idol worship (v. 1b).
    - 1. Although Jeremiah doesn't use the word "idol" he uses a word that means "filthy thing" (cf. Nah. 3:6; Hos. 9:10).
  - B. They needed to be steadfast in their commitment to God (v. 1b).
    - 1. To "waver" is used in Prov. 26:2 to refer to the fluttering of a sparrow.
    - 2. They wavered in their commitment to God by going back to Egypt for military help instead of trusting in God.
  - C. When they made a vow, they needed to swear in truth, justice and righteousness (v. 2).
    - 1. Instead of being hasty with our words, we ought to be careful what we say (cf. Eccl. 5:2-7).
  - D. Then the nations will bless themselves in Christ and in Him they will glory (v. 2).
    - 1. "In Him" refers to Jesus Christ. This verse is referring to Genesis 22:18, where the seed will be a blessing to the nations (cf. Gal. 3:16 clearly identifies the seed as Christ).
    - 2. In what way is Christ a blessing to the nations? He became a curse for us, so that we would be reconciled back to God (cf. Gal. 3:13-14).
    - 3. But Judah did not return to the Lord, so does that mean that the nations will not bless themselves in Him? Was this blessing somehow contingent on Judah's obedience? No! In fact, God used the hardening of Pharaoh to have His name proclaimed throughout the earth (cf. Ex. 9:13-17). So, the nations would bless themselves in Christ if Judah obeyed or if Judah hardened her heart against God.



- III) God's wrath will be upon all those who do not remove sin (v. 3-4).
  - A. The removal of sin illustrated (v. 3-4).
    - 1. Because of the fall, thorns fill the land. In order to cultivate that land, you must "break up the fallow ground". The parable of the soil in Matthew 13 illustrates the different soils. In this parable, Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 and points out that they cannot hear nor see. Isaiah 6:12 points out that the Lord is the One who has removed men far away.
    - 2. Outward circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with the children of Israel (Gen. 17:10-13). This outward sign was a picture of a heart change (Deut. 10:16; 30:6).
  - B. Both signs point to the need for a New Covenant (Jer. 31:31).
    - 1. They could not keep the Mosaic Covenant (Jer. 31:33).
  - C. Repent or face the wrath of God (v. 4).
    - 1. But we cannot produce repentance—God alone grants repentance (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

## **Text: Jeremiah 4:5-31**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** From the very beginning, God has used covenants as a means to define and describe our relationship with Him. For NT believers, God has initiated the New Covenant through the blood of Christ. During the time of Jeremiah, the children of Israel were under the Mosaic Covenant. Although these covenants are distinct from one another, yet they both are covenants. For example, disobedience to the Mosaic Covenant brought judgment. Likewise, unrepentant sin under the New Covenant brings the discipline of the Lord (cf. Heb. 12:4-11).

- I) Judgment is coming for those who refuse to repent (v. 5-13; cf. the boiling pot metaphor in 1:13-15).
  - A. The judgment of God illustrated (v. 5-7).
    - 1. An army coming to lay siege on a city (v. 5-6).
    - 2. A lion coming out of his lair to capture his prey (v. 7).
  - B. The judgment of God will be so severe that their only response is hopelessness (v. 8-9).

1. Their rulers will lose all hope (v. 9).
  2. Their spiritual leaders will be shocked (v. 9).
  - C. God will allow the people to be deceived (v. 10).
  - D. God is the One who initiates judgment (v. 11-13).
    1. The scorching wind will be too strong to winnow the chaff—it will winnow the chaff and the grain away.
    2. God commands the scorching wind to come and devastate them (v. 11-12).
    3. His chariot is like the wind and His horses are like the eagles—swift (v. 13).
- II) Even the nations see Israel harden her heart to God (v. 14-18).
- A. Not just outer idolatry but inner rebellion (v. 14).
    1. Note the use of “heart” and “within” (v. 14).
  - B. Foreigners will proclaim the wickedness all over Israel (v. 15-16).
    1. Jeremiah is no longer the speaker.
  - C. Her sin has been the cause of her destruction (v. 17-18).
    1. Like watchmen in a field, her enemies will watch over her fields.
    2. This passage makes it abundantly clear that the reason for their destruction is their own sin (v. 17b-18).
- III) Those who refuse to repent are fools (v. 19-22).
- A. Jeremiah had heartfelt anguish over the foolishness of the children of Israel (v. 19-22).
    1. His soul is sorrowful over their sin (v. 19-21).
    2. Yet, the people continue in their sin (v. 22).
- IV) Judgment will be so severe that even God’s covenant with creation will appear to be in jeopardy (v. 23-28; cf. Gen. 1:2, Jer. 33:20-21).
- A. Jeremiah is clearly referring to creation (v. 23-25).
    1. “Formless and void” (Gen. 1:2).
    2. No “light” (Gen. 1:3).
    3. “Birds” (Gen. 1:20).
    4. “Fruitful land” (Gen. 1:11).

- B. Even though God's covenant with creation appears to be bleak, God will not completely destroy it (v. 26-28).
- V) When everyone should be fleeing, Israel continues to play the part of the harlot (v. 29-31).
  - A. Judgment is at the door, yet she prepares herself for her lovers (v. 29-30).
    - 1. Yet, her lover seeks to take her life (v. 30).
  - B. Judgment is like the pain of childbirth (v. 31).

**Conclusion:** God relates to His people through covenants. With Israel, it was through the Mosaic Covenant. With NT believers, it is through the New Covenant. You are acting just like the nation of Israel when you continue to live in your sin. You gather on the Lord's Day and you confess your sin of anxiety in corporate prayer, yet all throughout the week you are anxious about your circumstances. Children, you confess your sin of selfishness during our time of prayer, yet you continue to serve yourself over your brother or sister. Do you think that God will not discipline His children (Heb. 12:4-11)? He will! Confess your sins and repent lest you face the discipline of the Lord.

## **Text: Jeremiah 5:1-13**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) There is none who does justice and seeks truth (v. 1-6).
  - A. God offered to pardon the many for One righteous (v. 1).
    - 1. God is not merely looking for a "good man". If He were, Jeremiah seems to fit that requirement.
    - 2. In fact, even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before God, God would still bring judgment (Jer. 15:1).
    - 3. Although Israel had sinned, the reason she was guilty before God was because of the sin that she inherited from Adam. Hence, the righteousness of One would pardon the many (cf. Rom. 5:17).
  - B. But when Israel makes an oath, don't they swear by the Lord's name (v. 2)?
    - 1. It is true. If you were to roam the streets of Jerusalem, you would hear people making oaths and swearing by the name of the Lord.

2. But they were not keeping those oaths. For example, in Jeremiah 34:15-16 the people made an oath to God that they would release Israelite slaves after 7 years, yet they broke that oath.
- C. Even though they were corrected, they refused to repent (v. 3b).
1. God does not leave His covenant people alone. He will deal with their unrepentant sin.
  2. They hardened their faces against God and His Word.
  3. The antidote to a hard heart is the Word of God (cf. Jer. 23:29). The Word acts as a hammer to break the rock in pieces.
  4. In contrast, the prophets told the people what they wanted to hear.
- D. Is it only the poor who refuse to repent (v. 4-5)?
1. The poor are those who do not know the Lord. They have not taken the time to study the Word—they are foolish.
  2. But even those who have been trained in the Word—the great—have refused to submit.
  3. Jeremiah is using the same language as Psalm 2:3 to refer to the rulers who take their stand against God.
- E. Because of Israel's sins, she will face judgment (v. 6).
1. 3 examples are given to describe the judgment—a lion, a wolf, and a leopard. There will be no escape.
- II) God has every right to execute judgment (v. 7-13)!
- A. Have you seen the wickedness that they have committed (v. 7 -9)?
1. King Josiah had all the elders make a covenant with God, both the small and the great (2 Kings 23:1-3); yet Ezekiel writes about how the elders were living in unimaginable wickedness (Ez. 8:7-13).
  2. God had provided the best land for Israel—they were well-fed, yet they lusted after other gods. Not only is there a spiritual element, but it also appears as though Jeremiah is referring to her immorality (v. 8).
- B. Even though Israel deserves every bit of God's judgment, yet God is merciful (v. 10-13).

1. Israel is likened to a vineyard (v. 10). Isaiah asks the pointed question from God, “what more could I have done for my vineyard” (cf. Is. 5:1-6)?
2. The people claim that God would never do this to them (v. 12). But notice that Jeremiah includes both the Northern and the Southern Kingdom (v. 11). The Northern Kingdom had already fallen to Assyria, so they should not have assumed that God would never judge them.
3. They also relied on the worthless words of the prophets (v. 13).

**Conclusion:** We are utterly helpless—trapped in our sin just like Israel. It’s easy for us to point out their wickedness and gloss over our sins. We are hopeless! But in the midst of our despair, God sent Jesus Christ to be our righteousness—to take the judgment of our sin.

## **Text: Jeremiah 5:14-31**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Jeremiah regularly uses the phrase, the Lord of Hosts, to refer to God—He is the Lord of armies. Although Psalm 99:1 does not use the exact same phrase, it captures the idea that He reigns over all. In fact, the people tremble and the earth shakes because He will do just as He said.

- I) God will do just as He said; in contrast to the prophets (v. 14- 19).
  - A. The false prophets lied about the Lord (v. 14; cf. v. 12- 13).
    1. The phrase “you (plural) have spoken” refers to the prophets (cf. v. 12-13).
    2. The phrase “your (singular) mouth” refers to Jeremiah (v. 14).
    3. Jeremiah’s words would be like fire and the people would be like wood.
  - B. This judgment will not happen by chance (v. 15).
    1. Israel may have wondered if the coming Babylonian invasion happened by chance. Jeremiah does not allow for this option. He described them in detail.
    2. In addition, Jeremiah is referencing Deuteronomy 28:49-52. God made it clear that if they disobeyed His commands, then He would send a nation to judge them.
    3. Although we are a part of the New Covenant and not the Mosaic Covenant, God still disciplines His children. Are you disregarding the discipline of the Lord by assuming that it is by chance (cf. 1 Sam. 6:1-9)?

- C. God deals firmly with the unrepentant (v. 16-17).
    - 1. Their quiver leads people to the grave.
    - 2. Notice the repeated use of the word “devour”.
  - D. Yet, God is merciful to preserve a remnant (v. 18-19).
- II) Since God does as He says, why would you not fear Him (v. 20-31)?
- A. Again, the Northern Kingdom (i.e. Jacob) is referenced (v. 20; cf. 2:4).
    - 1. Remember how God brought judgment on the Northern Kingdom by allowing the Assyrians to destroy them. This should have caused the Southern Kingdom to fear God.
  - B. To fear God is to tremble in His presence (v. 22a).
    - 1. David learned to fear the Lord when Uzzah was killed (2 Sam. 6:6-9).
    - 2. The midwives in Egypt feared God rather than Pharaoh (Ex. 1:15-21)
  - C. Creation fears God and obeys His commands (v. 22b).
    - 1. Although the waves roar, they do not cross the boundary God has set for them (cf. Job 38:11).
  - D. Yet, God’s people are stubborn and refuse to obey (v. 23-29).
    - 1. When the rains did not come, they should have thought about their stubborn hearts (v. 24-25).
    - 2. They have sinned by being deceitful, by oppressing the orphan, and by their wickedness (v. 25-28).
    - 3. Therefore, God must judge His people (v. 29).
  - E. In fact, the people want the prophets to prophesy falsely and the priests to rule on their own authority (v. 30-31).
    - 1. It’s no different today. Visit any number of churches in our city and you will find that many churches are entertaining the people and not preaching God’s Word—and the people love it.

**Conclusion:** Christ sits on His throne awaiting the day when all His enemies are placed under His footstool. Yet, we do not live in reality of His rule. There are only 2 responses to His rule. Do you tremble at His presence? Or, do you stiffen your neck in rebellion?

## Text: Jeremiah 6:1-15

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** As covenant people of God, we are not much different than the children of Israel. Although they were under the Mosaic Covenant and we are under the New Covenant, both covenants deal with unrepentant sin. In the Mosaic Covenant, God brings judgment on those who refuse to repent. Under the New Covenant, God disciplines His covenant people.

- I) Judgment is imminent for those who refuse to repent (v. 1-8).
  - A. Although the siege had not begun, the people were told to flee, to blow the trumpet, and raise the flag (v. 1)
    1. The passage implies that the Babylonian army is still in Babylon—"evil looks down from the north"—yet, judgment is imminent (cf. 4:5-6).
  - B. Even the comely and dainty one could not escape the imminent judgment of God (v. 1-2).
    1. Since Jeremiah addresses the sons of Benjamin (v. 1), it looks like they thought their status—comely and dainty—would prevent them from facing the judgment of God (v. 2).
    2. God says, "I will destroy them". There is some debate as to the meaning of this verb (i.e. "destroy" or "liken" [see KJV]), but the context, as well as, Hosea 4:5 clearly identify this verb as "destroy".
  - C. When God uses wicked Babylon, her rulers become His shepherds and her soldiers become His flock (v. 3-6).
    1. The Babylonian army is likened to the numerous shepherds and flocks surrounding the city. A city like Jerusalem would have been surrounded by shepherds and flocks.
    2. The one difference, though, is that "these" shepherds and flocks will prepare war against Israel.
    3. Not only does God allow the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem, but He is actually their Commander-in-Chief or Lord of Hosts (cf. v.6).
  - D. Even though Israel continues in her wickedness, God continues to warn her through the prophets (v. 7-8).
    1. Her sin is like a well of fresh water. During a siege (v. 6), there are few things more precious than fresh water. For Israel, her sin is like precious fresh water.

2. For those whose sin is like precious water during a siege, God will alienate Himself from them (v. 8).
- II) Judgment is thorough for those who refuse to repent (v. 9-15).
- A. The judgment of God is likened to a grape gatherer (v. 9).
    1. Jeremiah uses the same analogy in 49:9 of grape gatherers plundering Esau. There will be nothing left (cf. Obad. 1:5).
  - B. No one will listen, therefore the judgment will be thorough (v. 10-12).
    1. Jeremiah becomes weary of warning the people over and over. In fact, they despise God's words.
    2. Jeremiah reverts to preaching to the children in the streets because the adults have completely rejected the message.
    3. The reason they cannot listen is because their ears are "uncircumcised". Jeremiah has already mentioned that their hearts needed to be "circumcised" (cf. Jer. 4:4). So, although they have been circumcised outwardly, neither their ears or their heart have been circumcised.
    4. This judgment is so thorough that both husband and wife will be taken, as well as, the old and the young (v. 11). They will lose houses and fields (v. 12). 5. God will enact judgment on the "inhabitants of the land" (v. 12). He no longer refers to them as Israel—they are simply the "inhabitants of the land".
  - C. When the religious leaders should have been ashamed for lying to the people, they didn't even know how to blush. Therefore, God's judgment will be thorough (v. 13-15).

**Conclusion:** We are not left hopeless. The very next verse offers the hope we so desperately need (v. 16). Find the "ancient paths" and walk in it—this is where you find rest for your souls! As New Covenant Christians, let us cling to Christ. He has circumcised our hearts (cf. 31:33). He has changed our desires! We are a new creation!

## **Text: Jeremiah 6:16-30**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Is your soul at rest this morning? Do you feel weary and weighed down? In Matthew 11:29, Christ alludes to this passage from Jeremiah and offers rest to all who come to



Him. Yet, in spite of finding their rest in Christ, the Israelites deliberately chose to abandon the ancient path.

- I) There is no rest for those who refuse to listen to His word and obey His law (v. 16-21).
  - A. All who are weary can come to Christ to find rest by listening to His word and obeying His law (v. 16-17, 19b).
    1. The prophets stood as watchmen pointing God's Covenant people back to the ancient paths (cf. Hos. 9:8; Ez. 3:17). Yet, Israel would not listen (v. 17).
    2. Jeremiah is not simply dealing with the physical security of the nation of Israel, instead, he is dealing with the individual soul (v. 16).
    3. Why does Jeremiah call this path, the "ancient path"? After Israel had sinned by making the golden calf in the wilderness, Moses interceded to God for the people. During that prayer, God told Moses that His presence would be with the people, and that He would give them rest (Ex. 33:12-16). Then God writes the Law on stone tablets again (Ex. 34:1). To listen to His word and obey His law is to find rest— even for the Israelites in the wilderness.
  - B. Israel's failed example is meant to be a testimony to the nations (v. 18-19).
    1. There is no need for us to follow in Israel's footsteps. We can see the "the fruit of their plans". Do you think that God—the covenant keeping God—would alter His ways? He certainly will not. You can plot and scheme, but you will not find rest apart from obedience to His word.
  - C. God abhors sacrifice without obedience (v. 20).
    1. There is no substitute for obedience. Israel was extravagant in her worship—even bringing gifts from afar, yet God was not pleased (cf. Is. 1:11-14).
  - D. God lays a stumbling block for those who refuse to obey His words (v. 21).
    1. God certainly does not tempt anyone to sin (James 1:13), but He does allow us to be tempted. Because of the Lord's Prayer, it is right for us to ask the Father to not "lead us into temptation" (Matt. 6:9-13).
    2. One example of this, is when Gedaliah—the Babylonian Ambassador—was killed. The people asked Jeremiah what they should do, but God waited 10 days before He told Jeremiah what to do (Jer. 42:7). No doubt, with each passing day, worry increased. By waiting to give an answer, God was putting a stumbling block before the people.

- II) What was the judgment like for Israel when she refused to listen to His word and obey His law (v. 22-26)?
  - A. The army from the North will show no mercy (v. 22-25)!
    - 1. She will use her weapons of war to cause terror. When Israel hears, her arms will grow limp out of fear.
    - 2. Israel will respond like a woman in childbirth seized by anguish.
  - B. She will sorrow, like the sorrow of the death of a son (v. 26).
- III) Continuing in open rebellion is a clear sign that a person has been rejected by God (v. 27-30).
  - A. Jeremiah is called to observe the people to see whether they would repent (v. 27-29).
    - 1. Jeremiah's work is similar to a metal purifier. Unfortunately, the refining goes on with no value.
  - B. Like Israel who continued living in open rebellion, those who disregard God's laws and continue in their rebellion have been rejected by God (v. 30).

