

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### March 31: Jeremiah 1-6 (John Morris)

Reading for March 31, 2017

JEREMIAH 1-6

#### INTRODUCTION

Just a few words of introduction. Isaiah, whose prophecies we just finished reading, began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death (Is. 6:1) (739 BC). Jeremiah, however, began his ministry over a century later, in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (Jer. 1:2) (627 BC). Jeremiah may have prophesied for a time alongside Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah (Zeph. 1:1). Both addressed Judah and Jerusalem's persistent sins and the ultimate consequence of those sins — conquest and destruction at the hands of Babylon. Jeremiah was also contemporary with Ezekiel and Daniel, though they both did their prophesying on the other side of the Euphrates.

As opposed to Isaiah's frequent figurative imagery, Jeremiah tends more toward straightforward rebukes and calls to repentance. Several ideas and phrases are repeated throughout the book (sometimes more than ten times), and in general, the book is notably easier to understand upon first reading than much of Isaiah. Jeremiah prophesied in Judah until the eleventh year of Zedekiah (Jer. 1:3) (586 BC), at which time he saw Jerusalem fall for the third and final time to Babylon. He continued to prophesy afterward, however, even when forcibly removed by some of his own people to Egypt (Jer. 43:4-7). Faithful to the last, his last recorded sermons were delivered on foreign soil.

For this week, I'll just comment on a few verses throughout the first six chapters, and not try to summarize everything. Time is a bit more limited. Hope what's here can still be edifying.

#### CHAPTER 1

- 1:1: Jeremiah was a priest (hence a Levite and a descendant of Aaron), and may have been the son of the same Hilkiah who found the Book of the Law in the temple in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:14ff). If so, he was a prophet-priest whose father was the high priest.
- 1:5-9: God had ordained before Jeremiah's birth that he would be a prophet. Jeremiah was young (estimates range from 8 to 25) when God called him to this, and felt unequal to the task, but God promised to empower and protect him. Jeremiah was to be "a prophet to the nations," speaking not only to Judah, but to many other nations, as well (evident later in the book).
- 1:11-12: "What do you see?" This question appears seven times in the Bible. Jeremiah saw an almond branch, emblematic of God's readiness to perform His word, since the almond tree blossoms early in the year, in January. The Jews called it "the wakeful tree," since it was the first to awake from winter slumber.

#### CHAPTER 2

- 2:2: “your youth” refers to the early years of the nation’s development, when God brought them out of Egypt (cf. Hos. 2:15).
- 2:3: “all that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them” – during those days of their infancy, the nation enjoyed God’s divine protection; any nation that harmed them was harmed by God.
- 2:16: “Noph” (Memphis) and “Tahpanhes” were important cities in Egypt. Egypt would break Judah’s crown, fulfilled in the death of Josiah at the hands of Pharaoh Necho (2 Chron. 35:23-24), and perhaps also in the imprisonment (by Necho) of his successor, Jehoahaz, (2 Kings 23:31-33).
- 2:30: “your sword has devoured your prophets” – Jesus talked about this (Mt. 23:37).

### CHAPTER 3

- 3:1: Though the Law of Moses did not permit a divorced-remarried-divorced-again woman to return to her first husband (Deut. 24:1-4), God, who is rich in mercy, was willing to take Judah back if she would but return to Him. “Yet return to me” is the first of five pleas to “return” in this chapter (vss. 7, 12, 14, 22). The passage, of course, is based on the premise that God, the nation’s husband—just like Jesus is the betrothed husband of the church (2 Cor. 11:2)—had, in fact, divorced Judah, something affirmed more clearly in 3:8 (cf. Hos. 2:2).
- 3:3: “the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain” (cf. Hag. 1:10-11).
- 3:11-13: God invites Israel to return, the northern ten tribes who had already been conquered and carried away captive by Assyria long ago (722 BC). Repentance is open to all, all the time.
- 3:14: “one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” If even the smallest number of those from among the captive northern tribes should repent, God will bring those few back to Zion. God is more interested in quality than quantity.
- 3:16: This is the last reference to the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament. It’s particularly noteworthy in light of the nature of the prophecy.
- 3:17-18: These predictions (and some might also include those in vss. 14-16) seem to be what we sometimes call a “dual prophecy.” They were somewhat filled in the Jews’ return to the Promised Land after 70 years of captivity, but were not FULL-filled until the church (e.g. “all the nations shall be gathered to it”). The idea of Judah and Israel coming together is a repeated theme in Old Testament Messianic prophecies (cf. Is. 11:12-13; Hos. 1:11; Zech. 10:6).

### CHAPTER 4

- 4:1-2: God continues to plead with those of the ten northern tribes to “return.”
- 4:3: God now turns his attention back to Judah and Jerusalem. “Break up your fallow ground” (cf. Hos. 10:12).
- 4:10: Jeremiah reveals his lack of understanding about how God’s past promises of peace to the nation can be reconciled with the coming pain and anguish. The expression, “the sword reaches to the heart” is indicative of that deeply felt pain. Simeon used a similar expression when speaking to Mary about how Jesus’ experiences would affect her: “yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also” (Lk. 2:35).

- 4:16: “watchers” – besiegers of the city. This interpretation agrees contextually with the following verse, and is also supported by the literal rendering of 2 Sam. 11:16 where Joab’s behavior while besieging a city is described: “And it came to pass, when Joab KEPT WATCH upon the city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he knew that valiant men were” (ASV). After all, what does a besieging army do but “watch” the city?
- 4:19: “I am pained in my heart!” Jeremiah experiences extreme anguish over what is coming to his people. He had already mentioned that the coming sorrow “reaches to the heart” (4:10).
- 4:22: God responds to Jeremiah’s pained words in vss. 19-21. The punishment is justified.
- 4:23-26: Jeremiah, satisfied by God’s stated justification, describes what he sees for Judah after the destruction: waste, instability, de-population, ruin.

## CHAPTER 5

- 5:1-2: God instructs Jeremiah to go throughout the streets of Jerusalem, searching for faithful people. What he finds will vindicate God’s decision to judge.
- 5:4-5: Jeremiah finds that the common people are exactly what God said they were, but supposes/hopes he’ll find things to be different among “the great men.” Instead, he finds they are just as bad: “these have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds” (cf. Ps. 2:2-3).
- 5:10: “Take away her branches, for they are not the LORD’s” (cf. Jn. 15:2a, 6).
- 5:13: “the prophets become wind” (cf. Job 6:26; 8:2; 16:3). The prophets are windbags.
- 5:31: “But what will you do in the end?” There is a high price to be paid for ignoring the real answers to the real questions of life. God’s rewards are for those who hear and heed.

## CHAPTER 6

- 6:3: The leaders of the besieging armies of Babylon are likened to shepherds with their flocks.
- 6:4-5: The Babylonians are depicted as planning a surprise attack at noon, a time when opposing armies usually rested. They are also shown planning a nocturnal, sneak attack, one designed to breach the walls, thus allowing them to get at Jerusalem’s palaces.
- 6:13-14: The prophets and the priests have spoken words of comfort to the people which have eased their minds, but it’s a false sense of security. The leaders’ lies don’t change the reality of the coming invasion.
- 6:16: This reminds me of Jesus’ words to Ephesus: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the first works” (Rev. 2:5). Sometimes the secret to fixing the present is what we learned in the past. Hopefully, Ephesus chose to remember and reform, thus faring better than these Jews.
- 6:20: Judah was still going to great lengths to keep the external rituals of the Law. They were bringing “incense from Sheba,” which was 1,500 miles south of Jerusalem in SW Arabia, and “sweet cane [calamus] from a far country,” maybe India. Lots of trouble, but ultimately for nothing. Samuel’s words to Saul in 1 Sam. 15:22-23 apply here.

- 6:22-23: God describes the ruthless Babylonians to the people.
- 6:24-26: The people respond to God's words in anguish and fear.
- 6:27-30: God speaks more to Jeremiah about how the coming punishment is justified.

