

Study Guide

Jeremiah

Taught by Dayton Keesee



SUNSET
International Bible Institute



JEREMIAH



**Introductory
Old Testament Studies**

Taught by
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Jeremiah

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critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it one of the best and well adapted to this course of study. **“Jeremiah-Lamentations”** by Timothy M. Willis contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of this prophetic book. The author’s scholarly approach to this study will enhance your understanding of the prophet and his prophecy and help you to appreciate the over all content of this study. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for

(Certificate of Basic Bible Studies)

Each lesson is built around the instruction in the video or audio lectures. Listen to the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading:

You will be required to read the book of Jeremiah once by the completion of this course of study. You will also be asked to read the text for the class before coming to class. **(This will be 5% of your grade.)** You may also obtain and read the textbook, *“Jeremiah-Lamentations”* by Timothy M. Willis and receive an extra five (5) points on your grade. You need only to read the section on Jeremiah.

Tests:

There will be two tests to complete for this course. Test one will be taken at the end of lesson twelve (12) and the final test is to be taken at the end of lesson twenty-four (24). Each test will cover only the previous twelve lessons studied. All assignments must be completed by the time of your final test. Each test must be passed with a 70% or better to pass this course. **(This will be 85% of your grade.)**

Memory Work:

You will have twenty (20) verses to memorize in your study of Jeremiah. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passage done at the appropriate time. You are asked to *either*: write your verses out, correct them with a different colored pen after turning in your test. Turn them in with the mid-term or final test or you may choose to quote them to the test administrator and who will keep track of the verses completed. Please be diligent in doing all your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. **(Memory work will be worth 10% of your grade.)**

Due with the mid-term test: (11 verses)

Jeremiah 1:4-8; 2:13; 3:25; 4:22; 5:1, 30-31.

Due with the final test: (9 verses)

Jeremiah 9:24; 10:21, 23; 17:10-11; 31:31-34.

- The self exams for each lesson are to be read previous to listening to or viewing the material on the tapes.
- All the memory verses assigned must be either written or quoted after each assigned test is taken. Half are due with the mid-term test the other half with the final. These must be completed to pass the course.
- All work is due and must be completed at the time of the final test.

Grading Scale:	Memory Work	10%
	Two Tests	85%
	Reading	<u>5%</u>
	TOTAL	100%

TEXTBOOK READING	EXTRA	5%
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Instructions and Requirements for

(Bachelor of Biblical Studies)

Each lesson is built around the instruction in either the video or audio lecture. Listen to the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading:

You will be required to read the book of *Jeremiah* once by the completion of this course of study. You will also be asked to read the text for each class before coming to that class. One textbook will accompany this course: *Jeremiah-Lamentations*, by Timothy M. Willis. Read the section on Jeremiah and write a **three page summary** of the material on *Jeremiah* in the textbook. This paper must be written and sent in with the final exam. **(This will be 10% of your grade.)**

Tests:

There will be two tests to complete for this course. Test one will be taken at the end of lesson twelve (12) and the final test is to be taken at the end of lesson twenty-four (24). Each test will cover only the previous twelve lessons studied. All assignments must be completed by the time of your final test. Each test must be passed with a 70% or better to pass this course. **(This will be 85% of your grade.)**

Memory Work:

You will have twenty-eight (28) verses to memorize in your study of Jeremiah. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passage done at the appropriate time. You are asked to either: *write your verses out*, correct them with a different colored pen and turn them in with the mid-term or final test or *quote them to the test administrator* and he will keep track of the verses completed. Please be diligent in doing all your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. **(Memory work will be worth 10% of your grade.)**

Due with the mid-term test: (15 verses)

Jeremiah 1:4-8; 2:13; 3:25; 4:22; 5:1, 30-31; 6:14, 16; 7:23-24.

Due with the final test: (13 verses)

Jeremiah 9:24; 10:21, 23; 12:5; 17:10-11; 20:8-9; 29:13; 31:31-34.

- The self exams for each lesson is to be read previous to listening to or viewing the material on the tapes.
- All the memory verses assigned must be either written or quoted before each assigned test is taken. Half are due with the mid-term test the other half with the final. These must be completed to pass the course.
- All work is due and must be completed at the time of the final test.

Grading Scale:	Memory Work	10%
	Two Tests	80%
	Reading	<u>10%</u>
	TOTAL	100%

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LESSON ONE

JEREMIAH - A PROPHET OF JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION

A man of monumental spiritual stature presents to us the longest prophetic book of the Old Testament. Jeremiah didn't do anything in miniature. His prophecies pronounced God's justice and judgment on at least 20 different countries and cities (Jeremiah 25:18-28). He started while young and continued for over 40 years with a "thus saith the Lord" indictment delivered to kings, princes, false prophets, priests, and people of every level of life. He delivered a special promise from God to an Ethiopian slave, who befriended him (39:15-18), and yet pronounced judgment and calamity on Babylon's world empire (51:59-64).

There was nothing placid nor passive about his prophetic life and lip. He was a warrior in love with righteousness and a human whose heart vibrated with fleshly feelings founded on faith. There is no way one can place his message and mission in the normal category. His message came out of heaven, and his mission was a declaration of doom and desolation for the masses.

You are about to launch into one of the most divine adventures of stimulating study found in sacred Scripture. J.D. Douglas wrote, "It is no exaggeration to say that in order to understand what the Old Testament means by the term prophet, it is necessary to study the book of Jeremiah."

LESSON TEXT: All scriptures in the following study.

LESSON AIM: To familiarize the student with the prophet and his book.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. You will become familiar with the time of Jeremiah's prophecies, the kings who reigned, Solomon's influence on Judah's idolatry, and the mind-set of the people to whom he spoke.
 2. You will discover the structure and style of the book, Jeremiah's style of preaching, and how his life and Jesus' life are related.
-

Jeremiah, by the grace of God, became a tower of strength, a real man's man, one of God's outstanding heroes. Not once did he break down in public. Facing his people, he was invariably the man of God, the messenger of the Lord's mercy, calling to repentance the nation he loved with a love as tender as that of a mother, as sincere as that of a faithful friend, a brother. His love of his people, however, did not

interfere with his sense of duty, nor his love and obedience toward God. Unsparingly, he pronounced God's judgments upon the impenitent without respect of persons. Like walls of brass he stood firm against frenzied prophets, fanatic priests, frantic people, and furious kings. Calmly he faced this pack of snarling wolves ready to murder him. Neither defamation, nor persecution, nor imprisonment, nor threats of death kept him from speaking whatever God commanded him. Only when alone with himself and his God did he give voice to his agonized feelings, his doubts and fears, his heartaches and gnawing grief.

THE PERIOD OF JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES

A. The Location and Time Span of Jeremiah's Life

1. In Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin, a city about 2½ miles northeast of Jerusalem (1:1).
2. In Jerusalem (29:1; 32:2-3, 7-9; 38:6, 13; 39:14).
 - a. He grew up in a priestly atmosphere – his father being a priest (1:1).
 - b. There is no record of Jeremiah serving as a priest.
3. His prophetic life spanned the period from the thirteenth year of Josiah until the 11th year of Zedekiah (1:2-3).
 - a. Judah went into captivity in 587 B.C.
 - b. Jeremiah was taken to Egypt by his own people at this time.
 - c. Josiah became king in 640 B.C.
 - d. Jeremiah began his prophetic work in 627 B.C. when Judah became a desolation.

B. The Kings Who Reigned During Jeremiah's Prophetic Work

1. Jeremiah prophesied for 40 years under five different kings.
 - a. **Josiah** - reigned 640 to 609 B.C. (31 years). (1 Chronicles 3:14-17 and 2 Kings 21:23 - 22:2).
 - b. **Jehoahaz** (Shallum) - reigned in 609 B.C. (3 months). (2 Kings 23:30-37; Jeremiah 22:11).
 - c. **Jehoiakim** - reigned 609 to 598 B.C. (11 years). (2 Chronicles 36:5-9).
 - d. **Jehoiachin** (Coniah) - reigned 598 B.C. (3 months). (2 Kings 24:5-12; Jeremiah 22:24-30).
 - e. **Zedekiah** - reigned 597 to 586 B.C. (11 years). (2 Kings 24:17-20; 2 Chronicles 36:10-13).
2. Only Josiah properly served God and the people (2 Kings 22-25).

C. Solomon's Influence on the Nation's Idolatrous Practices

According to the Law given in Deuteronomy 17:15-17:

1. The king was not to multiply horses nor return to Egypt, but Solomon did both (1 Kings 10:26-29; 4:26).
2. The king was not to multiply wives for himself, but Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:1-8).
3. The king was not to greatly increase silver and gold for himself, but Solomon has such treasure coming in by the shiploads (1 Kings 10:14-15, 21-23).

4. The one sobering command, *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me* (Deuteronomy 5:7) was ignored by Solomon.
5. Solomon catered to the gods of many:
 - a. The Zidonians – Ashtoreth; Baal
 - b. The Moabites – Chemosh
 - c. The Ammonites – Milcom (Moloch)

D. Jeremiah and Judah

What was the mind-set in Judah after the rebellious trend set by the last four kings?

1. Some were saying, “We must return to the pagan practices of Manasseh’s day.”
2. Some were saying, “The Lord has deserted the land. He does not know or care what is taking place” (Ezekiel 9:9).
3. Some felt the Lord was being unjust with the nation.
4. Some were boldly declaring the ways of the Lord were not fair and just (Ezekiel 18:25).

NOTE: These were the times and tragedies in which Jeremiah was called on to preach and write God’s messages. He lived in a corrupted nation that was only one step away from desolation and destruction.

THE STRUCTURE AND STYLE OF JEREMIAH’S PROPHECIES

A. The Structure of the Book

1. Large blocks of the material are in chronological order.
2. Some chapters are inserted which jump forward or backward in time.
3. Some material is grouped together topically instead of chronologically.
4. See the outline of Jeremiah at the end of this lesson.

B. The Style of the Book

1. Definition: “Style is to make those observations that could assist the reader in his or her personal study.”
2. Repetition is used extensively. God called for repetition because there was something Judah *needed to do relative to their sins*.
3. Notice the repetition of verses in the chart below.

Verse Repetitions In The Book Of Jeremiah

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 1:18-19 and 15:20 | i. 11:20 and 20:12 |
| b. 2:28 and 11:13 | j. 15:2 and 48:11 |
| c. 5:9, 29 and 9:9 | k. 16:14-15 and 23:7-8 |
| d. 6:13-15 and 8:10-12 | l. 17:25 and 22:4 |
| e. 6:22-24 and 50:41-43 | m. 23:19-20 and 30:23-24 |
| f. 7:14 and 26:6 | n. 30:11 and 46:28 |
| g. 7:31-33 and 19:5-7; 32:35 | o. 31:35-36 and 33:25-26 |
| h. 10:12-16 and 51:15-19 | |

4. References to natural creation.
 - a. Eleven references to plants.
 - b. Six references to farmers and farming.
 - c. Six references to the wonders of nature – oceans, vapors, rain and lightening.

C. He Used Visual Aids and Parables

1. In Jeremiah 13:1-11, God instructed Jeremiah to buy a linen waistband (girdle-KJV), wear it (not wash it), finally taking it all the way to the Euphrates River and hide it under a rock.
2. In Jeremiah 25:15-31, God called on the prophet to take a cup of wine, causing representatives from the nations to drink of it as a sobering symbol of how His wrath would be poured out on the nations.
3. In Jeremiah 27:2ff, God called on Jeremiah to make and wear a yoke akin to a beast of burden. God was demonstrating to Judah and surrounding nations that they would either be enslaved to Babylon, or they would receive God's own special punishment.
4. In Jeremiah 32:6ff, God told Jeremiah to buy a plot of ground. With the army of Babylon camped outside, special care was given to affirm ownership. Jeremiah was declaring his faith in the fact God's people would return to claim ownership of that conquered country in days to come.
5. In Jeremiah 35, God told His prophet to take the family of the Rechabites to the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink. God knew the Rechabites would refuse to drink, demonstrating a family loyalty to their father, Rechab, which was in stark contrast to Judah, who would not be loyal to God.

D. Jeremiah and Jesus in Parallel

Note the following similarities between Jeremiah and Jesus.

1. Both were aware of a God-given mission while they were young (Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 2:42-51).
2. Both faced struggles from their own family, who did not believe them or encourage them (Jeremiah 12:6; John 7:1-5).
3. Both would face their trials without the encouragement or joys of companionship (Jeremiah 16:1ff; Acts 8:33).
4. Both lived in similar national settings, with Judah under Assyria, Egypt or Babylon rule in Jeremiah's day and the rule of Rome in Christ's day (2 Kings 21:10-16; 23:26-37; 24:1; 25:1-10; Luke 2:1-7; 3:1f; John 19:1-15).
5. Both had to react against the leaders and officials of their day (Jeremiah 5:13ff, 30f; 6:13-15; 23:1ff, 13-21; Matthew 6:1-18; 15:1-9; 23:1-33).
6. Both were burdened by the outlook and attitude related to the Temple in their day, knowing what would happen to it (Jeremiah 7:4; 52:12-14; 2Chronicles 36:19; Matthew 24:1f, 15-22; Luke 21:22-24).
7. Both wept over Jerusalem and God's people (Jeremiah 9:1; 4:19-22; Luke 19:41; Matthew 23:37-39).
8. Both Jeremiah and Jesus were unique because of their prayers and prayer life.

- I. Introduction (Chapter One)
- II. Prophecies Against Judah and Jerusalem (Chs. 2-45)
 - A. God's Charge to the Prophet Received and Carried Out (Chs. 2-25)
 - B. The Reaction of the People to the Prophet (Chs. 26-36)
 - C. God's Promise Fulfilled by the Desolation and Destruction in Judah (Chs. 37-45)
- III. Jeremiah's Prophecies Against the Nations (Chs. 46-51)
 - A. Egypt (Ch. 46)
 - B. Philistia, Tyre, Sidon (Ch. 47)
 - C. Moab (Ch. 48)
 - D. Ammon (49:1-6)
 - E. Edom (49:7-22)
 - F. Damascus (49:23-27)
 - G. Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)
 - H. Elam – including Media (49:34-39)
 - I. Babylon (Chs. 50-51)
- IV. A Review of Judah's Ruin (Ch. 52)

NOTE: Prophets contemporary with Jeremiah (627 through 586 B.C.)

Nahum (625-612 B.C.)	Daniel (605-536 B.C.)
Zephaniah (630 -625 B.C.)	Ezekiel (593-570 B.C.)
Habakkuk (625-605 B.C.)	

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE

1. What year did Jeremiah begin to prophecy?_____. How long did he prophecy _____, and who was king when he began to his prophetic ministry _____?
2. List the five (5) kings of Judah who ruled during Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. Also give the dates of their reign.
 - 1) _____ 4) _____
 - 2) _____ 5) _____
 - 3) _____
3. List three (3) things Solomon did which was an influence on Judah's idolatrous practices.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
4. Give three (3) visual aids or parables Jeremiah used in his preaching.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. Who was the last "good" king of Judah and how did he die?

6. List the prophets who were contemporary with Jeremiah.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
7. Write out the outline of Jeremiah. (This outline will show up on your test).

LESSON TWO

JEREMIAH'S PREACHING AND REJECTION

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of Jeremiah's preaching is clearly stated in 1:10: "*See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.*"

It would have been so heartening if people would have allowed the planting and building aspects of Jeremiah's ministerial efforts. Immediate success surely was not to be seen. What was seen are the devoted efforts by God and His prophet, "rising up early and speaking" (Jeremiah 7:13); "*I have spoken to you again and again*" (25:3); "*Yet you have not listened to me*" (35:14). Note this same emphasis in Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4.

These repeated efforts were not echoed from a single pulpit somewhere on the Temple grounds. Indeed, *where* God sent His prophet to preach is one of the valuable lessons this generation needs to see.

LESSON TEXT: All scriptures in the following notes.

LESSON AIM: To see the character of, place of, and the response to Jeremiah's preaching.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. You will become acquainted with some of the places Jeremiah preached and the significance of preaching in those places.
 2. You will come to know a list of people that rejected Jeremiah's preaching and his message.
 3. Understand the cost Jeremiah paid for preaching and the ways in which he was rejected.
-

PLACES WHERE JEREMIAH PREACHED

A. Jeremiah Did Not Preach from a Pulpit on the Temple Grounds.

1. **He preached in the gate of the Lord's house** to proclaim His word (Jeremiah 7:2) and in the court of the Lord's house (26:2; 19:14).
 - a. This is where those interested in God's message should gather (Isaiah 2:3).
 - b. This was not the only place God wanted His message proclaimed.
2. **The gates of the city**, where the kings of Judah would "come and go out" (17:19-20). People gather where the kings would be. The message was not

- only for the kings but for “all Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”
3. **The king’s palace** (22:1; 37:17).
 4. **In prison** because the word of the Lord also came to him there (32:2, 6-8; 33:1f).
 - a. Jesus judges some as to whether they have visited souls in prison (Matthew 25:34-43).
 - b. Prison ministries around the world are one of the most fruitful areas of evangelism being found (John 15:5, 8).
 5. **In enemy territory**—in the valley of the son of Hinnom (19:1-2).
 - a. This area became the *city dump* and a place for burning.
 - b. It was the place where children were offered as a sacrifice to the god, Molech (2 Kings 23:10).
 - c. It became known as the Valley of Slaughter (Jeremiah 19:6).
 - d. The Hebrew word translated into Greek is “Gehenna,” the term Jesus used 11 times for hell (Matthew 5:22, 29f; 10:28; Luke 12:5).
 6. **In the enemies’ houses** (Jeremiah 37:15f; 20:1-6). It included angry officials, beatings and being put in stocks.
 7. **On foreign soil—in the land of Egypt** (Jeremiah 43:8-13).
 - a. Many of God’s spokesmen went into foreign lands to speak God’s message.
 - 1) Jonah was sent to Nineveh in Assyria (Jonah 1:1f; 3:1-3).
 - 2) Amos related to Damascus (Amos 1:3ff), to the Philistines and others (Amos 1:8), to Tyre and Edom (Amos 1:10-15) and Moab (Amos 2:1-3).
 - 3) Obadiah had a “thus saith the Lord” for Edom (Obadiah 1:1).
 - 4) Nahum took another message to Nineveh in Assyria (Nahum 1:1; 2:8; 3:1, 18).
 - 5) Daniel spent much of his life on foreign soil, relating to rulers in both Babylon and the Medo-Persian Empire (Daniel 1:1-6; 5:29-31; 6:1-3; 9:1f).
 - b. God ordained Jeremiah to be a prophet to more nations than all the others put together (Jeremiah 1:10; 46-51).
 8. God also directed the prophet to **correspond with the captives who were living on foreign soil** (Jeremiah 29:1-13).

B. What Lessons Do We Learn from Jeremiah’s Preaching?

1. **Speak God’s word.** “Thus saith the Lord” was his message. Never did his message contain “it seems to me,” or “I think so,” or “it is my opinion.”
2. **Speak God’s word with all your heart.** It was in Jeremiah’s heart to deliver God’s message.
 - a. Why Jeremiah did not quit. “*In my heart it becomes like a burning fire, shut up in my bones and I am weary of holding it in*” (20:9).
 - b. This inner fire in his heart compelled him to rise above all ridicule, step over all stress, march on in the face of mockery to declare Jehovah’s message to Judah.
 - c. God would tell Judah through Jeremiah, “*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*”(29:13). Jeremiah’s

Maker and his Maker's message flowed from his heart!

3. **Seeks God's insight as to *where* to speak.** God sent His prophet into 8 different areas to speak. It was not Jeremiah's ambition that picked those places. God did! He stood and spoke at the aforementioned variety of places because God wanted him there.

REJECTION BY THOSE TO WHOM JEREMIAH PREACHED

A. Jeremiah Was Rejected by His Neighbors

Jeremiah was from Anathoth (1:1). The people there were seeking his life, saying, "Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, that you might not die at our hands" (11:21). These were his neighbors!

B. Jeremiah Was Rejected by His Friends (20:10)

Even his friends (literally, all the men of my peace) – those who greeted him with familiar greetings of friendship—are watching his every move.

C. Jeremiah Was Rejected by His Family (12:6).

God informs Jeremiah that his brothers and the "household of your father . . . have dealt treacherously with you."

D. Jeremiah Was Rejected by Kings

1. After Josiah, the next four kings not only did evil in God's sight, they gave no encouragement to God's prophet (2 Kings 23:31f, 36f; 24:8f, 18-20).
2. During the brief reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum) and Jehoiachin (Coniah), each is described in these words, "*He did evil in the sight of the Lord*" (2 Kings 23:32; 24:9).
3. Jehoiakim burned the writing of Jeremiah's prophecies, and tried to have him killed (Jeremiah 36:19-26).
4. Zedekiah, a king who would not lead, must have been a constant frustration to Jeremiah.

E. Jeremiah Was Rejected By Priests and Prophets

God's assessment of Jeremiah's fellow-preachers: "*For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest, every one deals falsely. And they have healed the wound of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace*" (Jeremiah 6:13-14).

1. Jeremiah did not just speak God's words *about them*. He spoke *to them*: "*How can you say, 'We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us?' But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie*" (8:8).
2. Jeremiah unmasked their hypocrisy: "*From the prophet even to the priest, every one practices deceit. Were they ashamed because of the abominations they had done? They certainly were not ashamed, and they did not know how to blush*" (8:10, 12).
3. In Jeremiah 20: 1-2 Pashur the priest had Jeremiah beaten and put in stocks. In Jeremiah 26:11 prophets and priests joined forces, calling for Jeremiah's

death. Most of chapters 27-29 are devoted to Jeremiah's denunciation of false prophets.

F. Jeremiah Was Rejected By All The People (Jeremiah 25:8)

HOW JEREMIAH WAS REJECTED

A. The People Refused to Hear or Obey

1. Their response was, "We will not listen" (Jeremiah 6:16-17).
2. God had informed Jeremiah it would be that way! Jeremiah 7:27 states: *"You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you; and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, or accept correction; truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth."*
3. Truth was not cut off from their *ears*! Even though they would not heed it.
4. God considers hearing important. Seven recorded times Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16 KJV; Luke 8:8; 14:35).

B. The People Responded With Ridicule (Jeremiah 18:18; 20:7; 28:5-11)

C. The People Cast Reflection On His Character

1. Arrested and branded as a traitor: "You are going over to the Chaldeans" (37:13).
2. Branded as a liar: "You are telling a lie! The Lord our God has not sent you" (43:2).

D. The People Responded With Physical Abuse

1. Pashur had Jeremiah beaten. *Beaten* is same word as *strike* in 18:18, and this time it was not with the tongue (20:2).
2. He was beaten by the officials (37:15).
3. He was taken and cast into a cistern, where he sank in mud. Jeremiah kept speaking, and they kept harassing and beating.

E. The People Put the Prophet in Prison

1. Pashur seems to have been the first to confine Jeremiah in prison, placing him in stocks. This is more than confinement – it is *painful confinement*.
2. He was also in a place known as the dungeon (37:16; 38:6-13), or house of the pit, and spent much time in the court of the guardhouse.

F. The People Made Threats On His Life

1. While he was still preaching to and praying for the people, they were plotting his death: "that his name be remembered no more" (Jeremiah 11:19).
2. When Jeremiah delivered his great lesson in the court of the Lord's house, the cry burst forth, "You must die."

3. Later the priests and prophets said to the officials, “A death sentence for this man” (26:6-11).
4. In the 5th year of Jehoiakim, the king burned what Jeremiah had written, seeking to bring him in for judgment (36:9, 21-26).

G. The Remnant Forced Jeremiah To Go To Egypt (43:5-6)

Johanan, the current leader of the remnant at the time, “*took the entire remnant of Judah. . . together with Jeremiah the prophet*” and headed for Egypt (43:5-6) **Jeremiah was forced to go against his own message.**

When one has lived such an obedient life before the Lord as Jeremiah had, how sad that he was made to go against his own message by these rebellious rogues. This adds meaning to Paul’s statements that Satan had hindered him repeatedly (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Romans 15:22).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. List eight places where Jeremiah preached.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

2. List six people or groups of people who rejected Jeremiah’s preaching.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

3. List seven ways in which Jeremiah was rejected.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

LESSON THREE

THE RESPONSE OF JEREMIAH TO REJECTION

INTRODUCTION:

The answer takes us back through the book to observe what has come to be called “Jeremiah’s Confessions.” What they were, to whom he made them, and what the results were unfolds as one of the most challenging, penetrating, practical and profitable lessons a servant of God will ever study.

Jeremiah sets a standard for all who have been burdened by their brethren; who have faced unfairness from their own family; who have tried to help others only to be mistreated by them; who have reached out to redeem the times to only reel in remorse at the rot and ruin of the sick social scene that surrounds you; who have persistently proclaimed God’s precepts, which are countered by false proclaimers who unscrupulously feed on the fruit of their weaknesses, only to have those weaknesses attack and turn on you; who have prayed and pleaded for reform in the land only to see the landslide of losers and lostness unfold before you. Though tempted to give up, Jeremiah never did!

LESSON AIM: To see the progression of Jeremiah’s trust and reliance on God as he faces the antagonism of the rulers and people.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the prophet’s response and reaction to the nation’s fall.
 2. Learn of God’s reaction to Jeremiah’s questions and requests for God to bring the judgment now.
 3. Understand that Jeremiah’s faith and trust in God and His purpose will grow until he learns to rely on God’s promises.
-

THE PROPHET’S EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

A. Jeremiah’s Response to Judah’s Fall

1. How did all of this affect him? Did he ever waver?
2. Jeremiah felt the fickleness of the flesh, wavered in weakness, and faced deep depression, *but still carried out all his Creator commissioned him to do!*
3. Jeremiah swung through the whole range of human emotions with a mountain of murmuring, mocking and misery before him.

B. Jeremiah's Confessions

1. A desire to run away (Jeremiah 9:2-3).
 - a. The reason: "that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (9:1).
 - b. While Jeremiah stands observing their wicked way on the one hand, wanting to redeem them, another part of his person is crying: "*O that I had in the desert a wayfarer's lodging place, that I might leave my people and go from them! For all of them are adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongue like their bow; Lies and not truth prevail in the land; For they proceed from evil to evil*" (9:2-3).

C. Personal Plots Against the Prophet (11:18-25)

1. Jeremiah's first conflict with the people of Judah came from his own people at Anathoth.
2. Since King Josiah's reform efforts began in the 12th year of his reign (2 Chronicles 34:1-5), and Jeremiah began his prophetic work in the 13th year of Josiah's reign (Jeremiah 1:2), then surely Jeremiah was part of that diligent effort to purge Judah and Jerusalem of their idolatry.
3. Jeremiah's description of his neighbors' animosity. "*I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter, and I did not know they had devised plots against me, saying 'Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living that his name be remembered no more'*" (11:19).

D. Jeremiah's Three Quick Responses (12:1-4)

1. He **compliments God** and **seeks out God's help** (12:1). It is important to keep this point in mind for it will be Jeremiah's pattern in the months and years ahead as his troubles intensify.
2. Jeremiah **questions God**, asking, "*Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?*" (12:1b). This questioning of God is also to be a pattern.
3. Jeremiah **exposes some self pity**. In 12:2 Jeremiah tries to educate God, describing how those people really are. In verses 3 and 4 Jeremiah reminds God of His good attitude toward those people, how God should punish them, and that God needs to do it *now!*

E. God's response to Jeremiah (12:5;).

1. God presents two questions to Jeremiah.
 - a. "*If you have run with footmen and they tired you out, then how can you compete with horses?*"
 - b. "*If you fall down in a land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?*"
2. God is basically saying to His prophet, "Jeremiah, rather than sink in self pity, stand up and prepare for the more stressful tomorrows."
3. What a tremendous message on God's insight as to what we can stand.

JEREMIAH'S DEEPER, MOUNTING TRIALS

Jeremiah's trials were just beginning and would get worse. He certainly was not through with his wavering and worry. In brief, he had not yet really discovered deity (cf. John 17:3).

A. Jeremiah's Mixed Emotions (15:15-18)

1. Wavering and worry, pressure and stress are about to sink Jeremiah's soul.
2. He poured out his feelings and frustrations to God. Jeremiah 15:15-18 presents **consternation** and **confusion**, **reasoning** mixed with **remorse**, **desire** coupled with **doubt**, **commendation** intermingled with **criticism**.
3. Jeremiah wants God to remember him (v. 15) and yet declares he went to God for refreshment, and God deceived him and was unreliable (v. 18).
 - a. He received and feasted on God's message as a joy and delight of his heart (v.16), and yet God is accused of filling him with indignation (v.17).
 - b. He pleaded with God in His patience not to take him away (v. 15), and yet because of God he sat alone (v. 17).
 - c. Jeremiah seemed to take pride in the fact he had been called by God's name (v.16), and yet because of God's assignment he endured reproach (v.15).
 - d. In these mixed up musings, Jeremiah's pain had become perpetual, and his wound seemed incurable (v. 18).

B. What Did God Do? (15:19-21)

1. Jeremiah was slipping into the same pattern Judah had followed, even to the point of declaring God was not sufficient or reliable.
2. God cut through all of Jeremiah's confusion with one good solid demand—quit being influenced by them and turn back to Me, where Jeremiah could be restored and once again be God's spokesman (15:19).
3. The reason for his discouragement. In four verses (15:15-18) he used the first person (I, me, my) sixteen times! His fundamental problem was that he was too concerned about what he himself must endure.
4. If Jeremiah would turn to God rather than to the wayward ways of Judah, in verse 20 God assures Jeremiah, *"Then I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze, and though they fight against you, they will not prevail over you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you, declares the Lord."*
5. God promised Jeremiah all this in the first chapter (1:17-19).

C. Jeremiah's Perils Continue to Mount

1. Jeremiah continues to inform God about what these people are doing, offering God counsel in regard to what He should do. In Jeremiah 17:15 the prophet states to God, *"Look, they keep saying to me, 'Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now!'"*
2. This word "come" becomes a toy with which to taunt Jeremiah. It is the same word translated "I brought on them" in 11:8 (cf. 19:15 – "to bring on this city. the entire calamity that I have declared against it"; 28:9- "come

to pass”). Jeremiah has been warning of the calamity coming on these people, and they mockingly respond, “Bring it on, Jeremiah, let it come now!”

3. Mixed emotions! Jeremiah pleads for their repentance while being so disgusted with them that he wants God to give them a double dose of disaster!

D. Jeremiah and Judah--Coming to a Climax (18:18-23)

1. Jeremiah goes again to God, urging that He note what his opponents are saying. He also poses a pertinent question: “Should good be repaid with evil?” (v. 20).
2. Jeremiah questions whether God is handling this matter as it should be handled.
3. Jeremiah outlines the punishment they should receive. Jeremiah’s suggestions are heavy and harsh: “Give their children over to famine and deliver them up to the power of the sword. . . let their wives become childless and widowed. Let their men also be smitten to death, their young men struck down by the sword in battle. . . Do not forgive their iniquity or blot out their sin from Thy sight. . . Deal with them in the time of Thine anger” (18:21-23).

E. Why Did Jeremiah React As He Did?

1. Personal attacks against Jeremiah. Two different times Jeremiah expressed the cause: “For they have dug a pit for me. . . For they have dug a pit to capture me”(18:20, 22).
2. There are two things to Jeremiah’s credit.
 - a. He went to God with his feelings rather than launch an attack himself of seeking an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth.
 - b. Whatever retribution Jeremiah felt was just, he brought the matter before God, counting on Him to pour out the punishment. It is a fundamental law from God, that God has decreed: “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord*” (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19).
3. We need to learn and respect that law. Common sense verifies why:
 - a. God is wiser than we are.
 - b. God knows all things within and without, never operating from part of the facts.
 - c. God has greater love, grace and mercy, and is more longsuffering than we are.
 - d. God knows the future, which includes whether a person or people will change in some tomorrow (an important insight in Christ’s prayer-Luke 23:34; Acts 2:36-47; 6:7).
 - e. God is more powerful than we are, enabling Him to punish better than we could (if punishment is needed).

F. Jeremiah’s Method Amidst Misery

1. Jeremiah’s formula for faithfulness and perseverance.
 - a. Jeremiah affirmed personal weaknesses in his confessions and

complaints. Yet, he kept all of these in a controlled corner, resulting in his ability to avoid wrong doing. Even Jesus became angry (Mark 3:5), but He sinned not (1 Peter 2:22).