## **Text: Jeremiah 7:1-34**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Do not be deceived into thinking that worship without obedience is pleasing to God (v. 1-34).
  - A. Temple worship alone is not pleasing to God (v. 1-2)!
    - 1. This message was not given to the drunkards at the tavern, but in the temple of the Lord! No doubt, the hearers would have been eager to point Jeremiah to the "wicked" people who were forsaking God, but in reality, these temple worshippers were far from worshipping God.
    - 2. Do you evaluate yourself by the wicked around you?
  - B. God demands obedience in order to receive the blessings (3-7).
    - 1. Living long in the land that God gave them was the blessing for obedience (v. 3, 7; Deut. 7:12-13).
    - 2. Instead, though, the people listened to the false prophets who would stir the people up with deceptive words like "this is the temple of the Lord" (v. 4).

3. One of the dangers of picking and choosing phrases we like in the Bible, is that we often find comfort in the words—even when there is none!
  4. God’s mercy is on full display as Jeremiah calls the people to repent (v. 5-7). They were already breaking God’s covenant, yet God in His mercy desired to bless them, if they would only repent.
- C. Stop deceiving yourself into thinking that you can just continue in your sins without judgment (v. 8-15).
1. God will not deliver you so that you can continue in your sins, will He (v. 9-10)?
  2. Not much has changed. Christ was dealing with the same foolishness in the temple in His day (cf. Matt. 21:13). Instead of worshipping God in Spirit and truth, they were taking advantage of people for financial gain.
  3. What God did in Shiloh, He will do again (v. 12-15). History tells us that in 1050 BC, the Philistines destroyed Shiloh— the very place where God was worshipped. What God did once, He can do again!
- D. You are not spiting God, but yourself by the sins you are committing (v. 16-20).
1. Do you think God will hear you when you pray if you are living in rebellion to Him? He wouldn’t even listen to Jeremiah as he prayed for the people (v. 16).
  2. Often, we drag our whole families into our sin. The children gathered the wood, the father kindled the fire, and the wife made the cakes as a sacrifice to their idols (v. 18).
  3. The Father pours out His wrath on both people and land! God always deals with sin the same way—He pours out His anger on sinners. Thankfully, Christ Jesus drank the wrath of God on the behalf of the elect!
- E. God has spoken through the prophets, yet you continue to harden your heart (v. 21-31).
1. Since the people will not listen, Jeremiah reverts to sarcasm in v. 21-23. The whole burnt offering was supposed to be offered to God and not eaten (cf. Lev. 1:1-9), yet God tells them to eat the flesh since it is a worthless sacrifice. In addition, he tells them that “God did not speak to your fathers...” when in fact, God did.
  2. We are like the children of Israel in that we keep hearing the message, but instead of listening, we harden our hearts (v. 24-28). The problem is not with God, but with us (v. 28)!

3. Instead of lamenting, they build altars to sacrifice their own children (v. 29-31).
- F. Since repentance would not happen, God's judgement would be severe (v. 32-34).
1. Instead of just the children being slaughtered, the whole place would be a valley of slaughter.
  2. The dead will not even be buried (v. 33). Conclusion: Do you think lightly of His kindness in leading you to repentance (Rom. 2:4-5)?

## **Text: Jeremiah 8:1-9:1**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) There will be no peace for those who continue in their rebellion against God (8:1-22).
  - A. They will not even have peace in the tombs—their bones will be desecrated (8:1-3).
    1. In ancient history, when a covenant between nations was broken by one nation, sometimes the other nation would desecrate the tombs (see Ashurbanipal).
    2. Not just the political and religious leaders, but the bones of everyone who lived in the city as well (v. 1).
    3. Don't miss the irony in verse 2. Their bones will be spread out to the sun, moon, and stars—the very things they worshipped and loved.
    4. What a sad day when death will be chosen over life (v. 3). This is not an isolated thought—"all the remnant of this evil family".
  - B. Can a person continue in rebellion against God (v. 4-7)?
    1. What happens when someone falls down? They get up! But not so with the children of Israel. They had "fallen" into sin and were unwilling to repent (v. 4-5).
    2. Deceit, which was a major theme in chapter 7, comes up again (v. 5). They hold fast to deceit.
    3. Continuing in rebellion is like a horse charging into battle—there is no thought for the danger (v. 6).
    4. Nature follows her course. For example, the birds migrate south during the winter. Yet, God's people stiffen their necks in rebellion—they don't follow the course of nature (v. 7).

- C. There is no peace for those who merely claim to be obeying the law of the Lord (v. 8-12).
1. Wisdom is literally “skill in living”. To claim to be wise while rejecting the law of the Lord is anything but wisdom (v. 8-9). In fact, Solomon, in a similar idea says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). To be wise is not only to have His words, but to also obey them. Exodus 9:18-21 gives a clear example of people who submitted to the word of the Lord.
  2. Instead of submitting to the Word of God, the scribes changed the interpretation of God’s Words (v. 8). Jeremiah records multiple instances where the false prophets claimed to be speaking on God’s behalf (cf. Jer. 14:13-16). Are you submitting under God’s Word or are you forcing your interpretation upon the text?
  3. There would be no peace. Their lands and their wives would be taken because of their greed and deceit (v. 10- 11). The prophets and priests had deceived the people into thinking that everything would be ok. Yet, they knowingly lied to the people for their own gain.
  4. False teachers have no shame (v. 12)!
- D. God is against those who continue in their rebellion against Him (v. 13-22).
1. God is the subject—He snatches them away (v. 13). Again, God dooms the people even after they run into the fortified cities (v, 14). He gives them poisoned water to drink (v. 14). He sends poisonous snakes to bite them (v. 17).
  2. When God is against you, there is no hope (v. 18-22)! Time keeps marching on, but there is no hope (v. 20). Notice the words of Jeremiah—”my sorrow”, “my heart is faint”, “I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me”. Yet, there is no physician—there is no hope (v. 22)!

**Conclusion:** While the nation of Israel during the time of Jeremiah had no hope for peace, this is not true for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is healing and restoration. Jesus Christ, the great physician heals the wounded. The sick is nursed back to health through Jesus Christ. There is rest to all who cling to Christ!

## **Text: Jeremiah 9:2-26**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** This chapter centers around the theme of knowing God (v. 3, 6, 13, 24). These people refused to know God.

- I) The reason that people run from one evil to the next is because they do not know the Lord (v. 2-9).
  - A. Instead of dwelling with His people, God desires to abandon them because they do not know Him (v. 2).
    1. God has always dwelled in the midst of His people. As they were leaving Egypt, God went before them as a cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21; 14:19). When they built the tabernacle God's glory filled it (Ex. 40:34-38). But now, God wants nothing to do with them.
    2. Notice that the passage does not say that God leaves them, but that He might leave. In fact, Jeremiah would later say that God will restore the fortunes back to Israel (Jer. 29:14; 30:3; 30:18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7; 33:11; 33:26).
  - B. Those who do not know the Lord do not speak truth (v. 3- 9).
    1. Instead of speaking truth, they bend their tongues like a bow in order to let their words fly like a deadly arrow (v. 3, 8).
    2. Deceit is when a person withholds or alters the facts in order to present a more compelling case (v. 4-6). Deceit may not be an outright lie, but it leads someone to believe something that is not completely accurate.
    3. This is not referring to one-time instances of lying (v. 5). They have actually taught themselves to lie.
    4. If they knew the Lord, they would know that He refines His children (v. 7; Malachi 3:2-4).
    5. If they knew the Lord, they would know that He does not allow unrepentant sin to continue (v. 9).
  - C. Utter ruin for those who have forsaken His commands (v. 10- 22).
    1. The weeping is likened to the weeping at a funeral (v. 10- 11, 17-22). The utter destruction of the city, including the animals, causes the prophet to cry out.
    2. A wise person knows the destruction of his sin and quickly turns from it (v. 12-14). Judah, of all people should have been well aware of this utter destruction. God continued to warn her through the prophets, yet she only stiffened her neck in rebellion (2 Kings 17:13-23, 34-41).

3. They have broken the covenant that God made with them (v. 13-14). The people had committed to obeying His words and keeping His commands (Ex. 19:4-8), yet they turned back from the covenant that they had made.
4. God Himself will act against His people (v. 15-16). 5 times in these verses God acts against His people (v. 15-16). II) Let the one who boasts, boast in this that He knows God (v. 23-26).
  - A. Don't boast in anything concerning yourself (v. 23).
    1. The wise often boast in their wisdom. The rich boast in their wealth. But God rarely uses the wise of this world (1 Cor. 1:26-31).
  - B. Let your boast be that you understand and know God (v. 24).
    1. What is it that you know about God? He exercises lovingkindness on the earth. The word for lovingkindness is the Hebrew word *Hesed* which often refers to faithfulness to His covenant. God is loyal to His covenant. In fact, Psalm 136 repeats this word throughout the whole Psalm to remind the people that God has been faithful to His covenant throughout history (Psalm 136:1-26)
    2. What do you know about God? He is a just judge. These last two terms—justice and righteousness—refer to similar ideas (v. 24).
  - C. God delights in circumcision of the heart, not outward circumcision (v. 25-26).
    1. Other nations performed some type of circumcision, but none of that mattered. God was looking for inward circumcision.

## **Text: Jeremiah 10:1-25**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** We are quick to point out the wickedness and idolatry of the nations, yet God speaks directly to the children of Israel (v. 1). As we look at the text, don't point out the wickedness of the nations. Instead, identify the ways that you have embraced the idolatry of those around you!

- I) Do not fear the gods of the nations (v. 2-5).
  - A. The nations are delusional for fearing their gods (v. 2-5).
    1. Although in our day people may not be terrified by the signs of the heavens, people are superstitious.

2. In fact, Jeremiah uses the word “delusional” to refer to the ways of the nations (v. 3). This word is used frequently in Ecclesiastes to refer to pointless.
3. They take wood from the forest and fashion it into an idol (v. 3-4). But because the idol would just fall over, they have to nail it to keep it from falling.
4. Their idols are like scarecrows, they can do no harm (v. 5).

II) Instead, fear the King of the nations (v. 6-16).

A. There is none like God (v. 6-7).

1. God stands in a category all His own! There is none like Him (v. 6-7).
2. There are many who are great, but none can compare with the greatness of God! His name is mighty! Do you remember when God defeated the Midianite army by the hand of Gideon and his 300 hundred men (Judges 7:9-14; 19-22)? Do you remember when the walls of Jericho fell down before Joshua and his army (Joshua 6:15-21)?
3. He deserves to be feared (v. 7; cf. Acts 5:1-11).
4. In wisdom, He stands alone (v. 7).

B. Idols cannot compare to the true and living God (v. 8-10).

1. Jeremiah doesn't mince words—those who worship idols are complete morons (v. 8). Can't they see that their idol is just a block of wood?
2. They go to great lengths to decorate their idols (v. 9).
3. In contrast, the Lord is true, living, and everlasting (v. 10). As a result, we ought to fear Him. Both the earth and the nations cannot endure His wrath!
4. Only a fool would fear an idol that could do no harm!

C. How do we respond to the idolators around us (v. 11)?

1. This is the only verse in Jeremiah written in Aramaic, which is the language spoken by the surrounding nations.
2. The message is simple—the idols you are worshipping did not create the heavens and the earth and will perish!

D. In contrast to idols, the Lord is Maker of all things (v. 12-16).

1. His power and wisdom are on full display in the creation of the world (v. 12).



2. In addition, the lightning and rain are a direct result of God—He causes the wind, rain and thunder (v. 13)!
  3. Idol worshippers, on the other hand, are foolish because they worship idols that are not alive (v. 14-15).
  4. Those who worship the Maker of all things has Him as their inheritance (v. 16).
- III) Although Israel is His inheritance (v. 16), she does not always enjoy the benefits (v. 17-22).
- A. Israel was cast out of the land like a slingshot (v. 17-20).
    1. She is pictured as a person gathering up her few possessions and carrying them over her shoulder (v. 17).
    2. It is Judah who will be under distress (v. 18; note; inhabitants of the land). Tents will be destroyed (v. 19-20; 22).
    3. The primary reason for her suffering is that she has leaders who do not seek the Lord (v. 21). The word “seek” is often translated as “inquire” (i.e. Jer. 21:2).
- IV) Call on God to deal justly during times of pain (v. 23-25).
- A. God ultimately directs everything anyway (v. 23).
  - B. We need God’s mercy (v. 24; cf. Gen. 18:25).
  - C. God will deal with the wicked (v. 25; Rom. 12:19).

## **Text: Jeremiah 11:1-23**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Listen and obey God’s commands (v. 1-17).
  - A. Even Jeremiah the prophet must obey (v. 1-2).
    1. Jeremiah was commanded to hear the words and then speak to the men of Judah (contrast with 7:1-2).
    2. This means you are not excluded as well. Often, when we see commands in scripture, we immediately think the commands refer to someone else. We rarely use God’s Word as a mirror for our own lives.
  - B. There was a covenant between them, therefore they should obey (v. 3-5).

1. The Mosaic Covenant is conditional—those who disobey the commands will be cursed (v. 3).
  2. Since we could not obey the Law, Christ became a curse for us (Gal. 3:10-13).
  3. God rescued His people from their affliction in Egypt, therefore they are to be His people and He is to be their God (v. 4). He is their Master, and they are His servants.
  4. God swore that He would give them a land flowing with milk and honey (v. 5). And He did!
- C. Even though they were repeatedly warned, they refused to obey the commands (v. 6-8).
1. The message was preached in the streets for all (v. 6).
  2. Throughout Israel's history, she was repeatedly warned by the prophets (v. 7-8).
- D. Do not turn back to worship the idols of your forefathers (v. 9-17).
1. God called this act by Israel a conspiracy (v. 9). This word is translated elsewhere as "treason" (cf. 2 Chron. 23:13).
  2. They have broken the Mosaic Covenant (v. 10). Covenants are divided into two categories; those which can be broken (Gen 17:14) and those which cannot be broken (Jer. 33:20).
  3. God refuses to hear the prayers of those who continue in disobedience (v. 11; cf. 1 Sam. 8:7, 18). In fact, it is God who brings disaster upon them.
  4. After God refuses to hear, then they call out to their idols, but their idols can do nothing (v. 12-13)! There will be no help in time of distress for those who refuse to obey God's commands (cf. 1 Sam. 28:6-16).
  5. To those who are obeying God's commands—stop praying for those who refuse to obey God's commands (v. 14). Let the judgment of God fall upon them.
  6. In fact, God doesn't even want you in His house. Your outward sacrifices cannot spare you from disaster (v. 15). Notice that this individual is called "My beloved". God is referring to someone who is in a covenant relationship with Him (v. 16-17).
- II) Those who refuse to obey God's commands turn against God's servant (v. 18-23).
- A. God reveals the plans of the wicked (v. 18-19).

1. Jeremiah would not have known unless God revealed their plans to him. He would have been led like a gentle lamb to the slaughter, but God foiled their plans (v. 19).
- B. God judges righteously, so leave vengeance to God (v. 20-23).
  1. God judges the heart, so He alone can judge righteously.
  2. Jeremiah did not have to defend himself against those who sought him harm— God would deal with them (v. 21- 23)

## **Text: Jeremiah 12:1-17**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The Lord is righteous, yet the wicked prosper (v. 1-6).
  - A. The righteous plead their case with God (v. 1).
    1. Jeremiah is referring to the false priests and prophets (cf. 20:1-10).
    2. Notice that Jeremiah starts with the righteousness of the Lord (v. 1). Since God alone is righteous, Jeremiah wants to plead his case with Him.
  - B. God is in control, but why do the wicked prosper (v. 1-2)?
    1. These are legitimate questions. God is the One who “plants” them (v. 2). So, why do they prosper (cf. 11:21-23)?
    2. Notice that God does not take credit for the fruit (i.e. “they grow”; “they produce fruit”).
    3. This topic is called Theodicy—the vindication of the righteousness of God.
  - C. No one can fool God, He knows the heart (v. 2b-3).
    1. Even though the wicked use the right words, their heart is far from God (v. 2b). So, words alone are not an accurate test of the heart.
    2. Even though Jeremiah’s words seem harsh, God knows his heart (v. 3).
  - D. Why do the righteous have to suffer on behalf of the wicked (v. 4-6)?
    1. The land and animals had done nothing wrong, yet they suffered because of the wicked (v. 4).
    2. When the righteous are in the midst of the trial, they must remember that God has only given them what they can handle (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13).

3. We simply cannot run with horses. When we read of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, we are in awe. When we remember the sufferings of Christ on the cross, we are left speechless.
  4. The righteous often suffer at the hands of those who are closest to them (v. 6).
- II) Under the Mosaic Covenant, God abandoned His people (v. 7-13).
- A. Under the New Covenant, Christ absorbed the full blow of God's wrath.
    1. Christ was forsaken on the cross, so we would never experience being forsaken by the Father.
  - B. It is right for God to abandon His covenant (Mosaic) people, because they have broken His covenant (v. 7-13; cf. 11:10).
    1. They have acted as a lion roaring against the Lord (v. 8).
    2. Israel, like a proud bird has brought about her own destruction (v. 9).
    3. The Shepherds refer to the leaders of Israel. They ruined God's choice vineyard (v. 10-11). They have brought about the destruction of Israel (v. 12-13).
- III) Yet, God will have compassion (v. 14-17).
- A. God will uproot Israel's wicked neighbors (v. 14a).
  - B. God will bring Israel back to her land (v. 14b).
  - C. God will have compassion on the wicked nations and restore them back to their land (v. 15).
  - D. Those who repent will be built up (v. 16-17).

