

Jeremiah

Length of the book and Duration of Prophecy.

Second only to Isaiah, Jeremiah is one of the longest books in the major prophets. If we add his Lamentations, Jeremiah has more material than even Isaiah.

| | Chapters | Pages |
|-----------------|----------|-------|
| 1. Isaiah | 66 | 61 |
| 2. Jeremiah | 52 | 57 |
| 3. Lamentations | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Ezekiel | 48 | 45 |
| 5. Daniel | 12 | 15 |

His book is a compilation of historical events, prophecies to Judah and the nations, and his own life's story. While most of the prophets personal life is left in obscurity, Jeremiah's long journey is captured in great detail. His work spanned 5 kings and covered over 40 years.

Josiah was **eight years old** when he became king, and he reigned **thirty-one years** in Jerusalem. **Jehoahaz** son of Josiah was **23 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **3 months** in Jerusalem. **Jehoiakim** was **25 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **eleven years** in Jerusalem. **Jehoiachin** was **8 years old** when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem **3 months and 10 days**. **Zedekiah** was **21 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **11 years** in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:1; 36:1-3; 5; 9-10; 11-13; 36:1-3

If we add the 31 years of Josiah, the 3 months of Jehoahaz, the 11 years of Jehoiakim, the 3 months and 10 days of Jehoiachin, and the 11 years of Zedekiah, we get 53 years, six months and ten days. If we subtract the first 12 years of Josiah's reign (Jeremiah started his 13th year), then Jeremiah prophesied for about 41 years.

Since he spoke of being but youth, he is possibly around 20. He would have been in his 60's when Jerusalem was captured and destroyed. Many of the worst things that happened to Jeremiah occurred during the reign of Zedekiah when he was in his 50's.

Jeremiah was called to preach harsh sermons of rebuke to hardened and wicked men who did not want to hear the message God commanded him to preach. He was persecuted, not only with scorn and threats of death, but also with the physical torment of being arrested, imprisoned, and left to suffer in the mud.

Jeremiah's Call

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Jer 1:4-5

We know from Isaac and Jacob, that God selects people before they are born to fulfill certain tasks for Him. Others appear to be chosen based on their ability to fulfill a specific task (Noah, Moses, and Job). Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul seem to fall in between. They were given very important tasks that required freewill, faith, and fidelity to God and His word. With so many failures and unfaithfulness on the part of God's people, one wonders how God knew before birth that they would in fact remain faithful.

Yet, it seems this is not such an unusual occurrence. God knows "all our ways" and the days fashioned for us are already known before we are born.

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in

Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were Ps 139:1-3; 15-16

This does not interfere with our freewill and choice. God doesn't force anyone to serve or remain faithful. Since God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, there is no partiality with God, and He is not a respecter of persons, there is no favoritism being shown. Everyone gets the same opportunity and will receive the same reward.

What God said to Jeremiah, infers preparation and possibly ability. God may have given to Jeremiah those qualities necessary or chose him because He knew he would have them. God may have allowed those things necessary for Jeremiah to be intelligent and patient, through the combination of genes or he may have chosen him because he already had these things. God may have allowed Jeremiah to be raised with the important opportunities for spiritual education, or He may have chosen him because he knew he would have them by time and chance. Clearly God chose him because He knew he was going to be the perfect fit for what God needed to be done. It is just perplexing to see it was all done before conception.

Paul's similar statements create the same questions.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, Gal 1:15-16

The ordaining and separating occurred long before they were prepared to do the work. These are mysteries beyond our ability to understand. Many who don't understand it place God into the position of forcing them to do His will. Yet the Scriptures never teach this. It is much more profound that God can do this without hindering man's will and choice.

Jeremiah's Response

Jeremiah's response is not an unusual one. Most people when considering a great task God wants done feel their unworthiness.

Then said I: "Ah, LORD God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." Jer 1:6

This is humility and respect and fear of falling short, not doubt or lack of faith. Moses started with similar misgivings of being unable to communicate well enough to be God's spokesman. Jeremiah was afraid he was unprepared, and was expressing this fear to God. Even today we struggle with such concerns. Mordecai's comment to Esther helps us answer our own concerns.

And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Est 4:13-14

When an opportunity to perform some service to God arises, we look to God's providence and expectations and not to our own weaknesses. God needed someone to deliver Israel from the king's edict and Mordecai knew it. He also saw that Esther was in the perfect position to bring that deliverance. Her lack of faith or fear of speaking would only lead to her own fall. Yet this was her moment of destiny. She had in fact come into the kingdom for such a time as this.

God's Answer(1): Comfort

God's answer to Jeremiah comes in many different parts. The first is a verbal assurance, the second is an act on God's part that gave Jeremiah inspiration, the third was authority, then came visions. The assurance is to give comfort.

But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD. Jer 1:7-8

There is no rebuke here. God simply explained to Jeremiah why he should feel no fear about his youth and inexperience. Read in context it is actually elaborating on what God wanted him to do and comforting Jeremiah that He will be with him and deliver him. Just as Moses believed he could not speak well, and Jeremiah felt his was too young. God had answered Moses:

So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." Ex 4:11-12

Subsequent events proved both Moses and Jeremiah were not only the best, but the only ones who were prepared to do what God asked. God answered Jeremiah in a similar way. You don't have to come up with any words, all you have to do is give them my commands and I will deliver you from whatever problems this creates.

God's Answer(2): Competence:

The second part of God's answer to Jeremiah's concern of inexperience was to remove it.

Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth." Jer. 1:9

This is one of the clearest descriptions of inspiration. We don't know exactly how God touched his mouth. Perhaps it was a vision like that of Isaiah.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Isa 6:6-7

Perhaps there was some tangible sign as there was with the apostles.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:2-4

However it was done, God first gave him inspiration so that His words were directly from God.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son Heb. 1:1-2

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21

From that moment, Jeremiah was no longer the one speaking. He spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained exactly how this is done.

But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Matt 10:19-20

Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. Lk. 21:14-15

Jeremiah no longer need worry about what he was to say. God would give him exactly what he needed to say and give him a wisdom far beyond the wisest sinner in the midst of Judah.

God's Answer(3): Authority

The third part of God's answer was to give him authority. Not only would God give him the words he would speak, but then God would use His own power to bring about those words. Imagine how Jeremiah must have felt. Here is a young man who is very aware of his youth and inexperience. God appears to him and tells him I have given you inspiration, I will deliver you from all adversaries, and I will use my own authority and power to bring about everything you say, not only to Judah, but to all nations on earth.

See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant." Jer 1:10

God's Answer(4): Visions

God then gave Jeremiah two visions. **The first is an almond branch(staff)**. Since only the term

“almond” is supplied what manifestation of the tree is based on the translators. The ASV and NASB have “a rod of an almond-tree.” and the KJV and ESV have “a branch of an almond tree.

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." 12 Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

The definition of “almond” is very helpful to understanding this passage.

šāqad (... watch, wake; (šāqēd) almond tree, almonds. ... šāqad has cognates in both Phoenician and Syriac. ... occasionally overlaps, and is used with, šāmar, "guard, " "watch over." In the latter the emphasis is on careful attention and preserving, while in , alertness is basic. Used in Qal and Pual, the latter in participial form only. The idea of watchfulness which is basic to the root affords the key to the explanation of the Hebrew name for the almond tree. This tree, which in Israel blooms as early as January and February and is affectionately looked upon as the harbinger of spring, is appropriately enough called šāqēd " "the waker." ... This name for the almond forms the basis for God's vivid object lesson on the occasion of Jeremiah's call (Jer :-). The almond rod, shaped, is a reminder to Jeremiah that God will be watchful and punctual, shoqed, in carrying out what he has promised. (TDWOT OT:3⁴³)

noun [masculine] almond (-tree) (Late Hebrew id.; so called from its early waking out of winter's sleep, (BDB OT:3⁴³)

Thus God gave this first vision to show that his being chosen is like the first blossoms of an almond tree.

The second vision is of a rapidly boiling pot. This time God Himself explains the reason for this vision. The time for judgment has come and the pot is already boiling with it. We later learn that Babylon is now being called and will soon be on the scene.

And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north." 14 Then the Lord said to me: "Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the Lord; Jer. 1:11-15

Jeremiah’s call is 12 years into Josiah’s 31 year reign and Nebuchadnezzar arrived to take Daniel and his friends in the third year of Jehoiakim. Hence in 19 years(remainder of Josiah) and 3 years of Jehoikims reign is **22 years**.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. Dan 1:1-2

As God had told Habbakuk,

"Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. Hab. 1:5-6

Truly the pot is now boiling

Jeremiah - 2

Review

His work spanned 5 kings and covered over 40 years.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|----------|
| Josiah | <u>31 years</u> | Jeremiah Began in 13 th Year | 19 Years |
| Jehoahaz | <u>0.25 year</u> | | 19.25 |
| Jehoiakim | <u>11 years</u> | | 30.25 |
| Jehoiachin | <u>0.25 years</u> | | 30.5 |
| Zedekiah | <u>11 years</u> | | 41.5 |

Jeremiah's Call & Humble Response

*Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; **Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.**" Jer 1:4-5*

*Then said I: "Ah, LORD God! **Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.**" Jer 1:6*

God's Answer(1): Comfort - (I will compensate for your youth)

*But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' **For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.** 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, **For I am with you to deliver you,**" says the LORD. Jer 1:7-8*

God's Answer(2): Competence - (I have put My words in your mouth - Inspiration)

*Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "**Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.**" Jer. 1:9*

God's Answer(3): Authority - (I have set you over the nations)

*See, I have this day **set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.**" Jer 1:10*

God's Answer(4): Visions

(Almond - "early waking" "the waker" - Jeremiah's call is the awakening of God's Wrath – ready to be poured out on the nation).