- b. Jeremiah moved to his Maker when doubt, fear, unfairness, or a judgmental spirit brewed within him.
 - c. He depended on God to enact any punishment on pretenders or polluted people who chanced to cross his path.
 - d. He learned to accept reality—good or bad—with a gradually growing awareness that God is mighty and will prevail.
2. Jeremiah's lingering doubt.
- a. Why has the way of the wicked prospered? (12:1).
 - b. Why has my pain been perpetual and my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? (15:18).
 - c. Will you, indeed, be to me like a deceptive stream with water that is unreliable? (15:18).
 - d. Should good be repaid with evil? (18:20).
- Within these questions are obvious efforts to either assist God or get Him to act.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. What was Jeremiah's response to Judah's fall? _____

2. Give the three-fold response by Jeremiah to the plots against him.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. Give two questions God asks Jeremiah concerning his questions.
 - 1) _____

 - 2) _____

4. What question does Jeremiah ask God in 18:19? _____

5. Jeremiah's lingering doubt is expressed by what four questions?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON FOUR

JEREMIAH'S LIFE COMES INTO FOCUS

INTRODUCTION:

Jeremiah had been through a raging storm of mixed emotions. He loved his people, prayed for his people, pleaded with his people to penitently turn back to God lest He make them a desolation—only to be branded as a traitor by those who were traitors before God! Jeremiah tried and he cried, he preached and prophesied only to be mocked daily as worthy of death. For months these frustrating experiences had burdened his soul with bitter struggles. These struggles we have been noting in his complaining comments from chapter 12 down to chapter 20. However, in chapter 20, C.F. Keil observes:

“Yet he stands immovably steadfast in the strife against all the powers of wickedness, like ‘a pillar of iron and a wall of brass against the whole land, the kings of Judah, its rulers and priests, and against the common people,’ so that all who strove against him could effect nothing, because the Lord, according to His promise, 1:18f., was with him, stood by his side as a terrible warrior and showed His power mighty in the prophet’s weakness.”

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 20:1-10 and other passages discussed by the teacher.

LESSON AIM: To chart Jeremiah’s progress from his state of discouragement to one of complete trust and reliance upon an Almighty and caring God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Review the past struggles Jeremiah had because of the unbelieving Israelites.
 2. See the change in Jeremiah from being a complainer to complete focus on God and His provision and protection.
 3. Learn six things which reflects Jeremiah’s concept of God.
 4. Learn ten ways God tried to bring Judah to repentance and their response to God’s warning.
-

It may have been the boldness Jeremiah manifested before Pashur and under those trying conditions that enabled him to get his life in focus and write the fabulous discovery he penned in 20:7-10. Four factors to note in this section.

1. Jeremiah affirms his personal weaknesses.
2. He always took his weaknesses to God.
3. He was in the process of allowing God to do the punishing.
4. He maintained an awareness that God was Almighty and that He will prevail.

JEREMIAH'S BATTLE WITH DISCOURAGEMENT (20:7-10)

A. Jeremiah's Discovery of God's Protection and Sufficiency

1. Jeremiah admits he reflected on forgetting God and speaking no more in His name.
2. Jeremiah's realization of what God promised him in chapter 1:7, "Everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all I command you, you shall speak."
 - a. The prophet realizes he would have quit, stopped speaking, but he didn't.
 - b. He rejoiced in knowing that God was with him.

B. Review of Past Struggles and Trials

1. Jeremiah's declaration, "*O Lord, Thou hast deceived me?*"
2. The key is the word, "deceived."
3. God, through a combination of openness, ingenuousness, and persuasion, brought Jeremiah through his trials, weaknesses and worries.
4. Jeremiah's five observations from his human vantage point.
 - a. The Mocking: "I have become a *laughingstock all day long*."
 - b. The Mass: "*Everyone mocks me*."
 - c. The Message: "I cry aloud, I proclaim violence and destruction."
 - d. The Meanness: "For the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision *all day long*."
 - e. The Mind-set: "I will not remember Him or speak any more in His name."

NOTE: With the foregoing mounting up in his mind, Jeremiah had concluded he would quit. That is when he discovered that he could not keep from speaking. It had to be a marvelous moment!

C. Jeremiah's Burdened Heart Becomes a Burning Heart. Two reasons:

1. **He focused on God's message**, knowing that message would stand the test of time.
2. **God becomes his central focus.** Jeremiah would now stand because his Maker was with him. Note James E. Smith's observations:
 "He knows his enemies are plotting against him. He even seems to hear them urging one another to lay false charges against him. Even his friends (literally, all the men of my peace)—those who greeted him with familiar greetings of friendship—are watching his every move. They hope that he will take one false step so that they may take advantage of it. Perhaps, they think, the prophet can be enticed or seduced into making some mistakes or saying something on which a charge of treason can be based. These enemies will stop at nothing. They are out for revenge against the meddlesome prophet who had dared contradict their pro-Egypt policy and pronounce the doom on their nations (v. 10)."
3. **From chapter 20 forward he never complains nor murmurs.**

D. Five Applications for God's Spokesman

1. **We are going to face fear in some form.** We have a choice:
 - a. Let it conquer us.
 - b. We, by God's grace, conquer it (1 John 4:17-19; 2 Timothy 1:7).
2. **We are going to be intimidated by some people or circumstances.** We have a choice:
 - a. Become ineffective.
 - b. Become effective by God's grace (Romans 8:33-39; 2 Corinthians 9:8).
3. **We are going to sometimes face and fear the unknown.** We have a choice:
 - a. Run from it.
 - b. Trust God to walk with us through it (Romans 8:26-28; 1 Peter 5:5-7).
4. **We are going to consider ourselves as inadequate for some of God's assignments.** We have a choice:
 - a. Convince ourselves and remain detached.
 - b. Mature and grow to become what He knows we can be (2 Corinthians 3:4-6; Hebrew 5:11-14; Ephesians 4:11-16).
5. **We are going to face pressure from little faith.** We have a choice:
 - a. Give in and give up.
 - b. Dig in and develop, get up, grow faith and go forward (Mark 9:14-24; Acts 14:21-23; 16:5; Philippians 1:27-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:12-14; James 2:22; 1 John 5:4; Jude vs. 20-21).

JEREMIAH'S CONCEPT OF GOD

- A. God is Sovereign, Who Rules Heaven and Earth** (10:12-13; 31:36-36; 5:22, 24; 8:7; 23:23-24; 27:5).
- B. God Controls *All Things* in Accord With His Will** (27:6-8; 18:5-10; 2:1-3; 25:15-28).
 1. God sets up kings and He removes kings (Daniel 2:20-23).
 2. "They have set up kings but not by Me" (Hosea 8:4). There are different stages of God's will.
 - a. God's ideal will.
 - b. God's allowed will.
 - c. God's ultimate will (Romans 14:10-12).
- C. God is Omnipresent** (23:23-24; 49:10; 22:1-14; cf. Psalm 139:1-18).
- D. God is Omniscient** (3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:20; 17:9-10; 20:12; 23:26; 29:23; 12:3).
- E. God is One Who Deals With Individuals** (39:15-18; 20:1-6; 29:24-32; 1:4-19; 11:11-14, 18-19; 15:19-21).
- F. God Loves His People But He Demands Obedience-Allegiance** (2:2-3; 31:1-3; 7:1-15; 29:4-10, 12-14; 44:12-14).

GOD'S TEN CALLS FOR JUDAH TO REPENT

A. Five Axioms Concerning God and Man

1. **God is truly patient.** Again and again He reaches out with love to extend to fallen man another chance to rise above ruin (2 Peter 3:9).
2. **Man can be truly stubborn.** This not only identifies man's will to resist God and truth, but it proves the depth and intensity of that resistance.
3. **Sin's influence in people can be very strong.** Wrong has a power that may overcome love, patience, truth and common sense. God offered to Judah all of these caring concerns, and they still rebelled.
4. **Man is truly precious in God's sight.** For centuries and millenniums God has been pouring out His love, preparing and presenting a scheme of redemption, sending out servants to lift up the lost, sacrificing His Son to save sinners, and purify polluted people, who obviously are precious to Him (1 Peter 1:3-12; Hebrews 1:1-4; John 3:16; Revelation 1:4-6).
5. **Man truly is redeemable.** Let any who "tosses in the towel"—who becomes a quitter—who declares himself hopeless—drink deeply of the principles in this section. When Judah cried, "It is hopeless"(Jeremiah 2:25; 18:12), God knew better.

B. Ten Ways God Tried to Bring Judah to Repentance

1. God warned by **Israel's fall** (2:14-26; 3:6-13).
2. God **pointed to nations with heathen gods that showed more respect than Judah gave Him** (2:9-13).
3. **God brought famine upon Judah** (3:1-3; 14:1-6, 13-22).
4. **God asked for one man** who would execute judgment/seek truth (5:1-6).
5. **God warned them to flee** (4:3-7; 6:1-17).
6. **God pleaded with them to turn from idolatry** (7:8-11, 17-20; 8:1-3; 9:12-16; 10:1-5, 8-15).
7. **God warned them that Judah would be like Shiloh and Ephraim** (Israel - 7:14; Psalm 78:55-72).
8. **God renewed the Covenant promise with them** (11:1-11).
9. **God offered to spare them if they would keep the Sabbath** (17:19-27).
10. **God brought on war** (21:1-11; 25:8-11; 44:1-19, 24-28).
BUT the people would not repent!!!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. What were Jeremiah's five observations concerning his past struggles and trials?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. What two reasons tell us that Jeremiah's "burdened" heart became a "burning" heart?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

3. Give five applications which Jeremiah's problems and burdens present for God's spokesmen of all time.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

4. Give six statements which show us Jeremiah's concept of God.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

5. List at least five (5) ways God used to bring Judah to repentance.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

LESSON FIVE

A NATION'S RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD GOD

INTRODUCTION:

Judah stands out as a classic example of the price to be paid when a country turns away from the Creator. How imperative it is that men and nations recognize the power and position of Jehovah God. Daniel reminds us: “For wisdom and power belong to Him. And it is He who changes times and epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings. . . In order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowest of men” (Daniel 2:20, 21; 4:17).

Greece was known for its philosophers. Rome for its law code and military power. An ancient culture, the Mayas, were ingenious centuries ago in their study of the heavens. Immanuel Velikovsky writes: “The Mayas, in the *Dresden Codex* correctly gave the length of the Venus synodical cycle as 584 days. The astronomical observations of the Mayas were so precise that in computing the solar year, they arrived at figures not only more accurate than the Julian year, but also more accurate than the Gregorian year, introduced in Europe in 1582, ninety years after the discovery of America, which is our calendar year today.” (Immanuel Velikovsky, Worlds In Collision)

LESSON TEXT: Various Bible passages in the Study Guide.

LESSON AIM: To make the student aware of a nation or individual's relationship and responsibility to an almighty God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Consider eleven ways a nation falls from God.
 2. Study six (6) ways by which nations may turn to God.
-

ELEVEN WAYS A NATION FALLS FROM GOD

A. The Bible's Affirmation of God's Position Before and Over People.

1. “*For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His*” (2 Chronicles 16:9).
2. “*And I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the work of their own hands*” (Jeremiah 1:16).

B. Eleven Steps to Apostasy by Judah and Any Nation.

1. ***Their leaders become corrupt.*** Leadership in Judah catered to the carnal and corrupt.
 - a. King Manasseh set a standard of sin and shame worse than the nations about him (2 Kings 21:9-12; 24:3; 2 Chronicles 33:9-17; Jeremiah 15:1, 4-6).
 - b. King Jehoiakim extended the shame by selfishness, dishonest gain, extortion, oppression and the shedding of innocent blood (Jeremiah 22:13-18).
 - c. Prophets and priests were polluted, committing adultery, walking in falsehood, and even strengthening the hands of evildoers (Jeremiah 23:9-15; Micah 3:1-11).
 - d. Jeremiah summarizes this downward step in these words: *"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so!"* (Jeremiah 5:30-31).
2. ***They listen to men rather than to God.***
 - a. Jeremiah 23:16-17 presents God's warning: *"Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility: They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord.'"*
 - b. God's warning, *"Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes the flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord"* (17:5).
3. ***They assume they obey God, but they do not!***
 - a. As Judah listened to the satisfying statements and promises of false prophets, they would say, *"Behold, we come to Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God. . . Surely in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel"* (3:22-23).
 - b. God's statement of reality in 7:8-10: *"Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal, and walk after other gods that you have not known; then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—that you may do all these abominations?"*
 - c. God's response was, *"Yet you said, 'I am innocent; Surely His anger is turned away from me. Behold, I will enter into judgment with you because you say, 'I have not sinned.'"* (2:35). Judah would face again the principle of Numbers 32:23.
4. ***They turn from God and turn to dumb idols.*** God's charge is clear: *"They. . . refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant, which I made with their fathers. . . For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal"* (Jeremiah 11:10, 13).
 - a. Three lessons can be gleaned from God's description of Judah's departure:
 - 1) When man leaves Jehovah God, he will soon establish for himself

- some other god.
- 2) Men may become rabid in their devotion to and worship of idols. Judah had as many gods as they had cities and as many altars as streets in Jerusalem.
 - 3) Loyalty to God gives to life meaning and a sense of integration and direction, whereas loyalty to gods is only to “set up the shameful thing” (11:13). When man gives up his Maker for what man makes, it is a sobering shame! Devotion to dumb idols leaves man stupid, foolish and deluded (10:8).
5. ***They lose the ability to discern between good and evil.*** God declared that they were “shrewd to do evil, but to do good they do not know” (4:22; cf. Hebrews 5:11-14). The outgrowth of this folly is stated in 8:1-12:
 - a. It caused them to love, serve, go after, seek and worship idols (v. 2).
 - b. They were in continual apostasy (v. 5).
 - c. They held fast to deceit, and practiced deceit (vs. 5, 10).
 - d. They refused to return to God (vs. 5-6).
 - e. They had spoken what was not right (v. 6).
 - f. They humanistically followed their own course and did not know the ordinance of the Lord (vs. 6-7).
 - g. The scribes wrote with a lying pen (v. 8).
 - h. They rejected the word of the Lord (v. 9).
 - i. They were greedy for gain (v. 10; Colossians 3:5).
 - j. They were not ashamed of all their abominations nor did they blush (v. 12).
 6. ***Immoral practices become a lifestyle.*** “When I fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the harlot’s house. They were well-fed lusty horses, each one neighing after his neighbor’s wife” (5:7-8; 9:2-8; 3:1-2).
 7. ***Respect for human life deteriorates.*** With the sword they devoured true prophets and shed the blood of the poor (2:30-34). They would oppress the alien (racial reactions), the orphans, the widows, and the innocent (7:6; 9:8). It deteriorated to: “burn their sons and their daughters in the fire” (7:31; 19:4-5; 32:34-35).
 8. ***Materialism becomes a goal and guide.*** God said: “Wicked men are found among My people. They watch like fowlers, lying in wait. They set a trap. They catch men. Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore, they have become great and rich. They are fat and sleek. They also excel in deeds of wickedness. They do not plead the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor” (5:26-28; 6:13-15; 17:11).
When materialism leads people away from their Maker, invariably truth, integrity, honesty and a hope for mankind go with it!
 9. ***They rely on other nations rather than on God.***
 - a. When they began to seek their security through alliances with other nations, *they were falling away from God as their security!*
 - b. In Jeremiah 2:14 God raised the question concerning Judah, “Why has he become a prey?” God adds, “Have you not done this to yourself,

by your forsaking the Lord your God, when He led you in the way? But now what are you doing on the road to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates?" (2:17-18).

10. ***They become stubborn, refusing truth when it is offered.*** This fact is clearly stated in Jeremiah 5:23-25: *"But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; They have turned aside and departed. They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God, Who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain, Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.' Your iniquities have turned these away and your sins have withheld good from you."*
11. ***They begin to operate by their own imaginations!*** When God's revelation is replaced with man's *imagination*, God's people (or any nation) are headed for devastation! Here is God's projected downward trend:
 - a. People come to despise God.
 - b. People begin to walk in the stubbornness of their own hearts.
 - c. Prophets pacified them with a vision of their own imagination.
 - d. The People were led into futility.

This shameful trend continued until the land had been stripped of possessions and people!

HOW A NATION TURNS TO GOD

A. A Nation Needs to Fear and Reverence God

1. *"They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God, who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain; Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of harvest'" (Jeremiah 5:24).*
2. Basic lessons are inherent in this passage:
 - a. God is in control of the elements.
 - b. God *gives us* seedtime and harvest, sustaining us.
 - c. God wants us to recognize and realize that it is in Him that we live and move and have our very being (Acts 17:28).
 - d. God wants this insight to be in our hearts (1 John 4:19; John 14:15).

B. A Nation Needs to Know and Understand God and His Ways. Jeremiah provides the pride and patriotism of a nation in these words: *"Let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, declares the Lord" (9:24).*

C. A Nation Needs to Seek and Search for God with its Whole Heart. God promised Judah through Jeremiah, *"I know the plans that I have for you. . . for welfare. . . to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (29:11-13; Acts 17:24-27).*

D. A Nation Needs to Obey God's Voice. Knowing, even understanding and

seeking God will serve little purpose unless there follows a genuine disposition to *obey God's voice*.

1. To Israel and to Judah God's message was the same: "*Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people, and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you*" (Jeremiah 7:23).
2. It is fundamental that the *made* should respond to the rules of the *Maker, the created* to the *Creator, the mortal* to the *Immortal*? "The loving-kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, *to those who keep His covenant and who remember His precepts to do them*" (Psalms 103:17-18).

E. There Must Be a Respect for Others Within Nations

This would include those of other nations.

1. Man's relationship is not just perpendicular with deity, but it must be horizontal with humanity.
2. God includes both as He gives to Judah His pattern for their survival: "*For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever*" (Jeremiah 7:5-7).

F. Trust in the Future

The *promise aspect* of God's dealings with men and nations is one of the most heartening phases of the Divine-human relationship. As God anticipated a return of fallen Judah to their homeland, note the plan and promises:

"And they shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them—to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul" (Jeremiah 32:38-41).

CONCLUSION:

All six points of God's game plan for nations are inherent in this one passage—from fearing God to becoming benefactors of His eternal goodness. Nations that adhere to these six principles will abide under God's divine promise: "*I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with loving-kindness. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt*" (Jeremiah 31:3-4; cf. Hebrews 8:6-13; 13:20, 21; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Every nation needs to ponder what the Psalmist wrote:

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. . .The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; From His dwelling place He looks out

on all the inhabitants of the earth. . . He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works. The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. . Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His loving-kindness; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in the famine.

Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield, for our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Thy loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee” (Psalms 33:12-22).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. Give two verses which affirm God’s position before and over His people.

2. List eleven ways nations fall away from God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11) _____

3. Name six (6) ways in which a nation turns to God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

LESSON SIX

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION:



r. Moorehead portrays the pain-ridden period in which Jeremiah prophesied in these words: “It was Jeremiah’s lot to prophesy at a time when all things in Judah were rushing down to the final and mournful catastrophe; when political excitement was at its height; when the worst passions swayed the various parties, and the most fatal counsels prevailed. It was his to stand in the way over which his nation was rushing headlong to destruction; to make an heroic effort to arrest it, and to turn it back; and to fail, and be compelled to step to one side and see his own people, whom he loved with the tenderness of a woman, plunge over the precipice into the wide, weltering ruin.” (G. Campbell Morgan, Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah)

The sadness of the scene is further covered by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay “It is difficult to conceive any situation more painful than that of a great man, condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted country, to tend it during the alternate fits of stupefaction and raving which precede its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one, till nothing is left but coldness, darkness, and corruption.” (G. Campbell Morgan, Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah)

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 1:1-19

LESSON AIM: We want to get a clear view of Jeremiah’s call and commission as it sets in the culture and context of the times.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Catch a glimpse of the apathetic attitude of the people from the high priest down to the workmen on the temple.
 2. Look at Jeremiah’s background and providential appointments.
 3. See the response of Jeremiah to God’s call and God’s response to Jeremiah’s reluctance.
 4. Get a view of the sobering two-fold assignments given to Jeremiah.
 5. Learn the two visions by which God communicated His assignment for Jeremiah.
-

THE PATH THAT LED TO DESTRUCTION

A. The Road Judah Traveled to Come to This End

1. A needed lesson from 2 Kings 22 concerning Judah's fall.
 - a. In the midst of idol worshipers, false prophets, and weak, wayward kings there was a naive, untaught, satisfied, assuming- security- group of God's people who were slipping into spiritual suicide.
 - b. The prevailing spiritual atmosphere in Jerusalem when Josiah began his religious reformation, in the eighteenth year of his reign (about 622 B.C.).
 1. Hilkiah, the high priest, found the book of the Law.
 2. He gave the book to Shaphan, the scribe.
 3. Shaphan's response to the book was noncommittal and disinterest.
2. Josiah's response to the reading of the book (2 Kings 22:11-17).
 - a. He tore his clothes (a sign of grave concern, sorrow, fear or penitence; note Genesis 37:29, 34; 44:13; Numbers 14:6; Joshua 7:6; 2 Samuel 3:31).
 - b. He immediately commanded key people to go and pray to the Lord for the king, the people and all Judah.
 - c. Such immediate concern was there because of the words of that book "concerning us" (v. 13).
 - d. Those key people went to "Huldah the prophetess" (v. 14).
 - e. Huldah's message from God proved the king's visibly distraught response was justified. That book *was declaring God's wrath* as burning against those people, and "it shall not be quenched" (v. 17).

B. The Sobering Application

1. Hilkiah, the high priest, was counting the money. The God designed role for a high priest to go before God for the people, rendering spiritual service, had been reduced down to material matters—"keeping up with the contribution!" (Exodus 28:1-4, 41-43; 29:44-45; Leviticus 5:18; 6:7; 16:17-23; Numbers 18:6-8).
2. These workers were spending their time working on the house of the Lord—akin to our "keeping up the church building."
3. These were honest workers that could be trusted to use the money without the need for any accounting.
4. Hilkiah, the high priest, by chance found a copy of the Law in the house of the Lord, passing it on to Shaphan without even reading it.
5. Shaphan, the scribe, who should have been skilled in the knowledge and use of God's Law (cf. Ezra 7:10), read it, but *no spiritual concern was stimulated and no instructive action took place!*
6. There is nothing to indicate the workers had any contact with the Law of God at all. They were busy, honest brethren, who never bothered to study what God was saying in His Law "concerning us."
7. If king Josiah had not heard the Lord's Law, there seemingly would have been no concern nor change, no research, no response, no reformation or restoration.
 - a. All other leaders had drifted and shifted into traditional patterns away from God's Law!
 - b. They may have been religious, but not righteous, traditional but not

true to God's Law!

- C. An Outline of Jeremiah.** This outline will appear on your Final Test.
- I. **Introduction** (note the divisions of chapter one scattered through the rest of the outline).
 - II. **Jeremiah's Prophecies Against Judah and Jerusalem (2-45).**
 - A. God's charge to Jeremiah (1:1-9.) received and carried out (2-25).
 - B. The Reaction of the People (1:17-19) to God's Prophet (26-36).
 - C. God's Promises Fulfilled – Desolation and Destruction in Judah (37-45). (This parallels with 1:11-16).
 - III. **Jeremiah's Prophecies Against the Nations (46-51).**
 - A. Egypt (46).
 - B. Philistia, Tyre, Sidon (47).
 - C. Moab (48).
 - D. Ammon (49:1-6).
 - E. Edom (49:7-22).
 - F. Damascus (49:23-27).
 - G. Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33).
 - H. Elam (including Media–49:34-39).
 - I. Babylon (50, 51).
 - IV. **A Review of Judah's Ruin (52).**

JEREMIAH'S CALL, COMMISSION AND COMMANDER

Chapter one is an introduction to the remaining fifty one chapters.

- A. Jeremiah's Location and Linage (1:1-3)**
1. Jeremiah was not a prophet by human selection but by Divine assignment.
 2. "The son of Hilkiah of the priests of Anathoth" (1:1).
 - a. No way to determine if Jeremiah's father was the high priest by that name during the time of king Josiah's reformation.
 - b. Jeremiah was a member of a priestly family. . . and that he had high connections is probable from the respect shown to him by successive rulers of Judah.
 3. To Jeremiah "the word of the Lord came" (v. 2) for **over forty years**.
 - a. Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry in the 13th year of King Josiah (627 B.C.), and it continued through the reign of Jehoahaz.
 - b. Jeremiah continued his prophetic work among the small remnant, who forced him to go into Egypt with them (Jeremiah 40-44).
- B. Jeremiah's Providential Appointment (1:4-5).**
1. Jeremiah 1:5 is one of the special, inspired statements of God's providential planning for people.
 - a. God's plans precede our birth (cf. Psalms 139:14-16; Galatians 1:15-16; Matthew 1:20-21; Genesis 25:21-24).
 - b. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35), we can rest assured that God has a plan for each one of us, including *you and me!* Note the specific planning God did relative to Jeremiah.

- “I formed you in the womb” — divinely developed
 “I knew you” — divinely discerned
 “I consecrated (sanctified KJV) you” — divinely desired
 “I have appointed you a prophet to the nations — divinely dispatched
2. This does not eliminate *human will*. In the very next verse Jeremiah began to exercise his will by resisting God’s appointment!
 3. Paul at first persecuted the church, resisting God’s designed intent for him (Acts 26: 9-11; Galatians 1:15-16).

C. Jeremiah’s Response to the Appointment (1:6)

1. Perceived inadequacy. “*Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth*” (1:6).
2. Jeremiah’s expression of inadequacy did not excuse him from responsibility.
3. Later, Jeremiah would affirm, “It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth” (Lamentations 3:27).

D. God’s Response to Jeremiah (1:7-9)

1. God reacted to Jeremiah’s response with words of encouraging confidence.
Everywhere I send you — You shall go
All that I command you — You shall speak
Do not be afraid of them — I am with you to deliver you!
2. The key to Jeremiah’s readiness was because God would be with him to deliver him and put His words in his mouth (vs. 8-9).

THE SOBERING TWO-FOLD ASSIGNMENT (1:10)

A. Jeremiah’s Work Paralleled with the Preacher’s Work

Prophetic work (1:10)		Preacher’s work (2 Timothy 4:1-5)
“root out”	— bottom	“reprove
“pull down”	— top	and
“destroy”	— tear up	rebuke
“throw down”	— throw away	
“build”	— replace	exhort with all
“to plant”	— decorate & beautify	longsuffering and teaching”

B. Two Visions That Set the Stage (1:11-16)

1. The rod of an almond tree.
 The two Hebrew words:
 - a. *SHAKED* = almond tree.
 - b. *SHOKED* = watched.
 - c. The almond blossom suggested to Jeremiah the watchfulness of God.

NOTE: The vision assures Jeremiah of God’s wakeful *concern, chastisement, and certainty* amidst the current circumstances.

2. The boiling pot from the north.
The fomenting conditions in countries north of Judah were developing an atmosphere that would naturally pour forth to the south. If the pot was tilting *away from* the north, then it would be tilting *toward* the south.
 - a. In verse 15 the forces would be coming from the north.
 - b. It is God who is calling for this action and will later clearly affirm Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the Babylonian Empire as “My servant” (25:9; 27:6; 43:10).
3. A three-fold charge summarizes why God had so decreed:
 - a. They have forsaken Me – *Their departure*
 - b. They have offered sacrifices to other gods – *Their devotion*
 - c. They worshiped the works of their own hands – *Their deification*
(of self)

NOTE: The nation was in need of national cleansing, and God had arrived at the time to initiate that process. A young king, Josiah, and a young prophet, Jeremiah, are providentially moving toward that climactic moment.

C. Jeremiah’s Challenge, Commission and Commander (1:17-19)

1. Jeremiah’s wake-up call that his mission to the nations and his commission to his own people are ready to begin, charging him to act.
2. Jeremiah did not initially grasp all God said in the next two verses. Note the following breakdown and definitions to assist you in seeing that significance.

Prepare	“gird up thy loins.”
Proceed	“arise” (often early, 7:25; 25:4 KJV, etc.).
Proclaim	“speak.”
Demand & direction	“speak <i>to them</i> ” (cf. Acts 5:19).
Degree	“all” (cf. Acts 20:20, 26-27).
Divine directives	“that I command” (cf. 1 Peter 3:4; 4:11).
Dependent before God	“thee”(cf. 1 Corinthians 9:16).
Danger	“dismayed before them” or God? (15:19-21).
Divine development	“I have made you.”(cf. Mark 1:17).
Secure setting	“a fortified city.”
Stabilized stand	“a pillar of iron.”
Sturdy withstanding	“walls of bronze.”

NOTE: At one time or another Jeremiah is promised that he will encounter kings, princes, priests and all the people. Have you ever faced this many strata of personalities in your social scene? Jeremiah did, and as God promised, “they will fight against you” (v. 19). Have you ever faced any one or any group who were *fierce* in their approach to you? Jeremiah did repeatedly!

Had Jeremiah grasped all that God promised in the first chapter, he would have recognized his security in those words, “*They will not overcome you for I am with you to deliver you.*” The facts are Jeremiah neither grasped all he would face from Judah nor did he deeply depend on God’s deliverance—at least, not

until after chapter 20.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. When the Book of the Law was found, how did the two following people respond?
 Hilkiah, the high priest: _____
 King Josiah: _____

2. Complete the following sentence: "Jeremiah was not a prophet by _____
 _____ but by _____."

3. For how long did Jeremiah prophecy? _____ Date the beginning and
 end of Jeremiah's prophetic period. _____

4. God's plan for Jeremiah is reflected in what four statements in 1:4-5?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

5. What fact in this beginning chapter would indicate that God's plan for Jeremiah
 did not eliminate his own human will?

6. What response did Jeremiah make to God's call?

7. What two visions are given to Jeremiah and what is the meaning of each?
 Vision one: _____

 Vision two: _____

8. What three-fold charge is given against Judah which summarizes why God is
 bringing judgment on this nation?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

LESSON SEVEN

A PLEADING, PERCEPTIVE PROCLAMATION

INTRODUCTION



Chapter two of Jeremiah is a splendid example of both God's pleading and His perception. It parallels with Isaiah 1:18, where God calls to His people, "Come now, and let us reason together," offering to them a chance to be pure and clean again in His sight.

The chapter could be outline around 16 questions that God raises to Judah (vs. 5, 11, 14 (3questions), 17, 18, 21, 24, 28, 29, 31(3questions), 32, and 36. Three more questions are mentioned that Judah did ask or should ask (vs. 6, 8, 23). These questions demonstrate God's pleading to, and perception of, Judah's sins, including where those sins will take them if they do not repent. There are seven segments of God's reasoning with them:

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 2:1 through 4:2.

LESSON AIM: To see the causes of the estranged relationship between Judah and Jehovah and hear God's plea for Judah's sincere return.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the past picture of Judah's faithfulness and the present picture of Judah's folly and God's faithfulness.
 2. Get an overview of Judah's condition, including the cause and the consequences of their unfaithfulness.
 3. See God's abundant grace as He continually calls on a wicked and corrupt nation to turn back to Him and be blessed.
-

THE PAST PICTURE (2:1-4)

A. God's Commendation of Judah's Past Devotion

1. They had the right *attitude*, "the devotion (KJV kindness) of your youth." This word identifies a genuine outreach to and for God.
2. They had the right *affection*, "the love of your betrothals." This term includes all positive aspects of love for building strong relationships.
3. They had the right *active* response, following after Him in a land not sown.
4. They had the right *motive*, they were following *after God*, not just after the plush life He offered them.
5. They were in a right *relationship*, *amorous association* with God – "Israel was holy to the Lord."

B. These Early Days of God's Association with Israel Were Special in Benefits

and Blessings

THE PRESENT PICTURE OF GOD'S FIDELITY AND JUDAH'S FOLLY (2:5-8)

A. God Reasons with Judah as to Why They Had to Change

1. There must be a reason for it! Is it in Me? Probing questions:
 - a. What covenant have I broken?
 - b. What deceit have I practiced?
 - c. What promises have I disregarded?
 - d. What unrighteousness have you found in Me?
2. God's graphic picture of Judah's departure. "Going, Going, Gone!"
 - a. Judah was *going* ("went far from Me"), *going* ("walked after emptiness") and *gone* ("and became empty!").
 - b. God knew and they knew He had not judged unjustly or behaved wickedly before them.
3. The people had defiled the land (v. 7).

B. God's Explanation of Why the People Strayed (v. 8)

Notice the failure of the priests and rulers (v. 8).

1. No petitions for the people – "the priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?'"
2. No precepts to prepare the people – "those who handle the Law did not know Me."
3. No purity in the pastors (rulers-shepherds) – who "transgressed against Me."
4. No perception from false prophets – who "prophesied by Baal."
5. No profit down this path – who "walked after things that did not profit."

What they had lost. (Test question)

The List

Priests

Scribes

Pastors (rulers)

Prophets (false)

The Loss

No sacrifice for sins

No study of Scripture

No spiritual sustenance or strength

No heavenly help or message from above

PLAINTIVE PLEA INCLUDING A COMPARISON & CONTRAST (2:9-13)

A. God's Illustration of Their Foolishness

1. The example of the faithfulness of Kittim and Kedar to their gods contrasted to the unfaithfulness of Judah.
2. They have abandoned the fountain: Illustration of their unfaithfulness:
 - a. With its perpetually fresh flow of water (the worship of the Lord).
 - b. In its place have hewn out leaky cisterns (the worship of idols), wherein the water stored becomes stagnant and putrid.

B. A Graphic Illustration of Our Foolishness.

While it is easy for one to see Israel's folly, are we able to see any kindred thinking in our current conduct? Bill Banowsky observes: "Our standard of living floods our lives with luxury and comfort that arouses the envy of history's princes and kings. More money runs through our fingers in a single year than our great granddaddies could earn in a lifetime. In our haste to push back new

frontiers we have broken the sound barrier and the four minute mile. We have harnessed the mighty atom and shattered the prohibitive veil of outer space. In short, we have conquered everything but ourselves! The American people are so happy with their new cistern that 20,000 of us, having everything to live with and nothing to live for, committed suicide last year.”