## Comments:

Charles Fry:

Jeremiah is indeed, in many ways, an easier read than Isaiah, with many snippets of personal story woven into the prophetic messages. Jeremiah, with his scribe and ally Baruch, is at that critical juncture where the kingdom of David ends in the Babylonian captivity, only to be recovered by the Messiah to come. Jeremiah and Baruch (introduced in chapter 32) appear to have had the final hand in composing the collected history of Judges, Samuel and Kings. (Note that the final chapter of Jeremiah is also the final chapter of Kings.)

Good introduction, John Morris, good insights and highlights!

## Comments:

Marc Hermon:

The 7 "What do you see?" questions in the Bible intrigued me so I started researching them. I won't list them because that will take the fun out of everyone else looking them up. I indeed did find 7 times where the Lord or Lord's representative asked this question and always to the Lord's prophet. I did however find an 8th time it was asked but it was definitely not asked by the Lord's representative and it definitely was not asked of the Lord's prophet.

Thanks, John Morris, for stirring the mind!

## Replies:

John Morris:

Marc Hermon: I'm terribly curious about the eighth. Did you use something other than the inspired NKJV? ;) Would like to know, though. Would a private message be a possibility?

Marc Hermon:

Admittedly, it is "What DID you see?" in the NKJV but is "What do you see?" in the other versions. I Samuel 28:13 (Saul and the witch of Endor)

Charles Fry:

Marc Hermon, for whatever it's worth, it is in fact different Hebrew verbage than the 7 John referenced. The tense is a "Qal Perfect" and in numerous other instances the same Hebrew verb and tense is rendered a past tense in the English (ie Genesis 7:1), but many translations put it as stated, "What do you see?" in the Samuel passage. "The king said to her, "Don't be afraid! What have you seen?" The woman replied to Saul, "I have seen one like a god coming up from the ground!" 1 Sam 28:13 NET

Marc Hermon:

I was just talking about this to Ginger. I think the translators must have thought that "What DO you see?" made more sense since it seems like she was having the vision right in front of him instead of it being in the past.

Charles Fry:

I think so. That scene is quite dramatic, and also puzzling to sort out just what was happening. Rather more happened, and different, and more disturbing than the medium expected, it seems. Translators make some difficult decisions trying to present.

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

So many fascinating points you brought to our attention, John Morris! Thank you!

## April 7: Jeremiah 7-11 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone. Our study of Jeremiah continues today. Here are a few notes on chapters 7-11 for your convenience.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KPahGbLT7OLHLCDO40ntMZZ2HOGMgg5n-q7SZxIzHk/mobilebasic>

Jeremiah 7

Verses 1-7: God sends Jeremiah to the temple to urge the people to repentance

Verses 8-15: Judah's double-mindedness

- As a nation, Judah lives in perpetual immorality, worships false gods and yet believes God approves of their behavior.
- Shiloh was the dwelling place of the tabernacle for centuries.
  - Shiloh means "place of rest"
  - In a remote region of Ephraim
  - Tabernacle erected there in Joshua 18:1-10
  - Shiloh ceased to be the dwelling place of God when the Ark of the Covenant was used in the war with Philistia (see 1 Samuel 4)
  - The Lord uses Shiloh to illustrate what awaits Judah should she refuse to repent
- Jeremiah 26 expands this message and reports how Jeremiah was received.

Verses 16-20: Intercession is worthless; God will pour out His wrath because of Judah's hardness of heart

Verses 21-27: Judah has continually resisted the words of the prophets since the day she left Egypt

Verses 28-34: God will abandon His people

- They do not receive correction
- Truth cannot be found on anyone's lips
- They have resorted to sacrificing their children (Valley of the Son of Hinnom = Gehenna; more on child sacrifice in chapter 19)
- God has no choice but to punish Judah for her sins.

Jeremiah 8

Verses 1-3

Verses 4-7: Though it defies reason, Judah refused to heed the word of the Lord, thus her destiny is sealed.

Verses 8-13:

- The wise men of Judah claim that the nation is faithful while they reject the prophets, lie, covet, and console the nation with empty words of comfort.
- Verse 12: Judah's depravity is so deep that there is no shame for their sin

Verses 14-16: What the people of Judah will say among themselves as destruction is imminent.

Verses 17-19: God acknowledges the pain that this punishment will inflict; and yet the crimes of Judah do not permit Him to reconsider.

Verse 20: Judah will one day recognize that the Lord will not deliver them.

Verses 21-22: Jeremiah mourns for his people; this continues in chapter 9.

Jeremiah 9

Verses 1-2: The prophet's expression of deep sorrow continues from the end of chapter 8.

Verses 3-11

- God says that Judah is full of lies and liars; no one can be trusted; the land is full of treachery; for this, among other things, they will be punished.
- Verse 10: Jeremiah interjects another lamentation on behalf of his nation.
- Verse 11: God promises that Jerusalem will be laid waste; a dwelling place for wild animals with no human inhabitants

Verses 12-16

- Verse 12: Jeremiah searches for a fellow Jew who will understand what awaits Judah and will openly declare it along with him.
- Verses 13-16
  - God reiterates Judah's unwillingness to obey the law
  - Note verse 14, "they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts": a judgment oft repeated in Jeremiah
  - Bitter punishment and dispersion among the Gentiles await the people of Judah

Verses 17-21: God invites those women who are skilled at mourning to grieve over Judah and teach their daughters likewise.

Verses 22-26

- Verses 23-24 remind us that true riches, wisdom and might are found in understanding the Lord and His character
- Judah will suffer the same fate as the uncircumcised nations who have resisted Jehovah.

Jeremiah 10

Verses 1-17: This section echoes the follies of idolatry exposed in Isaiah 44.

- Verse 2, "do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven": it was common for pagan religions to seek guidance from the heavenly bodies
- Verse 5: there is no reason to fear or regard the gods of other cultures
- Verses 6-10: Jeremiah compares and contrasts idols with the true and living God.
- Verse 11: God, who made all things, will destroy the creation of man's hands.
- Verses 12-17: Jeremiah celebrates the magnificence of God, His awesome power, and the stupidity of worshipping idols

Verses 18-25

- Verse 18: God will cast His people from the land because of their idolatry.

- Verses 19-25: Jeremiah mourns for his people
  - Verse 21, “the shepherds have become dull-hearted”: prophets often refer to false prophets, priests, princes, and elders of the people shepherds; Judah’s leaders have failed her
  - Verse 23, “I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”: a recapitulation of 9:14, “they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts”

Jeremiah 11

Verses 1-8: God urges Judah to return to the covenant quoted in verse 4 with which Jeremiah heartily agrees.

Verses 9-17: Further comments on the general state of Judah

- Verse 10: Judah has followed in the paths of her forefathers
- Verse 13: Idolatry is ubiquitous
- Verse 14: Jeremiah is again told not to intercede on Judah’s behalf
- Verse 16: What was once beautiful in the Lord’s eyes is now fit for destruction

Verses 18-23: Jeremiah has risked his life to proclaim these tidings to an obstinate and treacherous nation; evil men threaten his life; he trusts that God will preserve and deliver him

## Comments:

Charles Fry:

Good overview, Wade. Shiloh, and the Queen of Heaven, and the Valley of Ben Hinnom, and the problem of substituting religious ritual for obedience, lots of important themes highlighting what doesn't work. There is no substitute for obeying the message of "my servants the prophets."

## April 14: Jeremiah 12-16 (John Morris)

Reading for April 14, 2017

JEREMIAH 12-16

This portion of Jeremiah contains considerable back-and-forth between Jeremiah and God. Jeremiah is suffering, and has a lot on his mind. He makes inquiries, requests, observations, and God responds to all of them. Finally, however, in weakness, Jeremiah complains against God for not relieving him of his pain. Even prophets stumble. This transgression endangers Jeremiah’s future as a prophet, and God calls him to repent, promising him all the help he will need to fulfill his ministry.

This week, like two weeks ago, we’ll hit highlights, sometimes even highlights of highlights.

### CHAPTER 12

- 12:1-4: Jeremiah wants to know why God is allowing the wicked to prosper. He cites himself as one whom God knows is faithful, and calls for God to take vengeance on the wicked. The land is mourning (drought), the wildlife is dying, and all because of these people’s wickedness. And to add insult to injury, the wicked are sure that Jeremiah will never see the fulfillment of all his prophecies of doom. He’s a joke. They don’t take him seriously.