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." 12 Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

(A Boiling Pot - "All preparations are now set – fire set; water gathered & now boiling)

*And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "**I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north.**" 14 Then the Lord said to me: "**Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land.** 15 For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the Lord; Jer. 1:11-15*

God's Answer(5): A Warning and a Choice

The commands have been given and the assurances and abilities are set in place. The authority to do the work and the very nature of the work has been outlined. Now, it is up to the free-will choices of Jeremiah. God offers two paths for him. If he allows the nature of the work to trouble him and he is too dismayed to do the work, then God will do the very thing to him.

*"Therefore **prepare yourself and arise,** And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them. Jer 1:17*

The translation "prepare yourself" is unfortunate. The literal translation is found in the ASV.

Gird up Thy Loins

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

This is both an actual event and also became an idiom. It's first use occurred as God warned Israel to eat their first Passover with their loins girded, prepared to leave.

*And thus shall ye eat it: **with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand**; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's Passover. Ex. 12:11*

Throughout the Old Testament it was used of preparation to run, go quickly, and have the mind ready to work.

*and the hand of Jehovah was on Elijah; and **he girded up his loins, and ran** before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. 1Kings 18:46*

*Then he said to Gehazi, **Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way**: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. 2 Kings 4:29*

*And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said unto him, **Gird up thy loins, and take this vial of oil in thy hand**, and go to Ramoth-gilead. 2Kings 9:1*

***Gird up now thy loins like a man**; For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Job 38:3*

***Gird up thy loins now like a man**: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 8 Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified? Job 40:7-8*

*She **girdeth her loins with strength**, And maketh strong her arms. Pr. 31:17*

*1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. ... 5 And **righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins**. Isa. 11:1, 5*

Jesus used it as a warning to his disciples of how they are to be working for Him, and how they view the time from their conversion to His return.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; 36 and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Lk. 12:35-36

Finally Paul and Peter use it to describe the efforts Christians must put forth in preparation to work to gain truth and to prepare to understand important doctrines.

*Stand therefore, **having girded your loins with truth**, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, Eph. 6:14*

*Wherefore **girding up the loins of your mind**, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1Pet. 1:13*

There is an interesting paradox in the final portion of this verse.

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

Jeremiah is to be prepared mentally and spiritually along with the desire to act physically when the need arose. But there will be a cost. If he is to stand with God, it will lead to a conflict that may lead him to feel "dismayed."

hāṭat: A verb meaning to be shattered, to be dismayed, to dismay, to shatter, to scare. The base meaning is probably breaking or shattering like a bow or of the drought-cracked ground ...OT:2865 ... Figuratively, it refers to **nations shattered by God** (Isa 7:8). It is also used with a intensive and causative meaning **to scare, to terrify, or to dismay** (Isa 30:31). Job said that **God terrified him with dreams** (Job 7:14)" (Complete Word Study Dictionary OT; 2865)

Shattering, fear, and dismay have come to Judah. As the one who brings these tidings, Jeremiah will seek to create these emotions to bring repentance. Yet often instead of repentance, it creates the desire to shatter the one who brings the message. God is warning Jeremiah that he must focus on his relationship with God, and not the people of Judah. If he allows their emotional responses to shatter him, then he will become just like them as disobedient to God. God will then be forced to shatter Jeremiah in their presence since he too had become rebellious. If he wants to come out victorious, he must continue to stand with God, regardless of the response of the sinners.

God's Answer(5): Assurance & Guaranteed Victory

The final portion of God's answer to Jeremiah's concerns over his youth assure him of victory.

For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land — Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you." Jer. 1:17-19

First, God revealed that Jeremiah was even then a fortified city with iron pillars and bronze walls. No one would be able to prevail against him. A very similar promise was made to Joshua and later to us.

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Josh. 1:5

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6

As long as Jeremiah remains faithful to God's Word, he will be protected. No one, not kings, princes, priests of any of thye people of Israel can prevail against God, or those God sends.

Yet, Jeremiah is again warned. They will fight against you. Although ultimate victory is assured, the fighting will be fierce and have withered many a servant of God's hope. Only ultimate victory is assured, not life.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:35-39

Chronology

Although chronology is very important to the accuracy of our historical documents, God does not always concern Himself with it. Jeremiah is a book that sometimes goes in line with historical times, but at other times, God will skip to bring up the points that He wants His people to see even though it doesn't follow chronologically. Thus one chapter will see us in Josiah's reign and another in Zedekiah's, and the next chapter might be Jehoichin.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, Jer. 21:1

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: Jer. 22:18

We must be cautious when reading and seek to get the proper chronology as much as we can.

Jeremiah Begins His Work

The heart of the message Jeremiah was to take to Jerusalem(and all Judah) is recorded in the first few chapters.

"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. Jer 2:2

"What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters? Jer 2:5

I brought you into a bountiful country, To eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land And made My heritage an abomination. 8 The priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' And those who handle the law did not know Me; "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the Lord, "And against your children's children I will bring charges. Jer 2:7-8

Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. Jer 2:11

'For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jer 2:13

'In vain I have chastened your children; They received no correction. Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion. Jer 2:30

Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord. Jer 3:20

"If you will return, O Israel," says the Lord, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. Jer 4:1

For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth, Lament and wail. For the fierce anger of the Lord Has not turned back from us. 9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord, "That the heart of the king shall perish, And the heart of the princes; The priests shall be astonished, And the prophets shall wonder." Jer 4:8-9

Jeremiah - 3

Introduction/Review

God called Jeremiah as a “youth” and promised to help him become the seasoned prophet who could handle all that God would ask of him. He began with revelation that Jeremiah was to preach to the people. The sermon(s) in the first few chapters are harsh rebukes. Judgment is now upon them and God wanted them to hear it. Yet it was also for Jeremiah. Jeremiah too had to heed the words he was preaching and follow them.

Jeremiah’s Youth and Lack of Experience Caused him to Doubt

After preaching these things, Jeremiah became concerned. What he was preaching was far different from the other prophets in that day. In his youth, Jeremiah had believed what they were saying and therefore brought it to God.

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart." Jer 4:10

To fully understand Jeremiah’s misunderstandings we have to remember that he began preaching in Josiah’s 13th year. Remember that Josiah was only 8 years old when he began his reign. Although he began to seek God in his 8th year, it was not until the 12th year that he started purging Judah and Jerusalem.

***Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images** 2Chr. 34:1-3*

While this continued for many years, they did not find the book of the Law until his 18th year.

***In the eighteenth year of his, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. ... 14 Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.** 2Chr. 34:8-9, 14*

Hence was called right in the midst of Josiah’s reforms. Evidently, having this good king had given the prophets and people a false sense of security. They believed that because Josiah was doing all the right things, it would move down to the people. So Jeremiah is convinced that this is a time of a spiritual reawakening and the prophets were preaching God’s true feelings.

God showed Jeremiah the full extent of Judah’s Wickedness

God then gave Jeremiah a commission. Were these people truly deceived into thinking all would be well with them? Had the prophets really been sent by God to comfort and promise them peace? Jeremiah knew the Law. Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

*"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 **the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.** Deut. 11:26-29*

If Jeremiah can find people who are serving the Lord, then truly Jeremiah’s concerns would have some merit. God does not give a difficult task. He wants Jeremiah to find a single man. Yet there is a deeper purpose. It is for Jeremiah to “see now and know.”

***"Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places if you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her. 2 Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' Surely they swear falsely."** Jer. 5:1-2*

God wanted someone who executed judgment and sought the truth. People who went to His law for their decisions. Yet God warned him. Don't just listen to their words and even their oaths for they swear falsely. Evidently Josiah was excluded from this quest.

As Jeremiah began this quest it is difficult to see clearly whether he was optimistic or filled with doubt. His own youthful experience had led him to his words above, but God's answer had revealed the truth to him. Sadly the first part of his quest led to failure. He could find none among the poor who were penitent or would accept God's rebuke.

*O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? **You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return.** 4 Therefore I said, "**Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.**" Jer. 5:3-4*

The great men were in contact with Josiah and were actually responsible for carrying out his reforms. Surely among them he would find someone. Yet he is still unable to grasp the full extent. He still believes among the great and wise he might find one. But even among these men, the outward submission to Josiah had not reached their hearts.

I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God." But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds. Jer. 5:5

This completed Jeremiah's initial training. He had preached the inspired truth of God's anger and wrath that was to be poured out upon them. Although initially Jeremiah did not feel that these words were fair and just since the other prophets were preaching blessings and mercy, he now understood that these people were fully wicked and ripe for God's judgment.

God Answers Jeremiah's Concern

Now that Jeremiah understands the extent of their wickedness God had fully answered his earlier concerns.

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart." Jer. 4:10

God first described the prophets Jeremiah had in which expressed so much confidence. They were liars when they made such prophesy. They were just wind. God had never spoken to them about any of this.

They have lied about the Lord, And said, "It is not He. Neither will evil come upon us, Nor shall we see sword or famine. 13 And the prophets become wind, For the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them." Jer. 5:12-13

The condemnation did not fall exclusively upon the prophets. The people loved what these prophets were doing and the message they were bringing. It was both astonishing and horrible that this could be, so in that sense, Jeremiah was justified in his concern. Such things ought not to be.

"An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? Jer.5:30-31

A Change in Jeremiah

After his search and God's words in Chapter Five, Jeremiah is a changed man. He now sees the people clearly and his attitude reflects it. First, there is no one to preach to, since no one wants to hear. Their ears are not circumcised and thus can't give heed to God's will. Because of their sins, the Word of the Lord is only a reproach so they cannot delight in it since it only brings condemnation.

To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it. 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall

be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days. Jer. 6:10-11

While some see only the Lord speaking, it is much more probable that Jeremiah expresses that he is now completely with the Lord on this. He too is filled with fury! He can see how wicked the people are and that there is no remedy so He is now going to preach boldly and clearly.

One of the reasons for this fury both in God and Jeremiah is the covetousness of the people and the prophets who are exploiting it.

*Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. 14 **They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace. 15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the Lord. Jer. 6:13-15***

God also revealed the utter and complete rebellion of His people. It was not ignorance or weakness, but stiff necked pride and stubbornness. God had tried everything and Israel had rebelled against it. He had made a path and showed them that they could return to it, but they refused it. He gave them watchmen (Josiah and other prophets like Habbakuk and Zephaniah, and they blatantly told God they would not listen to them.

*Thus says the Lord: "**Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'** 17 Also, **I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'** Jer. 6:16-17*

The hypocrisy of both the prophets and the people is what had led to the paradox and contradiction Jeremiah had seen.

While His people would not hear, He spoke to the earth itself. As Saul before them, they thought that sacrifices could make up for any rebellion.

*So Samuel said: "**Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."** 1Sam. 15:22-23*

Yet God again made it clear that no amount of sacrifice or worship could make up for rebellion. , but God said

***Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people — The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words Nor My law, but rejected it. 20 For what purpose to Me Comes frankincense from Sheba, And sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me."** Jer. 6:19-20*

God then told Jeremiah that his role as a prophet would be to test them just as an assayer does silver. His preaching would work like the bellows and fire. Yet it would all be vain. For they are all "stubborn rebels, slanderers, corrupters. No matter how harsh his sermons, the wicked cannot be skimmed off the top and purity remains. After the wicked are drawn off, nothing remains.

***"I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people, That you may know and test their way. 28 They are all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. They are bronze and iron, They are all corrupters; 29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; The smelter refines in vain, For the wicked are not drawn off. 30 People will call them rejected silver, Because the Lord has rejected them."** Jer. 6:27-30*

Now, both God and Jeremiah are in fellowship. Jeremiah feels as God feels toward the people and Jeremiah now understands the people he has been sent to work with. He will preach with zeal and love, but it will make no difference. When he has completed his duty as assayer, there will be nothing less. Yet as God told Ezekiel, there are two purposes for a prophet.

*"As for you, son of man, the children of **your people are talking about you** beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please **come***

and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.' 31 So they **come to you** as people do, they **sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them;** for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. 32 **Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument;** for they **hear your words, but they do not do them.** 33 And when this comes to pass — surely it will come — **then they will know that a prophet has been among them.** Ezek. 33:30-33

Jeremiah's Sermon in the Temple

Jeremiah is now prepared both by experience and understanding to begin his work. As noted above, chronology is difficult to determine, but since it is placed here, we will consider it as what God wanted Jeremiah to do now that he understands the people he has been sent to help.

He is sent to the temple and stand at the gate. If this is a normal day, he will be speaking to those in Jerusalem who were among the most spiritually minded. If he is speaking during one of the great feast days, then the audience would be multitudes from all over Judah.

His message (which he now believes with all his heart), is to repent of their deeds and no longer rely on the lying words of the prophet. The temple is only of value if the people are faithful. If not it is only a structure.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!'" 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: **"Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'** Jer. 7:1-4

The sermon also had exhortations. They still have an opportunity. Even at this late date, God would relent if they showed remorse, repentance and the fruits of repentance.

"For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, 6 if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Jer. 7:5-7

Jeremiah then speaks to them of the fruits of the "lying words" that were being proclaimed by their prophets. How could they believe they could violate 5 of the ten commandments and still be pleasing to God. Yet that would have to be the case if these prophets are right. Do they really believe they could violate all this and then come to stand before God in the temple? Do they really think God would continue to deliver them so they could keep right on sinning?

"Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'?" 11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord. Jer. 7:8-11

God reminds them of a similar event in their history. From their entrance into the promised land until Samuel's birth, the tabernacle was at Shiloh. Yet due to the wickedness of Eli's sons, the ark was taken from Shiloh to help fight in their fight against the Philistines. It was captured and returned to Israel, but never did it return to Shiloh. He reminds them of these historical facts. God can indeed forsake his people in their hour of need and allow the place where his tabernacle stood to be forsaken. Because of their wickedness, what had happened before was about to happen again.

"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the Lord, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren — the whole posterity of Ephraim. Jer 7:12-15

Whether this is part of his proclamation, or only God's instructions to Jeremiah is impossible to

determine. It would certainly have an impact on these people to hear them. Jeremiah is no longer to pray for Israel. God will not hear any prayers offered up for the blessings or needs of these people. The evil of their rebellion is seen in the entire family. The children gather the wood, the fathers light the fire and the women knead the dough for the "queen of heaven." The commentaries and encyclopedias have only guesses and surmises of who this would be. The moon, Venus, a constellation are put forth, coming from Assyria or Persia. What we do see here is a complete devotion to an idol while they turn their back on God, thus provoking him to anger and shaming their own faces.

*"Therefore **do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you.** 17 Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The **children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven;** and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may **provoke Me to anger.** 19 Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the Lord. "Do they not provoke themselves, **to the shame of their own faces?"** Jer 7:16-19*

God returns to the terrible misunderstanding that has plagued so many. What they do in the temple, and what sacrifices they bring to honor God are insignificant in comparison to obedience. They act as though all that was learned at Sinai was to offer burnt offerings and eat the meat. God is clear! In comparison to obedience and submission, God didn't even speak about burnt offerings.

Burnt offerings were offered in nearly every generation, but submission and obedience seldom were seen. Israel had gone backward and not forward. They preferred the counsels and dictates of their own evil hearts. Even the prophets strong denunciations hand not checked them and they were doing even worse than their fathers.

*Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, '**Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.**' 24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.** 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. Jer. 7:21-26*

As God sends him forth with this message, He warns him again. You shall speak all these words in obedience to me, but do not expect anything from the people. They will not obey you.

*"Therefore **you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you.** You shall also **call to them, but they will not answer you.** Jer. 7:27*

Jeremiah 4 - Descent into Sorrow

Review:

Innocence: The book of Jeremiah began with his innocence. When God asked him to work as a prophet, Jeremiah's concerns were in his own inability to do the work. After God encouraged and explained how He would help him, all Jeremiah's concerns were removed and he prepared to do the work.

Doubt and Concern: It appears in the beginning that Jeremiah thought he would take his place with the other prophets and they would all work together with Josiah to continue reforming the people. He first suspects a problem when his message contradicts that of all the other prophets. He does not rebuke God, but begins to doubt that his message could be the right one as it seems it makes all the prophets into liars.

*Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Surely **You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem**, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart." Jer 4:10*

Zeal and Hope: God then Gave Jeremiah a commission that he was eager to fulfill.

*"Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places if you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her. 2 Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' Surely **they swear falsely**." Jer. 5:1-2*

He was so convinced that this would not be a difficult task that even when he could find no one among the poor and unlearned, he still expected to find them among the great men that were working with Josiah to purge Judah of idolatry.

*O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? **You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return. 4 Therefore I said, "Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.** Jer. 5:3-4*

I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God." But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds. Jer. 5:5

Dawning of the Truth: Slowly the true reality of what his work was to be became clear. Far from working with other prophets for the good of the people, Jeremiah would stand against these false prophets with no help whatsoever from the people. God's earlier words must have become much clearer to him at this moment. He would stand with God, but alone against all the people.

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

*For behold, I have made you this day **A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls** against the whole land — **Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land.** 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you." Jer. 1:17-19*

Anger and Fury: His first emotion after the shock was to become angry.

*To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed **their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.** 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days. Jer. 6:10-11*

Sorrow and Mourning

After another sermon preached to the people, his sorrow and anguish over the condition of the people begins to come to the forefront. He can now see the end has come. The preparing, sowing, and reaping has already been done and even the harvest is complete. Yet though everything has been done the people are not saved.

I would comfort myself in sorrow; My heart is faint in me. 19 Listen! The voice, The cry of the daughter of my people From a far country: "Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?" "Why have they provoked Me to anger With their carved images — With foreign idols?" 20 "The harvest is past, The summer is ended, And we are not saved!" 21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; Astonishment has taken hold of me. 22 Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery For the health of the daughter of my people? Jer 8:18-22

Jeremiah's heart is filled with great sorrow. He is hurt, mourning and astonished. There is nothing to soothe his pain and nothing to cure the people. As he looks out at the deaths of the innocent people (they did not deserve to die for their conduct, only for their rebellion against God. We face similar issues today. As we hear of multitudes who are dying without God because of the wickedness of men. Truly it is judgment, but one we wish would could have helped them avert.

He wants to leave these people and no longer witness their wickedness and evil.

Oh, 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! 2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men. Jer 9:1-2

One of the often quoted passages from Jeremiah are words of wisdom from our Creator about what He wants to see within our hearts.

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. Jer 9:23-24

Another well known passage are words from Jeremiah. After seeing the wickedness of Judah, Jeremiah recognizes that he too has sin in his life. He fully understands that it is not in any man to direct his steps and that only by following God's path can any hope be found. Yet even then, every man needs correction, yet having seen the wrath of God being poured out on his people, Jeremiah pleads for justice and mercy.

O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. 24 O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing. Jer 10:23-24

God Reveals A Plot

Jeremiah was doing his work, still hoping for a change in heart when God revealed the men in his own hometown were plotting to take his life. Jeremiah was completely taken off guard as such an idea never occurred to him.

Now the LORD gave me knowledge of it, and I know it; for You showed me their doings. 19 But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes 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 may be remembered no more." Jer 11:18-19

Jeremiah now understands and begins praying and speaking as God has since the beginning. He seeks God's vengeance upon them. God immediately grants the prayer, promising to punish them for this sin.

But, O LORD of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause. 21 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand' — 22 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; 23 and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, even the year of their punishment.'" Jer. 11:20-23

Jeremiah becomes Impatient

Although we can't see the full extent of it in the words, God's answer revealed that Jeremiah has passed into an area of danger and temptation. His bitterness and anger have begun to work in his mind. While he begins with his faith in God's righteousness, he then begins to question how God was going about things. While he had been more than patient and wanted God to be also, now he seeks immediate punishment. He sees the terrible circumstances that he is in and the prosperity and ease of those who are persecuting him. He doesn't understand why it should be like this. Jeremiah's thoughts seem to focus on one of their own words against him.

Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? 2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth But far from their mind. 3 But You, O Lord, know me; You have seen me, And You have tested my heart toward You. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, And prepare them for the day of slaughter. 4 How long will the land mourn, And the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, For the wickedness of those who dwell there, Because they said, "He will not see our final end." Jer 12:1-4

God's answer is a warning. Things are going to get much worse than this. If you can't keep up with those who can run races, what are you going to do against horses. Things are still peaceful now and yet the times are coming when a flood will arrive. These are mere words, their treachery is far deeper even than the words. Their hypocrisy is far deeper than Jeremiah knows. Even his own brothers in the house of his own father have dealt treacherously against him.,

"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the flood plain of the Jordan? 6 For even your brothers, the house of your father, Even they have dealt treacherously with you; Yes, they have called a multitude after you. Do not believe them, Even though they speak smooth words to you. Jer 12:5-6

One of Jeremiah's sermons brings out the lament of Judah for her sins and God's answer. They have asked why and God has fully explained it to them. They have been entrenched in sin even in Egypt. They were so accustomed to doing evil that it would take something impossible to change it. They received exactly what they deserved.

And if you say in your heart, "Why have these things come upon me?" For the greatness of your iniquity Your skirts have been uncovered, Your heels made bare. 23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. 24 "Therefore I will scatter them like stubble That passes away by the wind of the wilderness. 25 This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the Lord, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. Jer 13:22-25

Jeremiah Prays for Judah

After a terrible judgment from the Lord in the form of a terrible drought, Jeremiah's compassion was formed. Two possibilities can explain these words after his anger of the previous chapters. Either they are from an earlier date, or perhaps his compassions were kindled as he witnessed the terrible consequences of God's judgment.

The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts. 2 "Judah mourns, And her gates languish; They mourn for the land, And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. 3 Their nobles have sent their lads for water; They went to the cisterns and found no water. They returned with their vessels empty; They were ashamed and confounded And covered their heads. 4 Because the ground is parched, For there was no rain in the land, The plowmen were ashamed; They covered their heads. 5 Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field, But left because there was no grass. 6 And the wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights; They sniffed at the wind like jackals; Their eyes failed because there was no grass." Jer 14:1-6

These terrible events led Jeremiah to again cry out to God for them.

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. 8 O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble, Why should You be like a stranger in the land, And like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for

a night? 9 Why should You be like a man astonished, Like a mighty one who cannot save? **Yet You, O Lord, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us!** Jer 14:7-9

God again reminded Jeremiah of the wickedness of these people and tells him not to pray for them for He will not hear.

Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins." 11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence." Jer. 14:10-12

Jeremiah again intercedes, this time laying the guilt on the false prophets. Although God agrees with Jeremiah, He simply tells Jeremiah they too will be punished.

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" 14 And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' — 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them — them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters — for I will pour their wickedness on them.' Jer 14:10-16

Even after this answer, Jeremiah again sought to intervene.

Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these. Jer 14:19-22

Yet God is unmoved. He revealed to Jeremiah that even if Moses and Samuel were interceding for them, he would not relent.

Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.'" 3 "And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the Lord: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem." Jer 15:1-4

Jeremiah 5 — An Example of Suffering and Patience

Introduction:

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. James 5:10-11

Though but a youth when called, his faithful spirit and submissive soul were needed by God. The time for all the terrible curses God had warned Israel would occur if they were unfaithful had come. While God took Daniel and Ezekiel to Babylon to continue working with the remnant of “good figs” (Jer. 24:1-8), Jeremiah was left with the “bad figs” doomed to be destroyed. His life would be one of deprivation and sorrow. He would be hated by all men and would gain no tangible results from all his labor except his faithfulness to God. As this truth begins to become obvious to Jeremiah, he is unprepared for it and faltered.

The Truth of His Role

In the midst of a terrible drought, that led to even animals leaving their young to die and great anguish among the people of Judah, Jeremiah pleaded with God for mercy. His tender heart could not bear to look upon the great suffering of both people and animals.

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. ... Yet You, O Lord, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us! Jer. 14:7-9

God revealed that this drought was the just consequence of their conduct and could not be changed. God again reminds Jeremiah that praying for these people is futile. He will not regard their fasting and will not accept their sacrifices. Instead He will continue to bring curses upon them.

Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins." 11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence." Jer. 14:10-12

Yet Jeremiah continued to intercede. He believed that God had the power to do anything and that if he manifested enough godly sorrow and grief on his part he could change God’s mind and bring blessings upon his people. He believed that it was the fault of the false prophets and that God’s wrath should be directed against them.

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" 14 And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' — 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them — them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters — for I will pour their wickedness on them.' Jer. 14:10-16

While God confirmed Jeremiah’s charge against the prophets, and revealed that He would destroy them for their evil, the people could not be absolved of their own guilt. They would die of both famine and sword and no one would bury them. God had already told Jeremiah this truth.

The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? Jer. 5:31

Yet Jeremiah again sought to intervene. It appears that Jeremiah simply couldn’t accept the truth that nothing could help these people. He offered a public confession in their behalf. His godly sorrow and remorse for the circumstances Judah had brought upon itself are powerfully expressed.

He makes some of the same points Moses made after the golden calf.

Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these. Jer. 14:19-22

Yet God was unmoved. He revealed to Jeremiah that even if Moses and Samuel were making the same intercessions He would not relent this time. Jeremiah is given only one message to give to the people: cast them out of My sight. If the people should respond where then should we go, God's terrible answer is all Jeremiah is authorized to give. They will go to death, sword, famine, or captivity. God has created four forms of destruction: (1) Sword to slay; (2) dogs to drag; (3) birds of the heaven to devour and destroy; (4) the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.'" 3 "And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the Lord: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. Jer. 15:1-4

Jeremiah's World Crashes

All that God has said about the future leads Jeremiah to sum up his own bleak circumstances. He speaks in a way similar to that of Job regarding his birth. Jeremiah's life is so difficult that it is a woe to him that he was ever born.

Woe is me, my mother, That you have borne me, A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. Every one of them curses me. Jer. 15:10

His final words about being cursed by all men appear to violate God's warning at the very beginning.

Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be **dismayed** before their faces, Lest I **dismay** you before them. Jer. 1:17

As the dialogue continues, it becomes evident that Jeremiah is in fact "**dismayed**" before them. He begins by asking God to take vengeance on those who are persecuting him.

Jeremiah Prays and Reasons with God:

1. Take vengeance on them.
2. In your patience do not take me away.
3. For your sake I have suffered rebuke.
4. I ate your words and they became the joy and rejoicing of my heart.
5. I did not sit with the mockers nor rejoice.
6. I sat alone because of your hand and was filled with indignation.

O Lord, You know; Remember me and visit me, And **take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. 16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. 17 I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, Nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, For You have filled me with indignation. Jer. 15:15-17**

Jeremiah Charges God

This is Jeremiah's lowest point in the book. At last all hope for the future and all rationalizations of why these things have not yet occurred have been removed. Jeremiah now sees clearly what is ahead. He has been godly and done God's will. He has prayed for the people and had hoped to make some difference for his people. But everyone hates him and now God has told him that not even Moses or Samuel could make a difference.

Up to this point in his work as a prophet, he has done everything God has asked of him and all it has brought him is perpetual pain and an incurable wound that can't be healed. There is no balm in Gilead even for him. Is this how it is to be? Is God going to become just an unreliable stream. Jeremiah comes for refreshment and wants to see God's merciful character and only sees wrath and curses. Will God be waters that fail?

18 Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail? Jer. 15:18

God Demands Repentance

Although we only see the question, God response gives the motive and attitude behind it. With these words it is obvious to God that Jeremiah has left Him and returned to Judah. They were rebellious and now Jeremiah has rejoined them. God warns him that he now needs to return (repent). If he will repent that God will bring him back into fellowship with Him and they will continue to work together as they had previously.

If Jeremiah will remove the vile from all that was precious in his previous words, then Jeremiah will once again be God's mouth. Jeremiah is again warned that in his position there is only one option for him. His work is to get them to return to him as he is in fellowship with God. What must not happen is that Jeremiah returns to the rebellious people and away from God. God then reaffirmed His promise to make Jeremiah a fortified bronze wall (Jer. 1:18-19).

*Therefore thus says the Lord: "If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you **take out the precious from the vile**, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, **But you must not return to them.** 20 And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you," says the Lord. 21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible." Jer. 15:19-21*

We will read of Jeremiah's repentance later in the next chapter. Although his repentance and confession are not recorded in the book, it is obvious from the rest of the book that he did so and their fellowship was restored, since Jeremiah is again God's mouth.

The Full Truth Revealed

Jeremiah has passed through his crisis of discouragement and returned to the Lord. God now believes Jeremiah is ready to bear the entire truth. He must not marry or have children because only gruesome death awaits the entire nation.

*The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, 2 "**You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.**" 3 For thus says the Lord **concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land:** 4 "**They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth.** They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth." Jer. 16:1-4*

Throughout all this terror and anguish, Jeremiah is to remain unmoved. He is not to mourn, lament or bemoan them. Since God has removed not only His peace, but also His lovingkindness and mercy, as His servant, so must Jeremiah rise above his human weaknesses and remain unmoved

Not only is he to refuse to mourn with them, but he must also not feast, sit or eat and drink with them.