## **Text: Jeremiah 13:1-27**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God will destroy the proud—those who refuse to listen to His words (v. 1-11).
  - A. Instead of priests who cling to God, the proud are like a ruined undergarment (v. 1-11).
    1. The waistband was made of linen which was the same material used for the priests (v. 1; cf. Ex. 28:39 -40).
    2. The waistband was an undergarment worn around the thighs. This new waistband

- (never washed) would cling to the wearer just like the humble cling to God (v. 1).
3. God purchased the elect through the blood of Christ. In a similar way, Jeremiah purchased the waistband. But instead of clinging to Christ and obeying His words, Israel would rather be buried in the earth and totally ruined.
  4. Then, Jeremiah was to go to the Euphrates, about 700 miles roundtrip, to hide the waistband then later retrieve it. Although the location of Perath has been debated it is commonly used in the OT to refer to the Euphrates (cf. Gen. 2:14; 15:18; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; 2 Kings 23:29; 24:7; Jer. 46:2, 6; 51:63).
  5. Why the Euphrates? Because the Babylonians would come from the Euphrates to bring judgment (cf. Jer. 51:60-64).
  6. There is no place for mediocre Christianity. You are either like the proud who refuse to hear God's word or like the humble who cling to God like an undergarment (v. 9-11).
- B. Instead of every wine jar being filled with wine (proverb), the people would be filled with drunkenness because of their pride (v. 12-14).
1. Jeremiah used a proverb of his day to get his audience's attention—then he switched the punchline (v. 12-13)!
  2. God will not show pity on them (v. 14).
- C. Listening to God's Word is contrasted with pride (v. 15-19).
1. Notice the emphasis of the two verbs—"listen" and "give heed" (v. 15). Stop what you're doing and carefully listen to God's instruction.
  2. Giving glory to God is a common phrase, but how do we do it (v. 16)? We give glory to God through obeying His words. What does God's word say ought to be the first thing we ask.
  3. The results of not listening to God's words are severe. Your feet will stumble like a person walking in the darkness (v. 16b).
  4. The righteous respond with sorrow over the proud (v. 17).
  5. Your pride will effect everyone (18-19). Jehoiachin's sin caused pain for his parents and the surrounding cities (cf. 2 Kings 24:8).
- D. Absolute humiliation for those who refuse to obey God's word (v. 20-27).
1. The beautiful sheep that God had given will be gone (v. 20).

2. The judgment will be like the pain of childbirth (v. 21).
3. You will be absolutely humiliated because of your sin of pride (v. 22, 25-27).
4. But there will be no room for change (v. 23). Just like you cannot change your skin color, you will not be able to change from your sins. In fact, apart from the finished work of Christ, we are all dead in our sins!

## **Text: Jeremiah 14:1-15:9**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Those who refuse to turn from their sins will be humiliated (14:1-6; 14:17-18; 15:5-9).
  - A. Those who refuse to turn from their sins will languish like those who languish in a drought (14:1-6).
    1. Have you ever seen a house fire on the news? If so, you will often see the homeowner sitting on the curb looking stunned. This is the picture that Jeremiah paints for us (v. 2-4).
    2. The doe who abandons her young and the donkey who is nearing death pictures the one who is languishing. Life has lost its meaning for this person (v. 5-6).
  - B. Those who refuse to turn from their sins will be crushed like those who are crushed by famine and sword (14:17-18).
    1. Jeremiah weeps continually for the people because of an infected wound (v. 17). This is like the family at the bedside of someone who is dying. There is extreme sorrow.
    2. There is no where for them to turn. If they leave the walls of the city, they will be slain by the sword. If they stay in the city, they will be killed by disease and famine (v. 18).
  - C. No one will take pity on those who refuse to turn from their sins (15:5-9).
    1. God is the One who brings judgment upon them (6-8).
    2. Although she has 7 sons, the sun will set on her while it is still day (v. 9). Her sorrow will be premature.
- II) Those who refuse to turn from their sins may acknowledge their sin, but there is no repentance (14:7-9; 19-22).

- A. Although God is the hope of Israel, He will not help those who refuse to turn from their sin (v. 7-9).
    - 1. Jeremiah is not referring to himself (notice the plural pronouns). In fact, Jeremiah is told to not even pray for these people because God does not intend to help (v. 11-12).
    - 2. There is an acknowledgment of sin, but no repentance or request for forgiveness (v. 7).
  - B. Although God is a covenant keeping God, He will not help those who refuse to turn from their sin (v. 19-22).
    - 1. God's judgment is intended to cause us to reflect on our sins (v. 19-20).
    - 2. It is true that God made a covenant with the people (Mosaic), yet the people had broken God's covenant (cf. 11:10).
- III) Those who refuse to turn from their sins should be left alone to their own destruction (14:10-16; 15:1-4).
- A. Don't even waste your time praying for them, they would rather hear from the false prophets (14:10-16).
    - 1. It seems odd that we should not pray for those who are continuing in their rebellion against God (10-11). But the Apostle Paul concludes that we should not even eat with those who living in unrepentant sin (1 Cor. 5:11-13).
    - 2. These people are accountable to God for refusing to hear the true prophets and instead listening to the false prophets (13-16).
  - B. Even Moses and Samuel cannot rescue these people from certain doom (15:1-4).
    - 1. What a beautiful reminder of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Moses and Samuel were the pinnacle, yet they were unable to justify the wicked.

## **Text: Jeremiah 15:10-21**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) In the midst of conflict take delight in God's words (v. 10-21).
  - A. Are there valid reasons why your adversaries are attacking you?
    - 1. As a spiritual leader Jeremiah was careful not to cause unnecessary conflict (v. 10b). Lending and borrowing money is a common cause of conflict, which is why

Jeremiah refrained from it (cf. 1 Sam. 12:1-4).

2. Do not be surprised at conflict in a local church. Paul and Peter dealt with it (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11-12; 2 Cor. 2:1-5; Phil. 1:12-18; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Pet. 4:16-17)! In 2 Timothy 3, it appears as though Paul must be dealing with wicked men within the church. These wicked men are called “imposters” (2 Tim. 3:13)—they claim to be Christians but are not.
- B. In the midst of the conflict remember that God is at work (v. 11-14).
1. Verses 11-14 is a difficult section to interpret, but one thing is certain—God is the One acting. “I will” occurs 4 times in these verses. God is at work in the midst of conflict.
  2. Verse 11 begins with an oath—God will act. Jeremiah felt constrained because of evildoers. Perhaps he was imprisoned (cf. Jer. 37:18) or thrown into a pit (cf. Jer. 38:6). God promised that He would free him. Take comfort. God is at work.
  3. Not only is God acting, but He is the only One who can. Who else could smash iron or bronze (v. 12; cf. Ps. 2:9)? The iron from the north is clearly referring to Babylon. Ultimately, what Israel was saying by their actions was that they could smash this “iron from the north”.
  4. God is at work not only protecting the innocent (v. 11), but also crushing His enemies (v. 13-14).
- C. Take delight in His words because He knows all things (v. 15-18).
1. Even though we know that God knows all things, it helps to remind ourselves that He knows our situation (v. 15). 5 times in v. 15 Jeremiah uses the first person pronoun (I or me).
  2. What were the words that caused Jeremiah to respond with joy—that he had been called by God’s name (v. 16). Jeremiah was hand-picked by God and it caused his heart to rejoice.
  3. If you refuse to stand in the way with sinners then you may find yourself all alone—and that’s ok (v. 17-18; cf. Ps. 2:1). Jeremiah was filled with anger over the people’s sins. Because of this, he could not enjoy their fellowship.
- D. In the midst of conflict remember to repent of your own sins (v. 19-21).
1. God is clearly speaking to Jeremiah (note the singular pronoun “you”). Jeremiah has been a faithful mouthpiece for God throughout the book of Jeremiah, yet God calls him to repentance. Even though you are “in the right” you must keep short



accounts with God.

2. Finally, God gives Jeremiah the hope of physical deliverance that he has been desperately looking for (v. 20-21). They will not prevail over him.

## **Text: Jeremiah 16:1-21**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Under the Mosaic Covenant, the consequences of disobedience were severe (v. 1-13).
  - A. Jeremiah's celibacy was a lifelike picture of the isolation and sorrow that come from disobedience (v. 1-9).
    1. This passage likely occurs in Jeremiah's teenage years. In the OT celibacy is extremely rare—marriage was assumed.
    2. God often uses pictures to drive home a point. Hosea married an immoral woman in order to picture how Israel had forsaken God. Ezekiel's response to the death of his wife was a picture of how Israel would respond when God takes away the desire of her eyes—they wouldn't even weep (Ez. 24:15-27).
    3. Jeremiah's celibacy was a picture that God would remove rejoicing from the land (v. 2; cf. v. 9). People buy and sell property without even a hint of celebration, but marriage brings a feast (v. 9). We pause our busy lives to celebrate the birth of children and anniversaries. Yet, Jeremiah pictured the loneliness and sadness that often accompanies celibacy.
    4. Not only was Jeremiah isolated in celibacy, but he could not even attend funerals (v. 5, 7-8)— even though death would be common (v. 4, 6).
  - B. Those who face the consequences for their sins will be surprised (v. 10-13).
    1. The people have been living in rebellion against God, yet they are stunned when God actually judges them for their sins (v. 10). It's as though they do not think that God would ever judge sin.
    2. It's no different today. The most common response I receive from unsaved people is "how can a loving God send people to hell?". The answer is simple, God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8).
    3. God's patience with sinners can run out. God delayed His judgment on the

Amorites because of His patience, but eventually they faced God's judgment (Gen. 15:16; cf. Luke 13:6-9).

4. Ultimately, both they and their parents had repeatedly sinned against God (v. 11-13).
- C. God's power and might will be made known when He restores Israel back to her land (v. 14-21).
1. Her deliverance will be so great, that the Exodus out of Egypt will pale in comparison (v. 14-15).
  2. God pictures Israel's captors as fishermen and hunters (v. 16). Some have tried to interpret this as her restoration (i.e. "fishers of men") but Jeremiah is using it in a negative sense (v. 17-18; cf. Lam. 4:18-19).
  3. What a waste (v. 19b-20)! Man said, "let us make god" (compare Gen. 1:26 with Jer. 16:20). It's not even possible.
  4. When God restores His people, they will know His power and might (cf. Deut. 3:24).

**Conclusion:** The book of Jeremiah naturally draws us to anticipate a better covenant. The climax comes in Jer. 31:27-34 with the New Covenant!

## **Text: Jeremiah 17:1-27**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Those who trust in the flesh are cursed (v. 1-11).
  - A. Because sin is permanent (1-2).
    1. Judah's sin is not written with pen and paper, but rather, with an iron stylus on a hard heart. Just like a gravestone is meant to be permanent, so our sin is permanently written on our hearts (v. 1).
    2. There are 2 options for verse 2, but both point to the same idea—the permanence of sin. As a parent remembers his children, so he remembers his idols (NASB). A parent does not forget his children. The second option is that "their children remember their altars" (KJV). The idea here is that even the children cannot forget the altars—again permanence.
  - B. Because judgment is forever (v. 3-4).

1. Because of her sin, God gives over her inheritance to the nations (v. 3-4). But, in a sense, Judah let go of her inheritance in order to keep her sin (v. 4).
  2. God's anger is like a fire that has been kindled (v. 4). But unlike a campfire that burns for a few hours and smolders, God's anger will burn forever.
- C. What does the cursed man look like (v. 5-8)?
1. He trusts in his own strength instead of trusting in the Lord (v. 5).
  2. He's like a bush in the desert that withers (v. 6). He does not see the blessing of the Lord.
  3. The word "planted" can also be translated as "transplanted" (cf. Ezek. 17:22). The bush in the desert was transplanted by a stream. This is a picture of salvation. Prior to God's work of regeneration in our hearts, we were a bush in a desert—withered and dead. But then, God transplanted the withered bush by a stream and gave it life (v. 7-8).
- D. Because our heart is deceitful (v. 9-11).
1. There is nothing more deceitful than man's heart (v. 9). Jeremiah is referring to the unregenerate person—their heart has an incurable disease.
  2. God alone judges—and each person comes up short (v. 10). This is illustrated by the partridge brooding over eggs that she did not lay (v. 11). Eventually those chicks will leave her and she will be a fool. Those who trust in their deceptive heart will find themselves tricked by it.
- II) Those who trust in the Lord will be blessed (v. 7-8, 12-18).
- A. Because He is our hope and refuge (v. 12-18).
1. His throne has been from the beginning (v. 12) and those who hope in Him will not be put to shame (v. 13).
  2. The heart has an incurable disease and Christ alone can heal it (v. 14).
  3. The Day of the Lord will come when it is time (v. 15-17). And He will put all those to shame who have opposed Him (v. 18).
- III) Those who disregard God's Word will face His wrath (v. 19-27).
- A. God's judgment is just (v. 19-27).
1. Jeremiah warned all those who came through the gate to not break God's command for the sabbath (v. 19-23; cf. Ex. 31:13-17).

2. They refused to listen attentively to God's Word and therefore would not see God's blessing (v. 24-27).

## **Text: Jeremiah 18:1-23**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** In the illustration of the potter and the clay, we have a stunning and brilliant display of the sovereignty of God alongside the free will of man. The potter can either destroy the vessel or shape it into a pot. The stunning part is that the clay has something to do with what the Potter does with it (v. 7-10). The goal of this passage is not to define how these two seemingly contradicting ideas work together; but rather, to remind us to humbly submit under the Potter's hand!

- I) When the clay disregards the hand of the potter, it will be crushed and remade (v. 1-12).
  - A. The potter and clay illustration was direct revelation (v. 1-4).
    1. God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house and He would speak to him. The illustration and the application came directly from God (v. 5). Jeremiah did not come up with this message on his own.
    2. This passage does not give us liberty to find specific revelation for something in our lives today.
  - B. Even though the potter intended to make one vessel with the clay; if the clay is not pliable, he will crush it and make another vessel with the clay (v. 5-12).
    1. Not only is Israel like clay in the potter's hand, but all the nations are in His hand (v. 6-9).
    2. Jonah the prophet understood this. He knew that if the Ninevites would repent, then God would not destroy them (Jonah 4:2).
    3. How do you think Israel would respond? Hopeless (v. 12)! They would rather continue in their sin and face the consequences than repent. Is that how you respond when confronted with your sin?
- II) Has anyone ever heard of a covenant people forsaking their covenant (v. 13-17).
  - A. Israel broke her covenant relationship with God (v. 13-17; cf. Jer. 31:32).

1. God calls her “the virgin of Israel” referring to her covenant relationship with God (v. 13). She was betrothed to Him.
  2. Nature is consistent (v. 14-15). The mountains of Lebanon always have snow. The waters always gush forth from a spring. Yet, God’s covenant people have forgotten the covenant relationship they have with God.
  3. When you continue in your sin, you are acting just like Israel—she was betrothed to God and yet was worshipping other gods (v. 15).
  4. Just like the world knows how a Christian ought to behave, so the surrounding nations knew how covenant Israel should respond (v. 16). Therefore, God must punish her disobedience (v. 17).
- III) Those who disregard God’s Word hate God’s prophet (v. 18-23).
- A. They devise plans against God and His servants (v. 18).
    1. They attempted to use religious arguments (v. 18). For example, wouldn’t the priests know the Law? Yet, they were only hearing what they wanted to hear.
  - B. How does God’s servant respond (v. 19-23).
    1. Jeremiah had labored to teach these people the Word, yet they responded in aggression towards him (v. 20).
    2. Is it right to pray for the destruction of the wicked? Jeremiah certainly did (v. 21-23). First, Jeremiah prayed that God’s wrath would be turned away from these people (v. 20). But since they continued in their rebellion against God, destruction was the only answer.

## **Text: Jeremiah 19:1-20:6**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Under the Mosaic Covenant, God will crush those who refuse to obey His Word (19:1-15).
  - A. When God addresses the sins of a people, He starts with the leaders (v. 1-2) and then addresses everyone (v. 14-15).
    1. This message was first delivered to the elders and senior priests (v. 1). Jeremiah did not begin by preaching this message in the temple, but rather, he took the leaders outside the city to deliver the message (v. 2).
    2. Then he went to the court of the Lord’s house and preached to everyone (v. 14-

15).

3. God often deals with the leaders first. Men, how are you leading your family?

B. When God finally brings the curse of the Law to bear, the judgment will be severe (v. 3-9).

1. Thankfully, we participate in the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant without facing the curse because Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law (cf. Gal. 3:10-14).

2. How bad will the judgment be? Their ears will tingle when they hear how bad the judgment will be (v. 3)!

3. The judgment will be severe because they deserve it. They were sacrificing their children to the gods (v. 5). They would lay the infant on the burning hands of a god. The baby would then roll into the fires and be consumed. Since they did this wickedness, God would let *their* dead carcasses be eaten by the birds and wild beasts (v. 6-7). In addition, God will make them eat the flesh of their children as they are under siege from Babylon (v. 9).

4. The judgment will be so severe that even the surrounding nations will be astonished (v. 8).

C. Not only did Jeremiah preach the message, but God wanted them to visually see what He was planning to do (v. 10-13).

1. This visual aid was not Jeremiah's idea (v. 1, 10). God, in His mercy, not only gave them the message preached, but also a visual aid showing them what He was going to do.

2. They broke the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Jer. 11:10; 14:21; 31:32), therefore, God would shatter them like a clay pot.

II) When a person refuses to obey God's Word, they also hate God's messenger (20:1-6).

A. Instead of leaving vengeance to God, they take vengeance for themselves (v. 1-2; cf. Rom. 12:19).

1. Pashhur had Jeremiah beaten and then thrown into the stocks. The word for stocks is a Hebrew word that means "turn" or "crooked". It may refer to a form of torture imposed on Jeremiah.