- 12:5: God answers in a way Jeremiah almost certainly didn't expect. Paraphrasing, "If this seems too much for you to bear, Jeremiah, what will you do when the future hardships come? There are greater trials coming your way. You've not seen the worst yet."

- 12:6: As an example of what He is talking about, God shares with Jeremiah that even his own family is not to be trusted anymore. They may be speaking kindly to his face, but behind his back they are against him. They have even enlisted the help of others to bring him down.

- 12:7-10: Note how God speaks of His people and their place: "the dearly beloved of My soul" (vs. 7); "My heritage" (vs. 8); "My vineyard," "My portion," and "My pleasant portion" (vs. 10). It wasn't because He didn't love them that God punished Judah. They forced His hand.

- 12:14-15: A promise to Judah's neighboring nations, as well as Judah. All are going to be taken captive, and exported to foreign soil. But God will also return them to their native lands in time to come (cf. 48:47; 49:6).

- 12:16: This may be Messianic. In the future, if the Gentiles will live by God's law, they will have a place in the midst of the Israel of God.

## CHAPTER 13

- 13:1-11: Pretty straightforward. God would occasionally have the prophets go to great lengths to learn or teach something (cf. 1 Kings 20:35-42; Is. 20:1-4; Hos. 1-3; Ezek. 4; 12:3-14; 24:15-24). From Jerusalem to the nearest point of the Euphrates would have been a journey of well over 300 miles. The Euphrates may have been selected due to its connection with Babylon, the nation's future home.

- 13:17: "My soul will weep in secret for your pride." Pride goes before destruction, and when Judah falls, Jeremiah will privately cry over what brought them down. Jeremiah is not called the weeping prophet without reason (cf. 9:1, 10; 14:17).

- 13:23: Though these words speak to the nation's propensities, and their predictable behavior, they are not to be understood as indicating that repentance is impossible for them. Four verses later, God still pleads with them...

- 13:27: Their sins are many, and the hole they've dug for themselves deep. But with God nothing will be impossible. God still holds out hope to them: "Will you still not be made clean?"

## CHAPTER 14

- 14:1-6: Discussion of the drought and consequent famine.

- 14:8: Jeremiah is distressed by God's unwillingness to deliver Judah from its present distress (drought, famine, etc.). He likens God to a non-Israelite and to a traveler who is only passing through the land. In other words, God seems to him to be acting like a disinterested bystander who has no vested interest in the people.

- 14:9: Jeremiah asks why God is acting like a man who is astonished to the point of being unable to act, or like a soldier who hasn't the strength to save. It's not that Jeremiah believes that God can't save, only that He seems to be behaving AS IF He can't save. Jeremiah is distraught and doesn't understand.

- 14:11: Three times in Jeremiah, God commands the prophet, “Do not pray for this people” (cf. 7:16; 11:14). The nation had long persisted in its willful rejection of God, had become worse even than the northern kingdom had been, and God had finally determined what the nation’s fate would be. Nationwide repentance might have moved God to relent from the disaster, but no longer would intercessions on behalf of this recalcitrant nation move the needle. Their sin was finally going to find them out.

- 14:12: God won’t hear, because it’s not sincere (cf. 12:2). God hates empty ritualism.

## CHAPTER 15

- 15:4: What did Manasseh do? See 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33:1-9

- 15:10: Jeremiah’s anguish over his own circumstances (particularly, the persecution he was enduring (cf. 15:15)) prompted him to wish he’d never been born. Job felt the same way at one point (Job 3).

- 15:11-12: God reassures Jeremiah with three promises: (1) “it will be well with your remnant” (NASB- “I will set you free for purposes of good” (ESV & NIV read similarly))- in other words, these trials will not last forever; (2) “I will cause the enemy to intercede with you”- in time, Jeremiah’s enemies would actually turn to him for help (cf. 21:1-2; 37:3; 42:1-3); (3) “Can anyone break iron, the northern iron and the bronze?”- the iron from the north (region of the Black Sea) was the best iron going, and bronze was one of the strongest metals known to them at the time. God had made Jeremiah like iron and bronze (1:18-19), and his enemies would not be able to break him.

- 15:18: Jeremiah lets his pain get the best of him, and after citing his faithfulness (vs. 16-17), complains against God for letting him be run through the ringer when he’s been a good boy. He even suggests that God has been unreliable and deceptive, not delivering him from trouble when He said He would. Like Job before him, Jeremiah (as my grandpa used to say) let himself get “a little big for his britches.”

- 15:19-20: God calls Jeremiah to repent of this attitude and these accusations. He tells him to keep the good that is in his heart, get rid of the bad, and upon doing so, he’ll be able to resume his role as prophet. But he mustn’t let his detractors drag him down. Let them change their minds and come to you, Jeremiah, not the other way around! And, again, God promises that He WILL strengthen and deliver him.

## CHAPTER 16

- 16:1-4: Reminiscent of Jesus’ words to those in Jerusalem (Mt. 24:19), and Paul’s to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:26).

- 16:14-15: Once again, after pronouncing terrible judgments, God reminds them that hope is on the horizon. Yes, there will be a captivity, but there will also be a return!

- 16:19-21: May be speaking to the Gentiles coming to the LORD under the New Covenant, or may just be speaking of how Gentiles would grow disenchanting with idolatry, and begin to look to the God of the Jews even before Christ came. This did occur (the temple in Jesus’ day had a court of the Gentiles, and remember Jn. 12:20). This phenomenon may have been predicted in Zech. 8:22-23.

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, John! Your notes are incredibly helpful. Prophecy is a subject I am least versed in so your knowledge gives excellent guidance as I study these passages. Thank you - and to all the brethren- for efforts in leading these daily readings.

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

## Comment:

Yvonna Hartman:

I agree with Ginger. Really appreciate the good notes. I appreciate your work very much.

## April 21: Jeremiah 17-21 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Please find the link to notes on Jeremiah 17-21 below. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13qSG9VmMOHvrCxnci-XPsjb37qMGEP5JYB2IPyMzkql/mobilebasic>

Jeremiah 17

Verses 1-4: Judah will go into captivity for her idolatry.

- Verse 1: A writing implement made of the strongest known metal tipped with the hardest of all rocks has imprinted the sins of Judah; their conscience and the altar of God testify against them.
- Verses 2-3: Describes the wide-ranging proliferation of idolatry.

Verses 5-8

- Verses 5-6: An inverted echo of Psalm 1.
- Verses 7-8: An echo of Psalm 1

Verses 9-13:

- Jeremiah refers to the deceitfulness of man's heart
  - The numerous statements about the heart show us that the Judah of Jeremiah's day was led by its feelings rather than sound reason and judgment.
  - Because our hearts are untrustworthy, we need an objective guide.
  - The Lord can help us know our heart.
- Verse 11: Idolatry, though a huge problem, is not the factor leading to the nation's demise: ill-gotten wealth has also plagued the nation.
- Verse 13: Jeremiah reiterates that the wicked will come to nothing

Verses 14-18: Jeremiah pleads for God to remember that he is faithful servant who is surrounded by enemies.

Verses 19-27: Jeremiah told to preach at the People's Gate

- The people's gate is probably the east gate of the temple grounds
- Jeremiah is sent to urge the people to faithfully keep the Sabbath

Jeremiah 18

Verses 1-10: Like the potter with the clay, God exercises sovereign power over the nations of the world.

Verses 11-12: God offers Judah an opportunity to repent and avoid the impending destruction; they respond with defeat and continue following their hearts.