*For thus says the Lord: "**Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them; for I have taken away My peace from this people,**" says the Lord, "**lovingkindness and mercies.***

6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. 7 Nor shall men break bread in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother. 8 **Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink.** Jer. 16:5-8

His message is clear. After he reveals these things to the people, if they question him regarding why God has decided that now is the time to do these things, he is to tell them:

(1) Your fathers have forsaken me and followed other Gods. (2) You have done worse than them: (3) you follow the evil dictates of your own heart. (4) No one listens to me

*“And it shall be, **when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?’** 11 then you shall say to them, ‘**Because your fathers have forsaken Me,**’ says the Lord; ‘they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. 12 **And you have done worse than your fathers,** for behold, **each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me.** 13 **Therefore I will cast you out of this land** into a land that you do not know, neither you nor your fathers; and there you shall serve other gods day and night, **where I will not show you favor.’** Jer. 16:10-13*

God again revealed the nature of the people Jeremiah is preaching to, why his preaching is ineffective and why God cannot be moved to forgive them. Their sin has been engraved with a pen of iron and even harder, the point of a diamond. It has been engraved in their heart and their altars.

*“**The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; With the point of a diamond it is engraved On the tablet of their heart, And on the horns of your altars,** 2 **While their children remember Their altars and their wooden images By the green trees on the high hills.**” Jer. 17:1-2*

God also reveals the difficulty of anyone knowing such a heart. Even the most godly of men face this difficulty. There is so much lust, pride and temptation in the heart of each person that who can really know what they are truly made of? One moment, faithful service to God the next, giving in to lust and temptation. Who is the real person? Which one more accurately reveals our true character. While everyone believes they are a good person, God has created the means to test the heart

*“**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.**” Jer. 17:9-10*

Throughout the Scriptures we see these tests. God tested Abraham, then tested Israel by the way he revealed the instructions on how they were to gather the manna. He tested the ancient word with the ark Noah built and tests men today with the gospel and the commands such a baptism the way we respond to those tests reveals the true nature of our heart that will be manifested on the judgment day.

Jeremiah’s remorse and repentance along with his plea to God that he might be saved. He seeks healing and salvation. He wants his heart to reveal his faithfulness to God. While others are scoffing at his warnings, he is seeking to humbly serve God. He pleads with God not to be a terror to him as He will be to the others in Judah. God is Jeremiah’s only hope from the coming doom.

***Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my praise. 15 Indeed they say to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now!” 16 As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows You, Nor have I desired the woeful day; You know what came out of my lips; It was right there before You. 17 Do not be a terror to me; You are my hope in the day of doom.**” Jer. 17:14-17*

Jeremiah 6

Review:

While young, Jeremiah was assured by God that he was capable of doing the work of a prophet.

- ▲ As began his work, he had high expectations of results, but his message was so different that Jeremiah asked God why He had deceived the people with the other prophets(Jer. 4).
- ▲ He then learned the truth. In the midst of great reforms by Josiah, all the prophets were liars, and all the people were wicked and evil sinners. Jeremiah could not find one good man in their midst.
- ▲ Jeremiah then moved closer to God's own feelings, filled with fury, he became the assayer: By his preaching he would test their way(Jer. 6).
- ▲ Jeremiah began to mourn over the destruction and loss of his people(Jer. 8).
- ▲ A plot to destroy him was revealed by God but God promises vengeance. (Jer. 11)
- ▲ Jeremiah became discouraged and God encouraged him(Jer. 12).
- ▲ A drought returned compassion to Jeremiah and he pleaded with God. God again told him not to pray for them. He also warned: not even Moses or Samuel could change His mind(Jer. 14-15)
- ▲ Jeremiah cursed his birth because everyone curses him and charged God with being an unreliable stream. God demands repentance and Jeremiah repents(Jer 15)
- ▲ God commanded Jeremiah not to marry or have children. He was not to mourn or lament them(Jer. 16).

After all this, Jeremiah is now a seasoned prophet who no longer charged God but understands the wickedness of the people and the righteousness of God's decisions. He now begins to pleading with God for strength and that God's providence will protect him. Those who persecute him will be ashamed, but Jeremiah wants to live in such a way that he doesn't need to be ashamed. He is now speaking as the oracles of God. He repeats God's warning given at the beginning and again after his unadvised speech about God being a deceitful brook.

Let them be ashamed who persecute me, But do not let me be put to shame; Let them be dismayed, But do not let me be dismayed. Bring on them the day of doom, And destroy them with double destruction! Jer. 17:18

God offered Judah Another Opportunity to Repent and be Saved

Jeremiah is again sent to the gates to preach to the people. This time it is the gates to the city of Jerusalem and not to the temple. God wanted a different audience. Instead of those going to worship He wants those involved in commerce within the city to hear His words about the Sabbath. Specifically He wants the kings to hear these words. God warned them they were acting just as their fathers in refusing to keep it.

*Thus the Lord said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; 20 and **say to them,** 'Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21 Thus says the Lord: "**Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22 nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.** 23 But **they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction. Jer. 17:19-23***

Jeremiah is to offer them an opportunity to flee and avoid the coming judgment. This sermon would again reveal both to Jeremiah and the people the true nature of their deceitful heart. If they would listen carefully to God's command, God would spare them. Kings and princes will again enter the gates and the city will remain forever. But if they won't heed. Then an unquenchable fire will come and devour.

"And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the Lord, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. 26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the

mountains and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the Lord. 27 **"But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."** Jer. 17:24-27

The Potter's Wheel

While most of us have heard this "parable," it is important to see it in its full context. It was given immediately after the offer above, as a tool for Jeremiah to use as he spoke to the people. He was sent to the potters house to watch him work. Jeremiah witnessed the potter having to change his plans for the object he was making because that object was marred and damaged. He simply used the same clay to change it into another vessel over which he had full control.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Jer. 18:1-4

No one even thought about the principles since they are so obvious. The clay had no rights and no say. It was all within the will of the potter. Paul used this same principle to explain how God works with individuals as well as nations.

*But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 **Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?** 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, Rom. 9:20-24*

After God showed Jeremiah, He gave him the message He was to deliver to the people. God was a potter over Judah, just as this potter was over clay.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!" Jer. 18:5-6

God wanted it understood, that not only Judah, but all the nations under heaven were also under this same control. God's plans are based on two things. His own sovereign will, and the conduct of the nations. He makes plans, but those plans are in flux always based on the attitudes of the people in the nations. If His plan is to destroy and they repent, he will relent. If His plans are to bless, if the nation grows wicked, He will again relent of all the good He planned to do.

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jer. 18:7-10

After revealing all this, God returns to the same message that had been offered at the gates for the kings in the previous chapter. If you want to save Judah from destruction, you must repent and return to the Lord. If you do not then you will be destroyed.

"Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.'" Jer. 18:11

There response offers an amazing insight into the consequences of sin. It had hardened them to a degree where they rejected God's offer. It is hopeless! Everyone will obey the dictates of his evil heart.

And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every

one obey the dictates of his evil heart." Jer.18:12

The People Attack Jeremiah

Since they do not like the message, they attack the messenger. They do not want to hear these things anymore. Their proverb is a good one, but their application is evil folly. They know that as long as Jeremiah is in their midst, he will continue to preach repentance and obedience. So their answer is to discourage him with their response.

Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." Jer.18:18

Jeremiah again pleads with God. But instead of mercy and forgiveness, he seek vengeance. It is interesting how people's attitudes can change when it becomes personal. The people were the same people as the ones enduring the drought in chapter 14. There, Jeremiah sought mercy, but now when he sees the depth of their wickedness, he seeks the same end as God.

*Give heed to me, O Lord, And listen to the voice of those who contend with me! 20 **Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I stood before You To speak good for them, To turn away Your wrath from them.** 21 **Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, And pour out their blood By the force of the sword; Let their wives become widows And bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, Their young men be slain By the sword in battle.** 22 **Let a cry be heard from their houses, When You bring a troop suddenly upon them; For they have dug a pit to take me, And hidden snares for my feet.** 23 **Yet, Lord, You know all their counsel Which is against me, to slay me. Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight; But let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them In the time of Your anger.** Jer.18:19-23*

God immediately sends Jeremiah out to preach again. He again chooses a potters vessel(probably to remind them of the potter's wheel). This time he is to call the elders of the priests and people, to proclaim doom upon them.

Thus says the Lord: "Go and get a potter's earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. 2 And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle." Jer.19:1-3

"Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury." Jer.19:10-12

Since the people have firmly rejected Jeremiah, and the Word of God he proclaimed, why does God continue to send him out to preach? His care and concern for the people was too great to simply give them one warning. He gives them multiple warnings even at the cost of his prophets life.

Jeremiah is Beaten and Placed in the Stocks

After Jeremiah finishes prophesying these words, the chief governor in the temple has him beaten. Since he was in the house of the Lord he was a Levite or Priest. Some believe he was just under the High Priest and held authority. By doing this, he was publicly repudiating Jeremiah and his message. He treated him as a criminal because that is how he wanted him portrayed to the people of Judah.

God immediately revealed the terrible consequences to this man because of this deed.

Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the

Lord. 3 And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The Lord has not called your name Pashhur, but Magor-Missabib. 4 For thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see it. I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. 5 Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'" Jer.20:1-6

Jeremiah's Bitter Prayer

After being beaten and placed in the stocks, Jeremiah is again in anguish of heart and soul. It is important to note that although he is bitter, it is not directed against God, but against his own circumstances. God had induced him to become a prophet in the same way he induced us to become Christians. The will of God is an option for everyone, but Jeremiah recognized the importance of submitting to it. But the cost was far higher than he had anticipated or even imagined. What had begun as emotional and social persecution had then escalated into physical violence and being arrested as a criminal.

He described his own attitudes toward these things. He determined to stop preaching, but could not do it. He doesn't say whether the burning in his bones was his own conscience and sense of duty or some miraculous power from God. But he could not stop preaching no matter what the cost.

O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. 8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder! "Because the word of the Lord was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. 9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name."But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not. 10 For I heard many mocking:"Fear on every side!" "Report," they say, "and we will report it! "All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, "Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him." Jer.20:7-10

Although his circumstances are bleak, he no longer blames God. He is doing God's will and God will bless him. He lays all the fault at the feet of those who are persecuting him and knows that God will deal with it. Yet he is so unhappy he again curses the day of his birth.