2. Pashhur probably thought that this torture would silence Jeremiah, but nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, Jeremiah could not be silenced (v. 9).

- B. God takes notice of the wicked and will crush them (v. 3-6).
  - 1. God changed Pashhur's name as a sign. His new name meant terror on every side—which is exactly what Pashhur would see (v. 3-4).
  - 2. No one in his family would be spared because they believed the lies (v. 5-6).

**Conclusion:** Those who disregarded God's Word under the Mosaic Covenant faced *severe* consequences. Since we are under the New Covenant, Christ has paid the price for our sin. But there is discipline for those who continue in their sin (Heb. 12:4-11). God will deal with you as a father deals with his son. Listen carefully to God's Word and submit under it.

## **Text: Jeremiah 20:7-18**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** In this passage, we have a rare glimpse into the raw emotions of a godly man in despair. At one moment he feels as though God has *seduced* him (7). But in the next moment, he finds hope in God (13). At one moment, God is a champion in his corner (11). Then, in the next moment, he curses the day of his birth (14). Has Jeremiah gone too far?

- I) In the midst of despair, God rescues His servants (7-18).
  - A. In the midst of despair, you may feel betrayed by God (7).
    - 1. The word "deceived" is commonly used to refer to a person being seduced. (cf. Ex. 22:16; Jud. 16:5). In the midst of despair, Jeremiah felt like God tricked him. Jeremiah thought that the people would respond to the message in repentance, but instead, they mocked him (cf. Jer. 1:19).
    - 2. Micaiah, the prophet, used this word to describe what God did to King Ahab (1 Kings 22:20). God used the 400 prophets to trick Ahab into going to battle.
    - 3. Can you relate to Jeremiah (job 9:16-19)? Have you felt like God has not treated you like you deserve to be treated? Call out to Him. He rescues His servants!
  - B. In the midst of despair, you may want to quit (v. 8-10).
    - 1. Jeremiah desperately wanted to quit (9). He wanted to remain silent, because every time he spoke of violence and destruction, he faced violence and destruction (8). God renamed Pashhur "terror on every side" (3), yet everyone was calling him "terror on every side" (10). People were eagerly waiting for his failure.

2. Yet, God's words burned in his soul like a fire (9). He could not be silent! Do not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:1, 7-12)!
- C. In the midst of despair, find refuge in the Lord (11-13).
1. He is a warrior who is with us (11). This is the only time this Hebrew word is used to describe God. Typically, this word is used to describe the wicked nations (15:21). Why does Jeremiah use this word to describe God? He wants God to fight his enemies like they have been fighting him.
  2. The wording in verse 11 is similar to the idea found in Psalm 78:65-66. God brought Israel into the holy land (Ps. 78:54), yet they rebelled against Him (Ps. 78:56). Then the Lord became a warrior against them and put on them an everlasting reproach (Ps. 78:65:66). Although the Hebrew words for "warrior" and "everlasting reproach" are different, the idea is the same.
  3. Although Jeremiah would not take vengeance into his own hands, he did desire to see God mete out vengeance on his enemies (12; cf. 11:20).
  4. Jeremiah was able to sing praise to the Lord, because he was confident in his deliverance (13).
  5. Despair is not unusual—even for the righteous! In the midst of despair, remind yourself that God delivers the righteous.
- D. In the midst of despair, you may wish that you had never been born (14-18).
1. Although these verses may sound odd, both Job (Job 3:1-4) and Jeremiah felt this way. Both of these men are upright men (Job 1:8), yet they wished they had not been born.
  2. If you find yourself in the grips of despair like Jeremiah with no where to turn, Remind yourself of your dread champion who is able to deliver you!

## **Text: Jeremiah 21:1-14**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Those who continue in their stubbornness should not expect blessings from God (1-14).
  - A. Even though God warns of judgment, those who continue in their stubbornness expect God to be merciful (1-2).
    1. Israel's history is filled with the stories of God's wonderful acts on their behalf—



the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the sun standing still. In fact, God had defeated the massive Assyrian army, so why wouldn't God would work again on their behalf (2 Kings 19:32-37)?

2. These people cannot possibly be serious, can they? Were they so delusional that they didn't understand? The heart is deceitful—more deceitful than anything else (Jer. 17:9). Their heart tricked them into thinking that they deserved another chance.
  3. Although those under the New Covenant have been given a new heart (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26), we still deceive ourselves (James 1:22, 26). James is writing to “beloved brothers” (cf. James 1:19).
  4. The only way to avoid being deceived by your own heart is by using the Word as a mirror in your life (James 1:23-25). We ought to pause regularly and ask, “what does God's Word say about this?”.
- B. God Himself will fight against those who continue in their stubbornness (3-7).
1. This phrase “to turn back the weapons” is not used elsewhere in the OT (4). But it seems to refer to their own weapons being used against them.
  2. God repeatedly takes credit for bringing judgment upon them (5, 6, 7, 10).
  3. Because the Israelites were under the Mosaic Covenant, God would show no pity (7). They broke His covenant (Jer. 11:10; 31:32), therefore, they will face His wrath.
  4. What about us? Under the New Covenant, Christ Jesus satisfied the righteous anger of God (Rom. 5:9). This is called “propitiation”. Propitiation is pictured in the OT by Moses and the children of Israel (Num. 16:41-50).
- C. God, in His mercy, offered one final escape (8-10).
1. Continuing to live in the land was no longer an option. Everyone who stayed would die (8-9). Yet, God offered an option for life instead of death—surrender to the Babylonian army. This option required faith.
  2. The people who died in the city, died because they did not believe. They would rather trust in the walls of the city than trust that God would preserve their life when they surrendered to Babylon.
- D. God demands justice—even for Davidic rulers (11-12).
1. God's judgment was upon them because of their complete disregard for justice.

The Kings of David allowed the wicked to continue to oppress (12). Therefore, God will pour out His wrath upon them.

2. Jesus, son of David, is the fulfillment of the Davidic King who would rule with justice (cf. Is. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6).
- E. God's judgment upon them will be just (13-14).
1. Ultimately, their stubbornness is a result of their pride—"who will come down against us?" (13). If you are continuing in your sin, it is because of your pride. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:5-6)
  2. When God deals with sin, He is always just (14). Even in sending people to hell, He is just. Your only hope is Christ.

## **Text: Jeremiah 22:1-30**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The failure of the Davidic Kings points to the need for a son of David to fulfill what these kings could not do—obey the Mosaic Covenant (22:1-23:8).
  - A. These Davidic Kings could not and did not obey the Mosaic Covenant (22:1-9).
    1. The Mosaic Law was summarized by Christ as love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:34-40). This is exactly what the Davidic Kings and the children of Israel failed to do (3, 9).
    2. As the covenant people of God, there were blessings for obedience (4) and curses for disobedience (5-7). God was going to take their beautiful land and make it a wilderness (6).
    3. Even though Jeremiah primarily preached to Israel, he was actually a prophet to the nations (1:5). As the nations would pass by Israel (Israel was on a common trade route), they would observe what God did to this city (8). As we observe what God did to this city, let us take notice. God destroyed their city because they forsook the covenant they had with God.
    4. Although you are not under the Mosaic Covenant, do you take seriously your covenant with God?
  - B. The curses of the Mosaic Covenant would fall on these covenant breakers (10-30).

1. King Shallum would be expelled from the land never to return (11-12). One of the consequences of breaking the Mosaic Covenant was that the people and their king would be expelled from the land (cf. Deut. 28:36).
2. King Jehoiakim was cheating laborers out of their wages—clearly breaking the Mosaic Covenant (13-19). Therefore, no one would mourn his death and he would be buried like a donkey—just thrown out of the city gates (18-19). This is exactly what God said He would do to those who broke the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Deut. 28:26).
3. God intended to deal with them in their prosperity—there was no need for consequences (20-23), but they refused to listen. God will get your attention. He will use discipline if He must.
4. King Coniah and his children would be expelled from the land never to return (24-30). One of the consequences of breaking the Mosaic Covenant was that their children would be expelled from the land (cf. Deut. 28:32). God simply brought the consequences to bear on these covenant breakers.

**Conclusion:** We like to distance ourselves from the children of Israel—they were obstinate people who continued to break the Mosaic Covenant. The truth is, that even though we are under the New Covenant and have the Holy Spirit working in us, we are often obstinate. We know God’s Word, yet we disregard it. We know that we ought to be putting sin to death in our lives, yet we continue in our sin.

Jeremiah ends this chapter with the simple words—“hear the word of the Lord”. Will you continue in your sin or will you hear the word of the Lord this week?

## **Text: Jeremiah 23:1-8**

**Theme:** The Lord of hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** “Hear the word of the Lord”—that was Jeremiah’s introduction (22:1-2). His sermon was directed towards the king. “Do justice and righteousness.” Yet, these kings failed. In fact, chapter 22 is a description of how these kings failed to do justice. They broke the Mosaic Covenant (22:9).

Would the line of David fail? Would there ever be a righteous branch of David? Yes! Jesus, the

son of David would rule righteously and do justice in the land. Jesus accomplished what no other son of David could do—He obeyed perfectly!

- I) The failure of the Davidic Kings points to the need for a righteous son of David (1-8).
  - A. The shepherds of Israel should have gathered the sheep, but instead they scattered the sheep (23:1-2).
    - 1. The warning is grave—"woe". Christ uses a similar warning when He addresses the religious leaders (cf. Mat. 23:23-33). Christ ends His warning by asking them, "how will you escape the sentence of hell?"
    - 2. The shepherd metaphor was a reminder that a good shepherd sacrificed himself for the sheep (cf. 1 Sam. 17:34-35). A hireling, on the other hand, leaves the sheep when danger comes (cf. John 10:10-15).
  - B. Christ will gather the remnant of His flock and place good shepherds over them (23:3-4).
    - 1. This flock belongs to God! Notice the repeated use of the word "my" in the first 3 verses.
    - 2. When does the Lord raise up shepherds to tend His flock? After the resurrection, Jesus Christ spoke to Peter and told him to tend my sheep (cf. John 21:15-17).
    - 3. Peter exhorts the pastors of the churches to "shepherd the flock of God" (1 Pet. 5:1-2). Pastors shepherding God's flock is the fulfillment of Jeremiah 23:4.
  - C. Christ is the righteous branch from the stump of David (5-8).
    - 1. Jeremiah is using the same idea found in Isaiah 11:1. David's lineage is pictured as a tree that has been cut down, yet still alive. Then a shoot springs up from the stump. Jesus Christ is that shoot.
    - 2. This righteous branch did what the other Davidic kings failed to do. He did justice and righteousness in the land (5). The other kings broke the Mosaic Covenant (22:9), whereas, Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Mat. 5:17).
    - 3. His name is called "the Lord our righteousness" (6). The Lord's name is set in contrast to Zedekiah which means "my righteous One is the Lord".
    - 4. This righteous son of David will bring restoration. This restoration will be greater than the exodus out of Egypt (7).

## **Text: Jeremiah 23:9-40**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God's words are holy (9-40; note 9b).
  - A. To disregard God's holy word is to bring calamity (9-12).
    1. Jeremiah had a right view of the holiness of God and His words. When he thought about the wickedness of the prophets around him, he was shaking in his boots (9-10).
    2. Do you not tremble in God's presence (5:22)? For Jeremiah, to fear the Lord is to tremble in His presence.
    3. The prophets and priests were the religious leaders, yet they had polluted the land. They were being immoral—even in God's house (11). Therefore, God would bring calamity upon them (12).
  - B. When the prophets disregard God's word they lead others astray (13-15).
    1. In Samaria, the prophets were prophesying by Baal. They were saying, "thus saith Baal" and the people were being lead astray (13).
    2. In Jerusalem, the prophets were claiming to prophesy for God (cf. 16-17). Yet, their lives were godless and their words were false (14).
    3. Because of the prophets, the people would not turn from their sins (14-15). In fact, the prophets actually strengthen the hands of the wicked (14). Therefore, God must judge them (15).
  - C. Stop listening to the words of the false prophets (16-22).
    1. Up to this point, Jeremiah has been speaking to the prophets, but now he turns his attention to the listeners (16). Our tendency is to listen to those who tell us what we want to hear (17). Why were they listening to these false prophets? Because they despise God's words (17).
    2. These prophets were not getting their message from God (18). God's message was a message of judgment (19-20). In fact, God didn't even send these prophets, yet they spoke (21).
    3. How do you know if someone is speaking God's words? Do they call on you to turn from your sin or do they excuse your sin (22).

- D. God's words cause real change (23-32).
1. Why are His words so powerful? Because He is both near and far (23). Because no one can hide Himself from God (24). Because God fills the heavens and the earth (24).
  2. The dreams of the prophets are like straw, whereas, God's Word is like grain—it has actual profit (25-28).
  3. How is God's Word like fire (29)? In Jeremiah 20:9, God's Word is like a fire burning in Jeremiah's bosom—He must speak God's Words. In contrast, the prophets lack passion. When they speak the people forget God (27).
  4. How is God's Word like a hammer that breaks the rock (29)? God's Word is effective (cf. Is. 55:10-11). It brings about real heart change. In contrast, the false prophets do not benefit the people in the slightest (32).
- E. God will bring everlasting reproach on those who falsely claim to speak God's Word (33-40).
1. These false teachers appear to be mocking Jeremiah when they ask him, "what is the oracle of the Lord?" (33). The word "oracle" and "burden" are the same Hebrew word. Jeremiah is responding in a pun—"your words are the burden" (36).
  2. God's Word is not to be trifled with. Those who trifle with His words will be humiliated (40).
  3. What importance do you place on God's Words? You may not be like these false prophets who falsely claim to speak for God, but do you carefully listen to God's Words?

## **Text: Jeremiah 24:1-10**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God will make for Himself a people who have a heart to know Him (1-10; specifically v. 7).
- A. During the bleakest moments in Israel's history, God was not silent (1-3).
1. The best of the people had been taken captive—the leaders and the skilled craftsmen (1). The situation seemed hopeless.
  2. We may find ourselves discouraged as we look around us. Our nation is

increasingly becoming hostile towards God. Remind yourself that God is working in the bleakest of situations to make a people for Himself.

3. Although the baskets of figs are the central point of the vision, the baskets were *at* the temple (1). The temple is where God's people could expect to get a message from God. In fact, Jeremiah preached at the temple on several occasions (7:2; 26:2). In the NT, the church is the pillar of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
- B. The good figs were the exiles that God chose to be a people for Himself (4-7).
1. The good figs were *very good* (2-3). Jeremiah is alluding back to Genesis 1:31 when God looked at all of His creation and it was *very good*. God is restoring His creation.
  2. God chose for Himself the ones who had been exiled to Babylon (5). From our human standpoint, this makes no sense. Why wouldn't He choose for Himself those who were left in Jerusalem? Because God moves in a mysterious way.
  3. God's declaration that they will be His people and He will be their God is found frequently in the book of Jeremiah (7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1; 31:33; 32:38). In order for God to make a people for Himself, He must change their hearts.
  4. Daniel is an example of those who were exiled to Babylon. God made Daniel and His friends a people for Himself. In fact, Daniel repeatedly risked his life to follow God (Daniel 1:8; 3:16-18; 6:10-13)
- C. The bad figs were the ones left in Jerusalem that God abandoned (8-10).
1. The bad figs were utterly worthless (8)! They could not be eaten. In fact, the text says that God abandoned them (8).
  2. Not only does God abandon them, but He actually uses them as an example to the nations (9). They are a proverb. This is how God deals with those whom He has rejected.
  3. Even though they dwelled in the land, God was going to send destruction to them (10).

**Conclusion:** God is making a people for Himself. In the vision that Jeremiah had, there was only two baskets of figs—the good figs and the bad figs. We tend to make a third category of people—the “ok” figs. This is not God's viewpoint. There are only two groups—a people He is making for Himself and those whom He has abandoned. Hebrews 4:1-2, 7 reminds us that today is the day. Do not harden your heart in rebellion against God.

## Text: Jeremiah 25:1-38

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God's Word was faithfully preached, yet the people would not listen (1-38).
  - A. For 23 years Jeremiah preached God's word (1-3).
    1. Jeremiah did not exclude anyone. 3 times this passage says "all the people/inhabitants" (1-2).
    2. The message was not just given once, but over and over (3).
  - B. Jeremiah was not the only prophet to preach to Judah, God had sent many (4-5).
    1. In fact, Uriah, Huldah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk were all prophets in Judah during Jeremiah's lifetime.
    2. God has always raised up people to proclaim His words. Even today, there are faithful preachers of God's word scattered all over this city.
  - C. The people disregarded God's word by not giving the land rest (6-14)
    1. The land belonged to God (Lev. 25:23) and He required that the land have a sabbath rest every 7 years (Lev. 25:3-4). If they failed to give the land a sabbath rest, then God would expel them from the land so that the land would get the rest (Lev. 26:34).
    2. Although Jeremiah does not explicit point out the sabbath rest for the land, 2 Chronicles 36:20-23 does. Daniel also observed Jeremiah's words and determined when the 70 years would be finished (Daniel 9:2).
    3. God would send His servant, Nebuchadnezzar, to pour out His wrath upon Judah (9-11). It should not strike us as odd that Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant. Cyrus, King of Persia, was called "My shepherd" and "His anointed" by Isaiah (Is. 44:28; 45:1). These wicked rulers would act on God's behalf to pour out His wrath.
  - D. The nations are warned but continue on in rebellion against God (15-38; cf. Rom. 3:19).
    1. Jeremiah is told to bring a cup of wine and command the kings to drink from it (15-29). Some have argued that Jeremiah did not literally do this, but God tells Jeremiah what to do if the king refuses to drink (28). Also, chapters 46-51 are the messages he delivered to the nations in in this chapter (about half of the nations listed are in chapters 46-51).