Verses 13-17:

- Verse 14: Why does Judah forsake the very best of what God offers?
- Verse 15
  - “Ancient paths”: the paths of righteousness blazed by their forefathers who followed after God.
  - “To walk in pathways and not on a highway”: pathways are crooked and change elevation; a highway is straight and flat
- Verse 16: God will make an example of Judah to her neighbors

Verses 18-23: For his unpopular message, Jeremiah becomes a target for persecution; he prays for God to deliver him from his enemies

Jeremiah 19

Verses 1-2: Jeremiah is sent to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom

- Location is also mentioned in 7:31-32
  - “Son of Hinnom”: Heb., Ben-Himmon; Gr., Gehenna
  - Same valley Jesus uses as an analogy for hell (e.g. Mark 10:43-48)
  - Valley on the west and south side of Jerusalem
  - Also known as “Topheth” (verse 6): means, “place of fire”
- The precise location of the Potsherd Gate is unknown; likely where the potters disposed of the broken pieces of pottery

Verses 3-9: God curses the valley and Jerusalem

- Jews were worshipping Molech (aka Milcom), an Ammonite god, in the valley
  - The Israelites are first warned against the worship of this god in Leviticus 18:21, “And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech....”
  - Again he warns in Leviticus 20:2 “ 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.' ”
  - Apparently, the worship of this god was first introduced by Solomon in 1 Kings 11:7, “Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.”
  - In Jeremiah 32:35, God laments Israel's unfaithfulness with these words, “And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”
  - Led by King Josiah, Judah destroyed the places of Molech worship in 2 Kings 23:10, “And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.”
  - Yet, as we will see, Josiah's reforms were short lived – the worship of Molech did return to Gehenna following Josiah's death.
- While all idolatry is a grievous affront, the worship of Molech was a particularly despicable set of actions.
  - The image itself consisted of a hollow brass figure fashioned into a man's body with outstretched arms and a bull's head topped by a royal crown.
  - The priest would kindle a fire within the image until it glowed red hot.
  - Once heated, the worshiper would place their baby or small child on the outstretched arms as a sacrifice to Molech.

- As the baby screamed in agony, musicians nearby would beat drums and play flutes hoping to drown out the noise and lessen the pain for the parent.
- These unspeakable abominations took place in Gehenna.

Verses 10-15: After God compares his sovereignty with the potter in chapter 18, he sends Jeremiah to the valley where marred and broken vessels are cast, thus symbolizing God casting his people to destruction for their sins.

Jeremiah 20

Verses 1-2: Jeremiah is imprisoned for his message of repentance and impending destruction.

Verses 3-6: God will avenge Jeremiah's wrongful imprisonment at the hands of Pashhur (who He names Magor-Missabib, "terror is everywhere").

Verses 7-10: In a prayer, Jeremiah recounts the pressures he has faced for preaching such an unpopular message

- Verses 7-8: Jeremiah was openly mocked
- Verse 9: He tried to suppress the word of God, but could not hold it back.
- Verse 10: Jeremiah's own words were used as a weapon against him; even his friends sought for an occasion to harm him

Verses 11-13: Jeremiah follows his words of despair with words of faith, trust and confidence that the Lord will not forget his sacrifices

Verses 14-18: Like Job, Jeremiah has reached a point of real depression where he wishes he had not been born

**Note:** The chapters of Jeremiah are not in chronological order. If we were studying this book in the order the events took place, we would jump from 20:18 to chapter 25.

Jeremiah 21

**Note:** Chapters 21-29 foretell the judgement of Judah and her neighbors that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon carried out on God's behalf.

Verses 1-2: King Zedekiah is the final king of Judah before the Babylonian captivity; Judah is a vassal state whose rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar has provoked this final conflict (see 2 Chronicles 36:11-14).

Verses 3-10: God urges Jerusalem to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar because the Babylonians are carrying out God's judgment; those who refuse to leave Jerusalem will die in a horrific manner; those who surrender and defect will live.

Verses 11-14: The house of David will not escape the judgment of God for its failure to lead the people in paths of righteousness

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thanks for the great outline brother!

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Wade!

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

God both tells us the condition of our hearts and offers a solution to our heart problem.

When we visited Israel several years ago I wanted to know where the Valley of Ben Hinnom was in our ramblings. The area the guide identified as the old valley was substantially filled in, not much declivity anymore. It was green and mown, a sports park, and there were youths playing soccer there as we drove by.

## Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

So thankful it's not used as the area for "unspeakable abominations" any longer. I can't even imagine witnessing the worship of Molech. It's not surprising Jesus uses the valley as an analogy for hell. Mike Warner spoke on hell this Sunday morning @ Pleasant Hill and referred to this passage.

## April 28: Jeremiah 22-26 (John Morris)

Prophecy: April 28, 2017  
JEREMIAH 22-26

### CHAPTER 22

This chapter contains prophecies that were uttered before those in chapter 21. As we encounter elsewhere in the prophets, Jeremiah's oracles are not always organized chronologically. Chapter 21 began with a word to Judah's last king, Zedekiah. Chapter 22 will concern itself with his three predecessors: Jehoahaz (Shallum) (22:11), Jehoiakim (22:18), and Jehoiachin (22:24).

- 22:1-5: The "king of Judah" is probably Jehoiakim. Zedekiah was told in the previous chapter that all hope of deliverance from Babylon was gone. In these verses, however, God holds out hope to the king, indicating a previous monarch. Additionally, vss. 11-12 indicate that Jehoahaz will not return from his captivity in a foreign land. Jehoahaz was Jehoiakim's immediate predecessor, but had been deposed and carried off to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho, who then replaced him with Jehoiakim (2 Chron. 36:2-4). The question of Jehoahaz's possible return and resumption of power was likely on the minds of the people during Jehoiakim's reign. Note, by the way, how God swears by Himself in vs. 5. He did this, occasionally, "because He could swear by no one greater" (Heb. 6:13).

- 22:6-7: Gilead and Lebanon were both noted in antiquity for the grandeur of their forests, Lebanon for its cedars, particularly. God was going to bring down the royal house and the nation, figuratively making the lush forest "a wilderness." This prediction—"You are...the head of Lebanon...they shall cut down your choice cedars"—may also be connected to vss. 14-15a. Jehoiakim's royal residence (new and/or remodeled) was paneled with cedar, the height of luxury (cf. 1 Kings 6:9; 7:3, 7; Hag. 1:4). This palace was going down with the nation. "O inhabitant of Lebanon, making your nest in the cedars, how gracious will you be when pangs come upon you, like the pain of a woman in labor?" (vs. 23).

- 22:18-19: Jehoiakim's death would not be lamented by the people, as was his father's (2 Chron. 35:25). Nor would he receive the customary burial of a king. Instead, his body would

be dragged outside the city, and left to the elements and the wildlife. We have no record of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Significantly, however, Kings and Chronicles make no mention of a burial for Jehoiakim.

- 22:24-30: After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin (Coniah) came to power. He was a carbon copy of his father (2 Kings 24:9), and his end would be equally disastrous.

## CHAPTER 23

- 23:3-4: Speaking of the return after the captivity, and the superior shepherds God gave the people (e.g. Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah), but may also look to the Messianic kingdom in which God has given His people good shepherds (pastors/elders).

- 23:5-6: Unquestionably Messianic. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, "the Branch" (cf. Is. 11:1; Zech. 6:12) is coming.

Beginning in vs. 9, the false prophets become the theme for the rest of the chapter.

- 23:9-10: Jeremiah is emotionally twisted in knots over the false prophets, God's pronouncements on the nation, the sins of the people, and the physical consequences ("the land mourns"—drought) already being endured because of these things.

- 23:15: God had pronounced the same judgment on the people (cf. 9:15). Ironically, these prophets, who made their living from what came out of their mouths, were going to perish by what goes into their mouths...figuratively speaking, of course.

- 23:20: See 30:24 for same sentiment. The expression "latter days" refers to the time of final fulfillment of any given prophecy, not always to the final "last/latter days." Here, it seems to refer to the long-predicted conquest by Babylon. When the Jews finally endured their punishment, some would come to see, as a result, how foolish they had been; they would be able to look at God's judgment and "understand it perfectly." Proper punishment is good for the soul.

- 23:23-24: cf. Prov. 15:3

- 23:30-32: Three times the triune God says, "I am against" the false prophets.

## CHAPTER 24

This chapter constitutes a single, self-contained prophecy. It came "after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) the son of Jehoiakim"—that is, sometime after the second "carrying away (597 BC). The people of Judah are likened to "two baskets of summer figs" (see Amos 8 where God employs "summer fruit" in a vision about Israel), some very good, and some really rotten. The good represent those already carried away into Babylon. From among them, a remnant would return and enjoy a physical and spiritual revival in the Promised Land. The bad represent the remainder of the nation. Bad days are coming for them (586 BC). They will reap the rewards of their stubborn rebellion.