But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten. 12 But, O Lord of hosts, You who test the righteous, And see the mind and heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them; For I have pleaded my cause before You. Jer.20:7-12

Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! 15 Let the man be cursed Who brought news to my father, saying, "A male child has been born to you!" Making him very glad. Jer.20:14-15

Nebuchadnezzar Siege Changes Attitudes

When imminent danger arises, the true understanding of Jeremiah's role as a prophet comes to the front. Although they mock him and refuse to believe or listen to him, when things become dire, it is to him they send for help. The wording of the chapter makes it difficult to know if the events in the previous chapter are closely tied to this one. But since their attitudes toward Jeremiah are timeless, it makes little difference.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, saying, 2 "Please inquire of the Lord for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the Lord will deal with us according to all His wonderful works, that the king may go away from us." Jer.21:1-2

The *hubris* of this delegation is amazing. After all Jeremiah has done and said to them and all the

terrible things they have done to him that they came at all was insulting to God. When we add to that the complete lack of repentance or remorse over their own deeds, God's answer is not surprising in the least.

Then Jeremiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 4 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. 5 I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6 I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. Jer.21:3-7

God is not content to only send a message to the King. He also wants Jeremiah to go out and speak to the rest of the people and fully express God's decree that Jerusalem will fall.

"Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9 He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. 10 For I have set My face against this city for adversity and not for good," says the Lord. "It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." Jer.21:8-10

Jeremiah 7

God's Condemnation of the Shepherds(elders) and Prophets

Long before the elders in the church, God's leaders were viewed as the shepherds of His people. He was very angry with the leaders in the days of Jeremiah because they had not cared at all for His people. He would deal with them for their evil deeds. God also promised to gather His scattered flock from all the nations, and set up caring shepherds for them. He dates this time to when His servant David(Jesus) becomes king.

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord. 3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord. 5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: Jer.23:1-6

After condemning the shepherds, God also excoriated the false prophets who had deceived and led to the destruction of His people. This section begins with Jeremiah's own attitude toward these prophets who so greatly hindered his work. It concludes with what God will do to punish them.

My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the Lord, And because of His holy words. 10 For the land is full of adulterers; For because of a curse the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil, And their might is not right. 11 "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the Lord. Jer.23:9-11

God warned the people against the words of those who claim to speak for Him, but instead speak from their own heart. It should be obvious to them when they deny God's own words.

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You shall have peace";' And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" Jer.23:16-17

God then reveals the terrible consequences of false teachers. Their insubordination and lack of reverence are seen in the truth that God never sent or spoke to these prophets. But the true problem lay in a different direction. If they had preached the truth some would have listened and they could have turned them from their evil way.

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. 22 But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings. Jer.23:20-22

The all seeing and every present God now reveals what He has seen. Using their own dreams, these prophets have prophesied lies to His people Israel. In the same way that their fathers had forgotten God for Baal, these were now forgetting God through their dreams. God then gives a stern warning. Tell your dreams and dreams and My word faithfully. God's word is the wheat and their dreams are the chaff. God's word is like fire and like a hammer.

"Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the Lord; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord. 25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, 27 who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers

forgot My name for Baal. 28 "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the Lord. 29 "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Jer.23:23-29

As God summed up His anger at these men, he accused them of "stealing My words from his neighbor." They use their own tongues and call it God's word. They use their false dreams and call it prophesy.

"Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor. 31 Behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.' 32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the Lord, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the Lord. Jer.23:30-32

The Burden of the LORD

God then condemns their use of the term "oracle" or "burden."

massa "load; burden; tribute; delight." The 43 occurrences of this word are scattered throughout the periods of biblical Hebrew. The word means that which is borne by a man, an donkey, a mule, or a camel: "If thou see the donkey of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him..." Ex 23:5 — the first occurrence. ... *Massa* means "burden" in the sense of something burdensome, a hardship. Moses asked God: "...wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" Num 11:11. (Vine's OT:4853)

In Isaiah, God used this term to describe the prophecies concerning the wicked and their doom in the future. Isaiah spoke of the oracle(burden) of Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia, Tyre. It was also how Nahum and Habbakuk began their books. Evidently the false prophets in Jeremiah's day had taken this term as their own and were using it in way that disgusted God. God then warns them that they must never use this phrase again since it had become so perverted.

"So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the oracle of the Lord?' you shall then say to them, 'What oracle?' I will even forsake you," says the Lord. 34 "And as for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' I will even punish that man and his house. 35 Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the Lord answered?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?' 36 And the oracle of the Lord you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God. 37 Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the Lord answered you?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?' 38 But since you say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' therefore thus says the Lord: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the Lord!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the Lord!'" 39 therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and will cast you out of My presence. 40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.'" Jer. 23:33-40

Another Turning Point

The parable of the two baskets of figs was already covered when we spoke of the captivity of Jehoiakim's son, Jeconiah. From Jeremiah's perspective, it is a parable of more difficult times ahead. Those whom Jeremiah had some hope helping were now removed by Nebuchadnezzar by God. Only those in Babylon had any hope for a future. Those now left in the city were doomed.

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. 7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart. 8 'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad' — surely thus says the Lord — 'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9 I will deliver them to

trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers." Jer. 24:5-10

Confronting the Prophets

Jeremiah continues to point out to the king and the people the error of those who were prophesying to them in the name of God. God makes it clear in verse 15, that though He was not responsible for sending them, if these people listen to them, they will bring the curse God had been threatening to send upon themselves. These lies preached by the false prophets would lead God to drive them out and lead them to perish.

I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! 13 Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14 Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon," for they prophesy a lie to you; 15 for I have not sent them," says the Lord, "yet they prophesy a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you." Jer. 27:12-18

Jeremiah's Short Letter to the Captives

Not long after the vision of the good and bad figs, God revealed the words He wants Jeremiah to send to the captives in Babylon. The letter consists of several parts. First, It revealed the length of the captivity He had decreed they would endure. They will remain in Babylon for 70 years. For that reason they are to build homes, marry and have children, and seek the peace of the place of their captivity. They were warned again not to heed the false prophets who were promising a quick return.

Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive — to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. ... 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 **Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. 10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer. 29:1-10**

Second, it made wonderful promises of grace, mercy, and forgiveness. God still had wonderful thoughts for the future of His people.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Third, God again answered their concern regarding the prophets who were still prophesying lies to them.

Because you have said, "The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon" — 16 therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, concerning all the people who dwell in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone out with you into captivity — 17

*thus says the Lord of hosts: **Behold, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like rotten figs that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. 18 And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth — to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, 19 because they have not heeded My words, says the Lord, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; neither would you heed, says the Lord. 20 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. Jer. 29:11-20***

Gods Command to Jeremiah to write his Book

After this short letter, God commands Jeremiah to begin writing the entire book we now have in our possession.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3 For behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'" Jer. 30:1-3

Jeremiah 8 – The Last Days of Jerusalem

Introduction:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. Jer. 32:1-2

Since Zedekiah only reigned 11 years, the end was now very near. Jeremiah was again in prison, when this vision came to him. It was a graphic illustration that God would restore Israel to the land they were about to be carried from, but even though Jeremiah had already revealed it, he was still unable to comprehend it. It was less than 10 years ago that Jeremiah sent a letter to Babylon, telling them they would return after 70 years.

1 Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive ... 3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying, For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer. 29:1, 3, 10

Jeremiah Commanded to Buy a Field

God reveals to Jeremiah that a near kinsman would soon bring him an offer to redeem a field that should go to him. When the man soon arrived with the offer, Jeremiah knew it was the fulfillment of God's word and that he needed to buy the field (which he otherwise might not have done).

7 Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it." 8 Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. 9 So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money — seventeen shekels of silver. Jer. 32:6-9

Jeremiah purchased the field as he had been told and even told Baruch to place the deed in a container that would keep it safe, since after many days it would be possessed again.

13 Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." 15 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." 32:13-15

Jeremiah's Prayer Begins with Praise and Adoration

Jeremiah's prayer revealed his discouragement and doubt. His address to God is one of the most comprehensive hallowing of God's name anywhere in the Scriptures.

'Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. 18 You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them — the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. 19 You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. 20 You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. Jer. 32:16-21

Jeremiah's Perplexity and Doubt

After such an expression of faith and confidence in God's power and love, one would expect great confidence, but instead Jeremiah only reveals their dire circumstances and the incongruity of what God has asked him to do.

'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it! 25 And You have said to me, O Lord God, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses!" — yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'" Jer. 32:24-25

God calmly reasons with his prophet helping him grow and comforting him with His power. He is right in his first assessment, but wrong in his application. First, God will destroy Jerusalem.

26 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? 28 Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. Jer. 32:26-28

God Again Promises Forgiveness and Restoration

Then God would do the impossible! He will gather them from all the countries where he delivered them. They will return to Jerusalem, God will make an eternal covenant with them, and they will buy and sell again.

37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. ... 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 42 "For thus says the Lord: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43 And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44 Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the Lord." 32:37-44

The Illustration of the Rechabites

God commands Jeremiah to go to the house of the Rechabites. They were the descendants of Moses father-in-law Hobab.

*Now Moses said to **Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law**, Num. 10:29
Now **the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law**, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. Judg. 1:16-17
Now **Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses**, Judg. 4:11
These were the **Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab**. 1Chr. 2:55*

We don't know how long they had kept the commands of their father, but it had been long enough for God to use them as an illustration to Judah. They had done for their father (proving it could be done) what Judah had not done for God. Because of this faithfulness, God promised there would always be one of his descendants serving Him.

