

GOD'S MESSAGES BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES

VOLUME 15

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOKS OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

BY
LEON D. STANCLIFF

B.A. ~ Speech
M.A. ~ Bible, Physical Science
Ed.S. ~ Education

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

2003



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**The Book Of  
JEREMIAH**



# *Introduction To Jeremiah*

## **I. General Background for the book.**

### **A. Historical background**

1. Good king Hezekiah had begun construction reform.
2. When he died in 698 B.C. evil Manasseh, his son replaced him.
3. He introduced idolatry and persecuted true worshippers.
4. Amon, his son, continued in his wicked ways.
5. After three years he was murdered and Josiah was placed upon the throne.
6. At an early age Josiah began religious reform.
7. Josiah began his reign in 641 B.C.
8. Ninevah of Assyria fell in 612 B.C.
9. Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon in 605 B.C.
10. When Pharaoh Necho marched through Palestine Josiah lost his life while trying to stop him.
11. Jehoahaz was put in his place by Pharaoh but reigned only three months before being taken to Egypt by Pharaoh.
12. His brother Jehoiakim was then crowned by Pharaoh.
13. When Nebuchadnezzar pushed through from the north Jehoiakim changed his allegiance.

14. Jehoiakim reigned eleven years before rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and losing his throne.
15. Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin (Coniah) followed, reigning for three months.
16. He was then taken to Babylon and kept for years.
17. The Babylonians appointed Zedekiah as a puppet king.
18. When Zedekiah conspired with Egypt Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem.
19. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon.
20. Gedaliah was appointed as governor but was soon murdered.
21. At this time the Jews who were left took Jeremiah into Egypt where his life concluded.

B. Social background.

1. The rich and powerful are completely unscrupulous.
2. The poor are bound into slavery without compassion.
3. Greed swallows up everything within its sight.
4. Deceit and lying are prevalent.
5. Robbery and murder take men's lives and possessions.

C. Religious background.

1. Syncretism is the order of the day with a blend of many kinds of false religion.
2. Formalism had paralyzed true religion.



3. Sensualism and degeneracy dominate the thinking.
4. Josiah made every effort to alter the conditions but was unable to change more than the outward appearances.

## II. The man, Jeremiah.

- A. He was raised in Anathoth, a priestly village.
- B. The son of Hilkiah.
- C. His life spanned the reign of five kings.
- D. He preached from the call in the thirteenth year of Josiah until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.
- E. His task was to pluck up, but also to build.
- F. Jeremiah and Josiah may have known each other as young boys.
- G. He was naturally timid, but God had called and would give him support.
- H. He was forbidden to marry or to be present at feasting or mourning.
- I. He was hated, isolated, and shunned.
- J. He was opposed by priests and prophets.
- K. He was from the upper class:
- L. Owns property.
- M. Had a secretary.
- N. Was acquainted with literature and history.
- O. He was a rebel.
- P. Against formalized religion.
- Q. Blasting kings and princes.
- R. Proposing surrender to Babylon.
- S. He was a statesman looking beyond the present to a new and better age.
- T. He has a rare sensitivity to the magnitude and consequences of sin.

U. There are a number of similarities between Jeremiah and Christ:

1. The simplicity of his teaching.
2. Opposition to formalism.
3. Weeping much over the people.

### **III. Nature of the book of Jeremiah**

- A. Difficult to follow systematically.
- B. Dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch.
- C. There is discrepancy between the Septuagint and the Hebrew.
- D. Tells of a time of chaos and decline.
- E. A wicked and shameless people will face punishment.
- F. Later a new covenant and a new age shall come into existence.

### **IV. Outline of the book**

- A. The call, Chapter 1.
- B. Condemnation of Judah.
- C. Denunciation and warning, Chapters 2-20.
- D. Charge against the rulers, Chapters 21-24.
- E. The sentence described, Chapters 25-29.
- F. Promise of restoration, Chapters 30-33.
- G. The penalty inflicted,
  1. Last years of the kingdom, Chapters 34-38..
  2. Destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 39.
  3. The wretched remnant, Chapters 40-45.
- H. Judgment of the nations, Chapters 46-51.
- I. Captivity and release Chapters 52-66.

### **V. Some great texts.**

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## *Chapter 1*

This first chapter tells us of the call of Jeremiah. The northern kingdom had already been in captivity for one hundred years. Now the southern kingdom was becoming just as wicked. God desired a man who would preach His Word to a people who had proven to be hard hearted and dull of hearing.

Jeremiah was the divine choice for the task. He was informed of the fact and felt that there must be others better qualified than himself. However, the Lord insisted and Jeremiah accepted the work in much fear and trembling.