## CHAPTER 25

- 25:1: "fourth year of Jehoiakim" (605 BC). This year was very significant. Egypt and Babylon had been vying for supremacy, and in this year, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish, thus establishing Babylon as the unquestioned world power in the Middle East. Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem for the first time not long after this historic victory.

- 25:11: First of three references in Jeremiah to the 70 years of captivity (cf. 25:12; 29:10).
- 25:15: It appears that we here begin to read about a vision Jeremiah had. He is told to take “this wine cup of fury” from the hand of God (which he does in vs. 17) to many nations and cause them to drink it. This is a familiar symbol in prophecy (Is. 51:17, 22; Rev. 16:19). One source comments on this: “Some relate it to the practice recorded in Numbers 5:11-31 where a woman suspected of adultery was required to drink a loathsome potion with disastrous results to her if she were guilty. Others suggest that the figure may go back to the practice of giving those who were marked for execution some brew to tranquilize them and render them incapable of struggle.” Whatever the case, all the nations listed in vss. 18-26 were being forewarned by Jeremiah that they would feel the fury of Almighty God.
- 25:30: “The LORD will roar” (cf. Amos 1:2)
- 25:31: “the LORD...will plead His case” (cf. Hos. 4:1)
- 25:38: “He has left His lair like the lion...” This is a frightening thought, to have God characterized in this way. “It is fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

## CHAPTER 26

Pretty straightforward narrative in this chapter.

- 26:1, 3: See comments on 22:1-5. In Jehoiakim’s day, God was still willing to relent concerning the Babylonian captivity. If we will repent, God will relent.
- 26:6: “like Shiloh....” Shiloh had been made the home of the tabernacle in Joshua’s day, and was home to the ark of the covenant, until Samuel’s day. Nevertheless, because of Israel’s wickedness, God had allowed the ark to be taken by the Philistines, and apparently, the tabernacle taken or destroyed (when the ark was returned, it never went back to the tabernacle). God destroyed His house once before, and was willing to do so again.
- 26:18: Jeremiah’s prophetic word confirmed!
- 26:24: Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, was a man of considerable influence. He is mentioned repeatedly in 2 Chronicles, 2 Kings, and Jeremiah. He protected Jeremiah from what the princes, people, priests, and (false) prophets would otherwise have done to him (vs. 16).

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

Good stuff, thank you, John!

I like the fact that several individuals named in Jeremiah have also turned up as names and titles on clay bulla (the bit of clay an official seal was pressed into as a signature), including Ahikam son of Shaphan. See the bit from The Archaeological Study Bible on 2 Kings 22:13 below.

(Arch SB) "The discovery of the Book of the Law caused great consternation on the part of King Josiah, who sent a delegation of five officials to Huldah the prophetess to “inquire of the Lord” (2Ki 22:13): Hilkiyah, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah. The names of four of the delegation members have been found on four seals and three bullaediscovered in Israel:

Hilkiah was the high priest who discovered the scroll of the law (v. 8). His name appears on a seal and a bulla of his son Azariah, who was also a priest and the grandfather of Ezra (1Ch 6:13-14; 9:11; Ezr 7:1). Hilkiah's name also appears on a seal of another son named Hanan. "Another bulla reads "Ahikam son of Shaphan," as in 2 Kings 22:12. No doubt Ahikam was a scribe like his father, who read the scroll of the law to Josiah (v. 10). It was Ahikam who later saved Jeremiah from death at the hands of the priests, prophets and people following the prophet's temple sermon (Jer 26:24). The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar appointed Ahikam's son Gedaliah governor of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem (2Ki 25:22). Fingerprints visible on the edge of the bulla are almost certainly those of Ahikam himself."

### Replies:

John Morris:

Didn't know we had any bullae besides the one of Baruch's that had fingerprints. Very cool.

### Comment:

Charles Fry:

Elnathan, the official who brought back the prophet Uriah from Egypt, is one of several intriguing characters in Jeremiah's story.

<http://www.livwat.com/articles/10053.html>

### Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

## May 5: Jeremiah 27-31 (Wade Stanley)

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vtmReQTMrFwKtsC-W2N\\_qLBJUZxbd\\_Q5ySiPrSnJRZE/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vtmReQTMrFwKtsC-W2N_qLBJUZxbd_Q5ySiPrSnJRZE/mobilebasic)

Jeremiah 27

Verses 1-11: God urges the nations that surround Judah to subjugate themselves to Nebuchadnezzar, God's chosen vessel to execute judgment.

Verses 12-15: God rebukes Zedekiah for listening to the false prophets who are encouraging rebellion against Babylon.

Verses 16-18: God rebukes the priests and the public for believing the false prophets' testimony.

Verse 19-22: God assures the nation that, contrary to the message of the false prophets, the temple will be sacked and its contents carried to Jerusalem until the days of Judah's punishment are fulfilled.

Jeremiah 28

Verses 1-4: Hananiah is identified as one of the false prophets who is promising that the house of the Lord will soon be restored and Jeconiah and the captive Jews will be returned to Judah.

Verses 5-9: Jeremiah confronts Hananiah and says a fulfillment of a prophecy attests to the origin of the prophet's message.

Verses 10-17: Undeterred by Jeremiah, Hananiah breaks the yokes worn by God's prophet and proclaims that Judah will enjoy peace; God reiterates His message and curses Hananiah to his death.

#### Jeremiah 29

Verses 1-4: This chapter contains a letter from Jeremiah to those captive Jews in Babylon.

Verses 5-9: God warns the people about the false prophets who promise a quick exit from Babylon; He encourages the people to settle in Babylon and resume the activities of daily living.

Verses 10-14: At the conclusion of the seventy years, if the captives will pray to God, He will hear them and restore them (see Daniel 9).

Verses 15-20: Those Jews who remain in Jerusalem who are contemplating rebellion will suffer for their lack of submission to God.

Verses 21-23: God condemns two false prophets by name.

Verses 24-32: God rebukes one of the priests in Babylon who has not imprisoned the false prophets circulating among the captives and has encouraged sedition.

#### Jeremiah 30

Verses 1-4: Jeremiah begins a book addressed to those who would return from captivity in the distant future.

Verses 5-11: A day approaches when God will judge those who held Judah captive and liberate a remnant of His people. Verse 9 is Messianic.

Verses 12-17: The chastening of God is the only cure for what has ailed the nation of Judah; those enemies who have sought their destruction will be destroyed.

Verses 18-24: God will reconstitute the nation and restore His relationship with this future generation.

#### Jeremiah 31

Verses 1-6: God expresses His deep love for Judah and His desire for their restoration.

Verses 7-14: Judah's restoration shall be an occasion for great rejoicing.

Verses 15-26: God will hear the tears of anguish and will respond with mercy; He urges the nation to repentance and promises to fully satisfy their longing hearts.

Verses 27-30: A parable circulated among the contemporary Jews, blaming their captivity on the actions of their forefathers; God will demonstrate that the parable is utterly false.

Verses 31-34: A promise of the new covenant; quoted by the writer of Hebrews in chapter 8.

Verses 35-37: The promises of God are sure.

Verses 38-40: A promise that Jerusalem will one day be restored.

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

## Comment:

Joanne Caffie:  
Is this the same king Nebuchadnezzar that involved Daniel, Shadrach, etc.?

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:  
Yes. Jeremiah and Daniel were prophesying during the same era. Daniel was in Babylon, Jeremiah in Judah.

Joanne Caffie:  
But after all the horrible things the king did to the Israelites why would (or did) God request them to bow down to him?

Wade Stanley:  
Babylon was God's instrument to punish the children of Israel for centuries of sin. By rebelling against Babylon, Israel was resisting the will of God. God was telling them to accept their punishment.

Charles Fry:  
And it isn't "bow" in the sense of worship, but in the sense of obedience to ruling authorities. It is the same principle taught by Jesus, Paul, and Peter, to obey and honor governing authorities set in place by God.