2. Notice how the Ninevites responded to the message that Jonah gave (Jonah 3:3-9). The Ninevites heard the message and turned from their sin.
3. The destruction will be so great that the dead will not be buried or even lamented (33).
4. God is described as a lion (30, 38). He will utterly destroy all those who have disregarded His words.

**Conclusion:** What response is God looking for? In Jeremiah 24:7, God will give the exiles a new heart to know Him. This new heart is a heart that desires to hear what God has to say about a matter. Daniel, one of the exiles reveals what this heart looks like. Daniel had received a vision from God (Daniel 10:1), but God did not reveal to Him the interpretation for 21 days. During this time, Daniel refused to eat tasty food or drink wine until God revealed to him the interpretation (10:2-3). God had given Daniel a heart to hear His words.

## **Text: Jeremiah 26:1-24**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Notice the shift in audience. For most of the book the Israelites are the primary audience (Jeremiah is preaching to Israel). In chapter 26, Jeremiah is the primary audience (God or Israel is speaking to Jeremiah; cf. 2, 4, 8-9). Whenever we apply a passage of scripture we must start with the original audience—in this case Jeremiah. Because Jeremiah is similar to us (i.e. given a new heart to obey God), we can apply this passage directly to our lives.

- l) Even though many will not listen, God requires His servants to give all His words regardless of the cost (1-24).
  - A. Do not omit a word (2, 4-8).
    1. When God spoke to Samuel about the impending judgment for Eli's children, Eli told Samuel to not hide any of God's words from him (1 Sam. 3:10-18).
    2. Likewise, we have a similar responsibility. How do you share the Gospel with people? Are you ashamed to point out the first 3 chapters of Romans? Mankind is living in rebellion against God and is in desperate need of a Savior. God's command to Jeremiah has not changed. You are called to give the Good News to people without omitting anything.
  - B. Perhaps they will listen (3, 8-11).

1. Their response is out of your control. It's likely that the message will be completely rejected, just like it was for Jeremiah (8-9). In fact, they wanted to kill him after they heard the message.
- C. When you preach all God's words, there is no need to defend yourself (12-15).
1. When you are confident that you have faithfully given all of God's words, there is no need to defend yourself. Paul told Timothy that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution". In the book of Acts, Stephen willingly gave up his life (Acts 7:54-60).
  2. Polycarp, the early church martyr said, "you threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."
  3. Jeremiah's message of judgement was also a message of hope (13).
  4. Jeremiah appealed to their conscience—"do with me as is good and right in your sight" (15). Our tendency is to take matters into our own hands.
- D. Some will face no persecution for proclaiming God's words, while others will die (16-24).
1. Micah's prophesy is almost identical to Jeremiah's, yet the king responded in repentance (18-19). In fact, King Hezekiah began to fear the Lord.
  2. Uriah's prophesy about the city, which was the same as Jeremiah's and Micah's message, resulted in death (20-23).
  3. In Jeremiah's case, God protected him. But notice the response from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were being threatened by the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:16-18).

## **Text: Jeremiah 27:1-22**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Instead of listening to God through His word, we are eager to hear from those who agree with our viewpoints. Jeremiah addresses one viewpoint—submitting to authority—where God has spoken clearly, yet we eagerly listen until we find someone who agrees with us. The NT clearly teaches that every one of us is to submit to our governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17), yet we disregard God's word.

- I) God has called all people to humbly serve their rulers (1-22).
  - A. The nations were commanded to put on the yoke and serve Babylon (2-3).
    - 1. Chapter 27 occurs about 2 years after Babylon had already begun to sack Jerusalem (597 BC). Babylon was experiencing internal unrest (595 BC). Perhaps the surrounding nations who were gathered in Jerusalem were attempting to overthrow Babylon.
    - 2. In this context, Jeremiah warns the ambassadors of these 5 kings by using a picture—a yoke. What does it look like to serve a ruler? To willingly put your neck in the yoke to pull a plow.
  - B. The Creator of all things is the One who has put all rulers on the throne (4-7).
    - 1. As Creator, He has every right to install whomever He chooses. When we reject our earthly rulers, we are rejecting God's rule over us (cf. Rom. 13:1-2).
    - 2. The only exception to obeying our authorities, is when they are telling us to do something that is clearly against God's word (cf. Acts 5:27-29). We must firmly, but graciously, obey God in those rare examples.
    - 3. Even the wild animals were given to Nebuchadnezzar (6). We may not like the reach of our government, but we must remember that God is the One who has appointed rulers. When we resist our rulers, we are actually resisting God (cf. Rom. 13:2).
    - 4. God sets up rulers and takes them down in His own time (7). Ultimately, God sets up His own Son to have an everlasting dominion which will not pass away (cf. Dan. 7:13-14).
  - C. Even though false prophets continue to claim to speak for God, God has already spoken (8-22).
    - 1. God had already spoken through Jeremiah the prophet (12), yet the people did not want to hear him. Instead, they listened to the prophets who had ulterior motives (10).
    - 2. Stop giving your ear to these false prophets who claim to be speaking for God (16-17). Instead, take notice when their words are not fulfilled (18-22).

**Conclusion:** God has spoken clearly, yet we do not like what He has said. We search the internet for someone who agrees with our viewpoint. Instead, let us study what God has said.

And when we come across passages that do not fit into our viewpoint, let us be quick to disregard our viewpoint when it contradicts God's word.

## **Text: Jeremiah 28:1-17**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Special revelation climaxed at Jesus and finished at the close of the NT canon. But during the time of Jeremiah, special revelation happened through dreams and visions. So, from Jeremiah's perspective, it was possible that Hananiah had received a word from God. For example, Jonah proclaimed that in 40 days Nineveh will be overthrown. Yet, God was gracious to Nineveh. So, when we see Jeremiah's response to Hananiah, let us remember that revelation was not confined to the written word at that time. Yet, Hananiah's message contradicted what God had already said.

- I) You can respond graciously even when others are undermining you (1-17).
  - A. Hananiah's message was a direct contradiction from Jeremiah's message (1-4; cf. 27:9-11, 16).
    1. Hananiah's message was given in the temple in front of the priests and the people. This was not a private conversation. In fact, it was probably intended to humiliate Jeremiah.
    2. Jeremiah warned that false prophets would lie and say that the vessels would shortly come back to the temple (27:16). Yet, Hananiah specifically prophesied that the vessels of the temple would return soon (3).
  - B. Jeremiah's response demonstrated that his desire was for their restoration not their destruction (5-9).
    1. Jeremiah's response seems odd until we recognize that he is not desiring vengeance (6). He wants blessing on these people not judgment.
    2. Often, we desire to see God's judgment poured out on the wicked. For example, Jonah longed to see God's wrath poured out on the Ninevites (Jonah 4:2-11). Jonah had more compassion on the plant than he did on the Ninevites. When the Samaritans did not receive Jesus, James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume them (Luke 9:52-54).
    3. In Romans 12:18-21, Paul reminds us that vengeance belongs to the Lord.

Instead of taking vengeance into your own hands, Let God take care of it, it belongs to Him anyway.

4. Even though Jeremiah wanted restoration for Jerusalem, he knew that the prophets of old were continually warning the people of God's judgment (7-9).
- C. Again, Hananiah's message was a direct contradiction from Jeremiah's message (10-17).
1. Hananiah's message was given in front of all the people, again (10). But notice Jeremiah's response—he simply went his way (11).
  2. Jeremiah was not afraid of Hananiah. When God spoke to him, he had no problem sharing God's message of judgment. But Jeremiah wanted to make sure to speak only what God said.
  3. No one likes to think about God's judgment. In fact, Hananiah spent his energy telling people that God would not deal with their rebellion. Yet, God must deal with sin because of His holiness.

## **Text: Jeremiah 29:1-32**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God has called His covenant people to humbly serve their rulers (1-9; 21-32; cf. Rom. 13:1-2, 1 Pet. 2:13-17).
  - A. Both those living in Jerusalem (Jer. 27 & 28) and those who were exiled were told to humbly serve their rulers (1-4).
    1. In chapters 27 and 28, Jeremiah exhorted those living in Jerusalem to humbly serve their rulers. But what about those who were already exiled? Chapter 29 is a series of letters between Jeremiah and the exiles where he exhorts them to humbly serve their rulers (cf. 29:1, 3, 21, 24, 29, 31). These letters were written around the same time as chapters 27 and 28.
  - B. What does it look like to humbly serve your rulers (5-9; 21-32)?
    1. To humbly serve your rulers is the same idea as putting your neck under the yoke (cf. 27:12-14, 28:14).
    2. To humbly serve your rulers is to seek the welfare of the city you live in (7), to pray to the Lord on behalf of the city (7), to live and build houses (5), to raise

families (6). To humbly serve your rulers is to be productive people in society.

3. In contrast, the false prophets encouraged the people to break off the yoke (8-9; 21-32; cf. 28:10).

II) Even in the darkest hour, God's plans for His covenant people are good (10-20).

A. God is faithful to fulfill all His good words for His covenant people (10-14).

1. God required the land to have a sabbath rest every 7 years (Lev. 25:3-4), but they failed to give the land a sabbath rest. Since they disregarded God's word He expelled them from the land so that the land would get the rest (Lev. 26:34). Although Jeremiah does not explicitly point out the sabbath rest for the land, 2 Chron. 36:20-23 does.
2. After the land received its rest, God would bring back His people to the land (10).
3. God does not forget His covenant people (11-14). He has good plans for their future. In the midst of the struggle, it is easy to forget God's good plans. The life of Joseph is a good example of this. He was sold as a slave. Then he was lied about by Potiphar's wife and was cast into prison. Then Pharaoh's cupbearer forgot about him before God finally raised him to second in command over all Egypt. Even though his brothers meant it for evil, God meant it for good (Gen. 50:20). Time would fail me to tell the stories of Moses, Abraham, Job, and David. Although these examples experienced the future blessings, there are many examples that had to wait until their future glorification (cf. Heb. 11:36-37)

**Conclusion:** On the surface, it appears as though Jeremiah is encouraging the people to search for God with all their heart (13). But repeatedly in the book of Jeremiah, we see that God is the One who gives us a heart to seek Him (24:7; 31:33). It is God who writes His law upon our hearts. It is God who draws us to Himself.

## **Text: Jeremiah 30:1-24**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

I) Even though Jacob's trouble will be great, God will restore His people (1-11).

A. These words were intended to encourage future generations (1-3).

1. With few exceptions, Jeremiah preaches God's words to the people. This is one

of the only times in the book of Jeremiah, were he is told to write the words in a book (cf. 36:2). So why does he write the words in a book? Because the message is intended primarily for future generations.

2. Do we as Gentiles participate in the blessings of the land promise (3)? On the surface, it appears as though the land promise is for Israel and Judah. But notice that the promise was given to their forefathers—namely Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This land promise is referring to the Abrahamic Covenant.
  3. In Galatians 3:14, Paul explicitly states that the blessings of Abraham would come to the Gentiles. These blessings come to the Gentile believers because they are *in Christ*.
- B. God will save His people from Jacob’s trouble (4-11).
1. Jacob’s trouble will be a time of great distress. Men will act like women in child birth (6). There will be no day like the day of Jacob’s trouble, yet God’s people will be saved from it (7).
  2. Instead of serving foreign kings, God will raise up David to rule (8-9). Who is this Davidic King? None other than the Righteous Branch—the Lord our Righteousness (33:15-16).
  3. Even though God will rescue His people, their will be discipline (10-11).
  4. Not only will God rescue His people, but He will destroy all the nations where His people are scattered (11).
- II) Restoration is necessary because sin has caused an incurable state (12-24).
- A. The dire situation illustrated (12-17).
1. Sin has caused a serious injury (12). In fact, the wound is incurable (12, 15). The verb form for the word “incurable” is found in 17:9 to describe the heart. Sin has caused an incurable disease. Cursed is everyone who trusts in man (17:5), but everyone who trusts in the Lord is blessed (17:7; 30:17).
  2. No lawyer will take this case—it is a losing case (13).
  3. You have been abandoned by your lovers (14).
- B. I will be their God and they shall be My people (18-24).
1. Full restoration is in view. Cities will be inhabited again (18). The people will be celebrating (19).
  2. Who is this leader that comes from their midst (21)? This is none other than the

Jesus Christ. This Ruler approaches the Lord acting as a Ruler and Priest for the people.

3. Why does this Ruler approach the Lord? In order to satisfy His wrath (23). He risks His own life (21) in order to accomplish restoration for His people.

## **Text: Jeremiah 31:1-14**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

I) Sing for joy because all the families of Israel will find rest (1-14).

- A. He drew us to Himself because of His lovingkindness (1-4a).
  1. Jeremiah is using the standard covenant language, you shall be My people, and I will be Your God (7:23, 11:4, 24:7, 30:22, 31:33, 32:38). Except, this time, he defines the people as “all the families of Israel”. Since Jesus is the true Israel (cf. Matt. 2:13-15), those who are united with Christ are included (cf. Eph. 1:3-6; Gal. 3:14).
  2. Although v. 2 is difficult to interpret, the context is clear—God loves His people with an everlasting love (3). Jeremiah seems to be viewing Israel as one group which includes the exodus from Egypt (i.e. wilderness) with the exile that was happening (i.e. sword). Just like Israel enjoyed rest in Canaan, so God will provide eternal rest to all the families of Israel (2; cf. Heb. 4:8-11).
  3. God’s covenant relationship does not only include Him (“I will be Your God”), but also includes us (“they shall be My people”). It is in this context that Israel is called “virgin” (4, 13, 21). Israel was committing adultery by following after other gods (3:2-3, 8; 5:7; 9:2), yet she is called “virgin” for she has been redeemed.
- B. Sing for joy because of God’s lovingkindness (4b-9).
  1. Look at this scene—tambourines and dancing (4), shouting and singing aloud (7)! But why? Because of the everlasting love of God towards His people (3).
  2. Look what He has done for His people (5). He has brought them back to their homes (8) and allowed them to plant vineyards. He is making all of them—the blind and lame, the pregnant woman (8)—walk by streams of water (9). He is restoring their fortunes back to them (30:18).
  3. Jeremiah is not referring to the Babylonian exile because God gathers His people from the *remotest parts* of the earth (8).



- C. All His covenant people will be satisfied with His goodness (10-14).
1. This message is not only for ethnic Israel, but also for the nations (10). In fact, there is a shift in pronouns from v. 10-11 (he/him) and v. 12-13 (they/them). With this shift in pronouns, Jeremiah seems to be including the nations.
  2. There are two theological terms used to describe God's goodness—"ransom" and "redeem" (11). To ransom something was to pay a price to rescue it. For example, the firstborn of a donkey belonged to God. You could either break its neck or pay the ransom of a lamb to "ransom" it (cf. Ex. 13:12-13). To redeem something is to pay the price to set it free. A slave who sells himself may be redeemed if the price is paid, otherwise he must wait until the year of jubilee to be released (cf. Lev. 25:48-51).
  3. It may seem like priests get the short end of the stick. They could not own land—God was their inheritance (cf. Num. 18:20). Yet, God will fill them with abundance (14). As New Covenant Priests, we participate in this abundance (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9).

## **Text: Jeremiah 31:15-30**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Although sin brings severe judgment, there is hope (15-30).
- A. Israel played the harlot by worshipping other gods and now faced God's judgment (15).
1. This sorrow is described as Rachel weeping for her children (15). Later, Matthew records this same passage as being fulfilled when Herod slaughtered the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:17-18). But Rachel died in childbirth (Gen. 35:18). So why does Jeremiah use Rachel and not Jacob (cf. Gen. 37:29-35; 42:36; 44:30-31)? Because Rachel's sorrow is symbolic of Jeremiah's sorrow (Lam. 2:11-13; also notice Jer. 31:16).
- B. Don't lose heart. God will restore His people (16-22).
1. Rachel is weeping bitterly, but there is no need. God will reward her work (16). Again, Rachel died in childbirth, so what work is being referred to? This work refers to the work done by Jeremiah and the other prophets to plead with the people to turn from their sins.

2. Both Jeremiah and Hosea use a similar analogy—a stubborn heifer (18; Hosea 4:15-18; 10:11). In Hosea 10:11, the heifer loves the easy work of threshing the grain but refused the work of plowing. Essentially, Israel wanted to reap the blessings of obedience without the work (Hosea 10:12).
  3. Why does God restore His people (20)? Because of His lovingkindness towards them (cf. Hos. 11:1-4). He chastises His people, and then He restores them (18-19). God continues to work in the same way with His children today (Heb. 12:4-11).
  4. There is a shift from the masculine (20, i.e. son) to the feminine (21-22). The virgin of Israel would do something unheard of—she will encompass a man (22). Jeremiah is alluding to the idea that adulterous Israel would now return back to her husband (21-22). The virgin of Israel would now pursue her God.
- C. This restoration will bring about true heart change (23-30).
1. Jeremiah is looking forward to the New Covenant (31). Not only will God restore His people back to their land, but He will cause them to be refreshed (25) and to multiply (27; cf. Gen. 17:6). In fact, the whole book points to this theme of restoration. God will pluck up and overthrow, but then He will build and plant (28; 1:10).
  2. When we realize God’s plan for His people, we can be comforted by it (26; cf. 29:11).
  3. Ezekiel uses the same idea—the children suffering on behalf of the father’s sin (29-30; cf. Ezek. 18:19-32). Ezekiel is clear— turn from your sins and live (32). Again, Ezekiel mentions the “new heart”. The New Covenant writes the Law on our heart. It changes our desire.

## **Text: Jeremiah 31:31-40**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Because God’s people were unable to obey His commands, God made a new covenant with His people (31-40).
  - A. The New Covenant includes all the people of God (31).
    1. During the time of Jeremiah, God had not yet revealed the mystery that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the house of Israel and Judah (cf. Eph. 3:3-13;

Gal. 3:7). Paul specifically refers to the Gentiles being heirs with Israel as a mystery—something that had not been previously revealed.