THE CURRENT CONDITIONS AND THE CAUSE (2:14-19)

A. Judah Had Become a Prey to Other Nations (v. 14)

Not only had God’s people gone after other gods, they had also surrendered to other nations rather than seek their security from God (2 Kings 23:31-35; Ezekiel 30:13-16).

B. They Had Made Alliances with Other Nations (2:18)

1. Judah was trusting to the circumstance of the hour, attempting to strengthen her borders by intrigue, and alliances with other peoples.
2. Entering into negotiations for alliance with Egypt, and hoping to win the favor of Assyria; and all this because she had lost her strength of character.

A CARICATURE OF JUDAH’S CORRUPTION (2:20-30)

A. Judah is *Wandering* (vs. 20-23)

1. She moves about over every high hill and before every green tree as a harlot obsessed with idolatry.
2. She has “gone after the Baals” (v. 23). Like a swift young camel, she has entangled her ways with spiritual whoredom. This involved cultic prostitution and the offering of children as sacrifices.

B. Judah is *Wild* (2:24)

Like a donkey in the wilderness doing as she desires, she assumes she is secure and sounds forth in noisy merriment so that she is an easy prey to any that may seek her.

C. Judah is *Wayward* (2:25)

Both her steps and speech are projected as pursuing the polluted.

D. Judah is *Shamed* Because of Her *Wanton Ways* (vs. 26-30)

1. God is not mocked, and deceived disciples who go after other gods will reap what they have sown (Galatians 6:7-8; Numbers 32:23).
2. A price is to be paid by kings, princes, priests and prophets (the problem producing people in v. 8). They will shudder before stock and stone saviors in a time of trouble (v. 27; Psalms 115:1-9).
3. In national or personal calamity idol-dependent people will recognize their peril and the idol’s futility, resulting in a desperate cry for God to “arise and save us” (v. 27).

A PARTING PLEA TO WAKE UP TO THEIR WICKEDNESS (2:31-35)

A. God’s Rules and His Record (2:31)

B. God’s Reminder of Their Rebellion (2:32-34)

1. Even though His people had as many gods as cities in Judah (v. 28), God still pleads with them to heed His word (v. 31).
2. God has been forsaken (v. 13) and forgotten! “My people have forgotten Me, days without number” (v. 32).
3. The deceptive concept and claim, “I am innocent” (v. 34).

A PROPHETIC PROMISE OF THE PRICE THEY WILL PAY (2:35b-37)

A. Four Stages To God’s Judgment

1. You shall be put to shame by Egypt.
2. You will be enslaved. “From this place you shall go out with your hands on your head.”
3. The Lord has rejected those in whom you trust. Your alliances will not help.
4. You shall not prosper with them.

B. A disobedient people still pursuing a losing lifestyle

PROMISCUOUS PATTERNS PRESENTED IN A PARABLE (3:1-4:2)

God’s plea in chapter two continues in chapter three.

A. A Parabolic Charge of Judah’s Promiscuous Patterns (3:1-5)

1. A parable of “putting away and returning polluted” (3:1).
2. The polluted pattern of Judah’s past (3:2). “Whoredom” & “Wickedness.”
3. The problem has penetrated your person (3:3). There is no shame even if you suffer.
4. The problem includes seeking God’s pleasure (approval) without penitence (3:4-5).

NOTE: These events in chapter 3 (as well as chapter 2) must refer to the *reformation time* in the reign of Josiah. That is evident because: 1) Verse 6 clearly refers to it as the “days of Josiah.” 2) In verse 1 God mentions Judah’s conduct: “Yet you return to Me.” 3) In verse 10 God again refers to a return (reformation) but perceives “Judah did not return to Me with all her heart but rather in deception.”

B. A Kindred Pattern of Perversion by Israel – Ten Northern Tribes (3:6-11)

1. On every high hill and under every green tree the northern tribes of Israel had, as a harlot, committed spiritual shame. Recall the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18:19).
 - a. King Ahab made Baal worship the official religion of Israel (1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:18).
 - b. Other kings persisted in the idolatrous calf worship started by Jeroboam, intending to draw people away from the temple and true worship of Jehovah (1 Kings 12:26-33; 13:13-14; 2 Kings 17:7-17).
2. Never once did the nation as such return to the Lord wholeheartedly.
3. That such promiscuous, profligate people would be given another chance is a tribute to the amazing grace and mercy of our Maker!

THE POSSIBILITIES THROUGH PENITENCE PLAINLY PRESENTED (3:12-19)

A. God's Five-fold Charge Against Israel

1. Israel is *faithless* (v. 12). "Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto God" (Hebrews 11:6).
2. Israel holds on to her *iniquities* (v. 13).
3. Israel *transgressed* against "the Lord your God" (v. 13; 2:28-29).
4. Israel had been *evangelistic in spreading* her sin. "*You have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree*" (v. 13).
5. Israel had *not obeyed God's voice* (v. 13). All four of the former charges would be overcome if this last one were truly obeyed (cf. Psalms 95:7-8; Hebrews 3:7, 15; John 10:3, 16, 27; Revelation 3:20).

B. God's Two-Fold Promise to Judah (vs. 14-19)

1. God's assurance – Israel will be rewarded if they are responsive. He will in faithfulness, provide for them a *dwelling place* in Zion.
2. God's provision – He will give them pastors (shepherds) and precepts that will feed them with knowledge and understanding.
Note: A Messianic prophecy here goes all the way to Jesus and His new covenant (31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; 13:20-21).

DIVINE PERCEPTION DEMANDS PENITENCE AND CORRECTION (3:20-25)

A. The Cause: Departure and Deception (v. 20)

B. The Cost: Sorrow Which Springs from Perverting Their Way and Forgetting Their God (v. 21)

C. The Call: Return (v. 22). God's promise – "*I will heal your backsliding.*"

D. The Conclusion Mentally

1. Return to God (v. 22b).
2. Reject other gods (v. 23).
3. Remembrance of ruin by rebellion (v. 24).
4. Remorse for shame, confusion, not obeying (v. 25).

CONFESSION WITHOUT CORRECTION (3:22-25)

A. Stages to Their Confession

1. They had allowed themselves to be deceived by seeking salvation through stones and trees on every high hill (2:20, 27; 3:13; cf. John 4:20-24).
2. They had been busy at the bad, consumed, showing total devotion to idolatry (v. 24).
3. They acknowledged shame and humiliation "*for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers since our youth, even to this day.*"
4. The core cause of their problem confessed: "***We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God***" (v. 25; cf. v. 13).

B. The Pleading Possibility (4:1-2)

God's very expression of "If you will return" unmask the difference between a declaration and a deed, the difference between a pronouncement and procedure. God's people must not only confess their sins but have the will to correct their lives. Judah tried confession without correction, and God was neither deceived nor would He accept that confession.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. In what five areas did God commend Judah in the past (2:1-4)?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. In 2:8 are listed four (4) groups of leaders who failed God's people. List these four groups and explain how each failed the people.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

3. In 2:20-30 Judah's corruption is characterized in what four (4) ways?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

4. Judah sought to solve her problems by seeking alliances with other nations. What was wrong with this and how could it apply to the United States today?

5. What is God's five-fold charge against Israel in 3:12-19?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

5. What was God's two-fold promise to Israel in 3:12-19? What was this promise based on?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 Based on: _____

LESSON EIGHT

PREVIEW & PERIL PRESENTED TO WARN

INTRODUCTION

The seriousness of sin is seldom seen by the sinner. A lighthearted confession of wrong doing (as God's people did in chapter 3:22-25) is not enough to root out evil or avoid ruin. God knew that, and therefore He opened chapter 4 with a call for truth, justice and righteousness (4:1-2). How do these characteristics convert into conduct? Naming the pieces and parts does not purify a person. When one knows *the way*, one still needs *the will* to achieve it. It takes the correct mind-set to redeem or motivate men. Judah needed a different mind-set. Chapter 4 is a warning and wake-up call by previewing promised perils and punishments if corrections are not forthcoming.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 4:4 through 6:8

LESSON AIM: To grasp the depth of Judah's wickedness and the surety of God's coming judgment.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Hear God's plea for Judah to repent, their response and God's promise of judgment.
 2. Take notice that in chapter five God reasons *with* the rebellious, reasons *because of* the rebellious and gives reason *for* the rebellion.
-

THE ROUTE TO ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH (4:3-31)

A. Plea to Plow and Circumcise Cities (4:3-4)

1. God employs two metaphors that pinpoint the procedures to become what He wants them to be.
 - a. God calls on men of Judah to "break up your fallow ground" – clear out the carnal clutter *externally* (v. 3).
 - b. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart" – eliminate *internal* ingredients that contaminate character (4:4).
2. Circumcision has always been a vital figure for God's messages to men.
 - a. To get men to properly *assert* themselves.
 - b. To assure that our *attitude* be what it should, God has repeatedly called for the circumcision of our hearts.
3. The outward act of circumcision made a man a member of the commonwealth of Israel, but it was **the circumcision of the heart that made a man part of the true Israel of God.**

B. Reasons to Flee to Fortified Cities (4:5-9)

1. Not a guarantee of security - these cities will also fall to Babylon.
2. An attempt to awaken people to the perils being prophetically presented (4:5; Hosea 8:1-10).
3. Three stages of destruction are declared.
 - a. **The nation will become “a waste”** (lost its purpose).
 - b. **The nation will become a “Ruin”** (lost its power).
 - c. **The nation will be “Without inhabitant”** (lost its people).
4. Leaders all fall – the heart of kings and princes will fail, the priests will be appalled and the prophets astounded.

C. Remonstrance and Ruin for Their Rebellion (4:10-13)

1. Jeremiah’s declaration of deception by God (v. 10). “Thou hast utterly deceived this people. . . saying, ‘You will have peace,’ whereas a sword touches the throat.”
2. The reason – the people love it that way (5:31).
 - a. The false prophets prophesy peace and safety.
 - b. God is blamed – God’s allowed will.

NOTE: That God would permit or allow a rebellious people who did not hear or love the truth to believe a lie and be condemned (made desolate) is a basic principle or policy with God (cf. Jeremiah 7:23-28; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11; Ezekiel 14:6-11).

D. Repentance or Continued Rebellion (4:14-18)?

1. The plea is for Judah to wash their hearts from evil.
2. The perplexity was, **“How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?” (v. 14).**
3. The “Beseigers” from a far country are preparing to invade.
 - a. They station themselves around the cities of Judah.
 - b. They lift up their voices against the besieged cities in ridicule, in taunts and demands for total surrender (v. 16).
 - c. The enemy erects pavilions, booths and tents about the besieged city (cf. Isaiah 1:8).
 - d. The enemy watches the city lest any within make good their escape.
 - e. All this has come upon Judah because she has rebelled against the Lord (v. 17).

E. Results After the Warning (4:19-31)

1. The prophet’s cry and why (4:19-22). Jeremiah declares that his soul is in anguish. His heart was pounding and he could not be silent.
2. The Prophet’s painful perception (4:23-26). Each verse between 23 and 26 begins with “I looked.” Each look is a message of emptiness and darkness, of a shattered and shaking landscape, of a barren and a bludgeoned countryside—a lifeless land!
3. The promised punishment is certain (4:27-28). *Punishing pursuit* closes the chapter, as Judah’s *pomp and plush lifestyle turns into pain* (4:29-31).

F. The Promised Punishment (4:23,28)

1. One can almost hear Jeremiah asking, “Is this really necessary?” In 4:27-28 God responds:
 - a. *God declared*, “I have spoken” (cf. Genesis 28:15; Exodus 32:13; Isaiah 14:24; 46:11; Jeremiah 32:24; Ezekiel 12:25, 28; 39:8; Numbers 11:23; Joshua 23:14).
 - b. God not only declared this desolation, *He devised* a plan: “I have purposed.”
 - c. Further, God was *determined*: “I will not change my mind.”
 - d. Therefore, it was *definite*: “nor will I turn from it.”
2. The people are *using religion* in order to avoid punishment and assure divine protection.”

G. Punishing Pursuit: Judah’s Plush Lifestyle Turned to Pain (4:29-31)

1. Judah forms alliances with the nations.
2. Judah uses every device to gain the favor of the powers of the world.
 - a. Puts on scarlet robes and beautiful ornaments of gold.
 - b. Applies cosmetics to her eyelids in order to make eyes seem larger.
 - c. All of this primping is in vain. Judah’s political lovers actually despise her and are seeking to destroy her (v. 30).
3. Judah had entered into adulterous liaison with Egypt, Assyria (2:33f) and, most recently, Babylon.

NOTE: How many peoples and nations have been more concerned about other rulers and their weaponry than they have about God? How many have sought security by association and alliances rather than from the Almighty (cf. Daniel 5:17-21; 4:27-37; Ezekiel 17:17-24)?

REASONING WITH AND BECAUSE OF THE REBELLIOUS (5:1-31)

God continues to reason with Judah in chapter 5. God first reasons *with* the rebellious (5:1-6). Second, God reasons *because of* the rebellious (5:7-18). Finally God gives reasons *for* the rebellion (5:19-31).

A. The Nature of Judah’s Rebellion

The nation has been guilty of at least six terrible sins:

1. Moral corruption (vs. 1-6).
2. Sexual impurity (vs. 7-9).
3. Treacherous unbelief (vs. 10-18).
4. Religious apostasy (vs. 19-24).
5. Social injustice (vs. 25-29).
6. Intentional deception (vs. 30-31).

B. God Reasons with the Rebellious (5:1-6)

1. The power and influence of one good man. “Show Me *one man* who can change this sick, social and sin-infested scene, and I won’t do it.”
 - a. Look in all *places*—the streets, avenues, lanes, alleys and the broad open squares (v. 1).
 - b. Find the right *person*: one who “does justice.”
 - c. Find the man who “seeks truth.”
2. Inherent in this assignment are three things:

- a. One who knows justice and truth after diligent seeking.
- b. One who *will execute or do* what truth and justice demand.
- c. He must be a man who will be heard and heeded, received and obeyed by the people (which explains why Jeremiah could not qualify. The people did not hear or heed Jeremiah's admonitions!).

C. God Reasons Because of Their Rebellion (5:7-18)

1. God reasons by a question, "***How shall I pardon?***" (vs. 7-9), and answers how He will punish (vs. 10-18), promising two times that He will not carry out a "complete destruction" (vs. 10, 18).
 - a. Pardon was not possible because of spiritual and domestic adultery.
 - b. God caused Israel to swear fidelity when He made the covenant with them at Sinai (Exodus 24).
 - c. This oath Israel repeated at each renewal of the covenant, and last under Josiah (2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chronicles 34:31-32).
 - d. This blatant breaking of the vows and covenant with God by massive idolatry was intensified by the rankest form of domestic adultery.
2. God's vengeance and punishment are understandable.
 - a. They had flagrantly broken God's covenant, spiritually and domestically (Exodus 20:2-5, 14, 17).
 - b. They had abused God's blessings to them, when He "fed them to the full" (v. 7).
 - c. God had warned and waited, instructed and disciplined them, but they "refused to take correction" (v. 3).
 - d. Their sinful inclinations had reduced the immoral patterns to the point there was not *one man* who could redeem them from their riotous ways (v. 1).
 - e. Vengeance is both God's right, and sometimes the only redeeming hope for people is for God to act (Romans 12:19-21; 5:6-10; John 3:16).
3. In verses 10-13 God brings 4 charges against these people:
 - a. They are **unfruitful branches**, which do not properly represent God (cf. John 15:1-8).
 - b. They had **dealt treacherously with God** (cf. 3:7, 10-11), trying to hide under a self-devised mantle of security.
 - c. They had **lied about the Lord**, deceiving each other into believing God would not punish them (v. 12).
 - d. They had **false prophets**, who are wind (empty), void of God's word and ways.
4. In verses 14-18 God identifies ways that Judah's downfall will come.
 - a. God's word, like a fire, will consume the people as though they were wood (v. 14; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:11-16).
 - b. A mighty, far-away nation will come, speaking another language, having weapons hungry to fill open graves (vs. 15-16; Proverbs 30:16).
 - c. Judah's downfall is graphically given by what they are about to lose (v. 17):
 - 1) Your food— "They will devour your harvest and food."
 - 2) Your family— "They will devour your sons and daughters."
 - 3) Your flocks— "They will devour your flocks and herds."

- 4) Your fruit– “They will devour your vines, fig trees.”
- 5) Your fortifications– “They will demolish your fortified cities.”

NOTE: Is there any hope left? Yes! God will leave a remnant (vs.10, 18; 29:10-14; 44:14), who will respect Him, repent and return!

D. God Gives Reasons for the Rebellion (5:19-31)

1. First, forsaking God to serve other gods. This will result in God forsaking them that they may serve strangers in a land not their own (v. 19).
2. Second, the people had gone through three degenerating stages that assured their failure.
 - a. They had become foolish (Hebrew, *sakal*).
 - b. They were without understanding (4:22).
 - c. The final result: souls blind or deaf, neither seeing nor hearing (cf. Matthew 13:13-17; Ezekiel 12:2).
3. Their fundamental failure was the fact they did not fear God.
 - a. They failed to fear and reverence God for *His presence* (v. 22).
 - b. They did not respect nor fear God for *His power* (v. 22; Job 38:8-11).
 - c. They did not properly respect or reverence God for *His provisions* (vs.23-24; Psalms 147:7-11; Matthew 4:45).

NOTE: Their profligate patterns were already beginning to cost them, as God’s blessings and benefits were being withheld (5:25). God’s justice demanded He so respond because Judah was enacting every form of disobedience (5:26-31):

1. *Social disobedience* – Men trapping men to enslave (v. 26; Mark 1:17).
2. *Economic disobedience* – Men deceiving men to enrich self (v. 27; Psalms 78:21-33).
3. *Civil disobedience* – Men refusing to execute judgment (v. 28; Zechariah 7:8-12).
4. *Ecclesiastical disobedience* – Religious leaders rejecting God (vs. 29-31).

RAGING LEGIONS ARE COMING (6:1-30)

A. Raging Legions - Babylonian Army (6:1-5)

1. Alert the whole area and flee southward.
2. The intensity of the invading forces (v. 3).
 - a. Fortified cities offer no security.
 - b. Babylon is prepared for war (v. 4; 1 Samuel 7:9-13; 13:9-12).
 - c. False prophets in Judah are preaching, “peace” (v. 14).
 - d. This armed force will come, camp and consume (v. 3).

B. Reminder of Judah’s Ways (6:6-8)

Three-fold reason for God’s judgment.

1. **Oppression of the poor** – poor people are subjected daily to force and fraud, unjust gain and anguish!
2. **Violence and destruction.**
3. **Open and evident disregard – God has seen!** – “Sickness and wounds are constantly before the eyes of God.”

CONCLUSION:

How does God feel seeing such shameful, carnal conduct day after day among *His people* (cf. Genesis 6:5)? Who enjoys daily visits to a hospital of hurt and horror, agony and anguish, disease and depression suffered by loved ones? God here reminds Judah that He sees such “ever before Me” on a national level.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. God employs in 4:3-4 two metaphors that pinpoints the procedures to become what He wants them to be. List and explain these.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. What three graphic descriptions are given declaring Judah’s end in 4:5-9?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. What four statements in 4:28 manifest the sureness of God’s judgment?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

4. How does Judah try to impress the nations around her in 4:29-31?

5. The nation has been guilty of at least what six terrible sins?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

6. In 5:10-13 God brings what four charges against Judah?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

7. List four areas of disobedience the Israelites were involved in.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

8. In 6:6-8 three reasons for God's judgment are given. What are these?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON NINE

REMORSE, REMINDERS AND REJECTION

INTRODUCTION



This is a weighty section that is a sobering mix of man's totally degenerate state and of God's good way with all its glorious promises. While both parts can be seen in this section, they are seen in sad separation. Like oil and water there is no mixture in this scene. They are together in location but not in life; a part of the same picture but parts that stay apart!

Six sad stages identify the thinking and action that will assure Judah's desolation.

1. *Unjust gain* – “Every one is greedy for gain”(v. 13). This not only related to many people but also many plans, including unjust transactions, selfishness, violence and robbery.
2. *Spiritual shame* – Every one, including prophets and priests, “deals falsely” (v.13). This but expands on an evil already introduced in 5:2, 31.
3. *Lying claim* – By declaring fantasy instead of fact, (“saying ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace” (v. 14), they were healing the wound of God's people “slightly.”
4. *Deliberately defame* – With such abuses and abominations related to their proclamation, these spiritually sick souls were not “ashamed at all” nor would they “blush” (v. 15).
5. *Deliberate disdain* – The appeal to seek out the old paths, the good way, and walk therein is greeted with a blunt and bold “We will not walk in it” (v. 16).
6. *Ruin's refrain* – When the watchman warned by the sound of the trumpet, these souls hold true to form and respond, “We will not listen”(v. 17).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 6:9 - 8:19

LESSON AIM: To see that the ungodliness of Judah runs so deep that even the goodness of God cannot bring them to repentance.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn that God's rejection of His people is based on reason not on emotion.
 2. See examples of God's willingness to save upon their turning back to Him in repentance.
 3. Note the conditions Judah will face as a result of their idolatry and disobedience.
-

A GOOD LOOK AT THE GOOD WAY

A. A Pleading Exhortation (6:16). “Thus saith the Lord.”

Note the following breakdown of this precious passage.

1. *Stand* by the ways and *see*. – *Be Alert*.
2. *Seek* and *assess* – *Assimilate*. “*Ask*” for the old paths. “Jeremiah urges them to select the old path of fidelity to God and adherence to His holy Law and then to walk in that path.
3. *Select* the *solid* and sublime – *Appreciate*. “The good way.” That word is found in Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, relating to God’s estimate of each day of creation.
4. *Step forth* and serve – *Activate*. “Walk therein.”
5. *Satisfaction* for the soul – *Appropriate*. “You shall find rest for your souls.”

B. Rejection of this People Was Reasonable (6:18-26)

God wanted the nations, the congregation and the earth to understand the twofold problem:

1. Their plans and procedures were ceremonial corruption.
2. The Lord’s law was neither heard nor heeded, listened to nor lived (6:18-19).
3. Sacrifices without obedience are worthless. . . The men of Judah thought they were keeping God happy and on their side by going through the outward motions of worship.
4. That mighty military force from the north is again promised as the source for Judah’s punishment (vs. 21-23).
5. No place would be secure for “terror is on every side” (v. 25).

C. Ruin is Seen in a Symbolic Summary (6:27-30)

1. A test for metallurgic phraseology will be employed to declare Judah’s degenerate state.
 - a. Judah is declared to be stubbornly rebellious (*wrong steps*).
 - b. Going about as a talebearer (*wrong speech* - 9:4).
 - c. A bad mixture of brass and iron (*wrong substance* - Ezekiel 22:18-22).
2. The mixture of idolatry religiously, covetousness morally, and closed ears in civil and social matters—all a rejection of God’s commandments—have forced God to reject His people.

A PLEA TO THOSE WHO COME TO PRAY (7:1-8:3)

A. Reasons Chapters 7 and 26 Are Not Parallel

1. After mentioning Shiloh in chapter 7:12-15, God exhorts Jeremiah not to pray for “this people” (v. 16). That exhortation is repeated in 11:14 and 14:11. After Shiloh is mentioned in 26:6, the priests, prophets and all the people cry out for Jeremiah’s death (v. 8). The whole context in chapter 26 becomes one of argumentation about whether Jeremiah should die. There is no discussion of God talking to Jeremiah about praying for those people. When this attitude was taken toward Jeremiah, rather than pray for the people, he wants God to punish them (cf. 18:19-23).
2. In chapter 7:18, God is seeking to impress the prophet with the idolatrous patterns of the people, at a time when people were also gathering to

“worship the Lord,” and trusting in “the temple of the Lord,” which better fits the days of reformation and restoration carried out by Josiah rather than the days of Jehoiakim (7:1, 4; 2 Kings 23).

3. In 7:24-28 God seeks to open the eyes of Jeremiah to the fact Judah will not listen to his words (a hope he might have retained in the days of Josiah’s reformation), whereas in chapter 26, they all cry out for Jeremiah’s death (which would have stimulated no hope of being heard).
4. It is generally agreed that chapters 7-10 cover one period including three speeches (7:1 - 8:3; 8:4 - 9:21; 9:22 - 10:25) dealing with the temple and the law of God.
 - a. Such messages would blend perfectly with the time of Josiah’s reformation and restoration.
 - b. Chapter seven is an appeal to amend their ways; chapters 8 and 10 are an appeal for Judah to see the grave differences in idolatry and the true God.
 - c. Instead of hoping for a change in chapter 26, under King Jehoiakim, all of that chapter is a demand for and a discussion of whether Jeremiah should be killed.

Therefore, both the context and contents would indicate chapters 7 and 26 did not occur at the same time.

B. The Place, the Plea and the Promise (7:1-7)

1. The place – in the gate or the Lord’s house.
2. The plea – amend their ways and their deeds. Three things to avoid:
 - a. Do not trust in deceptive words (*wrong words*, Micah 3:11).
 - b. Do not oppress the alien, orphans, widows, the innocent (*wrong ways*).
 - c. Do not walk after other gods (*wrong walk*).
3. The promise – If they would heed both God’s positive (things to do) and negative (things to avoid) pleas, God promises to allow them to dwell in that place “forever and ever.”

C. The Problem Presented (7:8-11)

1. Jeremiah’s summary of the vices of his day – stealing, murder, adultery and false swearing.
2. The House of God had virtually become a den of robbers (7:11).
 - a. Human life was cheap.
 - 1) Infants were offered up as sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom (7:31; 19:4-6).
 - 2) A faithful prophet of God was hunted down and executed by the tyrant Jehoiakim for preaching the word of the Lord (26:20-23).
 - 3) The Baal cult with its lewd and licentious ‘worship’ had taken its toll.
 - b. Immorality run rampant.
 - 1) The men of Judah chased after the wives of their neighbors (5:7-9; 9:2).
 - 2) Deceit and lying were so common that no one could be trusted, not even members of one’s own family (9:2-6).
 - c. The people had completely lost their sense of sin (2:27).
 - d. Wickedness prevailed everywhere and the national leadership seemed unconcerned (10:21).
3. Their mind-set was that “we are delivered” (v. 10).

D. The Price to Be Paid (7:12-20)

1. God reminds Judah of the judgment at Shiloh. (See 1 Samuel 1:3; 4:10-18; Psalm 78:55-72).
2. A similar fate awaited Judah (vs. 12-14).
3. God's persistence toward His people is seen in the phrase "God rising early." (Used by Jeremiah eleven times)
4. A part of the price – Jeremiah instructed to not pray for them (7:16).

E. The Proper Approach Contrasted to Their Persistent Pattern (7:21-28)

1. The proper approach – "Obey my voice."
2. The persistent pattern – flagrant idolatry and immoral disobedience.
3. Verse 28 is one of the saddest statements in this book (cf. 9:4; 44:26-27). "Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth." There is no darker strand of hopelessness!

F. Their Obsession with Idolatry (7:29-31)

1. In the bare heights – "high places" (v. 29).
2. In the house of the Lord (v. 30).
3. In the Valley of the Son of Hinnom (v. 31).

G. The Promised Punishment (7:32 - 8:3)

1. The Valley of Slaughter (7:32). The slaughter of the people of Judah by the Babylonian army.
2. National leaders are *honored not*, as bones of kings, princes, priests and prophets are lifted from their graves (8:1-2).
3. The inability of idols to give a solution to their problems.

REASONING THAT LEADS TO RUIN (8:4-22)**A. Judah Has Refused to Repent (8:4-7)****B. Judah Has Refused to Respect God's Law (8:8,9)****C. Judah Has Refused to be Righteous (8:10-12)**

1. They were lustful (v. 10 - *wrong desires*).
2. They were lying (v. 11 - *wrong declarations*).
3. They were licentious (v. 12 - *wrong disposition*).

JUDAH HEARS THE RESULTS OF THEIR REFUSAL (8:13-17)**A. The Conditions They Will Face Are Complete Doom and Desolation (8:13)**

1. No grapes on the vines.
2. No figs on the fig tree.

B. The Confusion Judah Will Face When the Conflict Comes (8:14-15)**C. The Cause for Their Consternation is Identified as Babylon's Powerful Forces and God's Firm Plan (vs. 16-17)**

REASONING OVER THE RUIN (8:18-22)

- A. Jeremiah's Mental and Emotional Condition (v. 18).** Heartsick because of the misery of his people.
- B. Judah's Question and Cry of Dismay (v. 19)**
1. In a distant land the former inhabitants of Judah lift up a cry for help: "Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?"
 2. To this astonished cry God makes answer: "Why do they provoke Me with their images?" (v. 19).

SUMMARY

The Physician and medication were there and willing, but the patient, Judah, was wilful, obstinate, and determined to resist the cure!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. List six stages identifying the thinking and action that will assure Judah's desolation.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
2. Give two conditions that will accompany their complete doom and desolation.
3. What is meant by "the Valley of Slaughter?"

4. Concerning the "House of God" becoming a den of robbers, list four things which reflect this.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
5. Discussion: What do you see as Judah's core problem?

LESSON 10

PUNISHMENT, PAIN, APOSTASY AND PROMISE

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 9 and 10 will continue the discussion of punishment pain and apostasy. The core theme in chapter 9 is *punishment* that impacts the prophet and the people, showing up in 14 verses (1-2, 7, 9, 12, 15-16, 19, 21-22, 25-26). The second major theme is *God's power, righteousness, and the need to know Him*, showing up in 12 verses (3, 6-7, 9, 13, 15-16, 20, 23, 28). The third theme comes from repeated references to *man's wicked ways* that demand God's punishment, showing up in 10 verses (2-6, 8, 13-14, 25-26). A fourth theme is *death or a dirge*, showing up in 7 verses (1, 10-11, 16, 20-22). Therefore, it is no surprise that *weeping* and *wailing* surface in six verses (1, 10, 17-20).

Chapter 10 is an expose' of the futility of *idolatry* in contrast to the superiority of *God*, rest assured that the *need and vulnerability of man* is the central concern. The point: neither God nor idols are in danger of being hurt in this scenario—*men are!*

God made a covenant with Israel in the wilderness through Moses (Exodus 19:1-9; 20:1-24; 24:1-8). That covenant was reviewed before Israel by Moses (Deuteronomy 4:1-20), even identifying to them God's very procedure, sending them into captivity if they broke the covenant and went after other gods (vs. 23-31). Even Israel's return to God and how they would return were covered by Moses. Then the covenant was restated (Deuteronomy 5:1-33), including blessings if they obeyed and curses if they disobeyed (Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 9 through 11

LESSON AIM: Apostasy is the breaking of a covenant made with God and the consequences of not keeping covenant is judgment from God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn that apostasy brings punishment and pain and the desired results of God issuing punishment and pain for Judah.
 2. See the futility of astrology and idolatry, the superiority of God and the sad consequences of forsaking God to serve dumb idols.
 3. Renew your knowledge of the validity of making a covenant with God and the results of not adhering to the conditions of that covenant.
-

APOSTASY BRINGS PUNISHMENT AND PAIN

A. Crying until There Are No More Tears to Cry (9:1-2). The cause is two-fold:

1. Jeremiah cries “for the slain of the daughter of my people” (v. 1).
2. Jeremiah weeps for an unprepared people (v. 1). For a godly man like Jeremiah, it is a shocking and sad sight to view the death of unprepared people!

B. Carnal to the Core (9:2b-6)

1. The words “all” and “every.”
 - a. All of them are adulterers.
 - b. Every brother deals craftily.
 - c. Every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.
 - d. Everyone deceives his neighbor and does not speak the truth.
2. They weary themselves committing iniquity (v. 5).

C. The Aim of God’s Chastisement is Correction (9:7-11)

1. The only solution is to purge them through tribulation (v. 7).
2. Wickedness and immorality must be removed through the judgment process (v. 8).
 - a. The land flowing with milk and honey becomes a barren waste (v. 10).
 - b. The “I” in verse 10 is the prophet’s weeping.
 - c. The “I” in verse 11 is God’s promised punishment.

D. Confusion Countered with the Cause (9:12-16)

1. Judah deceived by false prophets.
 - a. False prophets, the wise men, and the scribes who have led the people to consider God’s promises and Jeremiah’s prophecies of desolation and destruction as *ridiculous* (9:12).
 - b. God now counters the deceit with a two-fold expression of the cause. **Judah had forsaken God’s law and had stubbornly walked after other gods** (vs. 13-16).
2. This apostasy and idolatry **they had learned from their fathers** (v. 14). The sons must now eat the wormwood and drink the water of gall (v. 15).

E. Consequences for Carnality (9:17-22)

1. The people’s reasons for mourning.
 - a. Not because of their sins and a severed relationship with God.
 - b. They are mourning because they were “ruined,” because of “great shame,” and because enemy forces “cast down our dwellings.”
 - c. It is basically a *material* mourning. There is no comment about *death of the people*, even of loved ones!
2. They needed to focus on the real problems.
 - a. In verse 20 God does not tell them to stop mourning.
 - b. The real problems were--not in *battered buildings* but *bloated bodies*; not in *dwellings* but in *death of the people*!
 - c. The cause for mourning was the stench of death coming through windows.