Along with that principle, Jehoiakim had pledged fealty to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC as the price of continuing to rule. He broke that pledge. His successor Zedekiah pledged fealty to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC as the price of his throne, and he broke that pledge. God takes oaths (covenants) very seriously. Nebuchadnezzar's wars against Judah and Jerusalem were directly motivated by their rebellions against his authority, which they had promised to obey.

## May 12: Jeremiah 32-36 (John Morris)

Reading for May 12, 2017  
PROPHECY: JEREMIAH 32-36

### CHAPTER 32

• 32:1: "tenth year of Zedekiah." 587 BC. Zedekiah reigned eleven years, and Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

• 32:2: "the court of the prison" (NKJV) or "the court(yard) of the guard" (NAS/ESV/NIV). This was part of, or adjoined, the royal palace (cf. Neh. 3:25), and was probably where the guard had its quarters.

• 32:7: This chapter is the only time we ever encounter the name Hanamel in Scripture. His father, Shallum, may have been the husband of Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14).

- 32:12: The first appearance of Baruch in Jeremiah. He will play a significant role as Jeremiah's scribe later in the book, reappearing in chs. 36, 43, and 45.
- 32:41: "with all My heart and with all My soul." God sets the example for us concerning how to go about doing His will.

## CHAPTER 33

- 33:7: As God so often does, after asserting that He will judge the nation for its wickedness, He follows that up with the promise of the return and revival. And as in 30:3 and elsewhere, God also states that the return will include captives from both the northern and southern kingdoms.
- 33:11: The first part of this verse reminds me of a similar prediction in Zech. 8:4, 5—empty, desolate cities shall again ring with the sounds of happy people. Better yet, though, the latter part of the verse describes that the people will be bringing true, heartfelt praise to God.

Vss. 14-22 are unquestionably Messianic.

- 33:15: "A Branch of righteousness" (cf. Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).
- 33:17: Even now, Jesus sits on the throne of David! (cf. Ac. 2:10; Mk. 11:9-10)
- 33:18: Even now, there is a royal priesthood, serving under the guidance of their great high priest (cf. Heb. 4:14-15), that is offering up spiritual sacrifices! (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5)
- 33:22: The references to the stars and sand take us back to God's promises to Abraham (cf. Genesis 15:5; 22:1). All who are a part of the "royal priesthood" are the spiritual descendants of David ("royal"), Levi ("priesthood"), and Abraham (cf. Gal. 3:7).
- 33:24: The "two families" are either Israel and Judah or David and Levi. Contextually, the latter is more likely.

## CHAPTER 34

- 34:5: Zedekiah will receive a royal funeral, accompanied by the burning of incense or spices, and the people will lament his death. This stands in stark contrast to what God predicted would become of his brother, Jehoiakim (cf. 22:18-19).
- 34:7: "Lachish and Azekah; for only these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah." And Lachish, apparently, was the last one left standing. We have correspondence from this time period between Lachish and central headquarters in Jerusalem. In Letter 4 of "The Lachish Letters," the commanding officer at Lachish writes to Jerusalem: "This letter certifies to The Commanding Officer/Jerusalem that I remain on duty to carry out your orders. Judah's signal fire at Lachish still burns, even after the [only other remaining] signal fire at Azekah has gone out!"
- 34:21-22: "which has gone back from you." Nebuchadnezzar's army had raised the siege, apparently, to go and intercept the Egyptian army that was coming to Zedekiah's aid (cf. 37:7-9). The Babylonians defeated them, the Egyptians went back home, and the Babylonians returned to resume their siege.

## CHAPTER 35

Typical of Jeremiah, we are now asked to switch chronological gears and go back in time to the days of Jehoiakim. The Rechabites are presented to Jeremiah as a striking example of long-standing obedience, even to an earthly father. They are contrasted with the nation of Judah that has a long-standing history of disobedience to the God of heaven! Judah God will punish with death, the Rechabites God will reward with life (35:19).

## CHAPTER 36

This entire chapter is straightforward narrative.

- 36:5: “I am confined.” Under what circumstances we don’t know. Jeremiah experienced imprisonment multiple times (cf. 20:2; 32:2; 37:15; 38:6), but we have no record of it under Jehoiakim’s reign. Judging from his statement, he may have been under some royal edict prohibiting him from entering the temple to preach.

- 36:30: Agreeing with 22:18-19.

- 36:32: Multiple bullae (singular: bulla)--ancient clay seals baked hard by fire--from Jeremiah’s day have been discovered, and at least two have been found that once belonged to “Baruch the son of Neriah the scribe.” One of them preserves the imprint of a finger. Since the seal belonged to Baruch, it is very possible that we have a fingerprint of the very man who penned the book of Jeremiah! You can Google for images, if interested.

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:  
Thank you, John!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:  
Another good read and good notes.  
I like Jeremiah 32:10-12 in reference to Revelation 5:1.  
Jeremiah 32:14 in reference to 2 Corinthians 4:7  
Jeremiah 32:18 in reference to Genesis 15:8-21

Connecting Jeremiah 34:1-3, the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, to Jeremiah 34:8-11, the people of Jerusalem, under siege, freeing their slaves, to Jeremiah 34:15, God was pleased that they freed the slaves (with a covenant vow). Then the siege was broken, as the Babylonians went to repel an approaching Egyptian army, Jeremiah 37:5 w/34:22 (cheating, looking ahead), and during the respite the men of Judah recanted their covenant oath and forced their slaves back into service, Jeremiah 34:16ff, bringing the severe divine rebuke for their faithlessness in 34:17-22, and the imminent return of the Babylonian army to finish what they had started. God is faithful to his covenants, even passing between the pieces himself in the person of Jesus on the middle cross. He has no pleasure in oath breakers.

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:  
Oh, and yes, Baruch, excellent character, largely unsung hero of the faith and contributor to our Bible! And the bullae with his name (and another with his brother's name) are excellent testimony to the historicity of Jeremiah.

## May 19: Jeremiah 37-41 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Today's section of Jeremiah is biographical and very accessible. Here is my summary of the highlights. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cg5tnwLPuAE8EOh7UYXwDV-o3obYYghdXr6G2GJZOKA/mobilebasic>

### Jeremiah 37

Verses 1-5: Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem because Zedekiah refused to submit to God's punishment; the Egyptian army breaks the siege.

Verses 6-10: Jeremiah is to warn Zedekiah that Egypt's appearance and Babylon's retreat should not be taken as a sign of relief; God will overthrow Jerusalem even if Judah defeated the Chaldeans.

Verses 11-21: Jeremiah is accused of defecting to the Chaldeans and is locked up; he continues to tell Zedekiah the truth and reminds the king that those prophets who promised that Babylon would not rise against Judah are gone; Jeremiah remains incarcerated.

### Jeremiah 38

Verses 1-6: The king's counselors convince Zedekiah to silence Jeremiah; the king turns the prophet over to them; Jeremiah is imprisoned in what appears to be an abandoned cistern.

- Archaeological Study Bible: A cistern is a collection chamber that gathers runoff. Cisterns typically have a bottle or bell shape, with a narrow top to prevent evaporation. The entire interior is coated with plaster, so that every drop of water is preserved. Water was drawn from a cistern in the same fashion as from a well. Homes could have private cisterns (see 2Ki 18:31; Pr 5:15); in fact, excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh, a site north of Jerusalem that is usually identified as the Biblical Mizpah, revealed 50 cisterns from the ninth century b.c. Cities had larger, public cisterns. In the temple area of Jerusalem, for example, excavators discovered 37 large cisterns, the largest of which is known as the "Great Sea." About 14 yards (13 m) deep, it can hold over two million gallons (9, 917 cu yd) of water! Also in Jerusalem is the Pool of Siloam, constructed by Hezekiah (2Ch 32:30) and embellished by Herod — the Upper Pool of Isaiah 7:3. In order to ensure a steady and reliable supply of water to this reservoir, Hezekiah undertook the construction of a tunnel aqueduct that travels over 547 yards (500 m) through solid rock from the spring to the cistern. Dry cisterns also served as detention cells (Ge 37:22-24; Jer 38:6).
- This may have been an attempt at cruel irony in light of God's comparison of Judah's unfaithfulness to a cracked cistern (see 2:13).