- B. The New Covenant replaces the faulty Mosaic Covenant (32; cf. Heb. 8:1-13).
  - 1. This passage (31-34) is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. The author of Hebrews contrasts the Old Covenant with the New by referring to the Old as a shadow (5), faulty (7), obsolete (13), growing old (13), and ready to disappear (13).
  - 2. John Owen helps us understand why anyone would want to continue under the Mosaic Covenant once the New Covenant was established. “They were carnal themselves and these things, the fabric of the temple, the ornaments of the priests, the order of their worship, had a glory in them which they could behold with their carnal eyes, and cleave unto with their carnal affections.”
- C. God wrote His Law on our hearts because we could not obey Laws written on stone (33-34).
  - 1. Ezekiel points out that we have a heart of stone (Ezek. 11:19). The New Covenant removes this heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh. In Ezekiel 36:24-32, God repeatedly acts on behalf of His covenant people (notice the “I will” phrases).
  - 2. The book of Jeremiah has already laid out the case that the people would not and could not obey His laws. When Jeremiah pointed out the sins of the people, instead of repenting they desired to kill him (cf. 20:1-2; 26:7-8).
  - 3. The New Covenant is new for two reasons. First, God’s covenant people had a desire to obey His words. Second, everyone in the New Covenant would know God—have a real relationship with Him. Under the Mosaic Covenant, there were many who were covenant people but not part of the elect.
- D. Because it is impossible for God to break a covenant, His covenant people can be confident (35-40).
  - 1. God’s covenant with creation continues to this very day (35-37). None of us woke up this morning wondering if the sun would rise. So, when we think about God’s promises, we ought to have the same level of confidence in all His promises.
  - 2. God promised to make Abraham’s descendants a great nation (Gen. 15:5; 17:4) and that the seed would possess the gate of His enemies (Gen. 22:17). This will find its fulfillment in the New Jerusalem when all the city will be rebuilt (38).

**Conclusion:** When we consider the New Covenant and all the blessings that come from it, let us respond with tambourines, dancing, singing, and shouting for joy (31:4, 7).

## **Text: Jeremiah 32:1-44**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) God cannot be silenced (1-5).
  - A. Because His words will echo in the ears of the wicked (1-5).
    1. King Zedekiah thought that He could silence God by simply putting His prophet in prison. But instead of silence, God's words rang through Zedekiah's ears. It is Zedekiah who speaks Jeremiah's words (3-5).
    2. History is filled with examples of godless men and women who tried to silence God and failed.
- II) Instead, God's word will be confirmed (6-44).
  - A. God confirms His words through supernatural circumstances (6-15).
    1. Jeremiah doesn't respond to the king's question (cf. 3, 6). He simply continues proclaiming God's words which included a supernatural example that could only come from God—Hanamel came to the courtyard of the prison to request Jeremiah to purchase some land (6).
    2. This was not for Jeremiah's sake. He would die before the fulfillment. This was for our sake.
    3. This supernatural confirmation from God would also be a reminder of God's word that He would restore the land back to His people (cf. 14-15).
  - B. God has continued to work throughout history (16-25).
    1. Creation declares the power of God (17). Since He created all things, He can easily confirm His words. Specifically, He sees the righteous and the wicked and He rewards to a thousand generations those who worship the Lord exclusively but visits the sin to the fourth generation of those who hate Him (cf. Exod. 20:5-6).
    2. He gave Israel signs and wonders when they left Egypt (20-21), yet they refused to obey His words (23). In fact, the siege ramps being built right outside the city were a public display that God's word will be fulfilled (24).

3. Just as the siege ramps are a testimony that God's words would be fulfilled, so Jeremiah's purchase of land would also testify that God is faithful to His words (25).
- C. God confirms His words both by His judgment on the wicked and by restoring the people back to the land (26-44).
1. God would give Jerusalem over into the hands of the Chaldeans and they would burn the city (27-29). No doubt the Israelites were repeating the common phrase, "is anything too difficult for me?", to refer to God's deliverance. Yet, God used that phrase to refer to their destruction because of their sin (30-35).
  2. God's sure judgment is set up as a way to prove that God would also restore His people (cf. 42). Just like God gave Jerusalem to the Chaldeans, so He would give the people a "one heart and one way" (39).

**Conclusion:** The Mosaic Covenant failed because it could not change people's hearts. In fact, the people under the Mosaic Covenant sacrificed their own children to the gods Molech (35). So, for this people to actually become God's people, God must change their heart (38). This everlasting Covenant (40) that Jeremiah refers to is none other than the New Covenant which is inaugurated by the blood of Jesus. Apart from this work of Christ, we would be dead in our sins (cf. Eph. 2:1-6)

## **Text: Jeremiah 33:1-26**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) From His covenant with creation to His covenant with individuals, God will fulfill His good word (1-26; note v. 14).
  - A. Even though these words are hidden, He will reveal them (1-13; cf. 30:24).
    1. The word "mighty" is generally translated in the OT as fortified (3; cf. Deut. 3:5). These words from God are like a fortified city—they are inaccessible like a fortified city—but God will reveal them.
    2. There is a sense in which we will not fully understand what God plans to do, until He accomplishes it. For example, the apostle's asked Christ right before His ascension, "Are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?". Christ responds that it is not for them to know (Acts 1:6-7).
    3. Part of what God reveals to Jeremiah (cf. v. 3; note the singular pronouns) is that

even though the destruction is great (4-5), God will heal them (6-8). This includes healing for their iniquity (crooked behavior; cf. Ps. 38:6), their sin (missing the mark; cf. Judges 20:16), and their transgression (rebellion; Hos. 8:1).

4. Jerusalem, which had become desolate, will again be filled with laughter, joy, and praise to God (10-11). There will be people and animals dwelling in the land once again (12-13). We may not fully understand how God will bring this about until He has accomplished it (cf. 30:24).
- B. God will fulfill His good word to David (14-26).
1. Jeremiah has just prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar will carry off Zedekiah to Babylon (32:5). It seems like the line of David is in danger of being cut off. Yet, God will cause a Righteous Branch to spring forth from the line of David (15). This Righteous Branch is none other than Christ.
  2. Jerusalem will not be the only city to benefit from this Righteous branch, He will execute righteousness and justice on the earth (15).
  3. God's covenant with David is as sure as His covenant with creation (20, 25). Specifically, the sun keeps its appointed time every day. In fact, my weather app can predict with certainty when the sun will rise each day. The same God who keeps His covenant with the sun also keeps His covenant with David.
  4. God's covenant with David is as sure as His covenant with Abraham (26). God can not reject Jacob. He will restore their fortunes.
- C. God will fulfill His good word to Levi (18, 21-22).
1. The covenant with Levi is even more suspect than the covenant with David. Hebrews 7:12-14 explicitly states that Jesus does not come from the Levitical line, instead He is a priest after a different order—Melchizedek.
  2. Peter, quoting the OT states that NT believers are royal priests (1 Pet. 2:9). But how does this demonstrate God's faithfulness to the line of Levi? Some of these questions we may not fully understand until God accomplishes His good word (30:24).

**Conclusion:** God's word will be fulfilled. He is always faithful to His covenant promises. One of God's good promises to New Covenant believers is that we can enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus and have direct access to God (Heb. 10:19-25). Therefore, let us draw near!

## Text: Jeremiah 34:1-22

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Instead of trusting in God's good words, our tendency is to trust in our own wisdom (1-22).
  - A. We often disregard God's good words if they don't make sense to us (i.e. surrender and live; 1-7; cf. 21:8-10; 32:5).
    1. Jeremiah 34 is clearly connected to the message that was given in 21 and 32. For example, Jeremiah 21:9 says that if you dwell in the city, you will die by sword, famine, and pestilence. In 34:17, God delivers them over to sword, pestilence, and famine. In Jeremiah 32:4, King Zedekiah is told that he would see the King of Babylon face to face and eye to eye (cf. 34:3).
    2. The word translated "hear" in Jeremiah 34:4 is a word that means hear and obey. Although we do not get the full message in chapter 34, we know that King Zedekiah was told to surrender to the Babylonians (21:9). But instead of surrendering, He fortified the city (cf. 33:4).
    3. Since King Zedekiah refused to hear and obey God's command to surrender to the Babylonians, he would not enjoy the benefits (4-5). Instead of dying in peace, his sons were slaughtered before his eyes and then his eyes were plucked out. He was then bound and thrown in prison for the rest of his life (52:10-11).
    4. David had a great opportunity to disregard God's good words when King Saul was pursuing him in the wilderness (1 Sam. 26:1-10). Surely sparing King Saul could not have made sense to David. So Abishai encouraged David to disregard God's words and allow him to kill God's anointed, but David refused. David instead trusted that God would take care of King Saul in His own time and that He would reward the righteous (10, 23).
  - B. We often disregard God's good words once we receive the results we are seeking (i.e. Babylonian army leaving; 8-22).
    1. Clearly the Israelites were hoping that if they renew their covenant with God to release the slaves (8-11), that the Babylonian army would leave (21-22). The implication is that once the Babylonian army left, the Israelites brought back their slaves (17).
    2. First, this covenant that Israel was making had already been made. When God delivered Israel out of slavery from the Egyptians, part of the covenant was to

release slaves every 7 years (13-14).

3. In addition, Israel renewed this covenant in God's house (15) with a formal ceremony (18-19). Yet, even then, they broke this covenant (16). They profaned God's name.
4. When the 10 lepers in Luke 17:11-19 sought to be cleansed by Jesus, 9 of the lepers disregarded Jesus the moment they were healed. Instead of giving glory to God (18), 9 of the lepers never returned. They got what they were looking for—cleansing.

**Conclusion:** Just like the 9 lepers, we often disregard God and His word the moment we get what we are looking for. Maybe you have spent time calling out to God this week over something that has been troubling you, and God has answered. Did you pause to give Him thanks, or did you quickly disregard what God had done on your behalf?

## **Text: Jeremiah 35:1-19**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Who are the Rechabites? The Rechabites were related to Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (cf. 1 Chron. 2:55; Jud. 1:16). Heber, the husband of Jael the woman who killed Sisera with a tent spike, was also a Kenite (cf. Jud. 4:11, 17, 5:24). These same Kenites helped Israel when they fled from Egypt (cf. 1 Sam. 15:6).

Jonadab (i.e. Jehonadab), the man mentioned in Jeremiah 35 is the same man who slaughtered the house of Ahab in 842 BC (cf. 2 Kings 10:15-17). The account in Jeremiah 35 is almost 250 years later (around 599 BC). Yet, the Rechabites honored their father Jonadab by obeying the 3 commands he gave (8). Do not drink wine (6). Dwell in tents not houses (7). Do not sow seed or plant a vineyard (7).

- I) The Rechabites willingly obeyed their earthly father, yet God's people refuse to obey Him (cf. 13-14)
  - A. Even though the temptation to disregard their father's command was strong, the Rechabites remained faithful (1-11).
    1. When Babylon came to attack Israel, the Rechabites decided to dwell in Jerusalem for safety reasons (2, 10-11). Since they had already temporarily gone against the command to not dwell in houses, it would have been easy to break the command to drink wine (5). Yet, they obeyed Jonadab (6).



2. Even though Jeremiah the prophet—a godly man—offered wine to them, they refused (4-5).
  3. This event was probably a public event. The Rechabites probably stood out like an Amish family would stand out in the city. Not only that, but there was a large group of them (3) and they met near the temple gate (i.e. near the doorkeepers chamber; 4).
  4. Finally, Jonadab had given these commands almost 250 years ago (cf. 2 Kings 10:15-17). Just to put this in perspective, 250 years is from now to George Washington. It would have been easy for them to view these commands as outdated. Yet, they obeyed.
  5. Although the temptation was great, the reward for obedience was far greater (18-19). Notice the similarity in wording to the Davidic and Levitical covenants just a few chapters earlier (33:17-18). In addition, the command to honor your father and mother also includes a reward (Ex. 20:12).
- B. In contrast, God’s people have repeatedly rejected God’s words (12-19).
1. God sent His prophets over and over again to preach the message, yet the people would not hear (15). We have a long list of prophets recorded in scripture and that list doesn’t even scratch the surface of all of the prophets God sent.
  2. 4 times in these verses God refers to Himself as the Lord of hosts or the Lord of armies (13, 17, 18, 19). If they refuse to hear His words, He will come after them like the Babylonian army.

**Conclusion:** Jeremiah has already told us why they refused to obey—it is because their heart is desperately sick (Jer. 17:9). They simply cannot obey. The whole book of Jeremiah points to the need for a greater covenant (Heb. 8:6-7, 13)—one in which people desire to obey God (Jer. 31:33). This New Covenant was inaugurated by the blood of Jesus.

If you find yourself unlike the children of Israel—in that you desire to obey God’s commands—then pause with me this morning and praise Him for changing your desires.

## **Text: Jeremiah 36:1-32**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- l) God reveals His judgment on the wicked so that perhaps they would repent and believe (1-32, note v. 3; cf. Jonah 3:4-10).
  - A. God reveals Himself through the written word in order to stir people to repent (1-10).
    - 1. Repeatedly, this passage points out that God revealed Himself through the written word (2, 4, 6, 8, 10). Even after the scroll had been burned by Jehoiakim, God had Jeremiah rewrite the words in another scroll (27-28). God has not left mankind without a witness.
    - 2. The fourth year of Jehoiakim (1) is the same year that Babylon began to destroy the surrounding nations (604 BC). The people were already at a heightened awareness of God's judgment which may be why they proclaimed a fast and were calling out to Him for deliverance (6-7). Yet, God's words of judgment would not stir these people to repent.
    - 3. How can a person call on God if they do not believe? And how can a person believe if they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how can someone preach unless they are sent (Romans 10:14)? This has been God's method of calling people to Himself throughout history. Yet, the modern church has added a simple phrase to God's list—how can they hear unless we attract them?
  - B. Some respond in absolute terror while others are completely careless at God's judgment, neither response demonstrates repentance (11-25; cf. 16, 24).
    - 1. The Hebrew word for fear (16, 24) is not the typical word used in the OT for those who fear the Lord (cf. Prov. 1:7; Jer. 5:22). Instead, it is usually used to refer to absolute terror (cf. Ex. 15:16; translated as "dread"; Is. 33:14). Although occasionally it can refer to those who believe (cf. Hos. 3:5).
    - 2. The book of Jeremiah uses the word "turn" (cf. 3, 7) more than any other book in the OT (92 times), yet these officials heard the words written in the scroll and there is no mention of turning from their sins. Instead they report these words to the king. The king's response is even more clear—he did not rend his garments nor was he afraid (24). The king's response is no different than Pharaoh's response—complete indifference (cf. Ex. 5:1-2).
  - C. God will not be silenced (26-32).
    - 1. Not only did Jeremiah rewrite the words, but God added to them (32). The king's feeble attempt to silence God only condemned him further.

**Conclusion:** It is not enough to merely be afraid of God’s judgment—turn from your sins (36:3, 7). Paul summarized his work when he spoke to the elders at Ephesus as preaching “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). If you can continue in your sin week after week, month after month the author of Hebrews warns of a terrifying expectation of judgment (Heb. 10:26-27). Apart from the finished work of Jesus Christ, it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).

## **Text: Jeremiah 37:1-21**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Some disregard God’s words because they fear what others think (1-21; cf. 17; Gal. 1:10).
  - A. Even though King Zedekiah disregarded God’s words (2), he still wanted Jeremiah to pray on their behalf (1-10; 3).
    1. It seems strange to disregard God’s words and then ask for prayer on your behalf. Yet, this is exactly what the Israelites do when they ask for a king (1 Sam. 12:19-23; cf. 1 Sam. 8:5, 10-19). They knew it was a sin to ask for a king at that time (1 Sam. 12:19), yet they desired God’s blessing. Perhaps Zedekiah was looking for a miracle like what happened to the Assyrians when 185,000 were killed (2 Kings 19:35).
    2. King Zedekiah was looking for help from both the Egyptian army (5-7) and God (i.e. pray on our behalf). There was a letter written (Lachish Letter II) at this time (588 BC) that mentions the military general for Judah visiting Egypt—likely requesting military help from Egypt. Within months, the Egyptian army began to position for an attack against the Babylonians.
    3. As the Egyptians threatened the Babylonians, Jeremiah warned Zedekiah not to be deceived (9). Even if the Babylonian army was decimated, they would still burn down the city (10).
    4. God is a jealous God. You cannot trust in Him and in Egypt’s chariots.
  - B. King Zedekiah secretly desired a word from the Lord by Jeremiah, yet he allowed Jeremiah to be beaten and imprisoned (11-21; 17).
    1. When the Babylonian army left the siege of Jerusalem to take care of Egypt, it gave Jeremiah an opportunity to finish the sale of the property in Benjamin

(32:8-12). But while he was leaving the city, the guard had him arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for joining with the Babylonians (13-16; cf. 21:9 & 38:19).

2. Notice that King Zedekiah's officials participated in the mistreatment of Jeremiah (15). King Zedekiah was obviously aware of Jeremiah's location (17), yet he did not help Jeremiah—even though Jeremiah was imprisoned for several days (16).
3. Although this passage does not explicitly state that King Zedekiah feared the officials, it is certainly implied by his actions (i.e. secretly; 17). Also, when King Zedekiah was alone with Jeremiah, he treated Jeremiah with kindness (i.e. gave him bread; 21).
4. In a similar story, King Saul disregarded God's words. Samuel told Saul to kill the Amalekites, yet he spared the sheep (1 Sam. 15:13-24). Why did Saul disregard God's words—because he feared the people (1 Sam. 15:24).

**Conclusion:** King Zedekiah's fear is contrasted with Jeremiah's boldness. Jeremiah boldly proclaimed judgment on King Zedekiah (17). In contrast, Zedekiah is secretly meeting with Jeremiah so that his court officials don't know (17).