2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink." ... 5 Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine." ... 6 But they said, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever. ... 8 Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, ... 13 'Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not receive instruction to obey My words?" says the Lord ... 14 "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me. ... 16 Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me." ... 18 And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, 19 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever.'" Jer 35:2

Jeremiah Arrested Again

Soon after these events, the siege was lifted and Jeremiah wanted to go look at the property he had purchased. But when the guard sees him trying to leave the city, he accused him of defecting.

And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left the siege of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12 that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. 13 And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of

the guard was there whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he **seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!"** 14 Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him. Jer. 37:11-14

This led to Jeremiah being beaten and imprisoned once again. When King Zedekiah had him brought before him, Jeremiah pleaded for his life and Zedekiah had mercy, moving him to a better prison with better food.

So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. 15 Therefore **the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe.** For they had made that the prison. 16 When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and **Jeremiah had remained there many days,** 17 then **Zedekiah the king sent and took him out.** ... 20 Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king. **Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.**" 21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should **commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone.** Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Jer. 37:14-21

God Demands Judah Surrender to Nebuchadnezzar

Although there is no time given in this next section, the context makes it clear it is at the same time as the other events. Jeremiah is preaching that if they stay in the city they will die, but if they surrender they shall live. Once again the Jews see it as treason, and being unable to put him to death, they imprison him again.

"Thus says the Lord: **'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'** 3 Thus says the Lord: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'" 4 Therefore **the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them.** Jer. 38:1-4

Jeremiah is Saved by an Ethiopian Eunuch

This time the imprisonment is far more severe. He is placed in a dungeon that is filled with mire that Jeremiah sinks in so deeply, that it was very difficult to remove him. An Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed-Melech goes to the king in hopes of saving Jeremiah from death. God rewards him with the promise of escape from all future evil.

6 So **they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.** 7 Now **Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs,** who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8 **Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For there is no more bread in the city."** 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, **"Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies."** 11 So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12 Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, **"Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes."** And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Jer. 38:6-13

Meanwhile the word of the Lord had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 16 **"Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be performed in that day before you. 17 But I will deliver you in that day," says the Lord, "and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. 18 For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me,"** says the Lord." Jer. 39:15-18

Jeremiah's Final Word to Zedekiah are Unheeded

After Jeremiah is brought up out of the mire, Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah and he pleads with him to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. If he surrenders, the city will not be destroyed and he will be spared.

Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the Lord. 17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18 But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.'" 19 And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me." 20 But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver you. Please, obey the voice of the Lord which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live. Jer. 38:14-20

The Fall of Jerusalem

Everything God had foretold through Jeremiah happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. The city was destroyed, the people taken captive, all the nobles were killed along with Zedekiah's sons and Zedekiah had his eyes put out and then was carried to Babylon.

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. 3 Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain. 5 But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. **And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him.** 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezz Gives Jeremiah his Freedom

After the destruction of Jerusalem, all that God had promised Jeremiah at the beginning of his work as a prophet had not been brought to pass. Jeremiah had prevailed, but the children of Judah had not. Twice God had promised this to him. The first time when he began his work and the second when he had grown discouraged and God had told him to repent.

For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land — Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you." Jer 1:18-19

If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them. 20 And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you," says the Lord. 21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible." Jer 15:19-21

Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, 12 "Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you." 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; 14 then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people. Jer. 39:11-14

Jeremiah 9

The Fall of Jerusalem

Everything God had foretold through Jeremiah happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. The city was destroyed, the people taken captive, all the nobles were killed along with Zedekiah's sons and Zedekiah had his eyes put out and then was carried to Babylon.

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. 3 Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain. 5 But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him. 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar Gave Jeremiah his Freedom

Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, 12 "Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you." 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; 14 then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people. Jer. 39:11-14

Many different explanations are given for the first part of this passage. It begins "the word of the LORD" yet no word follows. Some think part of the prophecy was lost. Others that it is the heading of the final historical section of the book and is not a word for him to preach, but the written word sealed with these words. Yet no other prophet has done this, and to simply conclude that it was lost, seems to be illogical because the first part is saved.

I think the best possible explanation are that the words that came from *Nebuzaradan* were given by Jeremiah, and he is simply quoting them. How else would he know all the things that are listed in this passage? Be that as it may, the main point of this section is to reveal why this had happened to Israel, and to let everyone know that even the Babylonians knew about it.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon. 2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: "The Lord your God has pronounced this doom on this place. 3 Now the Lord has brought it, and has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the Lord, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you."

Jeremiah's Choices

Whether this is a part of the "word from the LORD" for it certainly fulfills all God's promises to Jeremiah, or just his own decision is not clear. But Jeremiah is given complete choice of what he wants to do. If this is part of the "word of the LORD," then God Himself is giving him this choice. If it is just the words of *Nebuzaradan*, then perhaps God made this choice for him, but it is not revealed, and we only know because this was the choice he made. Since God was not finished with Jeremiah and he continued to be His prophet, the best solution is the latter.

And now look, I free you this day from the chains that were on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there." Jer 40:1-4

After the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah's book continues for a few more years. Judah is in exile and the rest are killed but there is still a small remnant and the book records their history from the time of the fall of Jerusalem until the they kidnap Jeremiah and take him to Egypt with them.

The first portion of the words has been variously translated because the of latitude of the Hebrew

words:

*However, before Jeremiah turned to go, Nebuzaradan added, Go back to Gedaliah NIV
If you remain, then return to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, ESV
As Jeremiah was still not going back, he said, "Go on back then to Gedaliah NAS
Now while he was not yet gone back, Go back then, (said he), to Gedaliah ASV
Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, "Go back to Gedaliah NKJV*

It is clear that something delayed Jeremiah and so Nebuzaradan again repeated his choices. This time he adds the name of the governor who would protect him. He also gave him both rations to keep him satisfied and also a gift which is not named.

Jeremiah then made his choice to stay and be with Gedaliah and remained with those who were left in the land.

Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, "Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go." So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. 6 Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land. Jer 40:5-6

The Historical Setting Jeremiah is Now Working Under

The main characters Jeremiah is now working with are listed along with a history of the events at that time. Gedaliah either by the words of Jeremiah, or just of his own desire with no power to fulfill them, promised they would be safe and prosper if they just submitted to him. At this time all the people who had fled the land began to come back, but nowhere is a number given, and because they all died in Egypt, there is no account at all of them.

And when all the captains of the armies who were in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, children, and the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8 then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah — Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezeiah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath before them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. 10 As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken." 11 Likewise, when all the Jews who were in Moab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and who were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, 12 then all the Jews returned out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance. Jer 40:7-9, 12

Treachery of Ammon Leading to Gedaliah's Execution

The historical account of the death of Gedaliah is another sad chapter in the history of Judah. God had left them and it will soon be revealed that their idolatry was so rampant that God could not yet leave his wrath. The king of the Ammon (one of Lot's children), had commissioned Ismael to kill Gedaliah, which unfortunately for Gedaliah, he refused to believe it.

God had already warned Moab about their own doom if they refused to serve the king of Babylon, yet here they were, seeking to kill the man Nebuchadnezzar had set as leader over Judah.

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Thus says the Lord to me: 'Make for yourselves bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, 3 and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. ... 5 'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 6 And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. 8 And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the Lord, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.'" Jer 27:1-3, 5-8

Either just before or after these things, Ezekiel has also sent word to Ammon about their conduct at the destruction of Jerusalem, and His anger and punishment for them.

*The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “**Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them.** 3 Say to the Ammonites, ‘Hear the word of the Lord God! **Thus says the Lord God: “Because you said, ‘Aha!’ against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, 4 indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession to the men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. 5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels and Ammon a resting place for flocks. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” 6 ‘For thus says the Lord God: “Because you clapped your hands, stamped your feet, and rejoiced in heart with all your disdain for the land of Israel, 7 indeed, therefore, I will stretch out My hand against you, and give you as plunder to the nations; I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the countries; I will destroy you, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”** Ezek. 25:1-7*

The Remnant of the Army seeks to Save Gedaliah

First Johanan gives a warning, then an offer to deal with the traitor, but Gedaliah is so taken in by this treachery that he refused the command to save himself.

*Moreover **Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14 and said to him, “Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?” But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them. 15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, “Let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he murder you, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?” 16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, “You shall not do this thing, for you speak falsely concerning Ishmael.”** Ezek. 25:1-7*

Gedaliah is Murdered

This city was taken in the fourth month which corresponds to our July. Yet the conspiracy was completed in the seventh month which is September/October. Most likely this is the next year although it is certainly possible that it was the same year since the summer fruits would have been harvest in the sixth and seventh months.

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. Jer 39:2

Now it came to pass **in the seventh month that Ishmael** the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah. **2 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, that is, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.**

Gedaliah’s Short Lived Reign

First, he continued to murder the Jews.

4 And it happened, on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no one knew it, **5** that certain men came from **Shechem**, from **Shiloh**, and from **Samaria, eighty men** with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, **having cut themselves**, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.

Yet these Jews were still worshiping God contrary to the Law of Moses. One also has to wonder how they worshipped in the house of the Lord when it was destroyed, they were in Mizpah and not Jerusalem, there was no altar and perhaps no priests.

*“You are the children of the Lord your God; **you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead.** 2 For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. Deut 14:1-2*

Ishmael plays the part of a hypocrite, weeping and promising to bring them to Gedaliah whom he had already killed and to lure them into the city. **70** were killed and **10** sought to ransom their life

with their possessions.

6 Now **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** **went out** from Mizpah to meet them, **weeping as he went along**; and it happened as he met them that **he said to them**, “**Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!**” 7 So it was, **when they came into the midst of the city**, that **Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed them and cast them into the midst of a pit**, he and the men who were with him. 8 But **ten men** were found among them who said to Ishmael, “**Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field.**” So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren. 9 Now the pit into which Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, because of Gedaliah, was the same one Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain. 10 Then **Ishmael carried away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, the king’s daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah**, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah **carried them away captive and departed to go over to the Ammonites.**

Johanan Saves the People, but Ishmael Escapes

As soon as Johanan hears about the massacre, he fights with Ishmael.