Verses 7-13: An Ethiopian eunuch rescues Jeremiah.

Verses 14-18: With the king's promise of protection, Jeremiah speaks freely, urging the king to surrender Jerusalem and thereby save both the city and the royal house.

Verses 19-23: Jeremiah urges the king to not fear those Jews who have defected to Babylon; if Zedekiah surrenders, he will live and the city will be saved.

Verses 24-28: Zedekiah commands Jeremiah to conceal their conversation from the counselors who seek his life.

### Jeremiah 39

Verses 1-10: Jerusalem is besieged; Zedekiah and his men of war attempt an escape but are captured; Nebuchadnezzar executes the royal family and the nobles of Judah in front of Zedekiah, removes his eyes, and takes him in chains to Babylon; much of Judah is carried away into captivity; Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, leaves a few poor people in the land of Judah.

Verses 11-18: Jeremiah is left to the care of Nebuzaradan who frees him and allows him to circulate among the people; God also promises to protect Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian eunuch who rescued Jeremiah.

### Jeremiah 40

Verses 1-6: Nebuzaradan gives Jeremiah the option of either returning to Judah or going on to Babylon; he ultimately urges the prophet to return to Judah.

Verses 7-12: Gedaliah, governor of Judah, urges the remaining Jews to live in peace as subjects of Babylon; Jews from other lands return to enjoy the fruits of abundant harvests.

Verses 13-16: Gedaliah receives reports that the Ammonite king contracted an assassin to remove the governor; Gedaliah is undisturbed by these rumors.

### Jeremiah 41

Verses 1-3: Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah.

Verses 4-10: Ishmael kills pilgrims from the north and takes the inhabitants of Mizpah captive to Ammon.

Verses 11-18: Johanan stands against Ishmael and rallies those taken captive by the agent of the Ammonites; they dwell near Bethlehem for a time and intend to escape to Egypt. a time with the intention of moving on to Egypt.

### Comment:

Steven Wright:

Maybe just a problem on my end, but I don't seem to have complete out line?

### Comment:

Doug Twaddell:

When I tap the link, I don't get all of it either.

### Comment:

Wade Stanley:

Hmm, not sure. It works for me. Here's another attempt at the link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cg5tnwLPuAE8EOh7UYXwDV-o3obYYghdXr6G2GJZOKA>

### Replies:

Steven Wright:

Same. It quits in the 42:11 - section With "fo"

Butch O'Neal:

Yup, me too. Same as Steve. (41:11)

Wade Stanley:

Sorry guys, that was just an incomplete sentence that has now been completed.

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

THANK YOU, Wade!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Ishmael the assassin is another of those characters in Jeremiah whose name (and partial fingerprint) has turned up on a hardened clay bullae.

King Zedekiah is such a tragic figure, a man who knew the truth and seemed to even believe it, but didn't have the courage to stand on the truth he knew.

### **Comment:**

Kevin Crittenden:

When Gedaliah was put in charge of the remnant and the Jews that had been scattered elsewhere returned, I assume that they took over the inheritance of those who had been taken into captivity. Now when the people later returned from Babylon, did they get their inheritance back or had they lost it for good?

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

You might say, that was the plan...

In 597 B.C.

2 Kings 24:14-17

14 He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans — a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

15 Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land. 16 The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans. 17 He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

NIV

Note especially v14b. Yes, the poorest people of the land were left to work the land. This is before the destruction of temple and city of Jerusalem. Then 11 years later when Zedekiah rebelled...

In 586 B.C.

2 Kings 25:11-12

11 Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon.

12 But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

NIV

Again, note v12, the poorest people, this time "some of" the poorest people left behind to keep the land in production. And Gedaliah to govern them. There were fugitives both times who had hidden or fled, that came back once the immediate threat was over. But then Ishmael murdered Gedaliah most of the scattered remnant in Judah joined together and went as refugees to Egypt, leaving very few people in and around Jerusalem.

2 Kings 25:25-26

25 In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood, came with ten men and assassinated Gedaliah and also the men of Judah and the Babylonians who were with him at Mizpah. 26 At this, all the people from the least to the greatest, together with the army officers, fled to Egypt for fear of the Babylonians.

NIV

So the writer of Chronicles observes that the land was nearly empty, and at rest for the 70 years.

2 Chron 36:20-21

20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21 The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

NIV

In the midst of the siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah in 587 had prophesied that people would return and resume their ownership and buying and selling of the land (Jeremiah 32, especially v.43-44).

When Ezra wrote of the return of the exiles after 70 years he mentions them returning and settling "in their own towns... in their towns" (Ezra 2:70). From the rest of the story in Ezra-Nehemiah we know there were people in the land who opposed the return of the Jews and rebuilding of Jerusalem, but generally they were people in the surrounding territories rather than occupants of Jerusalem and its satellite communities.

## Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you!

## May 26: Jeremiah 42-46 (John Morris)

Reading for May 26, 2017

JEREMIAH 42-46

### CHAPTER 42

• 42:1-6: The leaders of the rag-tag, Egypt-bound remnant approach Jeremiah, and probably panic-stricken, request that he ask God to tell them what to do. They promise to do whatever God says.

• 42:7: For reasons unknown to us, God makes Jeremiah and the remnant wait ten days for His direction. Good things come to those who wait, though.

• 42:9-18, 22: God instructs them to remain in Judah, assuring them that He will protect them from Nebuchadnezzar (who they fear will punish them for Gedaliah's murder, 41:18). If they refuse, however, and continue into Egypt, God promises that famine, disease, and sword will

overtake them there. It's the ultimate test. Will they trust in God, or lean on their own understanding? We face the same test. How are we doing, my brethren? I need to do better!!

## CHAPTER 43

- 43:1-3: Not surprisingly, the leaders of the remnant accuse Jeremiah of speaking false words. Inexplicably, however, they accuse Baruch (who was among them, 43:6) of putting him up to it! Baruch was his intimate companion, and perhaps an easier target than Jeremiah (the aged, venerable, and whose prophecies had thus far all come true!).

- 43:5: “all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all the nations where they had been driven.” Jews who had returned from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and elsewhere (cf. 40:11-12).

- 43:7: “Tahpanhes.” Pronounced like “Japanese.” Or...at least, that's how I say it. =) One author writes of this place: “Tahpanhes was situated at the eastern edge of the Egyptian Delta, some seven miles west of the Suez Canal. At one time before it dried up, the Pelusior branch of the Nile flowed past the site. The city was one of the major fortresses guarding the eastern entrance into Egypt. It was also an important commercial center since all the caravans going to and from Egypt passed through this city. The site was excavated by Sir Flinders Petrie, the famous British archaeologist, in 1886. He found the native name of the place to be Qasr Bent el Yehudi, ‘palace of the Judean's daughter.’ This name had for centuries preserved the memory of the visit of Zedekiah's daughters following the collapse of the kingdom of Judah.”

- 43:8-13: Jeremiah's first oracle in Egypt, probably delivered while the remnant was forced to wait at Tahpanhes to secure permission to travel in Egypt. As is evidenced earlier in the book, and in other works of prophecy, God believes in visual aids.

## CHAPTER 44

- 44:1: The renegade remnant settled in various localities in Egypt.

- 44:7-10: May we humble ourselves, learn from the word of the Lord and His chastening, and not be like these Jews. After all they'd lost, still they persisted in their idolatry!

- 44:17-18: This misinterpretation of their own history is so sad. Valiant efforts had been made to suppress the practice of idolatry during Josiah's reign, and it may have been then that these Jews had ceased worshipping the queen of heaven. But Josiah's reforms (as noble as they were) had been top-down, and the people's hearts weren't in them. The problems that had afflicted the nation since Josiah's death weren't due to a failure to worship the queen of heaven, but due to the people's failure to truly turn to God.

- 44:28: A small remnant of the remnant will escape God's judgment in Egypt, and return to Judah. Was Jeremiah in this remnant? Impossible to know, but we can hope so.

- 44:29: “And this shall be a sign to you....” To prove that this word was, in fact, from God and not from Jeremiah's imagination.