Can you think of times this week when you disregarded God's words because you were afraid what other might think of you?

## **Text: Jeremiah 38:1-28**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** This chapter is filled with irony. King Zedekiah gives Jeremiah into the "hands" of his enemies (5), yet King Zedekiah is scared to death of the possibility of being given into the "hands" of his enemies (19). Jeremiah, who is thrown into a cistern and sinks in the mud (6), is rescued by a stranger—an Ethiopian Eunuch (10). Whereas, King Zedekiah is mocked by the women of the palace about his feet sinking in the mire (22-23). The very thing that King Zedekiah tried to avoid—being given into the hands of his enemies—is the very thing that happened to him.

I) Sometimes we disregard God's word because we fear what others think (1-28).

A. The fear of man causes us to falsely accuse the righteous (1-6).

1. The fear of man is not only a struggle for those under the Mosaic Covenant, but also those under the New Covenant. Paul reminded the Galatians that they cannot please men and serve Christ (Gal. 1:10).

2. The king's officials assumed that Jeremiah was a traitor—that his desire was for the destruction of Jerusalem (4).
  3. Do you find yourself assuming the motives of others without any proof? Time is one of the only ways to rightly evaluate someone.
- B. Even though the wicked plot and scheme, God thwarts their plans (7-13).
1. The king's officials intended to cause a slow and painful death for Jeremiah—starvation in a muddy pit (6, 10, 16, 26). Yet, God used a foreigner to come to Jeremiah's aid (8-13).
  2. There is nothing wrong with making plans, but we must remember that God is sovereign over all things. When we find ourselves worrying about things that are outside of our control, we are no longer fearing God—the One who knows the plans He has for us (29:11).
- C. Those who fear what others think look ridiculous (14-28).
1. After Jeremiah is rescued from the cistern, King Zedekiah requests his presence (14). He is desperate to hear from the prophet what God has to say (14, 16). Yet, Jeremiah brings up the obvious contradiction—you won't listen even if I tell you (15) which is exactly what happens.
  2. Even the women who are left in the palace—including King Zedekiah's wife—will mock him (22-23).
  3. To top it off, King Zedekiah tries to cover up the conversation he has with Jeremiah (24-28). Since the meeting was in private (27), he asks Jeremiah to tell the officials that he doesn't want to be locked up at Jonathan's house again (26). Even the officials doubt this story, but since no one overheard it, they stop asking (27).

**Conclusion:** It is hard for us to see the fear of man in our own lives. In fact, King Zedekiah would likely not have noticed that he was fearing man. Yet, the truth is, that we often fear what others think. We know this because we quickly assign motives to people—even though we really have no idea.

The only antidote to the fear of man is a healthy fear of God. The midwives in Egypt give us a practical understanding of the fear of God (Exodus 1:16-22). The servants of Pharaoh who protected their livestock from the hail is another example of the fear of the Lord (Exodus 9:18-21).

## Text: Jeremiah 39:1-18

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** This chapter is filled with irony. King Zedekiah gives Jeremiah into the “hands” of his enemies (5), yet King Zedekiah is scared to death of the possibility of being given into the “hands” of his enemies (19). Jeremiah, who is thrown into a cistern and sinks in the mud (6), is rescued by a stranger—an Ethiopian Eunuch (10). Whereas, King Zedekiah is mocked by the women of the palace about his feet sinking in the mire (22-23). The very thing that King Zedekiah tried to avoid—being given into the hands of his enemies—is the very thing that happened to him.

- I) Sometimes we disregard God’s word because we fear what others think (1-28).
  - A. The fear of man causes us to falsely accuse the righteous (1-6).
    1. The fear of man is not only a struggle for those under the Mosaic Covenant, but also those under the New Covenant. Paul reminded the Galatians that they cannot please men and serve Christ (Gal. 1:10).
    2. The king’s officials assumed that Jeremiah was a traitor—that his desire was for the destruction of Jerusalem (4).
    3. Do you find yourself assuming the motives of others without any proof? Time is one of the only ways to rightly evaluate someone.
  - B. Even though the wicked plot and scheme, God thwarts their plans (7-13).
    1. The king’s officials intended to cause a slow and painful death for Jeremiah—starvation in a muddy pit (6, 10, 16, 26). Yet, God used a foreigner to come to Jeremiah’s aid (8-13).
    2. There is nothing wrong with making plans, but we must remember that God is sovereign over all things. When we find ourselves worrying about things that are outside of our control, we are no longer fearing God—the One who knows the plans He has for us (29:11).
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Jeremiah brings up the obvious contradiction—you won't listen even if I tell you (15) which is exactly what happens.

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**Conclusion:** It is hard for us to see the fear of man in our own lives. In fact, King Zedekiah would likely not have noticed that he was fearing man. Yet, the truth is, that we often fear what others think. We know this because we quickly assign motives to people—even though we really have no idea.

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## **Text: Jeremiah 40:1-16**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Everyone will know that God is faithful to His covenant promises because He crushes those who break His covenant (1-16; cf. 40:2-3; 42:5-6; 42:18; 44:2-4, 6-10, 26-30).
  - A. Even the Babylonian official knew that God was judging the nation because they disregarded His words (1-6).
    1. Why does God crush the wicked? Couldn't He just leave them alone? Even the Babylonian official knew that God caused this calamity on Israel because they sinned against the Lord (2-3). God judged the nation of Israel so that the nations would know that God is holy and must judge sinners—even those under His covenant (cf. 15:4; 19:8, cf. 19:15; 22:8-9; 24:8-10; 26:4-6).
    2. God is holy, but we are just like the Israelites—full of sin. We deserve to be

crushed by our own sin. But instead of being crushed for of our sins, God poured His wrath on Jesus. He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities. The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Is. 53:5-6).

3. Even Jeremiah felt the blow of God's wrath. When Jeremiah was given the option to go to Babylon or to go back to Israel, he was at a loss (4-6). Because God deals with people corporately under the Mosaic Covenant (31:29-30).
- B. God's faithfulness to the Mosaic Covenant requires that the nation suffers corporately (7-15; cf. Josh. 7:1-5).
1. Gedaliah is no ordinary Israelite. His grandfather, Shaphan, read the scroll that was found in the temple to King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-14). Gemariah, one of Shaphan's sons pled with Jehoiakim not to burn Jeremiah's scroll (36:11-26). Elasah, another son of Shaphan, carried Jeremiah's letter to the exiles (29:3). A third son of Shaphan, Ahikam (Gedaliah's father), protected Jeremiah after his temple sermon (26:24). So, Gedaliah is a righteous man.
  2. Gedaliah swore an oath to be an advocate for those who were left in Israel (8-10). Although an oath (verbal commitment) and a covenant (formal ceremony) are not the same, both are binding. In fact, Numbers 30 lays out the few exceptions to annul an oath. So, Gedaliah intended to do good for Israel.
  3. Yet, wicked men (cf. 41:11) sought to put Gedaliah to death (13-16) and were successful (41:2). Under the Old Covenant, the nation was judged corporately. But under the New Covenant the righteousness of One abounded to many (Rom. 5:18).
- C. God's frustration with man's disobedience illustrated (16; 43:2).
1. Johanan tried to warn Gedaliah (13-15), but Gedaliah refused to hear. Just a few days later, Jeremiah tried to warn Johanan against going to Egypt, but notice his reply—"you are telling a lie". When Gedaliah refused to listen to Johanan, it was an illustration of the Israelites refusing to listen to God.

## **Text: Jeremiah 41:1-18**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

**Introduction:** Why does Jeremiah include Ishmael's atrocities against his own people? Is this chapter really necessary? Yes! Jeremiah has already prophesied that those left in Israel during



the captivity were like bad figs which were completely rotten (24:8-10). God allowed Ishmael to commit these atrocities so that all the kingdoms of the earth will see it (24:9).

- I) Everyone will know that God is faithful to His covenant promises because He crushes those who break His covenant (1-18; cf. 24:8-10; 40:2-3; 42:5-6, 18; 44:2-4, 6-10, 26-30).
  - A. The kingdoms of the earth will fear because of God's judgment (24:9-10; cf. 22:8-9).
    - 1. Before we dive into the story, we must see the bigger picture. God allowed this judgment on Jerusalem—including the atrocities done by Ishmael—to demonstrate His wrath to all the nations (22:8-9).
    - 2. Ezekiel 6 refers to the destruction of Israel by the sword (3). He brings destruction so that they will know that He is the Lord (7, 10, 14). Specifically, that they will know that He doesn't speak in vain. When He says He will bring destruction, He will!
    - 3. How should we view national calamities? Even though we might be tempted to remove God from these calamities, Amos 3:6 reminds us that no calamity occurs that is apart from God.
    - 4. Because of Amos 3:6, we may be tempted to think that God primarily allows calamities on a city because of her wickedness. But that would also be wrong. In Luke 13:1-5, the tower of Siloam fell and killed 18 people, but Christ says that it would be wrong to think that this occurred because these people were more wicked than others. In fact, judgment occurs to remind us to repent of our own sins. So, even as we remember the destruction that occurred on 9/11, let us first repent of our own sins.
  - B. The atrocities that occurred from Ishmael are a reminder that God crushes those who break His covenant (1-18).
    - 1. Ishmael's betrayal and murder of Gedaliah is a reminder to the nations that God crushes those who break His covenant (22:8-9). In an act of utter betrayal, Ishmael and his men were eating a meal together when they killed Gedaliah (1-3).
    - 2. Then, the very next day, 70 of the 80 men who were coming to worship the Lord were slaughtered and their bodies were thrown into a cistern (4-10). The only reason he spared the 10 was because they had provisions that could be used (8).
    - 3. Thankfully, God in His mercy allowed the rescue of the prisoners of Ishmael (11-

18). But even in this, 8 of Ishmael's 10 men survived (1; cf. 15).

**Conclusion:** As we look at this passage, let us remember that the payment of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Do you suppose that you are more righteous than Gedaliah and those 80 worshippers? Everyone deserves the wrath of God. But God, being rich in mercy, made us alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:4-5).

## **Text: Jeremiah 42:1-22**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The fear of man causes us to disregard God's words (1-22; cf. 41:17-18; 42:11, 16).
  - A. Just because you are praying to God does not mean that you are submitting to His plans (1-6; 41:17).
    1. After the murder of Gedaliah, the Israelites—along with Johanan—were already in route to go to Egypt (41:17). Since they were already planning to go to Egypt, why did they ask God for direction (2-3)?
    2. Often, we ask God for wisdom in order to ease our conscience. We have already made up our mind on what we plan to do, but we just want God to agree with our plans (3). When you call out to God, are you genuinely willing to submit to His ordained plan?
    3. Notice how the Israelites referred to God as *your* God (2-3). Even though Jeremiah corrects them, it is clear that they view God as distant from them (4).
    4. Under oath, the Israelites swore that they would obey all that God commanded them to do through Jeremiah the prophet—even if it is unpleasant (5-6). Yet, just 10 days later, they called Jeremiah a liar (7; 43:2).
  - B. Instead of fearing man; trust in the Lord (7-17).
    1. God allowed 10 days to pass before He gave His answer to Jeremiah (7). As each day passed, news of Gedaliah's death was one day closer to reaching Babylon. God was using this time to reveal the fear of man in their hearts (11, 16).
    2. The fear of man is set in direct contrast with trusting in the Lord (11). God's desire was to build them up, not tear them down (10), but if they continued to disregard His words, He would do just as He said He would. In fact, the very thing

that they attempted to avoid—the sword, famine, and pestilence—God would send (14, 16-17).

3. What does it look like to trust in the Lord? For Israel to trust in the Lord, they needed to believe that God would show them compassion by causing Nebuchadnezzar to have compassion on Israel (12).
- C. God pours out His wrath on those who disregard His words (18-22).
1. The destruction of Jerusalem was still fresh in their minds which is why God used that illustration to describe how His wrath would be poured out (18).
  2. When God pours out His wrath, there will be no doubt that those who receive it have deserved it (22). In Romans 1-3, Paul lays out the case all deserve God's judgment (cf. 1:18; 2:1). In fact, every mouth will be stopped because there will be no excuse—everyone deserves God's wrath (Rom. 3:19).

## **Text: Jeremiah 43:1-13**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Do not stubbornly refuse to listen to God's word (1-7; cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-13).
  - A. There was no doubt, God spoke through Jeremiah (1-7).
    1. Not only had Jeremiah been a prophet for 40 years, but he had proven that he was a faithful prophet. At the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah, Hananiah contradicted Jeremiah's prophecy (28:1-17). Hananiah claimed that the yoke of Babylon would be crushed (28:2-3). Yet, God confirmed Jeremiah's prophecy by having Hananiah die within 7 months (28:16). There should have been no doubt that Jeremiah was speaking God's words.
    2. The passage repeats the theme that these were God's words (i.e. "the Lord their God had sent"; "all the words of the Lord"; "did not obey the voice of the Lord").
    3. In a similar way, God has spoken to us through His word. Yet, we stubbornly refuse to obey. For example, it is God's will that you abstain from immorality (1 Thess. 4:3). Yet, you acted just like stubborn Israel this week when you lusted in your heart. Again, in 1 Thess. 5:18, it is God's will that you give thanks in all things. Yet, this week, instead of giving thanks, you complained. Before you cast

a stone at the stubbornness of these people, look at your own heart.

4. Not only did they stubbornly refuse to obey God's words, but they accused Jeremiah of getting his message from Baruch the scribe (3). Baruch never took credit for the prophecies. In fact, he willingly admitted that he was merely a scribe writing Jeremiah's words (36:15-19).
- B. God confirms His word (8-13).
1. In 568BC, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and plundered Egypt just like Jeremiah prophesied (10-13). But why did God confirm His words 20 years after the prophecy? Certainly, God could have fulfilled the prophecy within months (i.e. Hananiah's death).
  2. The apostle Peter, points out that the prophetic word was "more sure" because they were eyewitnesses (2 Peter 1:16-21). Peter was testifying about what he heard and saw at the mount of transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17:1-8).
  3. Since God's word has already been confirmed through the apostles—those who saw and heard—we must pay more careful attention to His word (cf. Heb. 2:1-4).

**Conclusion:** None of us view ourselves as stubbornly disobeying God's word. Somehow we excuse our disobedience just like the Israelites did. Yet, we know God's commands—abstain from immorality or give thanks in all things. But somehow we think that those commands are mere suggestions. We must change our viewpoint of God's word. Instead of looking at God's word from a critics standpoint, let us humbly submit under His word.

## **Text: Jeremiah 44:1-30**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Those who disregard God's word deserve His judgment (1-30; cf. 7; 29).
  - A. Those who disregard God's word will have no excuse because they knowingly rejected God (1-19).
    1. They physically saw the destruction that occurred in Jerusalem because of their wickedness (2-3). Specifically, they were worshipping foreign gods and making sacrifices to them.

2. God sent His prophets over and over again to no avail—they simply would not listen (4-6). God’s wrath poured out in the city of Jerusalem is meant to be a picture of His wrath that will be poured out on the wicked on the last day when they cast in the Lake of fire.
  3. God’s wrath poured out on the wicked is the same wrath that everyone deserves. There is none righteous—no not one. There is none who seek after God. We all deserve this wrath that is poured out on the wicked. But instead, Christ Jesus received the Father’s wrath on our behalf.
  4. When someone asks the question, “how could a loving God send someone to hell?” The answer is simple, they do it to themselves (7-10).
- B. Those who disregard God’s word actually want to serve other gods (15-30).
1. Why would anyone want to serve other gods? Because life was better when we served other gods—at least that’s what we are tempted to think (18-19). These Israelites were comparing the time before the scroll was found in the Temple—they lacked nothing. They describe it as a time when they had “plenty of food”, “were well off”, and “saw no misfortune”.
  2. This was not the first time that Israel complained about God’s provision. In the wilderness, they compared the food from Egypt with the food in the Wilderness and complained to God about it (Num. 11:4-9). One of Satan’s lies is that we were better off before we began to serve God. Don’t let Satan’s lie have a foothold in your thinking.
  3. Although the men act as though their wives are the ones who are worshipping these deities (15), Jeremiah has already identified the whole family as participating (7:17-19). The children gather the wood, the men kindle the fire, and the women bake the cakes.
  4. It was not their worship of Yahweh that caused the calamity, instead, it was God’s patience in dealing with Israel’s sin (22-23). Essentially, they thought that the Queen of Heaven was judging them because they turned their back on her for a season (18).
  5. One final sign—God will cause Pharaoh Hophra to be given over to his enemies just like King Zedekiah was given over to his enemies.

**Text: Jeremiah 45:1-5**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) Strength to endure the trials of life cannot come from your circumstances (1-5).
  - A. The circumstances of life may seem unbearable (3).
    1. Baruch rightly identifies the sovereignty of God over all things (i.e. “*the Lord* has added sorrow”). Although we bristle at Baruch’s words, we must confess that God is sovereign—even over the trials that we face. Yet, God never tempts us to sin.
    2. The Bible is filled with examples of God allowing His servants to go through trials. For example, in the Lord’s prayer Christ prays, “do not lead us into temptation” (Matt. 6:13). Again, Christ prays in the garden that the Father’s will be done (Luke 22:41-42). The Father’s will was that Christ drink the cup of sorrow.
    3. Paul experienced many hardships, yet none of the trials overwhelmed him (2 Cor. 4:7-12). He was afflicted, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not despairing. How is this possible? How could he endure without losing heart (2 Cor. 4:16-18)? He recognized the temporal nature of the trials in contrast to the eternal weight of glory to be revealed. He knew there was no comparison between the temporal trials and the eternal glory.
  - B. God’s plan had already been revealed (1:10), He had always intended to uproot and tear down (4).
    1. Baruch should not have been surprised. God regularly had Jeremiah preach about the destruction of Jerusalem (1:14; 26:6). Yet, somehow, Baruch was discouraged when the people disregarded God’s word.
    2. God had given a similar message to Isaiah the prophet—preach, but they will not listen (Isaiah 6:8-10). Isaiah responds by asking, “how long will I preach and be rejected”? God’s answer, until the cities are destroyed (Isaiah 6:11).
  - C. The circumstances of life can be frustrating when we are concerned with our own life (5).
    1. Life was frustrating for Baruch because he was seeking for satisfaction in the circumstances of life. He wanted prestige for his faithful ministry, yet he never got it. Instead, he faced the same sort of ridicule that Jeremiah faced.
    2. The Christian life is one of sacrifice. Christ told His disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23). The Christian life is not

one of ease. If you find yourself frustrated with your circumstances, it's because you have forgotten that your life is not about you.