NOTE: When a nation honors things and uses people, righteousness in the land is in a reverse gear!

F. The Creator's Counsel (9:23-24)

1. God's effort to help Judah's wise men get some true wisdom (9:12, 23-24).
2. Three humanistic aspirations that claim to be the sources to spell success-- man's wisdom, man's might, and man's riches!
 - a. King Saul – his wisdom (1 Samuel 13:1-13; 15:7-23; 31:1-6).
 - b. King David easily could fall victim to the temptation of glorying in his might.
 - c. King Solomon through the ages has been honored for his great wisdom and massive riches (1 Kings 4:21-34; 10:14-19; Ecclesiastes 2:1-12), and yet through that very wealth and power, Solomon played the fool to violate every rule that God had given to warn Israel and its king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Kings 11:1-11).
3. Verse 24 moves from *man's folly* to how the wise can gain *God's favor!* To “understand and know” God.

<i>Loving kindness</i>	His disposition	His Spirit	(For us) Delight
<i>Justice</i>	His decrees	His Statutes	(For us) Discipline
<i>Righteousness</i>	His deeds	His Service	(For us) Development

G. Chastening is Consistent (9:25-26)

1. Judah was no better in heart than Egypt, Edom, Ammon or Moab.
2. Judah, like the other nations, had one glaring deficiency – the circumcision of the heart, of which the outer circumcision was a symbol, (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:25-29).

GOD, IDOLS AND MAN (10:1-26)

A. The Futility of Astrology and Idolatry (10:1-5)

1. Warning (v. 2): “Don’t learn the way of the nations and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens.”
2. Modern astrology had its birth in the pagan temples of Mesopotamia.
3. Idols are in reality nothing more than a tree which has been cut out of the forest by the ax of a woodsman (v. 3).
 - a. Idols can neither scare nor share, defend nor deliver, reach out, redeem nor reward!
 - b. Worshiping the stars makes no more sense than worshiping a tree!

B. The Superiority of God (10:6-16)

1. The reverence and awe that are due unto God stands in sharp contrast to the futility of idolatry.
2. God is declared to be the source of seven things:
 - a. **Truth** – “The Lord is the true God” (Psalms 19:7-11; John 17:17).
 - b. **Life** – “He is the living God” (Psalms 100:1-3; John 1:1-4).
 - c. **Time** – “The everlasting King” (Psalms 90:1-2; 10:16; 29:10).
 - d. **Authority** – “The nations cannot endure His indignation” (Psalms 76:7; 2 Chronicles 20:6).

- e. **Creator** – “It is He who made the earth by His power” (Genesis 1; Psalms 33:6-9).
 - f. **Wisdom** – “He established the world by His wisdom” (Proverbs 8; James 1:5).
 - g. **Word** – “When He utters His voice waters. . .clouds. . .lightning. . .wind” (Psalms 29:3-11; 135:7).
3. The stupidity of any who would worship dumb idols (vs. 14-16).

C. God’s Action Against People Who Adhere to Idols (10:17-22)

- 1. The sad plight of people is seen through God’s planned punishment.
- 2. Judah is described as a nation stripped of personnel (v. 20).
 - a. God’s tent had no one to erect that meeting place between God and His people.
 - b. There will be no meeting place for God has rejected these people.

D. A Prophetic Prayer and Plea (10:23-25)

- 1. The prophet prays for God to correct him with justice.
- 2. Jeremiah’s admission for Judah and all mankind: “I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps” (v. 23).

E. Deity’s Position Demands Man’s Submission

- 1. *Because* man is not able to direct his own steps.
- 2. *Because* man cannot correct his own wrong alone (10:24; Ephesians 4:32; 2:1-9).
- 3. *Because* God can bring us to nothing (v. 24; cf. Hebrews 12:28f; Matthew 10:28).
- 4. *Because* man needs God’s help to overcome evil men (10:25).
 - a. Those “who know Thee not” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 - b. Those “who call not on Thy name” (Genesis 5:26; Psalms 14:2-4).
 - c. Those who devour (eat) and consume (finish) Thy people and make their land desolate (1 Samuel 12:10-11; Psalms 31:15; 59:1-17; 71:4; 140:1-13; 2 Timothy 4:17-18; Hebrews 13:5-6).
- 5. *Because* of the great good God can bring to man.

THE DIVINE COVENANT REVIEWED AND RENEWED (11:1-23)

A. The Covenant Presented to be Proclaimed (11:1-5)

- 1. God made a covenant with Israel in the wilderness through Moses (Exodus 19:1-9; 20:1-24; 24:1-8).
- 2. That covenant was reviewed before Israel by Moses (Deuteronomy 4:1-20).
- 3. Then the covenant was restated (Deuteronomy 5:1-33), including blessings if they obeyed and curses if they disobeyed (Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68).
- 4. The covenant was to *all* the elders, *all* the men, *all* the inhabitants, *all* the people, who were to hear *all* the words of the covenant.
 - a. Each one must hear and heed these words.
 - b. Each one who hears is to speak this word to others.

B. The Proclamation: Past and Present Rejection (11:6-10)

Five important lessons to be learned:

1. **Doing or not doing God's covenant is eternally important.**
2. **God is very patient and caring.**
3. **If God can retain hope for such rebels, we dare not give up.** But step up and speak out again and again even when souls submerge themselves in sin and shame.
4. **God's time of punishment may not relate to the time of disobedience.**
5. **God has *always* supplied man with directions and decrees,** testimony and truth, legislation and law, **so that *all* could know,** leaving us without excuse (Acts 14:14-17; John 7:17; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4; Romans 1:16-25).
6. Three steps identifying Judah's downfall:
 - a. They refused to hear God's word.
 - b. They relied on other gods to serve them.
 - c. They revolted (broke away) from God's covenant.

C. The People's Plight (11:11-13). What a hopeless picture:

1. They cannot help themselves or escape (v. 11).
2. God will not help them (v. 11b; cf. Proverbs 1:22-33).
3. They will cry out to their gods, which cannot save them (v. 12; 10:3-5). They have gods galore, but only in Jehovah God is there hope.

D. God's Perception (11:14-17)

1. God perceived Jeremiah's prayer (v. 14).
2. He further perceived Judah's vile deeds, even in His house (v. 15).
3. He perceived what they had been – like “a green olive tree, beautiful in fruit and form” (v. 16).
4. He perceived what they had become – they had degenerated into a *wild olive* tree (Romans 11:24).
5. God perceived their planned wicked deeds against His prophet (vs. 18-19). They wanted to blot out both the man and his memory (v. 19).
 - a. Their deeds (v. 18).
 - b. Their devised plots against Jeremiah (v. 19).
 - c. These plots were to “cut him off from the land of the living” (v. 19).
 - d. These plots included that “his name be remembered no more” (v. 19).

E. The Prophet's Plea (11:20)

1. God's awareness does not move Jeremiah beyond any danger or harm.
2. Other prophets had been threatened.
 - a. Amos was ordered to leave Bethel (Amos 7:10ff).
 - b. Elijah had to flee for his life to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:1-4).
 - c. Zechariah was slain in the Temple (2 Chronicles 24:20-22).
 - d. Isaiah, according to tradition, was sawn asunder during the reign of king Manasseh.
 - e. In Jeremiah's day a prophet by the name of Uriah, who spoke words similar to those of Jeremiah, was slain by King Jehoiakim (26:20-23).

F. God's Punishment (11:21-23)

1. The punishment is to be severe.
2. The year of their visitation or punishment is upon them (v. 23).
3. They shall not be able to escape the ruthless armies of Nebuchadnezzar.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. What in 9:7-11 is the AIM of God's chastisement? _____
2. What was the two-fold cause of Judah's destruction in 9:12-16?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. Their apostasy and idolatry they had learned _____.
4. Complete this sentence: When a nation _____ and _____, righteousness in the land is in a reverse gear!
5. What are three humanistic aspirations that claim to be the sources to spell success?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
6. God is declared to be the source of what seven things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
7. What five (5) lessons are to be learned by Judah concerning Past and Present Rejection in 11:6-10?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

LESSON 11

THE PROPHET, THE PEOPLE AND THE COVENANT

INTRODUCTION

Let all who have been confident in God's righteousness but questioned His *timing*, who does not doubt His power, but want Him to *act now*, who know God knows everything, but want to *offer Him some suggestions*, who are sure He sees everything, but want to raise some questions about *His allowances*, and *identify some facts* He needs to consider---let all such souls line up and join Jeremiah before God's throne as chapter 12 unfolds.

If the foregoing statements seem contradictory, coming from a source of limited faith and identify a frustrated mind, you would be right. All the foregoing related to mixed emotions, anxieties and concerns will periodically surface in Jeremiah from chapter 12 into chapter 20. These statements form an amazing study of growth in God's prophet.

For any wavering in the valley of uncertainty, where questioning God is a reality, learn the vital lesson that God did not give up on His prophet, God's prophet did not falter in God's service, and personal growth, insight, and understanding were beautifully honed and shaped in this valley of concern and frustration. How practical that makes these chapters for any one of us.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 12 through 14

LESSON AIM: To understand the mind-set of Judah and Jeremiah concerning outward corrections in contrast to God's desire for inward penitence.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Investigate the concept Jeremiah has toward the wicked prospering and Gods' response to both His prophet and His people.
 2. Learn the painful price to be paid for ungodly pride in the story of the "Dirty Girdle."
 3. Learn that the people pray to God for a solution to the drought but dictate to God their own terms to that solution.
 4. See God's evaluation of His people and the false prophets who deceive the people.
-

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS PROSPERING

A. The Prophet's Question (12:1-4)

1. Why do the wicked prosper in their wickedness? How do you account for the fact that the wicked:
 - a. Are at ease.
 - b. Have taken root.
 - c. Are growing.
 - d. Have produced fruit (vs. 1-2).
2. Jeremiah wanted God to *act now!* It was a matter of timing.
3. A four-fold lesson for us concerning God is that:
 - a. He is aware of our circumstances,
 - b. What the needs are,
 - c. Knowing what will happen before it happens, and
 - d. He will act when He knows action should be taken (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:17-21).

B. God's Response to His Prophet (12:5-6)

1. The difficulty the prophet faces. The race has barely begun, and up ahead the prophet must compete with horses.
 - a. In this context running with men seems to refer to Jeremiah's encounters with false teachers/prophets.
 - b. There is probably a thinly veiled reference to the military might of Babylon (cf. 4:13; 8:16).
 - c. Local opposition from the people of Judah was modest by comparison with the opposition yet to be experienced from a foreign foe.
2. The second figure of speech compares life in a land of peace with ordeals related to the "thicket of Jordan" (12:5; 49:19; 50:44; Zechariah 11:3-4).
 - a. *"If in a country now enjoying peace thou scarcely thinkest thyself in safety, what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?"*
 - b. The overflowing of Jordan, which generally happened in harvest drove the lions and other beasts of prey from their coverts among the bushes that lined its banks; who, spreading themselves through the country, made terrible havoc, slaying men, and carrying off cattle.
 - c. By *footmen* may be meant the *Philistines, Edomites, etc.*, whose armies were composed principally of *infantry*.
 - d. By the *horses*, the *Chaldeans*, who had abundance of *calvary* and chariots in their army. But still the words are *proverbial*.
3. Difficulties with his own family (v. 6).

C. God's Response to His Own People (12:7-13)

1. How God sees His people.
 - a. God sees His people **as an out-of-control, roaring lion against God.** They are acting like the Devil (cf. 1 Peter 5:8-9; John 8:43-44).
 - b. God sees His people **as a "speckled bird of prey" to Him** (v. 9). Those nations with which the highly favored and beautiful Jewish nation mingled against God's will, shall now pluck it to pieces.
 - c. The Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, Assyrians, Egyptians and

Babylonians will come like shepherds, camp, conquer and consume the whole countryside. God's pleasant field will be turned into a desolate wilderness (v. 10; 15:5; 2 Kings 24:1-3; 21:1-6, 11, 16).

2. The question: "Why did this happen?" The twofold answer:
 - a. No man took it to heart – neither Judah nor the nations care in their hearts what happens to Judah or the land.
 - b. Because the sword of the Lord is devouring (v. 12).

D. God's Conditional Promises (12:14-17)

1. For Judah.
 - a. God would separate from them their wicked neighbors (v. 14).
 - b. God would return them to the land of their inheritance (v. 15).
2. For the Nations (vs. 16-17).
 - a. They would be built up in the midst of Judah.
 - b. Conditional – if they would learn God's way and swear by His name.
 - c. The final (and 2nd negative) promise God made to the nations was that "if they will not listen (obey KJV)," God not only will uproot that nation, He will destroy it (12:17).

NOTE: By this discovery of His world-plan the Lord makes so complete a reply to the prophet's murmuring concerning the prosperity of the ungodly (vs. 1-6), that from it may clearly be seen the justice of God's government on earth.

THE PAINFUL PRICE TO BE PAID FOR PRIDE (13:1-27)

A. The Parable of the Dirty Girdle

1. The linen girdle is a symbol of **private ownership**. The girdle obviously represents God's people. God had made "the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah. . .that they might be for me a people" (v. 11).
2. The girdle was a symbol of **closeness**. As a girdle clings to the one who wears it, so God wanted His people to "cling to Me" (v. 11).
3. The girdle was a symbol of **sophistication**. It was special attire, worthy of being worn on special occasions. So God intended that His people be special, "a people for renown, for praise, and for glory" (v. 11).
4. The girdle in this Divine drama had turned splendor into shame, the elite had become evil, and through pride these people were "totally worthless" (v. 7; note the term pride in vs. 9, 15, 17).
5. That girdle had deteriorated to such a degree that it must now be cast away as totally worthless (vs. 7, 10; 11:16-17; 10:17-18).
6. The girdle was to be taken to the Euphrates in Babylon and hidden there—the very place where God's discarded people were to go as worthless captives (vs. 4-6; 25:8-12; 52:11).
7. This girdle takes God's prophet to the land of Nebuchadnezzar.
 - a. To illustrate that Judah was going there.
 - b. Perhaps so Nebuchadnezzar could meet Jeremiah. He was well acquainted with Jeremiah and showed him special favors (cf. 39:11-14; 29:1, 4-7).
 - c. It could have been for Jeremiah's protection. In chapter 11:18-21 God

- made it clear that killing the prophet was being planned by some.
8. Jeremiah needed to get away to do some meditating, clearing his mind.
 - a. He had been praying for the people (11:14) to whom he was proclaiming desolation (7:34; 12:11).
 - b. He had just learned of their threats to kill him, resulting in his desire for them to be immediately led as sheep to the slaughter (11:19-20; 12:1-3).
 9. The journey with the girdle would help Jeremiah accept the total destruction of the nation.

B. Drunkenness Identifies Arrogance (13:12-14)

1. The people's arrogant perception – **prosperity and good times**.
2. God's perception – **drunk with confusion and destruction**. The scope of this forth-coming judgment:
 - a. The inhabitants of the land.
 - b. The residents of Jerusalem.
 - c. The prophets, the priests and the kings who occupy the throne of God.
 - d. God will have no pity upon these fallen sots, and he will not intervene to prevent them from being destroyed (v. 14). The grace period has ended.

C. Darkness Will Surround Their Haughty Heads (13:15-17)

1. Jeremiah's four-fold plea for his people:
 - a. Listen.
 - b. Give Heed.
 - c. Do not be haughty.
 - d. Give glory to the Lord your God (v. 15).
2. The problem here is pride's deception that blinds people to any danger.
3. Jeremiah's deep emotional weeping for the Lord's flock.

D. Dishonor Faced by Royalty (13:18-19)

1. When a few peasants or peons suffer in a land, few pay any attention. However, when the leaders fall, security for all is gone and its significance demands a wake-up call throughout the land.
2. These events occurred about 597 B.C. It was likely the largest—at least the most significant—part of the deportation of the people into Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 52:27-30).

E. Disgrace Drapes over the Land (13:20-27)

1. Jeremiah identifies forces coming from the north (v. 20; 1:13-15; 6:22-26).
2. Alliances will control them (v. 21). "What will you say when He," i.e. God, "shall appoint as your head those you had cultivated as friends?"
 - a. The word translated "head" can also mean "poison."
 - b. Those you thought to be your friends and allies, those whose friendship you labored so hard to secure, will become your head, master, or perhaps, your poison.
3. The question in verse 23. This is not a statement of what man *cannot do*, but a solemn warning of what some men *will not do*!

4. The question in verse 27. “How long will you remain unclean?” Implies:
 - a. You are not clean (1 John 1:8, 10; Romans 3:23).
 - b. You need to be clean (2 Corinthians 6:17-18; James 4:8-9).
 - c. You must be *made* clean (Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Corinthians 3:4-5; 1 Peter 18-19), but you *can be clean* (Isaiah 1:18; Revelation 7:14; Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7).
 - d. Will you *refuse to be clean* (Proverbs 1:24-31; Matthew 7:21, 24-27; Luke 6:46; James 1:21-22; John 12:48)?

DROUGHT, DECEPTION AND DEMANDS (14:1-22)

A. The Results of the Drought (14:1-6)

1. A Divine message in hard times to help a disturbed prophet understand the true character of God’s people.
2. The conditions from the drought cut deeply into the people. They mourn (v. 2), are put to shame and humiliated (v. 3).
3. Even nature tells the tragedy. There is no water (v. 3), the ground is cracked open (v. 4), the deer, an emblem of motherly affection, abandons her babe, wild, tough donkeys pant, sniffing the air to pick up a scent of water. When it says their eyes fail, it is more than a loss of sight. It is a loss of life!

B. Reaction of the People (14:7-9)

1. This is the people’s prayer – not Jeremiah’s.
2. Their prayer reveals three things about their concept of their sin and God’s character.
 - a. Their confession of sin is non-specific.
 - b. They are complimentary of God (v. 9).
 - c. Judah’s real outlook toward God, the natural response of humanism.
 - 1) When people begin to make their own gods, they develop a nature to dictate what their gods should do or say (cf. Jeremiah 10:2-5, 8-9, 14-15; Psalms 115:4-8).
 - 2) While they asked God to act for His name’s sake, they are commanding God to act to relieve their misery in the drought.
 - 3) To them, God’s job was to take care of His people. That is man’s concept of pagan gods—they provide good crops, assure fertility and other convenient benefits for men.

C. The Reaction by God (14:10-12)

1. While they do not know God, God does know “this people” (v. 10). They are a people who:
 - a. Have loved to wander.
 - b. Have not kept their feet in check, therefore:
 - c. God does not accept them. They had not truly repented, and God plainly tells Jeremiah what each one should do in 14:10.
2. Note four basic lessons we should learn from this context:
 - a. Confessing sin but not genuinely repenting does not work before God.
 - b. Blaming others (as Judah blamed God) does not correct *our sin!*
 - c. Telling others what they should do does not take the place of doing

what we should do.

- d. Creating self pity when we pay for our sins can be a run from God's principle that we will reap what we have sown (Galatians 6:7-8).

D. Reaction to False Prophets (14:13-16)

1. The false prophets' message – "God will give peace in the land."
2. The false prophets' destiny – the fate of their own denial – sword and famine (v. 15).

E. Remorse for the Rewards of Rebellion (14:17-18)

F. Response by Judah to God (14:19-22)

1. More confessions without correction.
2. They looked on the *outside* for peace when they should have enacted penitence on the *inside!*
3. They charge God:
 - a. "Do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory."
 - b. "Do not break Thy covenant with us."
4. In verses 7, 9, 21, and 22 these people charge God with *their problem* and call on Him to *wake up* to His responsibility.

NOTE: What a sickness is in souls when the created seek to command the Creator, and brand the Maker of man with breaking the Covenant He had so patiently and lovingly kept!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. A four-fold lesson for us concerning God is:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. What are two figures of speech God uses to answer the prophet's question about the unrighteous prospering?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
1. How God sees His people (17:7-13). Fill in the blanks:
 1. God sees His people as an _____
 2. God sees His people as a _____

4. In the parable of the Dirty Girdle, give three things which the girdle symbolizes.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. In 13:15-17 Jeremiah's four-fold plea for his people is given. List these below:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

6. List four basic lessons we should learn from the context of 14:10-12.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

7. What was the "false prophets'" continuing false message? _____

8. What was the "false prophets" destiny? _____

9. What is the two-fold charge the people leveled at God in 14:19-20?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON 12

PUNISHMENT AND PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

If there was any chance that Jeremiah may have been deceived by the confessed sins and comments of Judah at the end of chapter 14, God clears the air as to His stand in chapter 15. Judah did make some good statements as chapter 14 closed. They were hurting and knew they needed help. Hence, they honored God some with their lips, but they continued to reject Him by their life. There was regret but no reformation.

The key to explain God's harsh words at the first of this chapter is seen in 15:7: "They did not repent of their ways." Better *words* but the same *ways* do not weigh much in God's righteous scales! If the *way* is wrong, how can what they *say* be right? Penitent platitudes without correction of conduct is diagnosed as spiritually sick souls by Jehovah (Isaiah 29:13-16).

Therefore, punishment is promised to these people, who are to be *separated from God's presence* (15:1) and *subjected to God's system of suffering* (15:2-14). There follows *protection promised for God's prophet* (15:15-21), including *the prophetic plea* (vs. 15-17), *the prophet's perplexity* (v. 18), and *God's promised protection* (vs. 19-21).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 15 through 17

LESSON AIM: To see God's continued pronouncement of judgment for the nation and protection for His prophet.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn that God's patience and longsuffering with Judah has finally reached its full end.
 2. See three prohibitions laid on Jeremiah.
 3. Learn that there are only two ways: turning away or turning to God.
 4. Learn of the relationship of keeping the Sabbath and preventing the coming judgment of Jehovah.
-

PUNISHMENT AND PROTECTION PROMISED AND PREDICTED

A. Punishment Promised to These People (15:1-14)

1. God's forsaking – because of their follies (v. 1).
 - a. Even Moses' and Samuel's intercession will not help.
 - b. God will not alter His intent.
2. God's system of suffering. The totality of this tragedy is stated in 15:2:

- Those destined for death, to death — No pulse
 Those destined for the sword, to the sword — No peace
 Those destined for famine, to the famine — No provisions
 Those destined for captivity, to captivity — No place (of their own)
3. The dreadful description further unfolds in 15:3:
 - The sword — To slay
 - The dogs — To drag away
 - The birds — To feed on human flesh
 - The beasts — To devour and destroy
 4. God is weary of “relenting” (NKJV), “repenting” (v. 6, KJV). The term *repent* in the King James does not mean God had made a mistake. The word there identifies that God is tired of grieving over these people, being moved to pity for their promiscuous lifestyle and its painful fruits.
 5. Every family level or unit will suffer (vs. 7-9).
 6. Jeremiah’s dejection (vs. 10-14).
 - a. He is a man of strife – as he appeals to an impenitent people.
 - b. He is a man of contention – by their reaction to his message.
 - c. He considers giving up (v. 19).

NOTE: How much can a man take? A beautiful thought to remember is *that God knows!!* He will not allow His prophet to be tried beyond what Jeremiah can handle (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13).

B. Protection Promised for God’s Prophet (15:15-21)

1. The prophet’s plea (vs. 15-17).
 - a. **Remember him and take notice of his persecutors** (v. 15).
 - b. **Recognize his respect for the revealed word** (v. 16).
 - c. **Reflect on his refusal to join the merry-makers** (v. 17).
2. The prophet’s perplexity (15:18). Two observations need to be made:
 - a. Jeremiah’s weak moments were *always* brought before God.
 - b. Jeremiah never missed an appointment *for God*. He and God worked out the prophet’s weaknesses and struggles in growth.
3. God’s plan and promise for his prophet (15:19-21).
 - a. Jeremiah is to be *selective* (“If you return,”) i.e., go back to the original point of departure.
 - b. Jeremiah is to be *standing* before Jehovah.
 - c. Jeremiah is to be *speaking* for Jehovah. “You will be my spokesman.”
4. God’s three great promises.
 - a. **“I will restore you”** (v. 19).
 - b. **“I will make you to this people. . . a fortified wall of bronze”** (v. 20; Mark 1:17; Luke 15:19).
 - c. **“I am with you to save you and deliver you** (vs. 20-21).

NOTE: *God is no deceptive stream!* What promises for His prophet! What security! What a faithful God!

HORRORS FOR THE HOME PLUS HOPE (16:1-21)

A. The Prohibition of Marriage (vs. 1-4).

1. How could Jeremiah proclaim those portions of his message concerning the horrors coming on families, and then enter into such a relationship himself (cf. 6:11-13; 15:7-9; 18:21-22)?
2. For Jeremiah to declare what he does concerning the home, mourning and merriment, while participating freely in all those areas would never impress the hearers with his sincerity.
3. How could Jeremiah fulfil the task God had assigned to him while watching his wife and children undergo the tragedies declared in this chapter? (1 Corinthians 7:29-35).
4. Jeremiah must—and did—face the fact it is not a time to have a wife or family (15:10; 20:14).

B. The Prohibition of Mourning (16:5-7)

1. God had “withdrawn peace from this people. . . My loving-kindness and compassion”(v. 5; cf. 12:12; 30:5).
2. When God says that people are to reap corruption (Galatians 6:7-8), you cannot go to them with comfort and compassion!
 - a. Doomed people cannot be blest with a message of devotion and delight!
 - b. Jeremiah had no hope to offer these condemned souls.

C. Prohibition Against Celebrating (12:8-9)

1. God is going to eliminate from that place rejoicing, gladness, and the voice of the bride or the bridegroom (7:34; 25:10).
2. Jeremiah’s abstinence is an object lesson to the people of that generation.
3. The nation was crumbling to destruction. This was no time for feasting and rejoicing.

D. Denials by the Doomed and Definiteness by the Divine (16:10-13)

1. The people’s astounding question – “Who us?” (v. 10).
2. Five charges from their past:
 - a. Your forefathers **have forsaken Me**. This is the 11th time Jeremiah has reminded them of their folly in forsaking Jehovah (1:16; 2:13, 17, 19; 5:7, 19; 9:13, 19; 12:7; 14:5; 15:6).
 - b. Your forefather’s **have followed other gods** and taught you to do so.
 - c. They **have “served” other gods**, which means they really worked for these gods.
 - d. They **have “bowed down to them,”** a charge found in 1:16; 8:2 and 13:10.
 - e. They had forsaken God and **“have not kept My law.”**
 - f. One ingredient added by this present generation, **“stubbornness”** (v. 12), which is a hardness that blocks out head, heart and heeding.
3. God’s threefold promise of how He will respond to their long term rebellion:
 - a. God will hurl them out of the land.
 - b. They will serve other gods day and night (v. 11).
 - c. God adds, “I will grant you no favor.” What a sobering statement.

E. Hope and Hurt Are up Ahead (16:14-21)

1. God promises a return of His people (vs. 14-21).
2. However, that generation would experience God's punishment (vs. 16-18).
3. International attack upon idolatry (vs. 19-20).
 - a. There had to be a cleansing of the land by deportation.
 - b. The move out of Egypt into the promise land was actually a move *into the idolatry of Canaan*, whereas the move from Babylon would be a move *out of idolatry*.
4. Restoration will follow deportation – “To Thee the nations will come from the ends of the earth” (v. 19). In the view of the Old Testament prophets the restoration from Babylon culminated in the work of the great liberator, the Messiah.

THE HEART AND HEARING OF MAN VIEWED BY GOD (17:1-27)**A. Hearts Engraved with Sin (17:1-4)**

1. God sees the sin infested heart of Judah.
2. The sin of Judah is written indelibly, for all times, in the table of their heart.
3. The Searcher of the heart (17:10) reads there the declaration of their independence from the rule of the Lord, from His Law and His Gospel.

B. Hearts Turning Away or Turning to God (17:5-8) Cursed or blessed?

1. Cursed is the man who trusts in man (vs. 5-6).
 - a. Who makes the flesh his strength (2 Chronicles 32:8).
 - b. He will be like a bush in the desert (Ezekiel 19:12-14).
 - c. He will not see when prosperity comes (Deuteronomy 28:29).
 - d. He will live in stony wastes in the wilderness (Genesis 4:11-12).
 - e. In a land of salt, without inhabitant (Deuteronomy 29:23-25).
2. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord (vs. 7-8).
 - a. Whose trust is the Lord (revere God).
 - b. Like a tree planted by the water (Psalm 1).
 - c. Will not fear when heat comes (Psalm 52:8).
 - d. Leaves will be green (Psalm 92:12).
 - e. Will not be anxious in the drought.
 - f. Will not cease to yield fruit (Psalm 126; Revelation 22:1-2).
3. This great contrast would raise a question: *Why would any one, viewing the fruits, turn their hearts away from God rather than to God?* The next section answers.

C. God Will Search Our Hearts (17:9-14)

1. The condition of the depraved heart.
 - a. The heart is deceitful above all things.
 - b. The heart is desperately wicked.
 - c. Cannot be understood by man.
2. God alone can search the heart to both know it, judge it, and assign curses or blessings to it – *according to our ways* (v. 10).

D. What Jeremiah Hears from Judah (17:15-18)

1. The response of the people to Jeremiah's prophecies.
 - a. The key point in verse 15 centers around the word "come."
 - b. Their attitude was, "It hasn't happened yet" and that means you, Jeremiah, are a false prophet.
2. Jeremiah's response:
 - a. He didn't verbally respond to their abuse.
 - b. He talked to God about it.

E. What God Wants Judah to Hear and to Heed (17:19-22)

1. God's patience with Judah is again demonstrated in these verses.
2. God offers to preserve and bless the land if the people will respect and respond to one fundamental law—"keep the Sabbath" (v. 24).
 - a. "Take heed for yourselves" (v. 21).
 - b. Do not carry any load on the Sabbath day.
 - c. Do not bring anything in through the gates of Jerusalem.
 - d. You shall not bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day.
 - e. You shall not do any work.
 - f. Keep the Sabbath day holy.
3. Many who claim to keep the Sabbath violate those rules related to the Sabbath.
4. The Sabbath was a law between God and Israel (Exodus 31:12-18). It was never given specifically as a law to any other nation, or to Gentiles.
5. **Note these summary thoughts:**
 - a. The Sabbath was a special law *for Israel*, given through Moses, lasting from when they were camped at Mt. Sinai to the death of Christ on the cross (Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 9:14-15; Hebrew 8:6-13).
 - b. The Sabbath Law was never mentioned as a day to be observed by any one in the times of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph, spanning a period of some 2000 years.
 - c. Under Christ's covenant "we do not judge any one in regard to the feast days, new moons, or the Sabbath day" *for it is not a law from God to those under Christ's covenant* (Colossians 2:12-16; Galatians 3:26-28).
 - d. Even those who claim today that we should keep the Sabbath do not keep it as Moses' Law specified for it to be kept (Jeremiah 17:20-25; Numbers 15:32-36; Exodus 31:12-18; Ezekiel 20:12-13). This is but another case where *human tradition* has tried to replace *Divine revelation* (cf. Mark 7:6-13).

F. How They Heard and the Consequences (17:23-27)

1. Great benefits God offered Judah if they would truly have kept the Sabbath as He directed (17:24-26). There would follow:

<i>Peace</i>	–	Men would freely enter in through open gates.
<i>Power</i>	–	Kings and princes would be there/great leadership.
<i>Pattern</i>	–	Men would be sitting on David's throne—a God-approved standard (2 Kings 14:1-3; 16:2-3; 18:1-3; 2 Chronicles 17:1-3; 34:1-2).
<i>Prosperity</i>	–	They would be riding on chariots and horses (best

- transport of that day).
- Pious/Pure* – All would be bringing sacrifices and offerings/devout souls.
- Praise* – Thanksgivings offered in the house of the Lord.
- Perpetuity* – This city will be inhabited forever (Hebrew, *Olam*).
2. They responded with three stages of further rebellion:
- They did not listen so as to obey.
 - They did not incline their ear (even to seek to hear).
 - They stiffened their necks so as not to get His instruction. They *intended* to miss this message (v. 23).

NOTE: Their rebellion was no clearer than God's pronounced judgment: There will be a fire in the gates—no chance to escape. The palaces will be devoured. The most stable buildings will offer no security. That fire would not be quenched until God's planned punishment was fulfilled.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

- What are the two main topics of chapter 15?
 - _____
 - _____
- What three prohibitions did God put upon Jeremiah in chapter 16?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- What two possibilities for man are presented in 17:5-8 and what are their fruits?
 - _____
 - _____
- What are three characteristics of the heart given in 17:9-14?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- When and to whom was the Sabbath given as a law to keep? _____

 Give one scripture which so states: _____

LESSON 13

GOD, THE POTTER, HIS PRINCIPLES, PEOPLE, AND PROPHET

INTRODUCTION:



God had called for one command to be kept—the Sabbath (chapter 17), Judah would not listen (17:23). With stiffened, rebellious necks they went on their way, indicating they would get by all right through their self-sufficient air! God seems to supply His prophet with a graphic answer in parable form—Judah is to Him like clay in the potter's hand.

Many great lessons are entwined in this 18th chapter: 1) Man's dependence on Deity is evident. 2) God's sovereignty and international authority are distinctly projected. 3) God is busy as a planner. 4) Man's free will is clearly evident. 5) Man's greatness and ruin are both displayed. 6) God's patience is seen. 7) God's judgment and principles are given. All of these lessons can be found in 18:1-11. We will learn others in chapters 19 and 20.