## CHAPTER 45

This is the shortest chapter in Jeremiah, and closes out the lengthy section of narrative we've been enjoying. We met Baruch for the first time in chapter 32, and hear about him for the last time here. This chapter takes us back in time, as it came “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim” (605

BC), the same year as Babylon's pivotal victory over Egypt at Carchemish (see notes on 25:1) just before Babylon's first assault on Jerusalem.

Baruch is overcome with sorrow (vs. 3), though why we are not told. Very possibly it is because of all the pronouncements of doom he's been hearing from, and writing down for, Jeremiah (cf. 36:1-4, 32). Perhaps in an effort to help him get out of himself, God reminds Baruch that He is about to destroy a place and nation He built over generations with great love and care (vs. 4). Baruch isn't the only one with something to hurt about! Finally, God warns Baruch against selfish ambition, and gives him, instead, something to be thankful for (thankfulness and selfishness don't co-exist very well)—his life will be spared in the coming desolation. Not many of his countrymen can say that.

## CHAPTER 46

Starting in this chapter, and running all the way to chapter 51, is a compilation of many of Jeremiah's prophecies to other nations: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. This chapter, specifically, predicts Pharaoh Necho's defeat by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (vss. 2-12), as well as Nebuchadnezzar's eventual attack on Egypt, itself (vss. 13-26) (cf. 43:8-13). Finally, it closes with a promise to Israel that they will someday return to their land, that though God will erase from history the nations around them, they still have a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11).

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Baruch is one of the less noticed heroes of the faith, but incredibly important in the plans that God had for his word. I suspect that Baruch's distress was due to his mandate to assist Jeremiah, which meant sharing danger and rejection, without much comfort or reward in the circumstances. He was a trained professional scribe, most likely with good career opportunities in government service, except for being tied to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 36:19 (NIV)

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

I also imagine that Baruch is the editor/compiler of the finished book of Jeremiah, and the author of the last chapter (note the last verse of Jeremiah 51), and so also the author of the last chapter of Kings. Jeremiah seemingly prophesied in Egypt in his final days, but someone, most likely Baruch, carried his work to Babylon, maybe around 560 BC (Jeremiah 52:31). We know the book was available for Daniel to study and understand in Babylon in time for the restoration of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:1-2) around 538 BC.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thanks brother!

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, brother John!

## June 1: Jeremiah 47-51 (Wade Stanley)

Hi everyone. Lord willing, our family will be on the road early tomorrow morning, on our way to Indiana for a VBS with Martinsville. Consequently, I am posting the notes for Jeremiah 47-52 today. It's a really long assignment. Here are my notes as concise as I could make them. God be with you.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16LeGfISa8QBdu2xk16eW0ysU2-XXqEiYWDRyHOsASyc/mobilebasic>

### Chapter 47

Verses 1-7: This chapter continues the Lord's word against the nations (see 46:1). Philistia, the ancient enemy of Judah, has entered the Lord's crosshairs. The destruction will come from the north (verse 2) and will be carried out by Nebuchadnezzar in 604 BC. Gaza and Ashkelon are mentioned by name. He also mentions that Tyre and Sidon, the cities of the Phoenicians, will be cut off from helping Philistia.

### Chapter 48

Verses 1-3: Moab, another ancient foe of Judah, is the subject of this lengthy prophecy. Josephus believed this was fulfilled in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (582 BC). Nebo, Kirjathaim, and Heshbon were all Moabite cities that were taken by Israel and allotted to the house of Reuben. Later, Moses designated Heshbon as a Levitical city.

Verses 4-10: Typical urgings to flee the coming destruction. Chemosh, the national god of Moab, is mentioned in verse 7.

Verses 11-17: Moab settled into a pattern of confident ease, having avoided the turmoil experienced by her neighbors. God assures us that this will change.

Verses 18-29: God promises to humble the proud cities of Moab; none will escape His judgment and the power of Moab will be broken; intoxicating drink is once again used to illustrate the mindlessness and debauchery of antagonistic foreign powers.

- Verse 27 tells us why God's fury was directed at Moab.
- Another fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (Genesis 12:3).

Verses 30-39: Contrary to what one might think, Moab's fall was not reason for God to rejoice. He laments that their pride had brought Him to this point and with His foresight He is moved by the anguish of the Moabites.

Verses 40-47: The prophecy draws to a conclusion by reiterating many of the themes expressed earlier. Like Egypt, Moab's destruction would not be complete annihilation. Josephus tells us that Cyrus the Great restored the remnants of the Moabite people. However, they never rose to prominence again.

### Chapter 49

Verses 1-6: Jeremiah prophesies against the Ammonites. Milcom, also known as Molech, the national God of the Ammonites is mentioned in verse 1. Like Moab, Ammon will suffer destruction, but the remnants will be restored (verse 6). Josephus says that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Ammon in 582 BC.

Verses 7-22: God directs His attention against Judah's southern foe, Edom. Typical prophetic warnings, descriptions and predictions.

Verses 23-27: Israel's enemy to the north, the Aramaeans and their capital city Damascus, is the next recipient of God's wrath. Hadad was a Aramaean deity. Ben-Hadad (literally "son of Hadad") is a reference to the king of Aram.

Verses 28-33: In 599, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Arab tribesman. Kedar, a region in northern Arabia, and Hazor, another kingdom in northern Arabia (whose exact territory is unknown) are the two victims of Nebuchadnezzar's assault.

Verses 34-39: Elam was located in the southern part of modern Iran. The Elamites were traditional enemies of both the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

#### Chapters 50-51

Intro: God dedicated much of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry to warnings about the successful conquerings of Babylon. In these two chapters, we learn that Babylon itself will be conquered. Persia (sometimes called Medo-Persia) led by Cyrus the Great would wrest control of the Middle East from Babylon. Daniel 5 offers an interesting insight into this momentous event. In a figurative sense, Babylon is antithetical to Jerusalem. Babylon is the city of confusion, a city built by man's defiance of God, a symbol of worldliness and godlessness. Compare with Revelation 18.

50:1-3: The gods of Babylon -- Bel and Merodach -- as well as the nation they represent will be conquered by a nation from the north (Persia).

50:4-20: God urges the captive Jews to leave Babylon when it is vanquished. Proud Babylon will be reduced to nothing; the city itself, the crown jewel of the ancient world, would eventually be abandoned forever. Israel and Judah will be pardoned and restored.

50:21-32: God will humble Babylon and repay her according to her works.

50:33-40: God's judgment is predicated on Babylon's mistreatment of His people. He reiterates that Babylon will be forsaken and includes a comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah.

50:41-46: More rumblings about the coming enemy. Babylon cannot stand against the judgment of the Lord and the earth will see it.

51:1-10: Though undeserved, God has not forsaken Israel and Judah. He urges His people to leave. Through conquering and alliances, Babylon has influenced many nations thus making her fall painful for many. The presence of God's people could have helped Babylon but they are left with no choice but to abandon her.

51:11-32: The time for war has arrived; through providence God has arrayed Babylon's enemies against her; in language reminiscent of Isaiah, Jeremiah compares the true and living God to the inanimate idols worshipped by Babylon; Babylon's defenders are disheartened and abandon their posts.

51:33-44: More variations on the theme of impending destruction.

51:45-51: God beseeches His people to abandon Babylon, to remember God and Jerusalem, and to repent of what they allowed to happen to the temple.

51:52-58: God brings His prophecy against Babylon to a climax, recapitulating earlier themes and assuring everyone that though Babylon is powerful and seemingly impregnable, it will fall.

51:59-64: The final words of Jeremiah's book command Seraiah, the quartermaster of Zedekiah, to read the words of this prophecy against Babylon when he arrives in the city, to pray for God's fulfillment, and to visually demonstrate the catastrophe that awaits Babylon.

Chapter 52

This chapter is a nearly exact parallel to the conclusion of 2 Kings. It was likely inserted at a later time by Baruch as a capstone to this final prophecy.

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thanks, Wade! Prayers for safe travels!

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Wade Stanley! We're so thankful to you and John Morris for excellent commentaries on books of prophecy! Marc and I haven't commented recently but we're still doing the study daily. This weekend we enjoyed reading out loud while we drove to and from St. Louis. Read further in Kings and Chronicles for detailed history. God bless your travels.