3. The only way to endure through the trials is to preach Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Cor. 4:1, 5). Unfortunately, we tend to preach ourselves as Lord—and that's why life is frustrating.

## **Text: Jeremiah 46:1-28**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) No one can escape the Day of the Lord (1-28; cf. 10)
  - A. The proud are crushed on that day (1-12; cf. 10).
    1. No amount of preparation by the Egyptian army would alter the outcome. Both type of shields were prepared (3). The horsemen mounted their steeds. They polished their spears and put on their armor; yet, when the battle came they were terrified (5).
    2. Notice the pride of Egypt. She says, "I will rise up and cover the earth; I will destroy cities" (8). In addition to these clear statements of pride, there appears to be an allusion to Satan rising up in pride against God (cf. Isaiah 14:13-14). The Egyptian army "ascends" to the battle (cf. 4, 7, 8 [x2], 9, 11) much like Satan "ascends" to heaven to take on God. They are both acting in pride and will be crushed (10, 12).
    3. Why does God pour out His wrath against the proud? It is because they have made themselves His enemies (10). Pride is not exclusive to those who reject God. Pride can easily creep into our own hearts (1 Pet. 5:7).
    4. Even though Egypt faces judgment, she was called a "virgin daughter" (11). This phrase is typically used to refer to Israel (cf. 2 Kings 19:21; Is. 37:22; Jer. 14:17; Lam. 1:15, 2:13), but occasionally refers to other nations (i.e. Sidon and Babylon; cf. Is. 23:12; 47:1).
  - B. God causes the proud to be crushed on that day (13-26).
    1. This chapter describes 2 times that Egypt was crushed. In the first example 1-12), the Egyptians are crushed—passive (5-6). In the second example (13-26), God Himself takes credit for the destruction of the proud (15, 25-26).

2. There will be no hope. The mercenaries who were paid to help abandoned them (16-17, 21). Listen to their words. Not only have these mercenaries abandoned Egypt, but they accused Pharaoh of being a loud noise with nothing to back it up with (17).
  3. If it felt hopeless before, now it is completely hopeless (18). God swears that the enemy will tower over them like Mt. Tabor and Mt. Carmel tower over their landscapes.
  4. These final metaphors are hard to understand (22-23), but the main point is clear—the situation is hopeless (24). Perhaps the woodcutters refer to those who cut down the trees in order to prepare for the siege.
- C. The same God who crushes the proud on the Day of the Lord will also rescue His people on that Day (27-28; cf. 10; 30:7, 10-11)
1. We naturally feel afraid when we see the type of judgment that is pictured in this chapter. But instead of fear, God calls on Israel to not be afraid. They will face God's discipline but will not be destroyed.
  2. Likewise, when God pours out His wrath on the wicked, we need not fear. Just like God kept His promise to Abraham, so He will keep His promise with those who are under the New Covenant.

## **Text: Jeremiah 47:1-7**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The wicked deserve God's wrath (1-7).
  - A. God's judgment upon the wicked will be severe (1-3).
    1. Pharaoh's conquest of Gaza (1) is not the judgment that Jeremiah is prophesying, but rather the time that the prophecy is given (609 BC). Nebuchadnezzar—the one rising from the north (2)—would come about 5 years after the prophecy by Jeremiah. It would have been tempting for the Philistines to think that the battle with Pharaoh was the judgment, but it would not even compare to the coming judgment.
    2. God's judgment is like water that is rising. This metaphor does not strike us as scary. Likely, none of us have experienced the terror of water rising quickly



without a means of escape. During the recent hurricane, we knew of someone who nearly got trapped in their attic because the water was rising rapidly. I can only imagine what this would have felt like.

3. The judgment will be so severe that grown men will cry out (2). In addition, the men will be so scared because of the sound of the chariots that they will not even go back to rescue their children (3). Their hands will be limp.
  4. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of an angry God (Heb. 10:26-31).
- B. God's judgment on the wicked will be relentless (4-7).
1. All the Philistines were destroyed. History tells us that by the 5th century BC, the Philistines were completely destroyed. Not only will Philistia be destroyed but Tyre and Sidon will no longer be an ally.
  2. God takes the credit for destroying the Philistines (4). Our tendency is to avoid any reference to God's wrath when we share the Gospel, but this is not what the Bible does. For example, Paul tells us that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth (Rom. 1:18). In order to rightly understand the Gospel, we must understand God's wrath that is poured out on sinners.
  3. Not only was shaving your head and gashing yourself a sign of mourning (5; cf. 16:6), but also a way to get a god's attention. Elijah mocked the worshippers of Baal and said that their god did not hear them, so they responded by calling out and gashing themselves (1 Kings 18:27-29). In fact, they cut themselves so badly that the blood gushed out. The Philistines attempted to get their god's attention by gashing themselves to no avail.
  4. The sword refers to Babylon (6-7). God wields that sword and will not put it back into its sheath. During God's judgment on the wicked, there will be no rest.

**Conclusion:** God's judgment poured out on these wicked nations points to a future judgment when God pours out His wrath on all those who reject His Son. We must be bold to proclaim God's deliverance through Jesus Christ from the wrath of God. Let us pray that God would give us boldness to proclaim the Gospel this week (Eph. 6:19).

## **Text: Jeremiah 48:1-47**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The wicked deserve God's wrath (1-47).
  - A. No amount of weeping will cause God to relent (1-10).
    - 1. The inhabitants of these cities cry out in distress, yet God continues to pour out His wrath (3, 4, 5). There will be no escape (8-9).
    - 2. Why do they deserve God's wrath? Because they trust in their own achievements (7). This is no different than today. People trust in their own works for their justification.
    - 3. God's judgment is so severe that He curses the nation that relents in pouring out His wrath (10). There is a similar example of this when God was pouring out His wrath on the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:2-3, 24-28).
  - B. The wicked will be ashamed because they foolishly trusted in their own gods (11-20; cf. 13, 20).
    - 1. The Moabites had never faced difficulty (11), so they wrongly assumed that their god, Chemosh, had protected them (13). They were like wine that had never been separated from the dregs. It had continued to ferment so that it became completely worthless.
    - 2. Idolatry is creating a god that we form based on what we want it to be (13-14; cf. Ex. 32:4-5). Chemosh is depicted on coins as a warrior (cf. 14).
  - C. Because of her pride, she will become a laughingstock (21-44; cf. 29).
    - 1. The horn (strength) of Moab has been cut off (25). All of her cities will face God's judgment (21-24).
    - 2. Moab will be like a drunken person—staggering and vomiting (26). She laughed at Israel as Israel drank from the wrath of God (27), yet now she will drink from God's wrath and become a laughingstock herself (26, 39; cf. 25:15-16).
    - 3. When God pours out His wrath on Moab and her cities, He weeps over her (31-32, 36).
    - 4. Moab deserves every bit of God's wrath (40-44). She was arrogant toward the Lord.
  - D. Even though all the nations deserve God's wrath, He will have mercy on some (45-47).
    - 1. Jeremiah quotes sections from Numbers 21:28-29 and 24:17. In Numbers 22-24,

the Moabites contracted with Balaam to curse the Israelites (cf. Num. 22:5-6). This quote from Numbers is intended to prove that the Moabites deserved God's wrath. They were no better than the other nations.

2. Yet, God in His mercy promised to restore their fortunes back to them (47). This is the same promise that God gives to the Israelites repeatedly throughout the book of Jeremiah (29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7, 11, 26).

**Conclusion:** Each one of us deserves the wrath of God. We have all risen up in pride against God. Yet, God in His mercy has poured out His wrath on His only Son, so that we can be reconciled back to Him.

## **Text: Jeremiah 49:1-39**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The wicked deserve God's wrath (1-39; cf. 12).
  - A. When God pours out His wrath, He will not relent (2-3, 5, 7-10, 12-13, 17-18, 21-22, 23-27, 28-33, 35-38).
    1. God will pour out His wrath. There is not a single nation in this chapter that will not experience the relentless wrath of God.
    2. For the Ammonites, descendants of Lot's younger daughter (cf. Gen. 19:38), God pours out His wrath by setting the city on fire (2). The daughters will be like sheep rushing to and fro within the city walls (3).
    3. For the Edomites, descendants of Esau, their destruction will be like a grape gatherer who strips the vine bare (9-10). Typically, some grapes are left on the vine, but in Edom's case, all the grapes will be taken. She will be forced to drink from the cup of God's wrath (12). Her destruction will be like Sodom and Gomorrah (18).
    4. For Damascus, during her destruction she will be like a woman giving birth—panic has gripped her (24).
    5. For Kedar and Hazor, God will scatter them to all the winds—to the four corners of the earth (32).
    6. For Elam, God will break her bow (35). He will scatter her like the winds to the four corners of the earth (36). He will pour out His fierce anger on her (37).

- B. Those who trust in their own gods deserve God’s wrath (1, 3, 16).
  - 1. God, acting as Israel’s father, pours out His wrath on the Ammonites because they have stolen Gad which is Israel’s inheritance (1-2). Did they not think that God would take it back for His own children?
  - 2. Malcam (i.e. Molech) and his priests and princes will go into exile—there is no escape (3).
  - 3. The Edomites had been deceived by their god as well (16; “your terror” is only used here and likely refers to an idol [see 1 Kings 15:13 “horrid image”]). They proudly trusted in him, yet he could not deliver.
- C. Because of pride everyone deserves God’s wrath (4, 7, 16).
  - 1. The Edomites were proud because of their strength (4). The Hebrew word translated “valley” likely refers to “strength” (see also 47:5).
  - 2. The Edomites felt like no one could harm them. They were perched in the rocks and no one could reach them (16). Their arrogance deceived them.
- D. Even though all the nations deserve God’s wrath, He will have mercy on some (6, 39).
  - 1. The Ammonites and the Elamites were not somehow better than the rest. They deserved God’s wrath just like all the other nations. But God, who is rich in mercy, withheld His wrath on some.
  - 2. When we see God’s mercy on the nations, it ought to stir us up to praise Him for His mercy towards us. We did not deserve God’s mercy. We deserved His wrath.

## **Text: Jeremiah 50:1-46**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) The wicked deserve God’s wrath (1-46).
  - A. Those who trust in their own gods will be ashamed (1-3).
    - 1. Bel and Marduk refer to Babylon’s god of creation. But Babylon’s gods are nothing more than excrement. Jeremiah uses a pun to refer to “her idols” which literally refers to balls of excrement (2).
  - B. Even though all the nations deserve God’s wrath, He will have mercy on some (4-5;

17-20).

1. It seems as though Jeremiah's flow of thought has been interrupted. How can he talk about Babylon's destruction and then immediately talk about Israel's redemption (4-5)? Some view this section in Jeremiah as a series of messages that were randomly combined together. But instead, we ought to view this section as a reminder of God's mercy on some in the midst of His wrath.
  2. God will remember their sins no more (20).
- C. The wicked deserve God's wrath because they have opposed God (6-10).
1. Although Babylon participated in Israel's destruction, she claimed to be innocent (7). Israel was already scattered like sheep led astray by false shepherds (6), so why should Babylon guilty. But they had actually sinned against the Lord (7).
- D. The wicked deserve God's wrath because they rejoice when God's people suffer (11-16).
1. Babylon's rejoicing is likened to horses skipping in a field (11). They were overjoyed to find out that God's people would be in exile.
- E. When God pours out His wrath He will not relent (17-28; 33-46).
1. Clearly, Babylon is meant to be an object lesson—God will pour out His wrath on the wicked (23). They will be like Sodom and Gomorrah (40).
  2. The reason God pours out His wrath on the wicked is because they are in conflict with God Himself (24).
  3. God actually opens up His armory and utterly destroys His enemies (25-28). They all receive the sword, from the mighty men to the priests (35-37).
  4. God takes credit for the destruction of the wicked (44-45). He will come like a lion in the thicket and they will run.
- F. The wicked deserve God's wrath because of their pride (29-32).
1. Pride is ultimately against God (29). Pride says "I do not need God".

**Conclusion:** How is it that Israel is spared and Babylon is crushed? It is because Israel's Redeemer is strong and will vigorously plead their case (34). Our predicament is no different than Israel's, our only hope is to cling to our great Redeemer who pleads our case.

## Text: Jeremiah 51:1-64

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) When the Lord shatters His enemies (20-23), the idols of the nations will be exposed as false (1-64; cf. 5, 15-17, 44, 47, 52).
  - A. The destruction of the nations is the work of the Lord (1-14; cf. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14).
    - 1. God does not act as a spectator concerning the destruction of the wicked. He plans their destruction. God actually aroused the King of the Medes to destroy Babylon in 539 BC (11).
  - B. Since the Lord created all things, those who fear their idols are fools (15-23; cf. 15, 19).
    - 1. Jeremiah is quoting 10:12-16 in verses 15-19. The context in chapter 10 refers to fearing idols when you should fear the Maker of all things (10:5, 7).
    - 2. In what way are these idols deceitful (17)? They cannot do what they claim to be able to do—there is no breath in them. They are actually worthless (18).
    - 3. Those who trust in their idols will be shattered (20-23). They are shattered like a piece of pottery. The war club is probably a reference to the kings of the Medes (11, 28). These verses are alluding to Psalm 2:9 when the Lord shatters His enemies with a rod of iron. In Psalm 2, the rulers of the earth take counsel against the Lord, but will ultimately be crushed and the Lord will have the nations as His inheritance.
  - C. The nations deserve God's wrath because of all the evil they have done (24-44; cf. 24, 25, 34, 35, 36, 44).
    - 1. Although this whole section deals with the wickedness of Babylon, verses 34-35 summarize it well. Nebuchadnezzar has gorged himself on the nations. So, the violence that Babylon has done on the nations will be done to her (35-36).
  - E. When God judges the wicked, heaven and earth rejoice (45-58; cf. 48).
    - 1. God judges the wicked by punishing their idols (44, 47, 52). Although this Hebrew word has a wide range of meanings, Jeremiah 5:29 closely resembles the meaning here—to punish. The people are so closely connected with their idols that when God judges their idols, He is judging them as well.

2. Heaven and earth rejoice over the destruction of Babylon (48). This rejoicing pictures the future rejoicing of all God's people when Christ shatters all His enemies—joy to the world the Lord is come!
- F. Babylon's destruction is meant to picture the destruction of the wicked on the last day (59-64; cf. Rev. 18:21)
1. Babylon is a picture of all God's enemies. Jeremiah uses the term Leb-kamai (1) and Sheshak (41) which are cryptic names for Babylon. Obviously, he is not trying to hide this message from Babylon because he uses the term Babylon repeatedly in this section (1, 2, etc.).
  2. Also, after the message was given, Seraiah was to wrap the message in a stone and cast it into the river (63) This is what the angel does in Revelations (Rev. 18:21).

## **Text: Jeremiah 52:1-34**

**Theme:** The Lord of Hosts has spoken, listen carefully.

- I) You must take the warnings of God seriously, because He will pour out His wrath (1-30).
- A. God repeatedly warned Zedekiah, yet he would not listen (1-11; cf. 38:17-23; 34:2-4; 24:3-9).
1. The passage leaves no room for doubt—"he did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2). And the punishment was not by mere chance. God was angry with them and allowed the Babylonians to judge him (3).
  2. King Zedekiah was not just dragged to Babylon like the rest of the captives. He saw his children slaughtered before his eyes (10), before they blinded him and carried him off (11).
  3. Even when God pours out His wrath, He holds back some (6-7). Often during a siege, the city would run out of food and begin to do unthinkable things because of their hunger. Yet, in this situation, God allowed the Babylonians to break through the city walls right after they ran out of food. This was probably due to God's mercy towards Jeremiah (cf. 37:21).
- B. When God pours out His wrath, everyone suffers (12-16, 24-30).

1. Houses were burned, walls were destroyed and people were carried away as captives because of the people refused to listen to God's Word (13-15).
- C. Even the Temple of the Lord was destroyed because the people refused to listen (17-23; cf. 7:4)
1. The Temple had been completely looted. All the bronze that was taken was beyond weight (20).
  2. Since this was where the Temple of the Lord dwelt, the Israelites thought that God would never allow the city to be captured. When Jeremiah preached his Temple sermon, the people responded by repeating the phrase, "this is the Temple of the Lord" (7:4). Not only did God allow the city to be captured, He allowed the Temple to be looted.
- E. Even while God poured out His wrath on Zedekiah, He displayed His mercy on Jehoiachin (31-34).
1. Although Jehoiachin had been imprisoned for about 35 years, Evil-merodach released him and allowed him to eat at his table (31). Evil-merodach literally means foolish merodach which is a reminder that God often uses the foolish to accomplish His purposes.
  2. King Jehoiachin, also known as Coniah (cf. Jer. 22:24-28) only reigned for 3 months (cf. 2 Kings 24:8). Even though his reign was short, the Bible specifically mentions that he did evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Chron. 36:9).
  3. So, King Jehoiachin did not deserve any favors from God, yet, God in His mercy allowed him to eat at the King's table during the end of his life.

**Conclusion:** I can't help but see myself in King Jehoiachin. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, yet God showed him mercy.