Chapter 19 stands out because of its subjects, its setting, its sickening story of the degenerate and descending stages of spiritual and social shame.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 18-20

LESSON AIM: To see the sovereignty of God in directing man and the free will of man in his relationship to God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Study the story of the potter and clay and the principle taught in this story.
 2. Listen as Jeremiah speaks God's judgment on the people and their leaders in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.
 3. Learn of Jeremiah's punishment by the high officials, his power, praise and perception as he finally begins to see as God sees.
-

GOD, THE POTTER AND HIS PRINCIPLE (18:1-11)

A. The Potter At Work (vs. 1-3). The principle:

1. The clay spoiled in the potter's hand.
 - a. Resulting in his making it into another vessel.
 - b. As it *pleased the potter to make* (v. 4).
 - c. This *principle* is individual, national or international! (see v. 11)

2. What is the principle?
 - a. Anytime God relates to a person or nation with the purpose and plan “to uproot, pull down, or destroy” (v. 7; 1:10), and the intended victim would repent or turn from its evil, then God would relent of the calamity that He planned to bring on that person or nation.
 - b. On the other hand, if God planned to build up or plant a nation or kingdom (v. 9; 1:10), but it does evil in God’s sight, God will alter His plan concerning that person or kingdom. Instead of good, God will take vengeance on them for their evil.

B. Lessons to Be Learned from this Illustration

1. **God is sovereign and absolute** – so that men before God are like clay in the potter’s hand.
2. **Man cannot attain a worthy end in life without God** (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12).
3. **God has a purpose for every life** – as the potter has a purpose for his work (Psalms 139:13-16; Judges 13:3-5; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,2,14,15; Galatians 1:15; Jeremiah 1:5; Zechariah 12:1; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Romans 9:10-16).
4. **The human *free will* is evident** (Jeremiah 18:4; 7:18-28, 31; 19:5; 32:35; 13:10,11; Hosea 8:4).
 - a. God has His *ideal will* (what He wants us to do and be (John 6:63-68; Romans 1:16).
 - b. His *allowed will* (which leaves man free to become wise or a fool-Matthew 7:24-28).
 - c. His *ultimate will* , by which we will be judged (John 12:48; Romans 14:9-12; Revelation 20:11-15).
5. **God seeks to fulfill His purpose even after human failure** (18:4).
6. **A change on man’s part from rebellion to penitence will be followed by a change on God’s part from wrath and punishment to forgiveness and heavenly fellowship** (18:7-8; 2 Peter 3:9; Joel 3:9-17; Jeremiah 29:10-14; Daniel 9:2-23).
7. **A change on man’s part from righteousness to unrighteousness, will result in a change on God’s part from Fatherhood and fellowship to enact punishment and pain** (18:9-10; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Ezekiel 18:25-32).

C. God’s Reasoning and Judah’s Response (18:12-18)

1. God’s plea for repentance and Judah’s impenitent response (v. 12).
2. The appalling nature of Judah’s response.
 - a. Nature is reliable, but Judah is not! The snow capped peak of Lebanon forever stands that way, melting into a consistent cold flowing stream. There is a faithfulness in the flow of that refreshing stream from a foreign land.
 - b. God would be a refreshing stream of blessings to Judah, but they have forsaken Him to follow those who are worthless gods (18:13-15).
3. Three results from their rebellion are given (cf. Matthew 7:20):
 - a. **The land will be a “desolation,”** leading to hissing and astonishment.
 - b. **The people will be scattered** (9:16; 13:24; Deuteronomy 28:64-66).

- c. **God will turn His back on these people** (17:5; 2:27; 32:32, 33).

D. The Prophet's Plea to God About The People (18:19-23)

He pleads with God to hear (v. 19). "Give heed to me, Yahweh" The heart of this prayer and plea is twofold:

1. Perceive (remember) the prophet's disposition and declaration for these people, speaking good on their behalf, urging God to turn away His wrath from them (4:10; 7:16; 11:14; 14:11).
2. Perform what you have proclaimed for these people through my words.
3. The punishment he has proclaimed he now acknowledges needs to be done (14:10, 12; 15:1, 6; 16:3-6).
 - a. "For they have dug a pit *for me*" (19:20; Psalms 119:84-88).
 - b. "For they have dug a pit to capture me" (v. 22).
 - c. "For they have hidden snares for my feet" (Psalms 140:1-5).

A DRAMATIC DEMONSTRATION RELATED TO SHAME (19:1-15)

- A. Gathering in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.** Jeremiah gathers the elite—the elders, senior priests (v. 1) and kings (v. 3)—plus, the inhabitants of Jerusalem to "*the valley of Ben Hinnom, which is by the entrance of the Potsherd Gate*" (v. 2).

1. Jeremiah's purchased visual aid, "a potter's earthenware jar."
2. Judah's polity, their nationality, their religious system, had to be broken up.

B. The Charges and the Conduct (19:1-5)

1. **They had forsaken God.** This charge has already been made 14 times (1:16; 2:13, 17, 19; 5:7, 19; 9:13, 19; 12:7; 14:5; 16:11; 17:13).
2. **They had made Jerusalem and the temple an alien place,** cluttered with strange, alien gods (cf. 1 Kings 8:1-66; Jeremiah 2:18; 11:13).
3. **They had offered their sacrifices to other gods** (7:9-10).
4. **They had filled that place with the blood of the innocent** (2 Kings 21:12, 16; 24:1-4; Jeremiah 2:34; 7:6; 22:3, 17).
5. **They had offered their sons on the altar to Baal.**

C. The Promised Pain and Punishment (19:6-13)

1. Topheth—to be renamed "the valley of slaughter" (vs. 6-7, 11; 14:15-16).
2. God would make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem (19:7).
3. God would fulfil His ancient promise that they would eat the flesh of one another—even of their sons and daughters (v. 9; Deuteronomy 28:53-58).
4. The house of God and their houses would be defiled, destroyed and burned (21:10; 39:8; 52:13).

D. God's Intent Reaffirmed (19:14-15)

1. There was no response from the people.
2. The promised calamity restated.

THE PROPHET'S PUNISHMENT, POWER, PRAISE AND PERCEPTION (20:1-18)

A. The Prophet's Punishment (20:1-6)

1. The attack is physical and is carried out by Pashhur, the priest and chief officer in the house of the Lord (20:1; cf. 1 Chronicles 9:11; 2 Chronicles 31:13).
 - a. Pashhur had Jeremiah beaten and put into stocks.
 - b. Likely included the traditional forty stripes (cf. Deuteronomy 25:2-3).
2. Jeremiah not intimidated.
 - a. Jeremiah boldly declares to Pashhur that he has gotten a new name from the Lord, "Magor-Missabib, which means 'Terror on every side,' or 'Terror round about.'" (cf. vs. 3-4).
 - b. Jeremiah becomes more specific about that force from the north, now naming it as the power of Babylon (20:2-6; 1:13; 13:20; 16:15).
 - c. Jeremiah confidently gives God's judgments against Judah. From them will be taken the wealth or strength of the city, all their wearied labors and produce, all their precious, hidden-away treasures will be taken to Babylon (20:5; 27:21-22; 2 Kings 20:16-18; 2 Chronicles 36:10, 18).

B. The Prophet's Power (20:7-10)

1. I have become a laughingstock "all day long."
2. Everyone mocks me (while he is proclaiming violence and destruction).
3. Jeremiah's proclamation of God's word all day long resulted in reproach and derision (same word as laughingstock in v. 7).
4. A precious moment in Jeremiah's ministry (v. 9). What a vital lesson for us to learn. Two parts need to be seen:
 - a. God's word within us can either comfort or consume.
 - b. God's word is not only a fire, but a fire that longs for release. We are blest with a "going Gospel" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
5. The resolve in Jeremiah's heart to continue to speak did not come because the merry-makers and mockers had gone away (v. 10).
 - a. There was the "whispering" of many.
 - b. Jeremiah faced "terror on every side."
 - c. Their goal is to "denounce him."
 - d. All his trusted (?) friends were watching for his fall.
 - e. They long to, by any means, deceive him.
 - f. These people want "revenge."

C. The Prophet's Praise (20:11-13)

1. *The reason* for Jeremiah's praise:
 - a. They will stumble.
 - b. They will not prevail (1:19; 5:22; 15:20).
 - c. They will be utterly ashamed (cf. 2:26; 8:9; 12:13; 14:3-4; 15:9; 17:13).
 - d. They have failed.
 - e. They shall be an "everlasting disgrace."
2. *The righteous* (Jeremiah) has truly been tested (v. 12).
3. *The rejoicing* now bursts forth with a song and praise for the Lord (v. 13).

NOTE: As God's prophet walks away from his worst hour as a prophet for God he walks forth as a confident victor! It is not because of *who he is*, but because of *Him whom he serves*! "Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord!" When Jeremiah was ready to stop speaking, he didn't! As the pressure grew, so did God's prophet! His heart now had blossomed with a clear and confident faith in God's promises (1:17-19; 15:20-21), God's nearness, God's deliverance of his soul, "the needy one."

D. The Prophet's Perception (20:14-18)

1. Jeremiah had struggled to accept the horrible happenings that were coming on the nation of Judah and to its people (4:10-12; 5:1-5; 10:25).
2. Jeremiah now clearly sees God's promised protection for him in the face of their threats.
3. He now also *sees the danger in the deception that was keeping his fellow citizens from waking up to the price to be paid for their wicked ways*.
4. "Peace, peace" was a deceptive lie for a day that should be *cursed*!

SUMMARY

Most of what Jeremiah has covered in this chapter has been covered before (cf. 3:24-25; 11:13). Now Jeremiah has accepted clearly, coherently, convincingly both God's promises to him on the one hand and the horrifying punishment and shame that will come to Judah on the other hand. To face it as a day to be cursed (v. 14) surely was not easy, *but it was reality*. To now recognize God's protecting hand in the face of these perils was also *a glorious and happy reality*! So stands God's prophet in this hinge chapter of his prophetic life. He has exposed his great heart! Jeremiah has sorrow in his heart over the awful, cursed day in which he was born, and a song in his heart to the great God, Jehovah, who is greater than all the perils and problems related to Judah!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THIRTEEN:

1. List seven lessons to be learned from the account of the potter and the clay.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

2. What five charges concerning Judah's conduct are given in 19:1-5?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

3. What is significant about the fact that Topheth was to be named "the Valley of Slaughter"? _____

4. List five ways in which Jeremiah was being attacked by his peers.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

5. What was the primary message proclaimed by the false prophets?

6. What was Jeremiah's message surrounding the earthenware jar purchased by Jeremiah? _____

LESSON 14

GOD'S EXPLANATION FOR HIS ACTIONS

Just as chapter 20 was a discovery and discerning moment for Jeremiah, chapters 21-25 become a *clarifying* and *justifying* section for God's dealings with Judah and the nations. This section is not given in chronological order. The emphasis seems to be on *God's explanation for His action* against Judah, the nations, and the varied kings rather than any attempt to keep those actions in sequence.

Chapter 22 is a sweeping survey of the last 5 kings of Judah, affirming their end and the underlying factors related to each of their lives. It assures us that God knew the circumstances, and why the nation must fall. It further enlarges on why God gave the answer He did in 21:4-5.

Chapter 23 is closely related to chapter 22. It is a unique prophetic combination of the fall and future of God's people. Chapter 22 especially addressed the folly and failure of the kings of Judah. Chapter 23 centers on the failing pastors and false prophets, who place the nation in peril. By combining 22 and 23 one finds an obvious total loss of leadership in the land (cf. Chapter 5). Like a precious jewel in the midst of national misery, God inserts a messianic assurance that He will redeem them from the rot and ruin currently emerging.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 21-23

LESSON AIM: To see God's explanation of the reasons for Judah's demise which reflects God's justice.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. See that the actions of the last four kings justifies God's judgment on the people of Judah and the captivity they would endure.
2. Discover that one major cause of nations falling is lost and lousy leadership.
3. Learn that Judah followed after false prophets rather than listen to the prophets of God and the consequences of this folly.

THE WAYS OF WAR TO THE WICKED (21:1-14)

A. Chronological Time Table for Jeremiah 21-25

1. Related to the reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum- Jeremiah 22:10-12; 2 Kings 23:29-34; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4 – 609 B.C.).

2. Related to the reign of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 22:13-23 [598 B.C.]; 25:1-38 [605 B.C.]; cf. 2 Kings 23:34-37; 24:1-6; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8).
3. Related to the reign of Jehoiachin (Coniah-Jeremiah 22:24-30; cf. 2 Kings 24:6-16; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10 – 598 B.C.).
4. Related to the reign of Zedekiah (23:1-40 – seems to parallel with chapters 27 and 28 against false prophets, which was the beginning of Zedekiah's reign cf. 27:1; 28:1 or 597 B.C.; cf. 2 Kings 24:17-20; 2 Chronicles 36:10-12).

NOTE: In 24:1-10, a warning of Zedekiah's fall plus future hope (vs.1, 8), likely given at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign (also about 597 B.C.). Note Jeremiah 21:1-14; 22:1-10, which was about 588 B.C. At the beginning of this section, Jeremiah gives the final stage of Judah's fall (cf. 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21).

Why is the chronological pattern not followed? Neither God nor Jeremiah bother to explain. The following thoughts are shared for consideration.

- a. If God did not explain this matter, it is not imperative that we know.
- b. God's patience and fairness fit this contextual arrangement. God knew Judah, He could *speed forward* the unfolding of events and use it as solid justification for what He was about to do.
- c. A brief summary chart of God's patience and Judah's consistent perversions:

God pleads (3:13-14)	–	Judah confesses her sins but does not correct her life (3:22-25).
God uses famine (14:1-6)	–	Judah blames God and calls for Him to act (14:19-22).
God uses war (21:1-2)	–	Judah asks God to act and protect (21:1-5). No repentance.

Therefore, God responds before the action really begins, "You have left me no recourse but war with you Myself" (21:5; 22:5). So chapter 21 begins.

"The time is 588 B.C. A new Pharaoh had taken the throne, Pharaoh Hophra (588- 569 B.C.). Hoping to re-establish Egypt as a world power, he at once challenged the Babylonian supremacy. By means of lavish promises Hophra secured the support of a number of leaders in Jerusalem. Zedekiah eventually gave in to the political pressure to rebel against Babylon."¹

OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER 21:

- A. The ways of war against Jerusalem and Zedekiah (vs. 1-7).
- B. The ways of war against the people (vs. 8-10).
- C. The ways of war against the household of the King of Judah (vs. 11-14).

B. War Against Jerusalem and Zedekiah (21:1-7)

1. Zedekiah's plea to Jeremiah in (vs. 1-2).

¹James E. Smith, Jeremiah and Lamentations, p. 384.

- a. Jerusalem surrounded by the army of Nebuchadnezzar.
 - b. Zedekiah wants God to perform some wonderful act.
 - c. These people want God to come to the *rescue* rather than for Judah to *repent!*
2. Zedekiah's defenseless position before the Babylon forces (vs. 3-7).
 - a. Jerusalem becomes a *delivered city* (v. 4).
 - b. Divine strength will be applied as God promises, "*I Myself shall war against you. . . in anger and wrath and great indignation*" (v. 5; 18:23; 10:24).
 - c. The king and the kingdom will receive no pity nor compassion (v. 7; 6:23; 13:14).

C. War Against the People (21:8-10)

1. In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign Jeremiah offers to the people an option of life or of death (21:8; cf. Deuteronomy 30:15-20).
2. A few took that option (cf. 22:24-30; 38:1-2; 39:15-18, etc.).

D. War Against the Household of the King of Judah (21:11-14)

1. Exhortation to listen (v. 11).
2. Execute judgment and deliver (v. 12).
3. There will be no defense against the Divine, "*I will punish you. . .and devour all things. . .*"

THE KINGS OF JUDAH IN REVIEW (22:1-30)

A. King Zedekiah—Demands and Downfall of the Nation (22:1-9)

1. It is my judgment that this section was in the time of Zedekiah, blending this unit with chapter 28:1-5. There are four reasons for this conclusion.
 - a. It has been placed in the book beside (or with) the material in 21:1-4, which is specifically stated as the time when Zedekiah was confronted with Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem (21:1-6).
 - b. There is a parallel in how God expresses himself to Zedekiah in 21:5 and to the king of Judah in 22:5 (note the "I, Myself" expressions in both sections; cf. 49:13; 51:14; Genesis 22:16; Isaiah 45:23; Amos 6:8). Note also that in both 21:11 and 22:6 God relates special messages for the *house of the king of Judah*.
 - c. The circumstances mentioned in 22:5-7, related to the king of Judah, better fits the time of Zedekiah than Jehoiakim.
 - d. Note the introductory comments on chapter 21. Those comments, seeking to explain why chapter 21 speeds ahead to the time of Zedekiah, declare that God patiently waited for a change in Judah to the very end—a change of repentance that never came. Chapter 22:1-5 fits that setting because even until the days of Zedekiah God still offered Judah an option to still have kings "setting in David's place on his throne," if they would honor God's laws (vs. 3-4).
2. The message of 22:1-9 was given at the house of the king of Judah (v. 1), delivered to the king, his servants and his people (v. 2).

- a. Four positive demands:
 - 1) Do justice.
 - 2) Do righteousness.
 - 3) Deliver the robbed.
 - 4) Deliver the oppressed from the oppressor.
- b. Four negative demands:
 - 1) They were not to mistreat or do violence to strangers (cf. 6:7).
 - 2) Or to the orphan.
 - 3) Or to the widow.
 - 4) Do not shed innocent blood.

NOTE: The results if God's demands are not met is for *this house* to become a desolation, wasted and ruined!

B. King Jehoahaz (Hebrew - Shallum) – His Fate and Future (22:10-12)

- 1. Jeremiah's directive to weep for the one who goes away is obviously Jehoahaz or Shallum (v. 11; 1 Chronicles 3:15-17; 2 Chronicles 36:2-4).
- 2. King Jehoahaz would die in Egypt (2 Kings 23:31- 34).

C. King Jehoiakim – His Folly and Failure (22:13-23)

- 1. Jehoiakim was a demanding leader, but walking in the wrong direction.
- 2. Verse 13 opens to us a description of the degenerate ruler, verse 18 supplies his name.

D. King Jehoiachin (Hebrew name - Coniah or Jeconiah) – His Fall and Final End (22:24-30)

- 1. Coniah a signet ring on God's hand.
- 2. The signet removed (v. 24).
- 3. The king of Judah was the earthly representative of the invisible King of Judah, the Lord of hosts.
- 4. The king will be delivered into the hands of the ruthless Nebuchadnezzar (v. 25).
- 5. His end – he died in Babylon (22:25-26).
- 6. Jehoiachin was childless as far as having a descendant to sit on the throne of God.
- 7. Since none of his descendants would ever sit on David's throne, ruling in Judah, that rules out Jesus ever sitting on David's throne in Jerusalem because Jesus was a descendant of Coniah (Matthew 1:1-12).

NOTE: This chapter concerning the last four kings does justify God's judgment on the people of Judah and the captivity they would endure.

PROPHECY ABOUT PASTORS, THE PROMISED KING AND PERILS FOR FALSE PROPHETS (23:1-40)

A. Prophetic Problems, Perils and A Promise Concerning Pastors (23:1-4)

- 1. When any nation falls, one major cause will always be the result of lost, or lousy leadership.

2. The current pastors or shepherds were destroying and scattering God's people.
3. God is a great gatherer – He knows where His people are (2 Chronicles 16:9). A fourfold promise is given:
 - a. God will gather His people.
 - b. He will bring them back to their pasture (homeland-cf. 32:37-44).
 - c. They will be fruitful and multiply.
 - d. God will raise up shepherds over them to attend to them (v. 4; 30:18-22).

B. The Promised Messiah and a Glorious Return (23:5-8)

1. The promised Messiah is to be the descendant of David.
2. The Messiah is called in the standard English version a “branch.” The idea is a sprout or shoot which grows directly out of the ground.
3. The Messianic Shoot is raised up by direct action of God.
4. The Messiah will be a righteous Branch. All other descendants of David had to confess their sins and ask divine forgiveness. The Messiah would be sinless (Isaiah 53:9).
5. The Messiah shall reign as king.
6. He shall deal wisely. The Messiah will have the insight and the intelligence to bring God's plan of salvation to a successful completion.
7. The Messiah will execute justice and righteousness.
8. Israel and Judah will be reunited under the rule of the Messiah.
9. The Messiah shall bear the name “The LORD our Righteousness.”
 - a. The name given the Messiah here is not a mere label/tag. It designates the very nature or essence of the Messiah. He IS righteousness!
 - b. God desires that mankind should refer to the Messiah by the title here given, “Yahweh, our Righteousness.”

C. The Menace of False Prophets (23:9-15)

1. A sad summation of the shame of these prophets.
 - Immoral* – “The land is full of adulterers” (9:2; 3:2).
 - Impenitent* – “The land mourns because of a curse.”
 - Impoverished*– “The pastures of the wilderness have dried up” (9:10; 12:4).
 - Impudent* – “Their (the false prophets-dk) course is evil” (22:17; 6:13).
 - Impurity* – “Their might (force KJV) is not right.”
2. There is no hope for these leaders.
3. God sees 4 horrible things:
 - a. God's people are led astray (*wrong direction* - v. 13).
 - b. The committing of adultery (*domestic departures* - v. 14).
 - c. People “walking in falsehood” (*wrong declarations* - v. 14).
 - d. These polluted prophets “strengthen the hands of evildoers” (*wrong influences*)—akin to the terrible state of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20, 32; 19:1, 13, 24-25, 28).

D. The Message of False Prophets (23:16-24)

1. The misleading messages many were hearing
 - a. They are leading you into futility (v.16).

- b. “*They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord*” (v. 16; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; Jeremiah 1:8,9). But they speak as if it were from the Lord!
 - c. “They keep saying. . . ‘The Lord has said, You will have peace’ ” (23:17; 5:12; 6:14; 8:11; 14:13-14).
 - d. “They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you’”(v. 17; 19:15).
2. To whom these false prophets spoke.
 - a. “To those who despise Me.”
 - b. Everyone who “walks in the stubbornness of his own heart.”

E. The Methods of the False Prophets (23:25-32)

1. In verse 25 God put it plainly: “*I have heard. . .the prophets. . .who prophesy falsely in My name.*”
2. God heard their cry, “I had a dream.”
 - a. He knew it was “the deception of their own heart,” and the intent was “to make My people forget My name” (vs. 25-27).
 - b. That adds up to *bad claims, bad hearts, and bad motives!*
3. In God and Jeremiah’s eyes, the two evils of rank idolatry and the false messages of so-called prophets were both evil abuses.
4. The misuse of the name of Jehovah by false prophets was as bad as the earlier practice of Baal worship (cf. vs. 13-14).
5. A fourfold test and standard (v. 28) for all who would step up to speak for God, with or without a dream:
 - a. Let him who has My *word* (cf, 1 Peter 4:11).
 - b. Let him who has My word *speak!* We have had too many *silent saints* (cf. 20:9; Acts 4:19-20; 5:40-42).
 - c. Let him who has My word speak *My word* (Romans 1:16-25; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 2:2-5; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7).
 - d. Let him who has My word, speak My word *faithfully* (KJV).

F. The Misery for this Mockery (23:33-40)

What an ignominious epitaph those pseudo prophets have carried for centuries because of their big, swelling words of vanity by which they claimed prophetic inspiration!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOURTEEN:

1. What four kings of Judah are dealt with in chapter 22?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. Of which king is it said that none of his descendants would sit on David’s throne in Judah?_____
3. Complete this sentence: When any nation falls, one major cause will always be the result of _____

4. What is the four-fold (4) promise of God concerning His scattered people as stated in 2 Chronicles 16:9?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

5. List nine facts about or descriptions of the promised Messiah in 23:5-8.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
 - 9) _____

6. What was the five-fold summation of the shame of the false prophets in 23:9-15?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

7. What was the misleading messages given by the false prophets and from where did their messages originate?

8. To whom did these false prophets speak?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

9. A fourfold test and standard for all who would step up to speak for God, with or without a dream.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

LESSON 15

GOD'S FIDELITY AND THE TIMETABLE OF TRAGEDIES

INTRODUCTION:

The everlasting reproach and humiliation of 23:40 could easily have caused the mixed-up minds of deceived souls in Judah to ask, “How could God be just in casting His people from this land?” Chapter 24 answers in a clear way by contrasting figs that were *very good* and *very bad* (vs. 1-3), by unveiling *God's provision* for some and *His punishment* for others. God's plan for the good is given in detail (vs. 4-7), and God's plan for the rebellious remnant is also clearly covered (vs. 8-10).

This 25th chapter contains very significant material in the prophetic life of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, seems to step out of chapter 20 mature, fearless, and undaunted. Chapter 25 quickly scopes his early prophetic ministry (vs. 1-3), then covers God's judgment on Judah, through 70 years of captivity in Babylon (vs. 4-11), followed by the subsequent judgment on Babylon (vs. 12-14), God's judgment on the surrounding nations (vs. 15-28), and all the inhabitants of earth (vs. 30-38). No single chapter in the book, scopes the God-planned fact that Jeremiah was truly a prophet *to the nations* (1:5-10) like chapter 25.

This chapter also introduces us to that 4th year of Jehoiakim and the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar, and the year of Judah's initial fall to Babylon. This was also in the time zone of the battle of Carchemish, one of the most important battles in ancient history (cf. 2 Chronicles 35:20-24; Jeremiah 46:2). The significance of that year is given prominence in Jeremiah's book (cf. 25:1; 36:1; 45:1; 46:2).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 24 through 27

LESSON AIM: To be assured of God's fidelity and to scope the timetable of tragedies of judgment.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the extent of the judgment of God upon Judah and the nations.
2. Notice the protection of God for His prophet as Jeremiah goes on trial in chapter 26.

THE PARABLE PRESENTED (24:1-3)

A. During the Reign of Zedekiah (21; 22:1-9)

1. After the massive deportation when King Jeconiah and his mother were taken captive to Babylon (22:24-30; 2 Kings 24:8-16).
2. Jeremiah says this parabolic message is what “the Lord showed me” (v. 1).

B. The Figs Were Set Before the Temple of the Lord.

1. They were as a votive offering, first-fruits (Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 26:2) or tithes brought to the Lord of Israel.
2. The two baskets of figs “were set” . . . before His judgment seat to receive their verdict.
3. The people are symbolized by the baskets arraigned in God’s court.

C. God’s Plan for the Good Figs (24:4-7). Protected, purified, and preserved.

1. **To Captivity: Proving to purify**– “*I will regard as good the captivity of Judah*” (v. 5; 21:8-9; 1 Peter 1:6-7). Note Psalms 119:67, 71.
2. **In Captivity: Protection**– “*I will set my eyes on them for good*” (v. 6; John 10:27-28).
3. **From Captivity: Providential Guidance**– “*I will bring them again to this land*” (v. 6).
4. **Beyond Captivity: Provisions**– “*I will build them up. . . I will plant them*” (v. 6; Matthew 6:33-34; John 10:9).
5. **Objectivity: Perception**– “*I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord*” (v. 7; 29:11-14; Acts 11:22-23; 16:14-15; 2 Corinthians 2:14).
6. **Divine Captivity: Premier Relationship**– “*They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart*” (v. 7; 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1; James 4:8-10).

D. God’s Plan for the Rebellious Remnant (24:8-10). Abandoned and punished.

1. The bad figs are given three classifications. These God will abandon.
 - a. **Zedekiah, the king, and his officials** (v. 8; 39:1-7; Ezekiel 12:9-15).
 - b. **The remnant of Jerusalem who remain in the land** (v. 8; 39:9-10).
 - c. **The ones who dwell in the land of Egypt** (v. 8; 43:1-7; 44:26-30).
2. The price to be paid for turning from God and His word.
 - a. They would be viewed as “terror and evil” (v. 9; 44:20-23).
 - b. They will be in constant fear of being delivered into the hands of their enemies.

GOD’S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND THE NATIONS (25:1-38)**A. Time Table of Tragedy (25:1-3)**

1. Jeremiah scopes his prophetic work (25:1-3).
2. The message is to “all the people of Judah” (v. 1).
3. These verses cover from 627 B.C. to 605 B.C.

B. God’s Judgment On Judah (25:4-11)

1. **God’s patience:** “*He has sent His prophets, rising early and sending them*” (v. 4) to no avail!
2. **God’s plan:** He wanted them to turn from their evil way (*wrong direction*) and their evil deeds (*wrong deeds*-v. 5).
 - a. Do not go after other gods, serving and worshiping them.
 - b. Do not provoke God to anger with the work of their hands.

- c. Obey His words (v. 8).
- 3. *God's good promises:*
 - a. Dwell on the land the Lord had given them forever and ever (v. 5).
 - b. I will do you no harm (v. 6).
- 4. *God's punishment:* for their refusal to hear.
 - a. The families and forces of the north, under King Nebuchadnezzar, will be brought against *this land*.
 - b. God will utterly destroy them.
 - c. They become a horror, a hissing and an everlasting desolation.
 - d. They would be totally devoid of joy and hauntingly cowered in fear.
 - e. Their sentence of servitude and submission would be **70 years** (v. 11).

C. The Judgment on Babylon (25:12-14)

- 1. Babylon will also suffer the impact of God's retribution.
- 2. God points them to "*all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against the nations*" (vs. 13-14).

D. God's Judgment on Surrounding Nations (25:15-28)

- 1. This judgment is coming from God's hand.
- 2. In verse 16 God declares the unique influence is coming from "the sword I will send among them."
- 3. This use of a cup to pour out, make nations drink, is a common expression for God's judgments on men (cf. Job 21:20; Psalms 11:6-7; 60:3; Isaiah 51:17, 21-22; Jeremiah 49:12; 51:7; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Habakkuk 2:15-16; Revelation 14:9-10).
- 4. Key expressions to describe how the figure is used:
 - a. "Wrath of the Almighty"; "*fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.*"
 - b. "*Thy people experience hardship; Thou hast given us wine to drink that makes us stagger.*"
 - c. "*You have drunk from the Lord's hand the cup of His anger. . . please hear this, you afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine.*"
 - d. "*Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth,*" etc.
- 5. When you combine all the foregoing expressions from the varied passages, you should have no trouble with 25:15-28.
 - a. We are dealing with God's judgment on the nations.
 - b. God's sword and anger are related to this cup.
 - c. These nations will fall and be brought down by the sword God will send among them (v. 27).
 - d. These nations will face God's sword or cup (v. 28).
 - e. This outpouring of God's wrath was already beginning.
 - f. In reality, they are dealing with God's wrath rather than wine, with His anger, judgments and punishment rather than a drink of liquid!
- 6. God's wrath accomplished through Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.

E. Nations to Be Judged

1. **Egypt with its king.** Pharaoh-Necho, who was the principal cause of instigating the neighboring nations to form a league against the Chaldeans.
2. **The land of Uz,** a district of Edom (Lamentations 4:21), famous as the scene of the divine drama centered around the book of Job (1:1; Genesis 10:23).
3. **The territory of the Philistines** (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod) was located southwest of Judah (cf. 1 Samuel 6:16-17; 7:14).
4. **The transjordan kingdoms of Edom, Moab and Ammon,** listed from south to north, and running along east of the Jordan River and Dead Sea.
5. **Tyre and Sidon,** Phoenicia's two major and most ancient cities on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
6. **Dedan, Tema and Buz,** three tribes of northern Arabia.
 - a. The Dedanites descended from Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:3).
 - b. Tema came from Abraham through Ishmael (Genesis 25:15; Job 6:19; Isaiah 21:14).
 - c. Buz descended from Nahor, Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:21; Job 32:2).
7. **The kings of Arabia** (v. 24), nomadic tribes and traders who had related to God's people at least from the days of Solomon (1 Kings 10:14-15).
8. **Zimri** is not mentioned elsewhere as a tribe or nation of people. Perhaps related to the foregoing tribes of Arabia or the nearby region of Elam.
9. **Elam was east of Babylon, and Susa was its capital** (v. 25; Daniel 8:2; Genesis 10:22; 14:1-12; Isaiah 21:2).
10. In verse 26 Jeremiah takes a sweeping thrust under the phrasing, "all the kings of the north," extending this summary all the way to Sheshach, a cipher or cryptic method of naming Babylon (cf. 51:41,27).

NOTE: Verse 27 describes the fear-stricken, sickening, incomprehensible, helpless, and devastating behavior of these nations as Nebuchadnezzar marches over them and through them. Truly, the suffering fall of Judah will be shared by "all the kingdoms of earth" (v. 26).

F. God's Judgment on All the Inhabitants of Earth (25:30-38)

1. The graphic picture of God's judgment.
2. The Sovereignty of God seen in four pictures:
 - a. **Like a lion about to pounce upon the prey** the God of holiness roars from His heavenly habitation against His pasture or sheepfold. The tender Shepherd of Israel has turned into a roaring lion because of the wickedness of His people.
 - b. **As those who tread the grapes shout while they press the grapes,** so the Lord will raise the victorious shout as the wicked of the earth fall beneath His feet.
 - c. **As a prosecutor reads his indictment against the accused,** so the Lord enters into a controversy with the nations of the world.
 - d. He not only prosecutes the nations but He also pronounces judgment against them.