11 But when **Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were with him** heard of all the evil that **Ishmael the son of Nethaniah** had done, 12 they **took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah**; and they found him by the great pool that is in Gibeon. 13 So it was, when all the people who were with Ishmael saw **Johanan the son of Kareah**, and all the captains of the forces who were with him, that they were glad. 14 Then all the people whom Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to **Johanan the son of Kareah**. 15 But **Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites.**

They Seek out Jeremiah’s Counsel and Promise to hear God’s Word

We don’t know if Jeremiah was among them captives at this time, but he is with them, and although they have already made up their minds to go to Egypt, they come to Jeremiah. Everyone who is left is there. They ask him to pray to God and get His counsel on what they should now do.

Now **all the captains of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, came near 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet**, “**Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the Lord your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see), 3 that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do.**” Jer. 42:1-3

Jeremiah promised to do exactly what they have asked him for and will not leave out one word.

Then **Jeremiah the prophet said to them**, “**I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the Lord answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.**” Jer. 42:4

They then promise to do everything God speaks through Jeremiah, bringing great condemnation upon themselves when they later refuse to do what they had promised. One has to wonder why they made such a promise when they had no intention of keeping it unless it came out in their favor which evidently they were convinced would happen.

So they said to **Jeremiah**, “**Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. 6 Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.**” Jer 42:5-6

Jeremiah’s Brings God’s Answer

It is evident from the delay that God did not simply come at the call of the people. He waited ten days. Either to give the people time to consider how they will respond when God gives an answer or for another reason unknown to us. God promises that if they will stay in the land He will bless them. He will build and plant them, save them from Babylon, and show them mercy.

And it happened **after ten days that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah**. 8 Then he called **Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9 and said to them**, “**Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: 10 ‘If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,’ says the Lord, ‘for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. 12 And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy**

on you and cause you to return to your own land.’ Jer 42:7-12

God then revealed what will happen to them if they rejected His words and go to Egypt anyway. If they enter Egypt after this strict warning terrible curses will come upon them. Everything that had already happened in Jerusalem would happen again, this time to all who go to Egypt.

“But if you say, ‘We will not dwell in this land,’ disobeying the voice of the Lord your God, 14 saying, ‘No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell’ — 15 Then hear now the word of the Lord, O remnant of Judah! Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, 16 then it shall be that the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there you shall die. 17 So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.’ Jer. 42:13-17

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.’ 19 “The Lord has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt!’ Know certainly that I have admonished you this day. 20 For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the Lord our God, and according to all that the Lord your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.’ 21 And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. 22 Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell.” Jer 42:18-22

Like all who reject the Lord, they go after the messenger and continue to be convinced in their hearts that though they rejected His words, they will still be blessed. They call God’s messenger a liar, and reject all that he told them. All the people decide to go to Egypt in spite of God’s clear and terrible warning. Though they had just seen Jeremiah’s words come true in Jerusalem, they reject them here.

Now it happened, when Jeremiah had stopped speaking to all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, all these words, 2 that Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, “You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.’ 3 But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon.” 4 So Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces, and all the people would not obey the voice of the Lord, to remain in the land of Judah. 5 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all nations where they had been driven — 6 men, women, children, the king’s daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. 7 So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the Lord. And they went as far as Tahpanhes. Jer 43:1-7

Although Jeremiah is now in Egypt, it was not by his freewill and God continued to speak through him. He gives a graphic and powerful warning to the people of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar is soon coming to Egypt. Jeremiah is to take stones and hide them at the house of Pharaoh with the threat that in that exact spot Nebuchadnezzar will set his throne and as in Jerusalem deliver them to death or captivity.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, 9 “Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the sight of the men of Judah, in the clay in the brick courtyard which is at the entrance to Pharaoh’s house in Tahpanhes; 10 and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden. And he will spread his royal pavilion over them. 11 When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt and deliver to death those appointed for death, and to captivity those appointed for captivity, and to the sword those appointed for the sword.”” Jer 43:8-11

Jeremiah 10

Introduction:

We have now reached the final recorded events of the life of Jeremiah. He has spent his entire life proclaiming God's prophecies. He has written and rewritten much of the book we now possess. The writing began in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Since most of the other books do not contain any reference to their writing, it is interesting to see how it was done in this case.

Most of the writing is described as beginning in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

36 Now it came to pass in the **fourth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. 3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and **Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord which He had spoken to him.** Jer.36:1-3 36:4-6 See also Jer.30:1-3

27 Now **after the king had burned the scroll** with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: 28 "**Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned.** ... 32 **And besides, there were added to them many similar words.** Jer.36:27-29, 32

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the **fourth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) ... 12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13 So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, **all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.** Jer.25:1, 12-14

Josiah reigned thirty-one years

The words of Jeremiah ...came in the **thirteenth year of Josiah** 18

Jehoahaz reigned 3 months in Jerusalem. 3 months

Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in Jerusalem 11 (In 4th year started writing)

Jehoiachin reigned 3 months and 10 days. 3 months 10 days

Zedekiah 11 years in Jerusalem. 11 years (in 4th year more writing)

The final 18 years after the writing of the original book are not described, but were put together by him during that time. He did write a book that he sent to Babylon in the fourth year of Zedekiah, but it was thrown into the river:

The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with **Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign.** And Seraiah was the quartermaster. 60 **So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon.** 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, ... 63 **Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates.** Jer.51:59-63

The People Have Learned Nothing

In spite of all the preaching of Jeremiah and all the other prophets, Israel has still learned nothing. They have witnessed the fall of Jerusalem and the loss of all that they possess. Yet they have still not given up their idolatry.

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying, 2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'You have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3 because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went to burn incense and to serve other gods whom they did not know, they nor you nor your fathers. 4 However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!" 5 But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods. 6 So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as it is this day.' Jer.44:1-6

“Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain, 8 in that you provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not been humbled, to this day, nor have they feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.’ Jer.44:7-10

“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for cutting off all Judah. 12 And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and they shall all be consumed and fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach! 13 For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, 14 so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive, lest they return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return and dwell. For none shall return except those who escape.’” Jer.44:11-14

This is among the most amazing examples in the Scriptures of the hard hearted nature of God’s people. In spite of all they have seen and experienced, they still have no faith in God, nor any fear of the words of Jeremiah. They boldly tell Jeremiah we will not listen to you. They attribute all the disaster that came upon Jerusalem to the fact that they had given up their idols.

They reasons that if they had not given them up, they would still be fine in Jerusalem and they are not going to make the same mistake again.

Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: 16 “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! 17 But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. 18 But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.” Jer.44:15-18

It had already been recorded that this was a family affair. Everyone in the family dedicated to the worship of idols, while the worship of the Lord was ignored.

Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. Jer.7:17-20

The women are still actively involved in this sin. They cite their husbands permission as some form of excuse.

The women also said, “And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands’ permission?” Jer.44:19

Jeremiah again preaches the truth to the people. This time to explain the folly of their idolatry and pronounce their doom.

Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people — the men, the women, and all the people who had given him that answer — saying: 21 “The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and did it not come into His mind? 22 So the Lord could no longer bear it, because of the evil of your doings and because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, an astonishment, a curse, and without an inhabitant, as it is this day. 23 Because you have burned incense and because you have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord or walked in His law, in His statutes or in His testimonies, therefore this calamity has happened to you, as at this day.” Jer.44:20-23

Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people and to all the women, “Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt! 25 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: ‘You

and your wives have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands, saying, "We will surely keep our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her." You will surely keep your vows and perform your vows! 26 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: **'Behold, I have sworn by My great name,' says the Lord, 'that My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, "The Lord God lives."** 27 Behold, **I will watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them.** 28 Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and **all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs.** Jer.44:24-28

God the provides a sign that He will do all he has said. The man they had put all their trust in when they left Judah and came to Egypt will be given into the hands of his enemies and there will be no one to protect them.

And this shall be a sign to you,' says the Lord, 'that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for adversity.' "Thus says the Lord: **'Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.'**" Jer.44:30

We don't have any more information about Jeremiah than these words.

Did Jeremiah Write Lamentations?

Although there is no statement in Scripture, the internal evidence is clear that the same man who wrote Jeremiah also wrote Lamentations. Since we know that Jeremiah wrote the book that bears his name, there can be little doubt that the same man wrote both. First, seldom does tears come into the books of the prophets, yet they are evident in both Jeremiah and Lamentations

*Oh, 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!*** Jer.9:1

*Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, **That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water.*** 19 *For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: 'How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.'*" Jer.9:18-19

*But if you will not hear it, **My soul will weep in secret for your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly And run down with tears,*** Because the Lord's flock has been taken captive. Jer.13:17

*"Therefore you shall say this word to them: '**Let my eyes flow with tears night and day,** And let them not cease; For the virgin daughter of my people Has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow.*" Jer.14:17

*She weeps bitterly in the night, **Her tears are on her cheeks;** Among all her lovers She has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies* Lam.1:2

***My eyes fail with tears,** My heart is troubled; My bile is poured on the ground Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, Because the children and the infants Faint in the streets of the city.* Lam.2:11

My eyes overflow with rivers of water** For the destruction of the daughter of my people. 49 **My eyes flow and do not cease, Without interruption, Lam.3:48-49

The persecutions and anguish found in Jeremiah is also found in Lamentation

Woe is me, my mother,** That you have borne me, **A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!** I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. **Every one of them curses me. Jer.15:10

***Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable,** Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail?* Jer.15:18

Then they said, "**Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah**; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. **Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.**" Jer. 18:18

I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. **2 He has led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light.** Lam. 3:14-15

I have become the ridicule of all my people — Their taunting song all the day. **15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood.** Lam. 3:1-2

You have heard their reproach, O Lord, All their schemes against me, **62 The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day.** **63 Look at their sitting down and their rising up; I am their taunting song.** Lam. 3:61-63