3. All restraining benefits that would offer hope for the people are gone.
 - a. *Protection is gone* (no flight will succeed - v. 35).
 - b. *Protectors are gone* (the shepherds/masters of the flock are wallowing and wailing rather than defending - vs. 34-36; cf. John 10:11-15).
 - c. *Pasture to sustain is gone* or is being destroyed, famine is coming (v. 36; 19:8-9; John 10:9).
 - d. *Peace is gone* or is silenced (v. 37).
 - e. *Providential care of their Creator is gone*, being replaced with God as a fierce, angry lion, while humans are in a desolate place (v. 38).

THE PROPHET ON TRIAL BETWEEN TRUTH AND TRAITORS (26:1-24)

A. The Sermon in the Court of the Lord's House (26:1-7)

1. Jeremiah's responsibility: To speak the word.
2. Judah's responsibility: To listen and turn from their evil ways.

B. A Sentence Given to God's Prophet (26:8-11) "You must die."

C. A Stand by God's Prophet (26:12-15)

1. The Lord sent me with this message (v. 12).
2. If you repent of your sins no calamity will befall you (v. 13).
3. You may do with me as you please (v. 14).
4. If I am executed you will be guilty of shedding innocent blood (v. 15).

D. The Suit Against Jeremiah Appealed (26:16-19)

1. The officials and all the people change their earlier response, affirming, "No death sentence for this man" (v. 16).
2. Some elders appeal for Jeremiah. They point out that king Hezekiah did not punish Micah for such negative prophecy (v. 19).

E. The Suit Prosecuted Against Jeremiah (26:20-23)

1. A counter argument for Jeremiah's death.
2. The example of Uriah, the prophet who fled to Egypt.

F. A Significant Summary Statement (26:24)

Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, stepped on the stage to save Jeremiah! However, the real hand that took care of this prophet had spoken long before this trial began (1:17-19).

THE YEARS OF THE YOKE OF BABYLON (27:1-22)

A. The Central Figure in Chapter 27 is the God of Israel (vs. 4, 21).

1. Four key factors accompany this message to make it valid and significant.
 - a. *The Maker* (v. 5). This is the God who made the earth, the men and beasts by His great power and outstretched arm (Genesis 1; Psalms 33:6-12; Acts 17:23-28).
 - b. *The Master* (vs. 6-7). For punitive purposes, because of their evil ways, the Lord informs these nations "that have been given into the

hand of Nebuchadnezzar” that they would serve him, his son and his grandson.

- c. *The Mission* (26:8-10). God’s intent that these nations would be subjected to and serve Babylon was clearly stated.
- d. *The Mercy* (27:11). God has never threatened any people with punishment, but what He mercifully offers to them a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 3:9).

B. A Warning to King Zedekiah (27:12-15)

This warning - a message of life or of death. It is presented in three parts:

1. **An exhortation.** “*Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people and live*” (v. 12).
2. **Argumentation** (v. 13). This is presented in the form of a question: “*Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, famine and pestilence?*”
3. **Clarification** (vs. 14-15). The prophets who deny that these people will serve the king of Babylon are *liars!*

C. A Warning to the Priests and to All the People (27:16-22)

1. The message being advanced to Judah at this time was that the vessels of the Lord’s house (taken in the days of Jeconiah and the deportation of many at that time) will soon be returned from Babylon.
2. God was clearly stating that the captivity would be 70 years (25:12).
3. The response by Jeremiah continues to be the same.
 - a. A quick return is a lie.
 - b. Serve the king of Babylon and live. He adds another directive.
 - c. Entreat the Lord so that the vessels that yet remain will not be taken.

NOTE: Knowing *their nature* of rebellion, God adds that those vessels *will also be taken* to Babylon, which was fulfilled (52:17-23; 2 Chronicles 36:11-19; 2 Kings 25:14-21). Also, true to *God’s nature*, He left a ray of hope that those very vessels would be watched over by His providential care and would be returned.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIFTEEN:

1. What or who did the “good” and “bad” figs represent in 24:1-10?
 Good figs: _____
 Bad figs: _____
2. List six phrases which describe God’s plan for the good figs.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
3. What was God’s plan for the bad figs? _____

4. What action by God demonstrated His patience toward Judah? _____

5. For what length of time was their sentence of servitude and submission in Babylon? _____
6. To what does “the cup of God’s wrath” refer in 25:15-16? _____


7. List nine peoples/nations named by Jeremiah that would fall under the judgment of God.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
 8) _____
 9) _____
8. Who or what nation was to be the instrument of God’s wrath among the nations?

9. What is the major theme of Chapter 26? _____
10. Who is the central figure in Chapter 27? What two verses so state?

11. What is the general theme of Chapter 27? _____

LESSON 16

A LYING PROPHET, LETTERS TO AND RETURN OF THE REMNANT

 hapter 28 is a continuation of chapter 27. It not only is in the early part of Zedekiah's reign, but the same year in the 5th month (28:1; 27:1). The yoke Jeremiah began to wear in 27:2 is still being worn (28:2, 10). The vessels from the house of the Lord are still an issue between Jeremiah and the false prophet, Hananiah (27:21-22; 28:3).

Correspondence to the captives becomes a part of God's plan to restore His people. There could have been 20,000 Jews taken to Babylon. That number included some rulers, craftsmen, nobles and some skilled young men (Daniel 1:2-7).

The better class of people, socially and morally, were deported, leaving only the lower class, the rabble, who took over the homes and positions of the exiles. See 24:1, referring to this deportation, where the deported people are compared to good figs, Zedekiah and the Jews remaining in Judah and Egypt, to evil figs; comp. also Ezekiel 11:1-25, spoken in the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 8:1).

Chapters 30-33, sometimes called *Book of Consolation*, is the largest *positive portion* of the book of Jeremiah. The only specific biblical time table for these chapters is 32:1, declaring it to be the 10th year of King Zedekiah, when Jeremiah was "shut up in the court of the guard" (v. 2). Chapter 33 (v. 1) also was given while Jeremiah was confined. Chapters 30 and 31 mention no confinement but seem to be in the same general time frame, when the prophet was charged to "write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book" (30:2).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah chapters 28-30

LESSON AIM: To examine God's dealings with both His people in Judah and His people in Babylonian exile.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. See the trouble the false prophets were to the people of Israel.
 2. Examine the letters written to the captives refuting the lying prophet
 3. Learn of God's faithfulness in fulfilling the promise that a remnant will return to the land.
 4. Note the providence of God in the very midst of man's pollution and plunder. God's work does not rely on man's goodness.
-

A LYING PROPHET LOSES BEFORE THE LORD (28:1-17)

A. The Rebel Prophet's Message (28:1-4).

Hananiah picked a special spot to react against Jeremiah— “in the house of the Lord”—and before the priests and all the people (v. 1). His three-fold prophecy:

1. **The yoke of the king of Babylon broken** (v. 2).
2. **All the vessels were to be returned in two years.** That is a lie because Jeremiah had just declared more vessels would be removed (27:21-22).
3. **The promised return of Jeconiah to Judah.** This is a direct contradiction to Jeremiah's words that Jeconiah would die in Babylon (22:24-30).
This triple lie was designed to deceive the people with a false hope.

B. The Response by Jeremiah (28:5-9)

1. The difference between what we *want to hear* and what we *need to hear*.
2. Jeremiah knew that what he wanted was not what he and Jehovah knew Judah needed.
3. Jeremiah justified his message and manner as a valid prophetic act. *Here is my example, Hananiah. Where is yours?*
4. Jeremiah had prophesied of an invasion from the north, of Judah going into captivity, of famine, and of war—*all of which had now come to pass*.

C. The Reaction by Hananiah (28:10-11)

1. Hananiah offers no further argument and makes no more claims.
2. He removes the yoke from the prophet's neck and breaks it!

D. The Results of Rebellion (28:12-17)

1. A key pattern for God's spokesmen - have a “thus saith the Lord.”
 - a. The true condition of Judah and the nations (vs. 13-14).
 - b. Three indictments are leveled against Hananiah (vs. 15-16).
 - c. The price to be paid for falsifying the facts - your death (v. 17).
2. Three indictments leveled against Hananiah (vs. 15-16).
 - a. **Hananiah is an imposter.** God has not sent him and therefore he is not entitled to call himself a prophet.
 - b. **Hananiah has caused the people to trust in a lie.**
 - c. **Hananiah has spoken rebellion against the Lord** (v. 16).

E. The Price to Paid for Falsifying the Facts (28:17)

1. This chapter began with Hananiah's bold comments in the fifth month, and it closes with an announcement of his death in the seventh month.
2. His pay for two months of messages misleading men was a trip to the mortuary!

CORRESPONDENCE RELATED TO THE CAPTIVES (29:1-32)

A. Plan to Restore His People - Correspondence to the Captives

1. About 20, 000 Jews taken to Babylon. Rulers, craftsmen, nobles and some skilled young men (Daniel 1:2-7).
2. The very fact God allowed His people to be taken into captivity is proof He knew such a journey was necessary to ultimately bring them to repentance.

3. The people in captivity are the ones who could be reformed and restored.
4. In chapter 29 God uses a letter from Jeremiah to initiate His plans for reformation and restoration.

B. The Recipients of The Letter. The elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people Nebuchadnezzar had taken to Babylon (29:1).

1. The letter is taken to Babylon by two influential men of Judah:
 - a. Elasah, the son of Shaphan.
 - b. Gemariah, the son of Hilkiah.
2. This is *the Lord's letter* to His people (vs. 4, 8, 16-17, 19-21, 23, 25, 30-32).
3. The message to the captives contains:
 - a. Plans for the present (29:4-7).
 - b. Promises for the future (29:8-15).
 - c. Perils for the people left behind (29:16-20).
 - d. Perils for false prophets among the exiles (29:21-32).

C. Plans for the Present (29:4-7) The specific, inspired counsel Jehovah offers.

1. **Resume life** (v. 5). Build houses, plant gardens, and eat their produce. God did not send His people into captivity to starve or just survive, but through penitence, to thrive!
2. **Replenish the loss of life** (v. 6). “multiply there and do not decrease.” The slaughter in Judah and death on the march to Babylon were enough.
3. **Respect your captors** (v. 7). God wanted His people to seek the welfare of the people in the place where they were going.
4. **Respect your Creator** (v. 7).
 - a. God wants His people to pray to Him.
 - b. God wanted them to pray for the welfare or peace of these people.
5. **Reward for responding to God's request** (v. 7). By seeking peace in and welfare for Babylon, God promises the exiles that they will find peace or gain their welfare.

D. Promises For the Future (29:8-15)

1. Three evil influences were active among the exiles that might divert their minds and movements away from the God given instructions:
 - a. False prophets.
 - b. Diviners (27:9).
 - c. Dreams that were unreliable.
2. God looks ahead and describes how the exiles will think when they return.
 - a. **The Desire** – “*You will call upon Me*” (v. 12).
 - b. **The Disposition** – “*You will. . . pray to me and I will listen to you.*”
 - c. **The Determination** – “*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me*” (v. 13).
 - d. **The Devotion** – Do that seeking and searching “*with all your heart.*”

E. Perils for the People Left Behind (29:16-19)

1. The terrifying conditions related to Judah in verses 17 and 18 (cf. 27:8; 24:3, 8-10; 25:9-10) prove that the exiles were better off in Babylon than they would be in Judah!

2. The cause of punishment: “*they have not listened to my words declares the Lord*” (v. 19).

F. Perils for False Prophets among the Exiles (29:21-32)

1. The three-fold accusation against Ahab and Zedekiah:
 - a. They prophesied falsely in God’s name.
 - b. They acted foolishly in Israel.
 - c. They had committed adultery with their neighbor’s wives (3:2; 5:8; 13:26-27; Ezekiel 22:9-11).
2. Their three stages of rebellion would result in a three-fold punishment:
 - a. King Nebuchadnezzar “shall slay them before your eyes” (v. 21).
 - b. These two will be related to a curse.
 - c. They will be “roasted in the fire.” Nebuchadnezzar knew how to do this (cf. Daniel 3:1, 6-8, 19-22).
3. Shemaiah’s plot and consequences.
 - a. His plot – to attack Jeremiah and cause him harm.
 - b. His punishment: Shemaiah and all his descendants receive the Divine promise of death because:
 - 1) “*he has made you trust in a lie*” (v. 31)
 - 2) “*because he has preached rebellion against the Lord*” (v. 32).

A RETURN OF THE REMNANT (30:1-24)

A. A Written Reminder (vs. 1-3)

1. A written promise becomes more authentic.
2. A verbal statement can be denied with ease, but a written record is there for re-reading and re-affirming.

B. Present Perils Will Pass (30:4-11)

1. The days of *distress* (vs. 4-7. “it is the time of Jacob’s distress” (v. 7).
2. The days of *deliverance* (vs. 8-11).
3. Their salvation offers 3 great promises:
 - a. *A return* (v. 10).
 - b. *A rest* for they shall have a quiet time.
 - c. *A Relief*, being at ease.
4. “I am with you to save you” (v. 11). All the relief, the rest, and the return stand on this comforting comment! Note the following parallel:

“ <i>I am</i> ” (cf. Exodus 3:14; John 8:58)	--	Creator
“ <i>With Thee</i> ” (Matthew 28:20; Galatians 2:20)	--	Companionship
“ <i>Saith the Lord</i> ” (Matt.24:35; Hebrews 13:20-21)	--	Certain
“ <i>To Save</i> ” (I John 4:14; Hebrews 7:25)	--	Comforting
“ <i>Thee</i> ” (1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 2:1,2)	--	Condemned (who was so)

GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN THE MIDST OF MAN’S POLLUTION AND PLUNDER (30:12-17)

A. The Promised Return Does Not Rule out Chastening: “*I will chasten you justly*” (cf. 2:19; 46:28).

1. Because of current conditions, a three-fold punishment pattern is promised:
 - a. **No Medicine** can cure their carnal, corrupt condition (v. 12).
 - b. **No Memory**, as all alliances and neighboring nations do not seek them.
 - c. **No Mercy** is extended amidst their incurable pain (v. 15). *There is no anesthetic for their agony* (8:18-22).
2. God assures His people that those imposing their pain will also be punished for any wrong they have done.
3. The sneering enemies had called Zion an ‘outcast’ for whom no one was concerned. Yet the day will surely come when God in an act of pure grace will restore the nation (v. 17).

B. The Promises of Glory Restored (30:18-22)

1. Glory restored in *material matters* (30:18).
2. Glory restored in *merriment* (30:19).
3. Glory restored in *men* (v.19), both in *numbers* (“I will multiply them”—Deuteronomy 28:2-4, 11-13) and in *nature* (“I will honor them”) so that they are not insignificant (cf. Matthew 5:13-16).
4. Glory restored in *family, fruitfulness and favor* (30:20; 20:14-18; 16:1-4; Psalms 127:1-5; 128:3-4; 144:12-15).
5. Glory restored in *providential protection*. “*I will punish all their oppressors*” (30:20).
6. Glory restored in *government leadership* (30:21).
7. Glory restored *with their Maker* (30:22; 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1). “*You shall be My people and I will be your God.*”

C. The Perception of God’s Plan and Performance (30:23-24)

Three things stand out in this sobering summation that need to be recognized:

1. God’s wrath goes forth, when needed, to any country or clan.
2. The wrath and fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has performed the intent of His heart (v. 24; 6:11; 15:6; 25:31-33).
3. In the latter days the people will understand what God does (v. 24).

NOTE: God’s ways are not past finding out. Indeed, He wants to reason with us (Isaiah 1:18). However, when rebellion runs on without any checks or plans to change, God’s wrath may enter the scene, His intent be carried out, and the understanding may come later. If any man wills to do God’s will, that person will be given the chance to know and do His will (cf. John 7:17; 2 Peter 3:9).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIXTEEN:

1. What was the rebel prophet Hananiah's three-fold lie delivered to Jeremiah and the people?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. Three indictments leveled against Hananiah by Jeremiah are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. What five things were the captives in Babylon instructed to do while they were in Babylon?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

4. How does God describe how the exiles will think when they return?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

5. In Jeremiah 30:18-22 what are seven areas in which God promises to restore the glory of Judah?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

6. Three truths concerning God's action toward wicked nations expressed in 30:23-24 are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON 17

RESTORATION, REDEMPTION AND ASSURANCE

INTRODUCTION

The words, “*At that time. . . I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people*” (31:1) connect chapter 31 with the discussion begun in chapter 30. It is related to “all the families of Israel,” both Judah and Israel (30:3; 31:27). It identifies a good time and a happy relationship between God and all of His people. The significance of the statement is that it was delivered in one of the darkest eras of Judah’s history with Nebuchadnezzar’s army encircling Jerusalem.

As we turn to the thirty-first chapter, the apex of Jeremiah’s book and perhaps the high water mark of the Old Testament, the prophet’s tears suddenly become those of joy. The black picture of sin is but the ebony background against which this great solution to man’s problem stands out in bold relief.

These rays of hope are seen because of *God’s everlasting love*, a penitent people, and a climax through a new covenant between God and man. The uniqueness of the setting and the sublime nature of the sight in such bold contrast explain the prophet’s pronouncement, “*At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me*” (31:26).

Chapter 32 is not so much about real estate as national ruin and Divine plans for a restoration. To preserve faith in the future amidst perils at the present was God’s plan and the prophet’s plight. The apparent folly of purchasing property currently occupied by an invading army blossoms into a confidence-building-faith-factor that prophetic pronouncements of a return of God’s people to that land are real (31:38-40; 30:10-11, 18-20).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 31 and 32

LESSON AIM: To learn of the great love of God which is the basis for the restoration and redemption of the sinful nation.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn six attributes of the love of God manifested toward Israel.
 2. Examine the New Covenant including four specific requirements given for man and two precious promises given to man.
 3. See the significance of Jeremiah purchasing a piece of land even when an invading army occupies the land.
 4. Learn of God’s plan for Israel both present and future.
-

RESTORATION AND REDEMPTION

A. The Past With a Promise (31:1-9). The six-fold nature of God's great love:

1. **It is everlasting.** God states, "*I have loved you with an everlasting love*" (v. 3).
 - a. "**I** have loved you." The Almighty, all knowing, ever-existing Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker of men, the Controller of the universe, the Great I AM (Exodus 3:14)—He is the one manifesting this love.
 - b. "I have loved **you**" It is Judah with all their wantonness, waywardness, wickedness, sordid, sexual sins, idolatrous ignominy, conquered, captive conditions—they are the ones He loves!
 - c. God declares that He has loved with a love that has no beginning, no ending, and knows no change.
2. **It is elevating** (31:4). "*I will build you.*" This can include anything from shelter to prosperity, from stability to security.
3. **It is enriching** (31:5). The planter's production becomes so good that the planting and eating of good things becomes "common" (KJV).
4. **It is enticing** (31:6). When God's goodness and love are once realized, it will cause the watchman upon mount Ephraim (who once saw fit to rebel against God and His place of worship—1 Kings 12:25-33) to direct Israel to go up to Zion (the right place) and to the Lord our God (the right person).
5. **It is enrapturing and worthy to be evangelized** (31:7). Note key words that emphasize both sides of this benefit from God's love.
6. **It is ennobling** (31:8-9). A scattered, captive people are seen blended with the blind, lame, and women with child.
 - a. They were dependent (10:23), but God states that He will *lead them*.
 - b. They became determined (cf. Galatians 6:9). God states that He will cause them to *walk*.
 - c. They are directed (cf. John 14:6; 2 Peter 1:10-11). God promises that He will cause them to walk in a *straight way*.
 - d. They belong to Divinity (cf. 2 Peter 1:2-4). God adds, "*For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn*" (31:9).

B. A Preview of Pleasantness (31:10-14)

The ones *scattered* will be *gathered*. If their sins led Him to pull them up and send both Israel and Judah into varied strange lands, His everlasting love will bring them back home again. A key word is how He will *keep* His people as a shepherd keeps his flock (v. 10).

1. His goodness blesses them *materially*, as seen in the grain, the new wine, the oil and the young of the flock and herd (31:12).
2. They are blest *personally* with their life, as a watered garden (Isaiah 58:11; 27:2-6; Song of Solomon 4:15-16).
3. They are blest *socially*, as young and old together share in joy and comfort, even finding joy in their sorrow (31:13).
4. They are blest *spiritually*. The priests' souls will be filled with abundance.

C. Penitence Makes Possible a Return (31:15-22)

1. A dual fulfillment to vs. 15-17.
 - a. Matthew 2:16-18, one application is messianic as Rachel, the tribal

mother, is seen weeping over the wicked slaughter of little ones by King Herod in an attempt to kill baby Jesus.

- b. That it also must apply to events in Jeremiah's day seems evident because of two statements:
 - 1) "They shall return from the land of the enemy" (v. 16).
 - 2) "Your children shall return to their own territory" (v. 17). In Matthew 2:16-18, those children did not return to any border or territory.
2. Ephraim is also weeping in penitence, the spirit needed for God to begin the restoration process, including a return to their homeland (31:18-20).
3. God is delighted to direct the virgin of Israel back to their home (vs. 20-21).

D. Perception of the Promise is Sweet (31:23-30)

E. Prophetic Pronouncement Concerning the New Covenant (31:31-40)

1. Four specific **requirements are given for man**:
 - a. **Learn the Law**– "*I will put My law within them*" (v. 33).
 - b. **Love the Law**– "*On their hearts I will write it*" (v. 33; John 14:15).
 - c. **Lean on the Lord**– "*I will be their God, and they shall be My people*" (v. 33; 24:7; 30:22; 32:38).
 - d. **Live the life**– "*They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them*" (v. 34).
2. God's precious **promises to this new covenant**.
 - a. **Sins forgiven**– "*I will forgive their iniquity*" (v. 34; Isaiah 1:18-20; Hebrews 7:18-28; 9:1-28; 1 Peter 1:17-25).
 - b. **Sins forgotten**– "*Their sins I will remember no more*" (v. 34; Isaiah 43:25; 38:17; Micah 7:19).

F. Proof for These Promises (31:35-40)

1. His fixed ordinances (vs. 35-36 KJV) related to the sun, moon and stars.
2. God gives specific geographic locations (the Horse Gate, the brook Kidron, etc.) will be restored and will not be "plucked up or overthrown any more forever" (v. 40).
3. What is rebuilt is "for the Lord" (v. 38), will be "holy to the Lord" (v. 40).

PURCHASING PROPERTY IN TROUBLED TIMES (32:1-44)

The chronology of the 10th year of Zedekiah (32:1) is a continuation of a siege that began in the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign, continuing until the 4th month of the 11th year of his reign (39:1-2). Jerusalem was desperate, and any prospects of deliverance were nil. For Zedekiah any resisting effort would be granted no success (32:5).

A. The Purchase of a Field (32:6-15)

1. Commanded and controlled by God Himself.
 - a. *The person* – (Hanameel, a cousin) (v. 6).
 - b. *The plan* – (buy for yourself the offered field at Anathoth for "you have the right of redemption" (32:7-8).
 - c. *The procedure* – carried out with careful legal requirements.
 - 1) The purchased price was stipulated and accepted—"seventeen

- shekels of silver” (v. 9).
- 2) That likely would not have been a good price in normal times, but with Babylon’s army camped on the site, Hanameel seems happy to get anything for that land.
 - 3) Jeremiah is very careful to touch all legal requirements, including the deeds of purchase (sealed with the terms and conditions, and an open copy), signed before witnesses, and placed in the hands of Jeremiah’s trusted friend, Baruch (vs.10-12).
2. *The purpose* – for this God-directed land purchase is abundantly clear: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land” (v. 15).

B. The Prophet’s Prayer – A Tribute to God (32:16-25)

1. A prayer of praise to God, dealing with the God of the people (vs. 17-22).
 - a. **Powerful** (v. 17) – as the Maker of heaven and earth.
 - b. **Passionate** (v. 18) – “*Who shows loving-kindness to thousands*” (cf. 9:24; 16:5; 31:3).
 - c. **Punitive** (v. 18) – God “*repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them*” (cf. 1 Kings 14:9-13; 16:1-3).
 - d. **Perceptive** (v. 19) – He is “*great in counsel and mighty in deed.*”
 - e. **Proven** (v. 20) – God’s memorials and His miracles are demonstrations through which He has made an indelible impression on men.
 - f. **Protective** (v. 21) – The fact God had brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage by His signs and wonders was important for Judah to remember.
 - g. **Prospered** (v. 22) – God had given to Israel that land flowing with milk and honey. While God was taking it away, He could give it again.
2. The prayer continues, with an emphasis on the people of God (v. 23ff).
 - a. *Penalty promised for those people* (v. 23). Three violations,
 - 1) They did not obey God’s voice.
 - 2) They did not walk in His law.
 - 3) They have done *nothing* of all God commanded.
 - b. *Prophetic pronouncements becoming a reality* (v. 24), as siege mounds were being erected to breach the fortified walls.
 - c. *Plan of God accepted* (v. 25).

C. The Plan of God—present and Future (32:26-44)

1. The provocation of God’s anger.
 - a. **Their deeds**—Their hands had been busy at doing evil in God’s sight (v. 30).
 - b. **Their disrespect**—“*They have turned their back to me and not their face*” (v. 33).
 - c. **Their disregard** (v. 33)—Their ears were tuned out since “*they would not listen and receive instruction*” (25:3; 26:4, 5; 11:7-8).
 - d. **Their detestable things and departures** (vs. 34-35)—idolatry.
2. The future in God’s plan is unveiled in verses 36-44.
 - a. Instead of **scattering** His people, God will **gather** them (v. 37).
 - b. Instead of **turning from God**, they will **turn to God** (v. 40).
 - c. Instead of **remorse and regret**, there would be **rejoicing** (v. 41).

- d. Instead of **leaving the land**, they will **return to live on the land** (vs. 43-44). This latter point serves as a climax of God's initial instruction for Jeremiah to buy the land at Anathoth from his cousin, Hanameel.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVENTEEN:

1. Give six statements describing the nature of God's great love as seen in 31:1-9.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

2. What are four specific requirements for man given in the New Covenant?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

3. What two precious promises are attached to this New Covenant?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

4. What was significant about Jeremiah purchasing a piece of property at this particular time in Israel's history?

5. In 32:26-44, what four (4) things does Jeremiah say caused the provocation of God's anger?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

6. In 32:36-44, what four (4) contrasts are given which shows God's future plans for His people?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON 18

PRISON PROPHECIES DEFEAT AND DESOLATION

INTRODUCTION:

How convenient that God does not need *visiting hours* nor a *permit* to visit His prophet in prison (33:1). It is significant that God's most positive promises, and the most stabilizing statements in Jeremiah's book, are given during the prophet's days of confinement in this section often called *The Book of Consolation* (30-33).

With the Babylonian army besieging Jerusalem (32:2), it is evident that the remaining souls in Judah are complaining and charging God with total rejection (33:24). All hope begins to fade. It is important that these people and God's prophet do not forget the future plan God has for His people. This chapter continues with an encouraging thrust, especially emphasizing the Messianic benefits to be showered on souls who submit to His scheme of redemption.

God has a message of restoration of the people to Him and prosperity to the land (33:1-13). That restoration opens the way for the greater message of the Messianic Reign of Righteousness (33:14-26).

Chapters 34-36 primarily present different stages of disobedience by God's people. They are not in chronological order. Of the three, chapter 34 occurred last (in the days of King Zedekiah), chapter 35 would be chronologically next, and chapter 36 goes back to the days of King Jehoiakim. All three identify different ways God's people departed from His directions.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 33 through 35

LESSON AIM: To learn that the punishment for disobedience is defeat and desolation.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the great mercy and love of God in the promise of restoration and Messianic reign of righteousness.
 2. Learn the four-fold message of God for Zedekiah and God's response to temporary obedience.
 3. Observe the high price for being disobedient to the commands of God.
 4. Wonder at the obedience of the Rechabites in regard to Jonadab, their father and the contrast of the disobedience of the people of Judah.
-

PRISON PROPHECIES PRESENTING DIVINE PROMISES (33:1-26)

A. Message of Restoration of God's People to Himself and Prosperity to the Land (33:1-13)

1. The content and source of the message concerning restoration.
 - a. *The Confidant: The Lord* is His name (v. 2) – Lord of life, law, land, sea, space, time, eternity, justice, judgment, and truth!
 - b. *The call* offered an opportunity to speak to the Creator (v. 3).
 - c. *The concern for current conditions* explains why God talks to His prophet, and why God wanted Jeremiah to call on Him (vs. 4-5).
 - 1) The houses of the city, even of kings, were being torn apart to form some barrier against Babylon's siege mounds and swords.
 - 2) Jerusalem was disintegrating from within and being bombarded from without.
 - 3) That city was being filled with the "corpses of men" (v. 5; 21:4-7).
2. The reason for this devastation explained.
 1. That was happening because of God's anger, wrath, and the fact He had hidden His face from protecting His people.
 2. That was happening because of Judah's *wickedness*.
3. This carnage is geared to a cleansing (vs. 6-8).
 - a. God will *redeem them* because He will cleanse and pardon them.
 - b. God will *refresh and relax them* because He gives to them His divine cure.
 - c. God will *restore and re-build them*, which includes another chance, stability and prosperity.

B. Message of the Messianic Reign of Righteousness (33:14-26)

1. The *good word* in verse 14, concerning Judah and Israel, in this context refers back to the promise about the Righteous Branch in 23:5-6.
2. This promise to Jeremiah comes when the chaos and conquest of God's people is a shocking fact!
 - a. That "*David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel*" (v. 17) seemed so unlikely!
 - b. An unbroken succession of sovereigns of David's line was to be replaced with a higher fulfilment through the continuous sovereignty of Christ, as the true son of David (Matthew 1:1, 6-18; Luke 1:30-33; Mark 11:9-10; Acts 2:22-36; Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-17; 13:22-23, 33-39; Revelation 5:5-10; Luke 22:29-30).
3. The complete and total assurance given by God (vs. 22-26).
 - a. First, God's promises as solid as day and night (v. 25).
 - b. Second, God will multiply the descendants of David (v. 22).
 - c. Thirdly, God's faithfulness from the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

A SUMMARY OBSERVATION

What a ray of sunshine in a dark hour. What a hope-filled-foundation for souls sinking amidst slaughter and strife. What a confidence building collection of comments concerning the Creator's covenants with men– all presented when conflicts and chaos dominated the day.

DEFEAT, DISOBEDIENCE AND DESOLATION (34:1-22)

A. The Downfall of Jerusalem and Defeat of King Zedekiah (34:1-7). God sends Jeremiah to King Zedekiah with a four-fold message. Zedekiah will:

1. *Lose the capital city by fire* (34:1-2; 39:8-10; 2 Chronicles 36:17-19).
2. *Lose his own liberty* (34:3; 32:4-5). This will be covered in more detail in 39:1-7.
3. *Lose his own life*, not by the sword, but in peace. Indeed, “*spices were burned for your fathers. . .so they will burn spices for you; and they will lament you*” (34:5).
 - a. Zedekiah was captured and brought face to face and eye to eye before King Nebuchadnezzar (34:3; 39:4-7).
 - b. What a contrast. Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan ruler who paid more tribute to God and God’s prophet than Jeremiah’s own king did (39:11-14; Daniel 3:28-30; 4:31-37).
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar killed the sons of Zedekiah, before his eyes, then put out Zedekiah’s eyes, leading him blind into captivity.
4. *Lose his kingdom*, including the remaining fortified cities (34:7). Along with Jerusalem, Lachish and Azekah would fall (19:15; 24:8-10).

B. Disobedience and its Consequences (34:8-22)

1. The obligation of knowledge – Judah knew better. They knew enough of God’s will to do better than they did!
2. The fruits of obedience – release. Chapter 34 covers a time for release of servants and handmaidens, and verse 10 informs us that “all the officials and all the people obeyed.” Fellow Hebrews that had been enslaved were set free. This whole process was carried out with careful legal stipulations.
3. Suspicious motives – obeying God’s law to set slaves free may have been more of a *convenience* than a respect for God’s *commandment*. When it seemed the invasion was over, they immediately took back the servants they had set free!

C. God’s Response to Temporary Obedience (34:17-22)

1. God first called their attention to the covenant requirements He made when He brought them out of Egypt (vs. 13-14).
2. Second, God recalled that they had done what was right in His sight, even making a covenant concerning the same before Him in the house called by His name (vs. 15, 18). Such action pleased God, who hungered for faithful obedience from His people (a fact being emphasized in chapters 34-36).
3. The fact they had made a covenant before God, in His house and by His name, meant that by a reversal of their action they had *profaned* God’s name (v. 16).
4. God made it very clear what His response would be for their sordid act!
 - a. *God answered with satire* (v. 17). God would release them to the sword, to pestilence, to famine, and make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.
 - b. *God affirmed there would be slaughter and shame* (vs. 18-20). *No one* who transgressed His covenant—officials, court officers, priests, all the

people—would be spared.

- c. God assured their surrender to Babylon, being in the form of a burned city and a desolate land (vs. 21-22).

FIDELITY TO A FATHER—THE RECHABITES (35:1-19)

This chapter continues Jeremiah's survey of *obedience* and *disobedience* that began in chapter 34. The setting is the same, Jerusalem, but the time reverts back to the days of Jehoiakim, who ruled from 609 to 598 B.C. (35:1, 11).

A. The Example of the Rechabites.

1. Jonadab - worshiper of God (840 B.C.).
2. Jonadab still being respected and responded to in 600 B.C.

B. Complete Fidelity to a Father's Instructions (35:6-11). Note the affected areas:

1. What they drank—"You shall not **drink wine**" (35:6). As the Rechabites refused to drink, we know that this observation and message was for the benefit of "the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (35:13).
2. Who was involved and when?—"You shall not drink wine, **you and your sons forever**" (35:6).
3. Where they live—"You shall not build a house. . . **in tents you shall dwell all your days**" (35:7).
4. How they would be employed—"You shall **not sow seed** and you shall not **plant a vineyard or own one**" (35:7).
5. Who they married—"We have obeyed. . . **we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters**" (35:8).
6. Why they so lived—"That you may **live many days in the land** where you sojourn" (35:7, 19; Ephesians 6:1-4).

C. The Comparison and Contrast of Judah to God (35:12-16)

God's question to Judah: "Will you not receive instruction by listening to my words?" (35:13).

1. Because of *disobedience* Judah will face disaster.
2. Because of *obedience* the Rechabites are promised that they "shall not lack a man to stand before Me always" (35:19).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHTEEN:

1. What is the two-fold message contained in 33:1-13?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. The complete and total assurance given by God in 33:22-26 was three-fold. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. The four-fold message to Zedekiah in chapter 34 concerning his punishment was:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

4. What activity by the people occurred in 34:8-22 which pleased God?

5. Who was Jonadab and about what time did he live?

6. For how long had the Rechabites been keeping the commands of their father Jonadab? _____

7. What was the significance of the example of the Rechabites?

8. Complete the sentence.
Because of _____ the Rechabites are promised that they
“ _____ ”

LESSON 19

JEREMIAH'S STRENGTH AND ZEDEKIAH'S WEAKNESS

INTRODUCTION:

The 4th year of Jehoiakim has already been mentioned as a prominent year in Judah's history and of Jeremiah's ministry (36:1; 25:1; 45:1; 46:1-2). That year the battle of Carchemish between Egypt and Babylon occurred, determining what power would rule the world for the next half century. It was the year King Nebuchadnezzar first conquered Judah. Chapter 36 unfolds God's plan for Jeremiah to record his prophecies from the days of Josiah to this year in the reign of Jehoiakim (36:1-2; 25:1-3).

Chapter 37 begins a series of events related to the final fall of Judah and Jerusalem. Intermingled with that is the imprisonment (by men) and providence (by God) for His prophet.

Chapter 38 has three key personalities—King Zedekiah, Jeremiah, Ebed-Melech—the central figure is the last king of Judah. Four different times Zedekiah shows weakness by change in this chapter. First, he submits to charges by the princes *against* Jeremiah (38:1-6). Second, he responds to the appeal by Ebed-Melech *for* Jeremiah (38:7-13). Third, he counsels *with* Jeremiah, though unwilling to heed the prophet's counsel (38:14-23). Fourth, the king pleads for silence *from* Jeremiah, fearing what others will do if they know of his being with and speaking to the prophet (38:24-28).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 36 through 38

LESSON AIM: To see the response of Jeremiah, Zedekiah and Jehovah to the pressures of the troubling times.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Discover the impact of God's message on Jehoiakim and his action toward the Word of God.
2. Learn that the cost of preaching God's message at times may bring hard times and persecution.
3. See that Jeremiah's life in the hands of a vacillating king is unstable and demands deep faith in God's providential care and keeping.

IMPACT AND PRESERVATION OF THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE (36:1-32)

A. Setting the Stage for the Sermon (36:1-7)

This message was to contain all God had said concerning Israel, Judah and the nations from the days of Josiah, when Jeremiah began his prophetic work, to this 4th year of Jehoiakim (36:1-2; 1:1-5).

1. Baruch – the recorder and the presenter of the message.
 - a. A trusted and helpful co-worker for Jeremiah (36:4; 32:12-13, 16).
 - b. Baruch's brother, Seraiah, was in the royal service with King Zedekiah (36:4; 51:59).
2. Jeremiah stated, "*I am restricted: I cannot go into the house of the Lord*" (36:5).
 - a. The plan: to speak the word of the Lord-the right message to *all* Judah.
 - b. The purpose (36:3, 7): to exhort the people to turn from their evil way.
 - c. The presentation by Baruch becomes so important.

B. The Sermon Presented and its Impact (36:8-26)

1. Nine months in preparation.
2. The message presented five different times:
 - a. Before all the people from Jerusalem and Judah.
 - b. In the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the Lord's house.
 - c. The officials now send a representative to Baruch, urging that the scroll be brought to them and read to them.
 - d. They asserted, "We will surely report all these words to the king" (36:16-20).
 - e. The king wanted to hear the message from the scroll itself.
3. King Jehoiakim's response. He took the message, cut it, cast it (into the fire), and consumed it (36:23).
 - a. This indignant king defied God's word and warning, commanding his son and others to seize Jeremiah and Baruch (v. 26).
 - b. His intent was for Elnathan to bring those two in as he had earlier done with the prophet, Uriah, that the king might kill them (36:25; 26:20-24).

C. The Sermon Re-written plus Planned Punishment for All (36:27-32)

1. Jeremiah had knowledge of Jehoiakim's exact words.
2. Jeremiah's added message for Jehoiakim was two-fold:
 - a. Jehoiakim would have **none of his lineage sit on David's throne** (36:30). Coniah, a son of Jehoiakim, did have a brief 3 month reign, but God never recognized that reign (22:24-30).
 - b. Jehoiakim's **dead body would be cast out** "to the heat of the day and the frost of the night" (36:30; 22:18-19 "buried with the donkeys").
3. The chapter ends as it began, with a promise for Judah and Jerusalem to be showered with all the calamity God had promised to them (36:3, 31; 19:15).

PAYMENT FOR PROPHECYING: IMPRISONMENT (37:1-21)

The chronology of this chapter has caused some confusion. While it is clearly stated as being in the time of Zedekiah (37:1), the question relates to when in his 11 year reign did these events occur (2 Kings 24:17-20)?

The likely sequence of events would be as follows:

PASSAGE	DATE	WHY THIS SEQUENCE
34:1-7	Early 588 B.C.	When the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem (v. 7).
21:1-14	588 B.C.	<i>“Please inquire of the Lord. . that the enemy may withdraw from us”</i> (v. 2).
37:1-10	588 B.C.	<i>“Do not deceive yourselves saying, ‘The Chaldeans will (little later) surely go away from us, for they will not go.’”</i> (v. 9).
34:20-22	588 B.C.	<i>“...into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, 37:11-16 (little later) which has gone away from you”</i> (v. 21).
37:17-21	588-587 B.C.	Jeremiah is released from the house of Jonathan, and placed in the court of the guardhouse (vs.15-21).
38:1-6, 8-13, 28	587-586 B.C.	Jeremiah placed in the cistern and released; returned to the guardhouse until Jerusalem was captured.

A. The Problems from These People (37:1-6)

Neither the king, nor his servants, nor the people listened to the words of the Lord, which were spoken through Jeremiah (37:2).

B. The Promised Peril for These People (37:7-10)

1. The ruler of Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra (37:7; 44:30) had been approached for help against their common enemy, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Ezekiel 17:11-21).
2. They are warned not to be *deceived* by any military shift that might seem favorable to them (v. 9).

C. The Prophet Imprisoned (37:11-16)

1. Jeremiah was arrested and taken to the officials (KJV-princes).
2. They beat this prophet of God (37:15).
3. They put Jeremiah in jail in the house of Jonathan, the scribe.
 - Jeremiah was left in that dungeon “many days” (37:16).

D. The Prophet Sought and Providence Supplied (37:17-21)

1. Zedekiah – the king on the throne was far more insecure than the prophet in the pit!
 - a. Faith is stronger than sovereignty (1 John 5:4-5).
 - b. God-given trust is mightier than a throne (Hebrews 13:5-6).
2. King Zedekiah secretly sends for Jeremiah, asking, *“Is there a word from the Lord?”*
 - a. For decades of faithful service, Jeremiah consistently responded with a firm “There is” (37:17).
 - b. King Zedekiah knew Jeremiah to be a true prophet of God.
 - c. The king had wandered so far from God that he no longer revered or feared God in a respectful manner.
3. Jeremiah’s relation to trials and punishment.
 - a. First, He challenges the justice of his incarceration. He asks where he has sinned against the king, his servants or the people that would

- justify his being put in prison (37:18)?
- b. Second, He challenges the prophets of peace, who had declared the king of Babylon would not attack Jerusalem (37:19; 28:1-4, etc.)
- c. Third, very respectfully (“O my lord the king”-37:20) Jeremiah pleads that release for him from prison was right!
- 4. The prophet’s plea and God’s providence result in a double blessing:
 - a. Protection away from the princes (by court guard).
 - b. Provisions daily from the bakers, as long as any one had bread in the city (37:21). God’s promise holds true (1:17-19).

NOTE: What lessons this chapter teaches concerning the nature of a true prophet and the sadness of weak leadership. Jeremiah stands tall to demonstrate the responses of a true spokesman for God.

THE WEAK AND VACILLATING KING (38:1-28)

A. The King Submits to Charges Against Jeremiah (38:1-6)

1. The prophet’s continuing message: surrender to the Chaldeans and live.
2. The angry response by four officials: This kind of message was “discouraging the men of war, who are left in this city” (38:4).
3. The weak, vacillating king submits to the bold, brazen wickedness of these princes.
4. God’s prophet is again confined, this time in a cistern, a dungeon in darkness and slimy dirt (38:6).

NOTE: Rest assured that God had not forgotten His prophet. The following verses verify that fact.

B. Zedekiah Responds to Ebed-Melech’s Appeal for Jeremiah (38:7-13)

1. A contrast of courage and cowardice. *The king* who was too weak to do anything for Jeremiah uniquely meets a *foreign slave* who would!
2. Ebed-Melech brings three charges against the officials:
 - a. They have acted wickedly in all they have done.
 - b. “They have cast him into the cistern.”
 - c. Jeremiah will die there because of the famine. Starving to death in a cistern would be horrible!

NOTE: That not only is in open violation of what the king had set up as a pattern for Jeremiah (37:21), but it identifies the ruthless intent of these merciless officials!

C. Zedekiah Counsels with Jeremiah (38:14-23)

1. Jeremiah’s two blunt, candid observations:
 - a. Since the message is to be the same, would not the comments lead the king to call for, or allow others to carry out, the prophet’s death?
 - b. If Jeremiah offers a course of action for the king, did not past experience indicate “you will not listen to me” (38:15).
2. Jeremiah declares God’s solution with a triple benefit: Surrender to the king of Babylon and,
 - a. You will live (*save your life*; cf. Matthew 16:25-26).
 - b. This city will not be burned (*save the city*; cf. Acts 17:16-17).

- c. You and your household will survive (*save your family*; cf. Joshua 24:15).
- 3. Zedekiah's failure was fourfold (38:23; Deuteronomy 28:30-33):
 - a. He failed as a **husband**—His wives will be taken into Babylon as captives (Compare Christ in Ephesians 4:8; 5:25-27; 1 Peter 3:7).
 - b. He failed as a **father**. His children will become captives, his sons killed (39:6) and his daughters enslaved, being taken into Egypt (43:6). Note Genesis 18:19; Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 4:1-4.
 - c. He failed as a **man**—as he is seized by the hand of Babylon's king (cf. Proverbs 8:36; 11:17; 15:32; Habakkuk 2:10).
 - d. He failed as a **king**—"This city will be burned by fire" (38:23, 17-18).

D. Zedekiah Pleads for Silence from Jeremiah (38:24-28)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINETEEN:

1. How did Jehoiakim respond to the reading of the message written by Jeremiah?

2. What two-fold message concerning Jehoiakim did Jeremiah add when he re-wrote the book?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. What charge was leveled against Jeremiah when he tried to purchase land?

4. Who was Ebed-Melech and what did he do for Jeremiah?

5. What three charges did Ebed-Melech bring against the officials who imprisoned Jeremiah?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
6. List four ways or areas in which Zedekiah failed.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
7. List (and study) four cases in Scripture of weakness in the face of trials and four cases of strength and success through God's providence and steadfastness by His spokesmen. (Example: King Saul or Paul before king Agrippa)
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON 20

JERUSALEM FALLS & THE REMNANT

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 39 primarily centers around three personalities: King Zedekiah, whose weakness and rebellion are typical of the corrupt core and component parts of his polluted kingdom, that is now reaping what had been sown (39:1-10). Jeremiah, whose dedication in the midst of despair over his people's persistent plunge into moral and spiritual promiscuity, is rewarded by Divine providence and protection (39:11-14). God's tender care for this proclaimer of truth is no where better seen than the attention given to the prophet in this crucial crumbling of his native country. Ebed-Melech becomes a grand example of the Divine interest in anyone who will stand for, and do, what is right (39:15-18).

Chapter 40 is an explanation and extension that came out of the chaos and consternation when Judah and Jerusalem fell to the forces of Babylon. Even Jeremiah was a victim of the clamor, the furor, the frenzy, and bizarre brutalities that characterized those final hours of conquest. While God's providential care of His prophet was planned and pursued (39:11-14), in some way Jeremiah was whisked in chains from the court of the guardhouse in Jerusalem to Ramah (about six miles north of Jerusalem; 38:28; 40:1). There he was given tender care by Nebuzaradan, captain of the bodyguard (39:11; 40:1).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 39 through 41

LESSON AIM: To see the continuing sad plight of the once magnificent city and the struggles of the remnant left in Judah.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Investigate the events surrounding the final fall and destruction of Jerusalem.
2. See the continuing struggle of the small remnant of people and the release and reward of Jeremiah.

JERUSALEM FALLS TO BABYLONIAN FORCES (39:1-18)

A. King Zedekiah's Plight as Jerusalem Falls (39:1-10)

1. The prolonged ordeal of Babylon's attack – 18 months (39:1, 21; 2 Kings 24; 2 Chronicles 36; Jeremiah 52).
2. Military force was combined with God's anger (21:3-7; 6:11-15; 23:28-36).
3. There is a vital message here that must be heard.
 - a. God is no impassive, unfeeling, unconcerned machine. He loves (1

- John 4:8). He cares (1 Peter 5:7). He is a just and righteous God (Isaiah 45:21; Zephaniah 3:5; 2 Timothy 4:8).
- b. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity (Psalms 45:6-7; Proverbs 6:16-19).
 - c. His justice demands that He take vengeance on evil deeds and evil doers (Deuteronomy 32:35-39; Romans 12:19).
4. King Zedekiah fled the city at night (v. 4). However, on the plains of Jericho he was seized and brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (v. 5).
 5. Zedekiah's previously denied reality - the downfall of this city, which God had set aside as the place to meet His people.
 - a. The city given into the hands of the king of Babylon (21:4-16; 32:3).
 - b. Zedekiah could not escape (39:4-5; 32:4; 34:30; 38:18).
 - c. He was brought face to face before Nebuchadnezzar (39:5; 32:4; 34:3).
 - d. The city of Jerusalem was burned with fire (39:8; 34:2; 38:18, 23).
 - e. Zedekiah lost his sons (39:6; 38:23), – slaughtered before his eyes.
 - f. He surely was taunted and mocked by women—even his wives (38:22).
 - g. As his eyes were put out – had to be a haunting memory of the words about coming eye to eye before Nebuchadnezzar (39:6-7; 32:4; 34:3).
 - h. As the blinded king walked in bronze chains to Babylon, the sobering message that *he would not see that land* must have scorched his soul (39:7; Ezekiel 12:12-16).
 - i. Did Zedekiah now remember, with a sense of gratitude for God's mercy and grace, that he would die in peace and be honored in his death (cf. 34:4-5)?

B. God's Providential Provisions for His Prophet (39:11-14)

1. Nebuchadnezzar “gave orders about Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard (akin to the head of our military forces). These orders offered a three-fold group of benefits to Jeremiah (39:11-13):
 - a. *Provisions*– “Take him and look after him.”
 - b. *Protection*– “Do nothing harmful to him.”
 - c. *Position -Prestige*– “Deal with him just as he tells you.”
2. God's providential care through the varied military leaders.

C. Divine Interest in Ebed-Melech, an Ethiopian Slave (39:15-18)

1. Ebed-Melech's deliverance was three-fold:
 - a. Deliverance from “the men whom you dread” (v. 17).
 - b. He would not “fall by the sword” (v. 18), but would be *rescued*.
 - c. He would have his own life as booty, or would be preserved alive (38:2; 21:9; 39:18).
2. Ebed-Melech was so favored because he *trusted in the Lord* (39:18; Psalms 37:40; 1 Chronicles 5:20; 1 Peter 5:6-7).

NOTE: See in this chapter *God's Providence*, working *through* a world emperor, *against* a rebellious people (seeking to bring them to repentance), *for* a persevering prophet, and even *extended to* an Ethiopian slave.

Chapter 40 is an explanation and extension that came out of the chaos and consternation when Judah and Jerusalem fell to the forces of Babylon.

A. The Prophet Released and Rewarded (40:4-5)

1. *"I am freeing you today from the chains which are on your hands"* (40:4).
2. Jeremiah was granted an option: *"If you would prefer to come with me to Babylon. . . I will look after you"*.
3. The rest of Jeremiah's option was to look over the whole land and go *"wherever it seems good and right for you to go"* (v. 4).
4. Jeremiah could live with Gedaliah, the Governor, who was Jeremiah's friend (40:5; 39:14; 26:24), staying among his people.

NOTE: Jeremiah selected #4, after which Nebuzaradan gave him a ration and a reward (gift) and let him go (v. 5). What a dramatic example of supplies being given from the presence of the enemy (Psalms 23:5).

B. The Provincial Government Set up under Gedaliah (40:6-12)

A three-fold program of operations was outlined by Gedaliah, which basically followed the plan God had given (40:9-10; 27:11-17; 29:5-7; 39:10).

1. *Serve the Chaldeans and the king of Babylon.* God had planned that Judah serve Babylon. Respect for God and for their captors now became two reasons to pursue that course.
2. *Settle in the land* (40:10). The expression "stay in Mizpah" indicates locating, living and working there. They were to gather in the wine, summer fruit, and oil, which was in *"great abundance"* (40:12).
3. *Satisfaction is promised.* By so staying and serving, Gedaliah promises *"that it may go well with you"* (40:9).

C. Problems Prevail among the Remnant (40:13-16)

1. The plot of Baalis to kill Gedaliah.
2. The warning by Johanan ignored by Gedaliah.
3. Corrupt influences were so inherent among these people that Jeremiah said, *"Let every one be on guard against his neighbor, and do not trust any brother"* (9:4).
4. Johanan's conduct in this matter is worthy of consideration.
 - a. He knew the facts about Ishmael's intent.
 - b. He had a good reason for removing Ishmael from the scene:
 - 1) To save Gedaliah's life.
 - 2) So the Jews who had returned to Gedaliah would not be scattered.
 - 3) So the remnant of Judah would not perish (v. 15).
 - c. He respected Gedaliah's decision, even though it was against his better judgment and even though he had been called a liar.
 - d. While being told that he had lied (which had to hurt), he remained faithful to the Governor.
 - e. Later, Johanan assumed leadership of the remnant and refused himself to listen to the truth (43:1-7). *How frail and fallible is man!*

From 605 B.C. to 586 B.C. Judah and Jerusalem had been a battleground of bloodshed. Subjection and slaughter had been the rule of the day. Fightings and fire had left beautiful buildings, including God's house, a widespread scene of demolished destruction. Multitudes in mourning had marched in chains to wherever Nebuchadnezzar dictated that they be scattered in his empire.

A. A Meal Mixed with Murder (41:1-3)

1. Ishmael's family background.
 - a. "Of the royal family" (41:1).
 - b. He was the grandson of Elishama, the scribe, who teamed up with King Jehoiakim to burn the manuscript Jeremiah had written (36:12-26).
 - c. He was one of the chief officers of king Zedekiah (41:1).
2. Three groups are victims of this assassination plot:
 - a. Gedaliah is slain.
 - b. All the Jews with Gedaliah are killed (likely just the ones who were sharing in the festivities at that banquet).
 - c. The Chaldean soldiers or bodyguards are slain (41:3).

B. The Murder of Mixed-up Mourners (41:4-10)

1. Seventy of eighty mourners slain and tossed into a cistern (v. 6).
2. Ten of the eighty bribed Ishmael with wheat, barley, oil and honey.
3. Ishmael "crosses over to the sons of Ammon" taking captive all the people remaining at Mizpah (v. 10; 40:14).

C. Conflict and Concern about Further Captivity (41:11-18)

1. From one who warns (40:13-16) to warriors (41:11-12).
2. From sorrow to gladness (41:13-15).
3. Two things happened when these men arrived on the scene at Gibeon (cf. Joshua 18:21-25):
 - a. When the people held captive by Ishmael saw the forces with Johanan, they were both happy and immediately left Ishmael.
 - b. Ishmael's response (along with eight of his men) was to *escape from* Johanan.
4. Freedom now gives way to fear for at least four reasons:
 - a. Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar had setup government under Gedaliah at Mizpah – not Gibeon (40:1-6).
 - b. Gedaliah, the king of Babylon's appointment, had been killed without justification or approval (vs. 1-3).
 - c. Chaldean officials had been killed by Ishmael (v. 3).
 - d. Ishmael, the cowardly murderer, had fled the scene. This left the small remnant at Gibeon unable to try that traitor, punish him, or prove to any incoming forces from Babylon that Ishmael was the culprit.

NOTE: Somewhere amidst all these killings and chaos was Jeremiah. He was not named in chapter 41, but will be in future scenes—giving Divine directions but being rejected and further abused.

A. God's Prophet Is Urged to Pray; the People Promise to Obey (42:1-6)

1. The people's request: That God would tell them "the way in which we should walk and the thing that we should do" (v.3).
2. These people are still waiting for God to tell them what *they want to hear* (5:10-13; 14:8, 9, 19-21; II Timothy 4:2-5).
3. There are some pertinent phrases expressed by Jeremiah that need to be noted as a guide for dealing with others (42:4):
 - a. *Seek information* – "I have heard you." It is so easy to be ready with God's answer before we have digested the question.
 - b. *Make intercession* – "I will pray to the Lord. . in accordance with your words."
 - c. *Exact declaration* – "The whole message which the Lord will answer you, I will tell you." There are some four levels of possible response:
 - A. We may talk *to others about what* the Lord said concerning *them*.
 - B. We may tell them what *we think* the Lord wants them to do.
 - C. We can tell them *part* of the Lord's message for them.
 - D. We can, like Jeremiah, give them *the whole message of the Lord for their need*.
4. *Complete proclamation* – "I will not keep back a word from you." God trained Jeremiah that way (1:7, 17; 26:1, 2). The people's response:
 - a. *Their perception* – The Lord would "be a true and faithful witness" between or against them.
 - b. *Their promise* – "Whether it be pleasant or unpleasant, they will listen to the voice the Lord our God" (v. 6).
 - c. *Their prosperity* – "That it may go well with us" (v. 6).

B. God's Answer Offers Peace or Punishment (42:7-18)

1. God's answer was given to all, both the small and the great (v. 8).
2. What they needed to do, and what would be done for them:

	HOW?	
<i>Satisfied</i>	<u>Be Content</u>	"Stay in this land"
<i>Secure</i>	<u>Be Built</u>	"I will build you up." "I will plant you."
<i>Strong</i>	<u>Be Not Afraid</u>	"Of the king of Babylon, whom you are now fearing."
<i>Saved</i>	<u>Be Saved</u>	"I am with you to save you."
<i>Sustained</i>	<u>Be Delivered</u>	"I am with you. .to deliver" (snatch out of danger).
<i>Summary</i>	<u>Be Blest</u>	"I will show you compassion that he may have compassion on you."

With both God and the king of Babylon showing compassion on the remnant, what a blessing is this promise from God.

3. *Punishment is promised* if God's redeeming benefits are rejected. The rejection He foresees is threefold:
 - a. "We will not stay in this land."
 - b. We will not "listen to the voice of the Lord" (cf. v. 6).

- c. “We will go to the land of Egypt.”
4. Contrast between what the remnant *saw* and what God *said would be*:

<u>What the Remnant saw</u> (vs 14-16)	<u>What God said would be</u>
We shall not see war	The sword which you are afraid of will overtake you.
We shall not . . . have hunger for bread	The famine (will overtake you).
We will stay there (Egypt)	You will die there

5. In verse 18 He gives them a fivefold warning that would be the outgrowth of His anger and wrath if they yet determine to go to Egypt. The remnant would then be:
- Detested* – “a curse.”
 - Despicable* – “An object of horror.”
 - Declared disgust* – “An imprecation.”
 - Denounced and denied – “”A reproach.”
 - Debarred* – “You will see this place no more.” Only a devout Jew could realize the sorrow and shame related to this loss.

C. God’s Prophet Pleads and Warns (42:19-22)

- Jeremiah’s plaintive plea: “The Lord has spoken to you, O remnant of Judah. Do not go into Egypt! You should clearly understand that today I have testified against you” (42:19).
- Jeremiah’s reminder: God will do as He said even though they did not do anything as they indicated they would (42:5,6,21,22).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY:

1. Who was ruler in Jerusalem when the city finally fell? _____
Describe what happened to him. _____

2. How did the Babylonians treat Jeremiah? _____
3. Give a three-fold description of how Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard was to treat Jeremiah.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
4. Give three commands given by Gedaliah found in 40:6-12 concerning the remnant's activity.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. Identify the following people:
 - 1) Johanan: _____
 - 2) Ishmael: _____
 - 3) Nebuzaradan: _____
 - 4) Ebed-Melech: _____
6. Give four reasons Johanan was afraid to stay in the land after the murder of Gedaliah.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON 21

THE REMNANT'S CONTINUED DISOBEDIENCE

INTRODUCTION:

Chapters 43 – 45 continues the theme of disobedience, degradation and destruction for the remnant left in Judah. The prophet's plain preaching is rejected and they continue in their persistent plan to go to Egypt. The prophet portrays the fallacy of relying on anyone or any thing other than the Almighty God who has sustained them since Egypt. Chapter 43 will unveil to them that God intends for Babylon's forces to do to them the very thing they had hoped to escape! One does not escape danger by a departure *from God!*

Two basic needs existed: 1) They needed to realize that when one runs from God, such a soul makes a move toward misery—a run toward ruin! 2) They needed to recognize the underlying problem. They thought they were running from the nation of Babylon. They refused to recognize that their course of action was rebellion against God! It was from Him they were running, not from any physical, material, or national power.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 43 through 45

LESSON AIM: To see the futility of thinking one can run from and escape the judgment of God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. See the futility of trying to change locations in order to get away from one's sins and one's God.
 2. Learn that sinful and wicked actions persist and increase when we think we have left the environment of God.
 3. Know that bad circumstances do not rob one of the real blessings which God gives to the faithful.
-

ANOTHER ROAD TO RUIN

A. The Prophet's Plain Preaching Rejected (43:1-4)

1. *How he preached:* He delivered the **finished and complete product**. "When Jeremiah had **made an end of speaking**" (KJV).
2. *To whom he preached:* "Speaking unto **all the people**" (KJV). Sermons are to be spoken *to someone*.
3. *What he preached:* "Speaking. . . **all the words of the Lord their God.**"
4. *Why he preached:* Saying it for **the reason God wanted it said**. "Speaking. . . all the words of the Lord. . . **for which the Lord their God had sent him**

to them” (KJV).

- The people’s response: “You are telling a lie.”

B. The Persistent Plan Proceeds to Egypt (43:5-7)

1. After nine hundred years they returned to Egypt. A remnant of exiles, fleeing in fear and in rebellion. The very act of their coming to Egypt one of definite disobedience to the most recent message of the prophet of God.
2. Johanan is now the leading force in taking the remnant to Egypt.
3. Nowhere does it say that Jeremiah approved of this journey to Egypt.
4. God’s will—that His prophet remain on the scene (cf. Philippians 1:21-27).

C. The Prophetic Portrayal of Egypt’s Fall to Babylon (43:8-13)

Jeremiah resumed his prophetic work at Tahpanhes, the edge of the Egyptian Delta, seven miles west of the Suez Canal.

REBELLION BY THE REMNANT IN EGYPT (44:1-30)

From chapter 43 to chapter 44 enough time had passed for the remnant to scatter from Tahpanhes (43:7) to Migdol, south and east on the Egyptian border; to Memphis (or Noph), west of the Nile River and about 125 miles south of the Mediterranean Sea; and to Pathros (“land of the South”), called upper Egypt (44:1).

A. Punishment for Their Wicked Past (44:1-6)

1. God’s planned and promised calamity on Judah and Jerusalem had become a reality (44:2, 23; 40:1-2; 36:3; 25:29; 19:15, etc.).
2. The land was ruined and the place uninhabited – because of the abominable thing. There were three stages to this abomination:
 - a. *Wrong course*—“Continuing to burn sacrifices and to serve other gods” (v. 3; Exodus 20:3-5).
 - b. *Wrong knowledge*—serving gods “whom they had not known” (v. 3; 31:34; 2:8; Deuteronomy 29:10-29).
 - c. *Wrong response*—when God’s prophets spoke (from Moses to Jeremiah) “they did not listen or incline their ears to turn from their wickedness” (v. 5; 1:16; 2:19; 3:2; 4:14, 18; 8:6; 14:6; 22:22; etc.).

B. The Price to Be Paid at the Present (44:7-14)

1. Great evil they were doing affected:
 - a. **Their souls** (KJV).
 - b. **Their homes** – “*So as to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant*” (v. 7).
 - c. **The Remnant** – “*Cut off from you . . . Judah, leaving yourselves without remnant.*”
 - d. **Their God** – “*Provoking Me to anger*” by their sacrifices to the gods of Egypt.
 - e. **Their own reputations** – “*That you might become a curse and a reproach among all nations of the earth*” (v. 8, 12; 42:18).
2. How such shame had developed (v. 10).
 - a. *No contrition* – in the sense of regret or remorse.
 - b. *No fear* – or reverence that would lead them to the godly or upright.

- c. *No obedience* – because they would not walk in God’s law.
- 3. The punishment God promised to provide (vs. 11-14).
 - a. *Severed from God*, as He sets His face against them, “even to cut off all Judah” (v. 11; 21:10).
 - b. *Suffering* because sword or famine will affect all who set their mind to enter Egypt (v. 12).
 - c. *Shame* that was predicted (cf. 42:17-18) would in Egypt become a fourfold reality.
 - d. *Shut out from their homeland* (44:13-14).

C. Persistent Rebellion Prevails (44:15-19)

- 1. Their rejection (v. 16). “*We are not going to listen to you.*”
- 2. Their course (v. 17). “*We will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths*” (44:17).
- 3. Their ridiculous rationalizations:
 - a. They reasoned that sacrifices to the queen of heaven are right because of the long standing and widespread practice (v. 17).
 - b. They argued that sacrifices to the queen of heaven were the real source of their prosperity and success in a yesterday (v. 17).
 - c. They (the women) argued that burning sacrifices and pouring out libation to the queen of heaven was right because such was done with the approval of their husbands (v. 19; 7:17-19).

D. Perception, a Performance, and a Promise (44:20-28)

- 1. Three stages of deteriorating conditions as their punishment:
 - a. *No prosperity* because the land was in a state of ruin.
 - b. *No pleasure* for it was an object of horror.
 - c. *No people*, for that land was “without inhabitant” (44:22).
- 2. The *because* starting verse 23 identifies why those terrible conditions had occurred. Their mistakes had branched out into four areas:
 - a. *Mistakes with things material*—They had “burned incense and sacrifices” to other gods (44:8, 17-19).
 - b. *Mistakes with their Maker* – Having sinned against the Lord.
 - c. *Mistakes with His message* – “You have. . .not obeyed the voice of the Lord” (cf. Deuteronomy 28:14-45; Judges 2:20-23).
 - d. *Mistakes in their march* – “You have. . .not. .walked in His law, His statutes or His testimonies.”

E. Prophetic Proof of God’s Promises (44:29-30)

NO REAL LOSS WHEN YOU ARE GRANTED LIFE (45:1-5)

This chapter relates to events in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. It parallels with chapters 25:1, 36:1 and 46:1-12. Baruch spent some time writing down a *stirring message* from Jeremiah’s mouth (cf. 36—a sermon nine months in preparation). The material in chapter 36 details the impact of what Baruch shared in varied settings. That message even had a powerful influence on Baruch, which is identified in this chapter. It caused tremors of concern among officials and was tossed by King Jehoiakim into

the fire and burned (36:20-23).

A. The Message for Baruch (45:1)

B. The Mood of Baruch (45:2,3)

1. Baruch was *troubled*– “Ah! Woe is me.” A lamentation and cry of despair.
2. Baruch has *tears*– “For the Lord has added sorrow to my pain.”
3. Baruch is *tired*– “I am weary with my groaning.” The King James version gives, “I fainted in my sighing.”
4. Baruch is burdened with *terrible tension*– “I have found no rest.”

C. The Mirror For Baruch (45:4-5a)

1. Three things Baruch needed to see:
 - a. God is going to tear down what He has built and what He has planted, He is about to uproot (v. 4; 1:10; 18:7-10; 31:27-28, 40).
 - b. God’s insight detects a problem that needs to be corrected, which He approaches by this question: “*But you, are you seeking great things for yourself?*” (v. 5).
 - c. Baruch needed to understand that he must *not seek* great things for himself because God was going “to bring disaster on all flesh” (v. 5).
2. There are three pertinent questions worthy of being raised from this:
 - a. Are you *seeking*?
 - b. Are you seeking *great things*?
 - c. Are you seeking great things *for yourself*?

D. The Mercy for Baruch (45:5b)

What God promised Baruch, viewing slaughter and strife all around him, had to be even more precious: “*I will give your life to you as booty in all the places where you may go*” (45:5; 21:9; 38:2; 39:18; 43:6-7). Baruch’s assurance that he would *live* and be living *under* and *for* God had to be a dual blessing.

NOTE: Chapter 45 serves as a dividing line in Jeremiah’s prophetic work. From chapter two to the end of chapter 45, Jeremiah’s thoughts primarily pertain to Judah and Jerusalem. Beginning in chapter 46 there is a series of statements for the nations, from Egypt to the south and west to the expanding Babylonian Empire on the north and east.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

1. Describe Jeremiah's preaching by listing four (4) characteristics of his preaching.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. What was God's plain and clear instructions concerning the people going into Egypt? (42:16)_____
3. Who was the leading force in taking the remnant to Egypt and what was God's instruction concerning them going?

4. When God spoke to the people who had gone to Egypt, what did He remind them of and what did He say was the cause of it?

5. The wickedness they were involved in affected them in what four (4) areas?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
6. What two (2) statements did the people make in 44:16-17 which manifested their attitude toward God and His prophet?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
7. What three (3) rationalizations did they present to justify their giving homage to the "Queen of Heaven"?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
8. What great promise did God make to Baruch because of his faithfulness to God?

LESSON 22

PROPHECIES AGAINST THE NATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

By God's plan, Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (1:5, 10; 46:1). Every prophetic book of the Old Testament (other than Hosea) contains some section or statement concerning a foreign nation. A collection of messages for varied nations can be found in several prophetic books (cf. Isaiah 23-23, 34; Ezekiel 25-32, 38-39; Amos 1-2; Jonah 1-4; Jeremiah 46-51). God was always interested in the nations even though He had made special covenants with Abraham and Israel (as the lineage through whom the Messiah would come—Genesis 12:1-3; 17:4-9; 22:17-18; 26:1-4; 28:13-14; Exodus 19:1-9; Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Matthew 1:1-17; Acts 3:18-26; Galatians 3:6-29). The grand scheme of God through the seed of Abraham had its focal point around Israel and Judah, but those people were greatly and repeatedly affected by the rise and fall of neighboring nations. Therefore, as the prophets emphasized the universal Sovereignty of God, it was necessary to utter His plans related to the destiny of the nations.

These sections will not generally contain a specific law code for the behavior of those nations, but they will contain operating principles and plans by Jehovah, the *Lord of hosts* (Note Romans 1:16-2:16). Those factors are evident as we note this unique section of Jeremiah's prophecies to the nations.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 46 through 51

LESSON AIM: To gain the proper view of God's judgment upon the nations of Egypt, Philistia and Moab.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Understand God's use of one nation to bring judgment upon another nation as seen in relation of Babylon to Egypt, Philistia and Moab.
 2. See that the prophecies concerning judgment on the nations are to be an encouragement to God's people.
-

DECLARATIONS OF EGYPT'S FALL (46:1-28)

A. Egypt's Initial Fall to Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (46:2-12)

1. The chronological setting for the beginning phase of these utterances about Egypt (46:2).
 - a. The 4th year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (605 B.C.).
 - b. Jehoiakim appointed by Pharaoh Necho (2 Chronicles 35:20-27).
2. Both Judah and Egypt needed to realize that all this was a part of God's vengeance against them (cf. 46:10).
3. The confident forces of Pharaoh Necho. Jeremiah, with a tinge of satire,

describes their enthusiastic girding on of the equipment, and its polished readiness for the conflict (46:3-4).

4. The Egyptian army in chaos and confusion, filled with fear, put into flight, draw back and suffer defeat (vs. 5-6).
5. Egypt's mighty army came against God's day of vengeance, and the bloody battle saw Egypt's hosts as a sacrifice by the river Euphrates (vs. 7-9).
6. Egypt is referred to as God's *foes* (v.10).
7. Because of the *constant conflicts*, there is now for Egypt *no cure* (v. 11; 8:20-22).

B. Egypt's Ultimate Fall When Nebuchadnezzar Invaded Egypt (46:13-26)

Jeremiah's current prophecy covers the time after Carchemish, when the battered and beleaguered forces of Egypt came home. Two things are significant:

1. They stumbled and fell and fled "because the Lord has thrust them down" (v. 15; 22:19).
2. When Egypt's forces return defeated, they cried, "Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is but a big noise" (v. 17; Isaiah 30:7).
3. Beautiful, sleek, well-fed Egypt with all its wealth and luxury was destined for destruction (KJV) from a horsefly (NAS) out of the north (v. 18).
4. Egypt had no defense left (vs.17, 22).
5. God's threefold attack against Egypt (v. 25):
 - a. *Their gods* (including Amon of Thebes-the sun god).
 - b. *Their Government* (Pharaoh and the kings).
 - c. *The Governed* ("all those who trust in Pharaoh."). That covers all areas of influence and personnel in the land.

C. Encouragement from God for His Scattered People (46:27-28)

1. Two lessons God wanted His people to learn:
 - a. Lesson #1: Egypt is to become a desolation, making it foolish for the remnant to conjure up any hope or trust from that land and its rulers.
 - b. Lesson #2: God's people, wherever they had scattered, is not to fear nor be dismayed (v. 27).
2. God made a threefold promise to His people (v. 28):
 - a. **Comfort**— "*For I am with you.*"
 - b. **Continuation assured**— "*For...I shall not make a full end of you*" (cf. Psalms 46:7, 10-11; Isaiah 8:9-10; 43:1-7; Amos 9:6-12).
 - c. **Correction will come**— "*I shall correct you properly and by no means leave you unpunished.*"

DECLARATIONS OF DESTRUCTION FOR THE PHILISTINES (47:1-7)

1. Because of the evil spirit of revenge that had been in the Philistines (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:17-19).
2. So they will know that the Lord is God. Because by the action God takes against the Philistines, "*they will know that I am the Lord, when I lay My vengeance on them*" (Ezekiel 25:17).

A. The Conqueror (47:2-3a)

- B. The Conditions (47:3b-5).** Grown men will "cry out" and all the inhabitants "will wail" (v. 2).

C. The Cry of the Philistines (47:6)

Their cry is "*Ah! sword of the Lord, how long will you not be quiet? Withdraw*

into your sheath; be at rest and stay still.” It is a cry of surrender and a plea for a return of peace.

D. The Conclusion (47:7)

1. The authority of this force from the north – the Lord’s command! It marches because “the Lord has given it an order.” The devastation must run its course from Ashkelon to the seacoast – all of Philistia.
2. Other prophets spoke of the downfall and ruin of Philistia (cf. Amos 1:6-8; Isaiah 14:29-31; Zephaniah 2:4-7; Ezekiel 25:15-17).
3. Zechariah 9:5-7 points to a day beyond the pain when that region will be populated by a people who “will be a remnant for our God.” Hence, even in Philistia, God’s mercy will be found.

DECLARATIONS OF DESTRUCTION FOR MOAB (48:1-47)

The Moabites can be traced back to the grandson of Lot (cf. Genesis 19:29-37). They lived just east of the Dead Sea.

A. The Message of Doom Sounded Out (vs. 1-6)

1. Sounded out by the Lord of hosts (v. 1).
2. Sounded out by the attacking army (v. 2).
3. Sounded out by the Moabites themselves (vs.3-6).

B. Confused, Captured and Cursed (48:7-10)

1. The course taken (v. 7).
 - a. *Wrong trust*– in their achievement.
 - b. *Wrong remedy*–in their treasure (cf. Ecclesiastes 10:19).
 - c. *Wrong religion*– in their god, Chemosh (v. 7).
2. The price to be paid (vs. 8-10).
 - a. All your works (cities) will be destroyed (v. 8).
 - b. Your land left desolate; no treasure (v. 9).
 - c. Cursed through deceit; no defense (v. 10).
3. Because of Chemosh, that cannot protect, they will go into exile (cf. 48:13, 46; Numbers 21:29-30; 1 Kings 11:7, 33; 2 Kings 23:13; 3:4-27).

C. Cause for the Conquest (48:11-17)

1. *Cultural comforts can compromise character and lead to assumed security.* Moab settled down satisfied as self-sufficient souls.
2. *Chemosh, assumed to be a mighty god, would leave them ashamed.*
3. *Confidence in military might, without a right relationship with man’s Maker, leads to misery!*

D. The Cries of Confusion and Contempt (48:18-28)

E. Conquest Replaces Cockiness (48:29-30)

F. Cries for and of the Conquered (48:31-39). Verse 31 begins with *Therefore*, implying a summation being offered. The summation is a trail of tears. One finds *wail*, *cry out*, and *moan* all in verse 31. There follows *weep* and *weeping* in verse 32. There are *shouting*, *joyless cries* in verse 33. Six different cities echo an *outcry* in verse 34. God gives His outcry in verses 35 and 36, as He *wails* for Moab like flutes. In verse 38, from the streets and the housetops, the mournful sounds of lamentations can be heard.

G. Conquest and Calamity Are Certain (48:40-46)

1. It comes quickly, like an eagle.
2. The certainty of calamity (vs. 43-44). There is no escape!

H. Concluding Promise by the Creator (48:47)

What Chemosh, the god of the proud Moabites, could not do, Jehovah God, Creator of heaven and earth, could do: “*‘Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in the latter days,’ declares the Lord.*”

SUMMARY

Jeremiah is certainly a prophet to the nations (1:10), and Jehovah is a God who has ever been interested in the nations. The following chapter will add further proof to that fact.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO:

1. Give location and event of Egypt’s initial fall and who was responsible for it.

2. What two lessons did God want His people to learn concerning Egypt?

1) _____

2) _____

3. God’s three-fold promise to His people in 46:28 is:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. Give two reasons stated for the destruction of the Philistines in 47:1-7.

1) _____

2) _____

5. By what authority did the forces from the north march against Philistia?

6. Give the three-fold course taken by Moab.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

7. What price was to be paid by Moab as a result of the wrong path taken?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON 23

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS



Observe the dominance of Deity in this section. *Lord* appears twenty one times, the pronoun “I” twenty four times, “Me” four times, “My” three times, “Myself” one time, “He” four times, and “His” two times. That makes a total of 59 references to God in the 39 verses of chapter 49. Rest assured that *Jehovah is the One in charge* of these judgments, regardless of who enacts the punishment.

Since God is central in every case, it is no surprise that a kindred pattern can be found for each geographic region. That general pattern finds God calling on each region to *consider the circumstances*; followed by God’s *curse pronounced upon them* (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15); *the cause for the curse* is given; with a *conclusion concerning the promised punishment*. In some cases comfort for future times is extended (cf. 49:6, 39). In a rapid-fire pattern God scopes the problem(s) and pronounces sentence upon Ammon (49:1-6), Edom (49:7-22), Damascus (49:23-27), Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33), and Elam (49:34-39).

Chapters 50-51 covers 110 verses, stands as a unit. Babylon has been a significant topic either referred to, or named, throughout Jeremiah’s prophetic work (1:14-16; 20:4; 21:2; 24:1; 25:1, etc.). Therefore, it should be no surprise that some detailed attention is given to God’s judgments on Babylon. This prophecy was given, written, and transported to Babylon by Seraiah, when King Zedekiah went to Babylon in the 4th year of his reign (51:59).

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 49 through 51

LESSON AIM: To see God’s sovereign rule over the nations.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn that all nations are responsible to God for their relationships to other nations and to God Himself.
2. Understand that although Babylon was God’s instrument for judgment against Judah and other nations, she was still accountable for her cruel actions.

THE LORD’S JUDGMENT ON MANY NATIONS (49:1-39)

A. The Lord’s Judgment on Ammon (49:1-6)

1. The Creator is over their land (v. 1).
2. The curse of God results in a desolate heap (vs. 2-3).
3. The cause is expressed:

- a. Material – they were boastful and gloried in their fertile valleys.
- b. Money – "Who trusts in her treasures."
- c. Moral problems – The abuses of women.
- 4. The Creator's conclusion fits the crime (v. 5).
- 5. Comfort from the Creator extended (v. 6).

B. The Lord's Judgment on Edom (49:7-22). The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Genesis 25:30; 36:1-43).

- 1. *Consider the conditions.* Teman (named after Esau's grandson-Genesis 36:8-11) known as a great region of wisdom (Obadiah vs. 6-14).
- 2. God's questions in verse 7 affirm that Edom's counsel and wisdom had decayed.
 - a. *Conditions were ripe for punishment.* God intends to bring disaster upon them (v. 8; 46:21; 48:16).
 - b. *The cause again is clearly identified* (49:16).
 - 1) Much like Moab (48:14-15), Edom had assumed they were a *terror*, but they were *deceived*.
 - 2) That deception led to an *arrogance* that not only left them as defenseless targets, but caused God's plans and power to be against them (cf. 1 Peter 5:5-7).
 - c. *The concluding curse* that God will bring on them is fourfold:
 - 1) They will be *defeated* ("bring you down").
 - 2) They will be *damaged* (wounds, plagues). They are told what specific factors and forces will be involved in their downfall.
 - 3) They will be *despised*. All who see them will be horrified and hiss (v. 17; 19:8; Lamentations 2:15-16).
 - 4) They will be *desolate* (like Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 13:13; 18:20; 19:1, 12-13, 24, 28).
- 3. Almost as if God wants to add an exclamation point, He asks one more question: "*Who then is the shepherd who can stand against Me?*" (v. 20). All these actions are God's *purposes*. This is no *accident* but a *Divine intent*. If they nest as an eagle (v. 16), God will invade like an eagle (v. 22). The mighty men of Edom will endure pains akin to a woman in childbirth. The cries and conquest will be a thundering noise.

C. The Lord's Judgment on Damascus (49:23-27). Emphasis in this case relates to the *depressing conditions* and *circumstances*. There are some seven stages, one usually related to the other.

- 1. The people are *feeble*. The terrifying sights they see leave them ashamed, unable to fight or take a stand.
- 2. The people are *fainthearted* (KJV) – disheartened (NAS). For them, the fight is over.
- 3. The people have *fear* ("anxiety by the sea"). Their dread cannot be calmed.
- 4. These people are ready to *flee* (v. 24). The natural outgrowth of fear.
- 5. This city of praise and joy to God has been *forsaken* ("deserted"-v. 25).
- 6. These people, even young men, will *fall in the streets*. These are their men of war, who are put to silence.
- 7. These people will see their walls and fortified towers devoured by *fire*.

NOTE: It's fortified places are on fire, its military forces fall, the feeble, fainthearted, fear-stricken folks flee, leaving the city forsaken! *This conquest is complete!* The wrath of the Lord is a terrible thing.

D. The Lord's Judgment on Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33). Kedar, a descendant of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13-16), was of the Arabian tribes.

1. The command and resultant conditions (v. 28). "devastate the men of the east."
2. The common cry from Nebuchadnezzar's conquests (v. 29; 6:25; 20:3; 46:5). "Terror on every side."
3. The cause is identified (vs. 31-33). The same basic problems that had plagued all these nations in this chapter – assumed security.

E. The Lord's Judgment on Elam (49:34-39). Elam is related to Noah's son, Shem (Genesis 10:22; 14:1-11). His posterity emerged as a strong nation that was north and east of the Persian Gulf, west of Persia, south of Media and east of Babylon. The capital, Shushan or Susa (Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 1:2, 5; Daniel 8:2) was about 200 miles east of Babylon.

1. *The strength of Elam will be broken* (v. 35).
2. *The scattering of the Elamites* will be extensive – to all nations (v. 36).
3. *The scared souls will be shattered* (v. 37).
4. *The slaughter from God's anger* (v. 37).
5. *They are subjected before God* (v. 38).
6. *They shall be restored in the last days* (v. 39).

THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON (50:1-51:64)

A. The Prophet's Pertinacious Pronouncements (51:59-61)

B. The Parallel of Punishment *from* Babylon and *for* Babylon

There are at least 13 parallels between Babylon's treatment of other nations and how others will treat Babylon.

C. Babylon's Treatment of Nations & Nations Against Babylon

1. A force from the north to conquer (50:3, 9, 41-42; 1:11-16; 6:1-5, 22-24; 46:20, 24; 47:2-4).
2. As Babylon spoiled other nations, others will find satisfaction making spoil of Babylon (50:9-10; 21:3-5; 16:16-18; 15:1-2).
3. As Babylon left other nations so would Babylon be (50:10, 13, 40; 25:12; 25:9, 11, 18; 44:12; 49:13, 17-18).
4. As Babylon poured out God's vengeance on others, so Babylon would feel His vengeance (50:15; 46:2, 8-12).
5. As others suffered hunger for fear of Babylon's army, so would Babylon fear the army of others (50:16; 14:17-18; 48:31-34).
6. As Babylon had been a snare to others, so Babylon would be taken in a snare (50:24; 48:42-44).
7. As Babylon had drawn the bow against others, against Babylon would the bow be drawn (50:29, 14; 51:3; 6:23).

8. As Babylon made young men fall in the streets, so Babylon's young men would fall (50:30; 51:3; 11:22; 18:21; 48:15; 49:26).
9. Babylon had been as a kindled fire to others and a kindled fire would rage in Babylon's cities (50:32; 21:13-14; 34:2, 22; 43:12, 13; 48:45; 49:2, 27).
10. As Babylon had made the hands of others wax feeble, so would Babylon respond (50:43; 6:24-25; 49:24; 4:31).
11. As Babylon came as a lion from the swelling of the Jordan, so would the enemy come on Babylon (50:44; 49:19; 12:5-6).
12. As Babylon had given cause for others to wail (howl), so would Babylon respond (51:8; 4:8; 25:43; 48:20).
13. A general summary of conditions and causes seen in parallel. (51:43, 53-56, 57, 58; 48:17-18; 49:18, 22, 33; 46:8-10; 48:15; 49:27).
Other parallels might be drawn, but these are abundantly sufficient to show how exactly God caused Babylon to reap as Babylon had sown.

D. Why Babylon Was Prescribed this Punishment?

1. ***“For she has sinned against the Lord”*** (50:14; Numbers 32:23). God holds nations accountable to Him.
2. ***“Because you have engaged in conflict with the Lord”*** (50:24; cf. Acts 5:34, 38-39).
3. ***“For she has become arrogant against the Lord”*** (50:29, 31-32; 13:15; 1 Peter 5:5-7).
4. ***“For it is a land of idols, and they are mad over fearsome idols”*** (50:38; 25:16; Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 5:6-10; 6:13-15; 10:20-21).
5. **For resisting God, who applied healing to Babylon**, but she was not healed (51:9; 50:24).
6. **Because of “the measure of thy covetousness”** (51:13 KJV).
7. ***“For their evil that they have done in Zion”*** (51:24, 34-35; 25:12-14).

E. Babylon's Fall and Favor to God's People (50:1-10)

Babylon that had captured so many nations is to be captured.

1. *The cause* is the disease of idolatry (v. 3, 38; 51:17-18, 44, 47, 52).
2. *The conquering force* in this case is described as a nation (a league of nations – 50:9; 51:2) out of the north (50:3, 9, 41, 48), identified further as the Medes (51:11, 28).
3. *The conquest* will be so great and the desolation so complete that neither man nor beast will remain (50:3).
4. *The favor* to be shown to both the sons of Israel and of Judah “in those days and at that time” (50:4) becomes the headline news in this inspired story. There are three significant factors involved in this return.
 - a. *The Person*. Though they may be weeping as they go, they will seek the Lord their God (50:4; 29:11-14).
 - b. *The Place*. They were asking the way to Zion, turning their faces in that direction (cf. Nehemiah 1:1-2:20).
 - c. *The Precepts*. It was more than a return to the land. It was a return to the Lord and to “an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten” (50:5; 32:40; Isaiah 55:3; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Hebrews 13:20-21).

F. God's Perception of Babylon and for the Penitent Remnant (50:11-20)

1. The pillage of God's people by Babylon, will be drastically changed to shame, humiliation and desolation (50:11-13).
2. The bowman was free to attack (v. 14); the warrior was able to shout his battle cry from any corner of attack; and the vengeance seeker could openly satisfy his soul (v. 15).
3. Even Babylon's pillars and walls would be torn down. The slave of the soil would stop his plowing and planting for the sword of the oppressor had gained his release from bondage. He was free to go home (v. 16).
4. The cause for Babylon's downfall:
 - a. A mighty God had watched the jubilant abuse and pillage of His people (v. 11).
 - b. The indignation of the Lord (50:13; 10:10; 21:5; 32:37) had been stirred and vengeance was loosed (v. 15).
5. *Why God will do so* is clearly covered. "In those days and at that time" (vs. 4, 20) one could check for iniquity in Israel or sin in Judah, *and it will not be found in that righteous remnant.*

G. Details Concerning the Downfall of Babylon (50:20-32)

Understand the Source of this carnage and suffering.

1. It was what God *commanded* (v. 21), as *He set a snare* for them (v. 24).
2. *He opened His armory*, using the weapons of His indignation (v. 25).
3. It was *the vengeance of the Lord* (v. 28).
4. *God was against them*, "O arrogant one" (v. 31).
5. *He would set fire* to the cities and devour all the area (v. 32).
6. Truly, this was a "*work of the Lord God of hosts*" (v. 25).

H. The Redeemer Brings Rest to the Earth/Release to His People (50:33-34)**I. The Sword Assures Babylon's Submission (50:35-40)**

1. A sword will bring down their *mental leadership* (v. 35).
2. A sword will bring down their *mystical soothsayers and mighty men* (v. 36). Their oracle priests will become fools and their mighty men will be shattered (cf. 48:1; 8:9).
3. A sword will bring down their *military arsenal and manned forces* from the other nations (50:37).
4. A sword will bring down their *material treasures*, which will be plundered (50:37b).
5. The *madness over idols* further left them defenseless.

J. Factors Leading to Babylon's Fall (50:41-46)

There are three basic factors in Babylon's fall.

1. **Outside invasion.** That force will come from the north and be made up of many kings.
2. **Inside corruption.** Babylon will crumble from *the inside*, a nation with limp hands and a distressed heart.
3. **Divine judgment.** Babylon's greatest concern should have been relative to *the One above!* Whatever was happening outside or inside was part of a master plan and purpose drawn up by *the Lord of hosts* (vs. 44-45).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-THREE:

1. List five (5) nations/peoples upon whom God will bring judgment.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. Give three (3) reasons why judgment was to come upon Babylon.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. What nation was to be the conquering force upon Babylon?

4. List seven (7) reasons given for Babylon's punishment.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

LESSON 24

GOD'S JUDGMENT A DIVINE DIRECTIVE

If chapters 50 and 51 seem like repetition, it certain is not *vain repetition* (cf. Matthew 6:7). Some ideas need repetition before there is comprehended reception. Remember that in the 4th year of Zedekiah (51:59), when these words were being delivered, Babylon was at the height of its power, enacting one national conquest after another. To even suggest it would fall, much less pronounce its fabled palaces and plush gardens would be a desolation (51:2, 29, 43), seemed to be absurd. To pronounce its mighty military force (51:3-4, 14, 30, 53, 56) would be exhausted, captured and defenseless seemed ridiculous.

God, knowing the human response even of His people, gives re-duplicated proof in chapter 51, with an emphasis that such desolation and destruction in Babylon was *His own plan*. One needs to read chapter 51, noting that emphasis by God and concerning God. God's name as *Lord* is given 23 times, as *Lord of hosts* 5 times, as *God* 4 times, as *King* one time, as the *Holy One of Israel* one time. God is thus specifically named 34 times. Add the pronouns referring to God (I, Me, He, His, My, Himself, etc.) and God is referred to 87 times in those 64 verses. If one read the chapter carefully with the foregoing in mind, repetition becomes a *Divine reaffirmation* that what happened to Babylon is *God's planned action*! Both God's people and the nations of earth would thereby recognize who was the real Administrator when Babylon fell.

LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 51 and 52

LESSON AIM: To bring to a conclusion this great book of prophecy with one last look at God's divine judgment.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Again view Jehovah's sovereign right and actions in ruling the nations for the benefit of His chosen people.
 2. See again that position (being chosen by God) does not guarantee the right to live and act immorally.
 3. Learn that even in the midst of judgment God's mercy is available for any and all who would repent and turn to God.
-

DIVINE JUDGEMENT ON BABYLON

A. What Will Happen to Babylon (51:1-14)?

1. *Who* is doing it (vs. 1-4). *God is the One who will arouse a destroyer* against Babylon.
2. *Why* it must be done (vs. 5-6). God has not forgotten Israel nor Judah (v. 5).

3. *What God has done* (vs. 7-9). God had done two things related to Babylon:
 - a. *He had used Babylon*, as a golden cup, pouring out God's wrath on wicked nations (51:7; 25:15-28; 27:1-11).
 - b. *God had refused Babylon*. Suddenly and unexpectedly Babylon falls because of its own arrogance and sins (51:8-9; 50:9-14, esp. v. 14, 29-32).
4. *How God's people will respond* (v. 10). They know God is the source, and it is something they need to record and relate.
5. *How Babylon will fall* (vs. 11-14). God's purpose is to be fulfilled by the kings of the Medes (vs. 11, 28; 50:39, 41).

NOTE: The Lord's vengeance is here blended with "the spirit of the kings of the Medes." That is a clear case of God's perception of a national force that was ready to do what God knew needed to be done.

B. Who God is and How He Functions (51:15-58)

1. *What He has done* (vs.15-19) contrasted with what man cannot do.

GOD'S MIGHT	Vs.	MAN'S FUTILITY
God made the earth by His power		All mankind is stupid.
God established the world by His (10:12; 33:2).		Man is devoid of knowledge (at wisdom that level).
God with understanding stretched out the heavens		Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols. They are nothing, deceitful, worthless, a mockery (10:15).
God utters His voice—a mass of waters in the heavens; clouds ascend;		Total futility that <i>controls nothing</i> appear by its energy or power.
He makes lightning; brings forth wind;		
Massive energy under His control!		
The Maker of all is He!		All (idols) are made (by man)
<i>The Lord of hosts</i> is His name!		Idols as <i>lords</i> are mere human imagination!

2. **What God did do through Babylon** (vs. 20-23). Babylon had been God's war-club by which He enacted His judgments on many nations. This international spread of Babylon's fledgling world empire was in reality *God's action among men*. God was sovereign in all these massive ventures because Nebuchadnezzar was repeatedly referred to by the Lord of hosts as "My servant" (25:9; 27:6; 43:10; Isaiah 44:28).
3. **What God will do to Babylon** (vs.24-26). Though Babylon was carrying out God's judgments on Judah, the way in which it was done led God to then be against Babylon (v. 25; 50:14, 24, 29, etc.).
4. **How God plans to do it** and who will be affected (51:27-58). There will be a mustering and rallying of the nations against Babylon.
5. *God's perception* is evident in verses 29-33. The nation will quake and tremble, the former mighty military force will submit and cease fighting.
6. **God's people are recognized** as to how they will react amidst these developments (51:34-36). God's people called for Babylon to face the violence that they had imposed on the captives and for their blood to be on the Chaldeans (cf. Genesis 9:4).

7. **God's promise of what He will do to Babylon** is re-asserted (51:36b-44). Babylon's fall described as being brought down as "lambs to the slaughter" (v. 40).
8. **God's plea to His people** is for them to prepare for their return (51:45-51).
 - a. Come out of the midst of Babylon (cf. vs. 6, 9-10; 50:8).
 - b. Save yourselves from the fierce anger of the Lord.
 - c. *Save yourselves by a penitent return to God* (50:18-20; 29:10-14; 24:7). There are four factors given that could lead God's people to that penitent frame of mind.
 - 1) God will punish Babylon for its rank idolatry until they are ashamed of their idols.
 - 2) Heaven and earth would unite to shout for joy over Babylon's destruction.
 - 3) God's people are exhorted to *remember the Lord* and *let Jerusalem come to your mind* (v. 50).
 - 4) The disposition of God's people would be crucial to prepare them for a return.
9. **God's planned punishment for Babylon is now summarized** (51:52-58). For the fourth time in this chapter God strikes at the idolatry in Babylon (vs. 17-18, 44, 47, 51).
10. **God offers a climactic conclusion by a dramatic demonstration** (51:59-64). All the calamity that would come upon Babylon had been written on a single scroll. Standing beside the Euphrates River in Babylon, Seraiah was instructed to do four things:
 - a. *Read aloud all these words* (cf. Notes on 26:1-2; 36:1-4).
 - b. Seraiah then assures all that God, not man, Zedekiah nor even Jeremiah, *is the Source of this prophecy*.
 - c. When the reading was completed, a stone was to be tied around it, throwing that unique document into the Euphrates River.
 - d. God then added the punch line of Divine doom determination—"*Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her*" (v. 64- emphasis mine-dk). That document sinking in the Euphrates was a symbol of how Babylon would sink as a nation. *God's judgment was what would bring Babylon down*.

A REVIEW OF RUIN (52:1-34)

King Zedekiah was captured, Judah did fall, God's temple was stripped and burned, God's people were deported, and this all came about because the Lord punished His people for their wicked ways (52:3).

A. Zedekiah and Judah Fall to Babylon (52:1-11)

B. Jerusalem is Razed, Burned and Temple Treasures Taken (52:12-23)

As this scene unfolds, consider how much was gone from God's people.

1. *Religion is gone* as he "burned the house of the Lord" (v. 12; Psalms 74:3-10; Lamentations 2:6-9).
2. *Government is gone*—He also "burned the king's house" (v. 12).
3. *Social life is gone* for all the prominent houses in Jerusalem were burned (52:12;

38:22-23; 2 Chronicles 36:17, 20; 2 Kings 25:9, 11).

4. *Security is gone* for the walls of Jerusalem were broken down (52:14; 2 Chronicles 36:19).
5. *Souls are gone* as the poor (2 Kings 24:14b), the deserters who capitulated to Babylon, and the rest of the artisans are all taken into exile (52:15).
6. *Significant supplies and treasures are taken* to Babylon (52:17-23; 2 Kings 25:13-17; 2 Chronicles 36:18).

How much God's people gave up because of their *disobedience*.

C. Prominent People Are Killed and Deportations Occur (52:24-30)

1. The princes killed. Alluded to in 52:10 are given special coverage in verses 24-27.
2. Seraiah, the chief priest, was related to a noble line of priests.
3. Hilkiyah, the high priest, who was involved in King Josiah's massive reforms and the restored worship of Jehovah (2 Kings 22, 23), was the grandfather of Seraiah (1 Chronicles 6:13-15).
4. His son, Jehozadak became an exile in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar.
5. Zephaniah, the second priest (52:24) was likely the one who had been related to Jeremiah in several incidents early in the book.
6. The three officers of the temple (52:24) could have related to the rather elaborate duties Solomon had established and assigned years earlier (cf. 1 Chronicles 23:1-5; 2 Kings 12:10-11; 22:4-5; 23:4; Jeremiah 35:3-4).
7. Military leaders. Those mentioned in 52:25 were in some way related to the military functions at a high level.
8. These key individuals along with 60 others were slaughtered at Riblah in cruel, characteristic fashion for conquering forces in that day.

D. A Ray of Hope is Left (52:31-34)

In the thirty-seventh year of his exile, Jehoiachin was shown favor by Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon.

E. EPILOGUE

1. *What A Book!* It echoes the eulogy of the ungodly, vibrates with the vanity of fallen humanity, and repetitiously reminds us that a refusal to repent leads to ruin.
2. *What A Prophet!* No wonder that God saw fit to portray that personality in His precepts!
3. *What A God!* To continue to offer hope after centuries of rebellion by Israel and Judah spotlights the patience, persistence and providence of God. If anyone ever had a right to be depressed, God did. That God is love (1 John 4:8) should never be questioned in view of the valleys He has entered with degenerate and disobedient disciples, only to extend there a ray of hope, while preparing gates of pearl where His people may enter to walk on streets of gold! Truly, His love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

Mark well then, this remarkable man, Jeremiah; and as the mind lingers appraisingly upon him let the heart's prayer be—

*“Teach me, O Lord, to serve as Thou deservest,
To give, and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil, and not to seek for rest;
To labour and not to ask any reward,
Save only of knowing that I do Thy will.”*

Jeremiah would smilingly say, “That spirit and sentiment will sustain you and assure success before the Sovereign God, Jehovah, the Almighty!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-FOUR:

- Write a paragraph or tell a friend or fellow-student what you have learned about God from this study.
- Discuss what Jeremiah presented concerning God working with and among nations then and now.

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Study Guide

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Dayton Keesee was an instructor in the Sunset School of Preaching (now Sunset International Bible Institute) from 1967 until he left to become a local preacher in Oklahoma in the mid-nineteen eighties. He served as a missionary to Nigeria for several years before coming to Sunset. He has also made several teaching tours to India and has paid brief visits to several other countries.

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