**Jer 1:1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:**

There is much discussion over whether this Hilkiah is the same as the one who found the book of the law. We will not take the time to argue this point. There are more important issues upon which we can feed our souls. It is important that Jeremiah was born into a priestly family which lived in the city of Anathoth some three miles north of the city of Jerusalem in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

**Jer 1:2 To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.**

The date of this call was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. Josiah was known as a good king who did his best to turn the people back from their idolatry and immoral behavior to righteous pathways. He was

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not successful. The king lost his life without seeing any signs of a true reformation.

It was into this set of circumstances that Jeremiah had to enter to obey the call of Jehovah. This would have been an awesome assignment for any man, to say nothing of one who had just turned twenty years of age.

Jer 1:3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

Josiah began his work of preaching the word of the Lord at the age of twenty and this continued through the reigns of five kings. After forty years the Israelites found themselves in captivity and it is thought that Jeremiah may have continued to prophesy for perhaps another ten years before his life came to an end.

Jer 1:4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

It was not the word of Jeremiah which he preached. It was the Word of the Lord. Preachers make a serious mistake when they decide to improve upon the wisdom of Jehovah. God did not tell Jeremiah to preach just anything the prophet desired to present.

Jer 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

The young man was informed that he had been chosen to be a prophet. God had looked into the future and knew

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this was a man who could be trusted with the job which needed to be done. Note that God did not force Jeremiah to give up his freedom of choice between good and evil. Instead, He used His infinite foresight to find a man whom He knew would be dependable.

To sanctify is to “set apart for a holy purpose.” Vessels which were used in the worship of the tabernacle were sanctified and could not be used for cooking or eating a common meal. It would be well if some persons could realize the importance of respecting the building in which the worship is conducted. All too often children run and play as if they were out on the sidewalks. They emit shrill shrieks which do not indicate a respect for such a building. Clearly the building is not holy within itself, but it does become difficult to sober up and meditate upon holy thoughts.

**Jer 1:6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.**

Was this an admirable statement, or was it made in cowardice? There is a time to be bold and a time to tremble. This was not cowardly on the part of Jeremiah. He knew very well that a people who were bent on following their own pleasures would not readily listen to a young man who had just past adolescence. When he looked about him at the gray heads of hundreds of others, it is not surprising that he spoke of himself as being a child. Young men of this age are not noted for their humility. Jeremiah was only being realistic in stating that he did not have the experience to tackle the reformation of Israel. The job was too immense for him.

**Jer 1:7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send**

**thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.**

God's reply to Jeremiah was that this was not a correct stand. When He has spoken, He expects men and women to listen and obey. The preaching which the young man was to do was not to be originated in his own mind. It was the unlimited wisdom of the Creator Himself which would fall from the lips of this newly called prophet. When God is with us, who can be against us?

**Jer 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.**

He would most certainly find that the words he spoke would not meet with smiling faces. The priests would oppose him. The princes would oppose him. The people would oppose him. That was not the critical part of the decision. GOD would support him. That proved to be the case. Even though Jeremiah spoke in opposition to the pleasure seeking listeners, he lived to be a very old man.

**Jer 1:9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.**

The touch of the divine hand is unimaginably powerful. It brought the universe into existence. It caused the deaf to hear and the blind to see. It raised the dead to life. It will someday be the cause of the resurrection of multiplied billions. It was that hand which was to touch the tender lips of the hesitant twenty year old. He would speak the wisdom of the eternal God. There was no reason to tremble.

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

A farmer loves to see the results of his labors.. He plows the soil, plants the seed, removes the weeds and collects the harvest. Jeremiah would find himself doing this on a much grander scale. It would be entire nations who would be rooted up, It would be the Word of the Living God which he would plant in the hearts of those who would hear. It would be the princes and priests who would stand corrected for their sins. This man had no reason to fear any foe. He was to work in the vineyard of the Lord. The Lord would be with him.

Jer 1:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

God is about to show Jeremiah that there is an urgency about the assignment which he is being given. He will illustrate this by using a vision of an almond tree. The almond tree budded and blossomed before the rest of the trees in the area of Palestine. It would have been quite obvious to the young man what it was he was seeing. When God presented the vision He requested that Jeremiah identify what it was that he saw. His reply required no great effort upon his part. It was a rod from an almond tree.

Jer 1:12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

Jehovah then explained the reason for the use of the almond tree as a means of convincing the prophet that

there was to be no waste of time in beginning the work. He was about to take action and the people of Israel needed to know it would come about.

Jer 1:13 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.

The first vision of the almond tree was followed by another vision. This time it was a pot, seething with vapors and boiling hot. When Jeremiah was asked what he saw this time he answered that he saw the pot and that it was to be seen in the north.

Jer 1:14 Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

Jehovah then declared that there was evil coming from the north. It would cover the land of Judah and bring misery upon the disobedient people.

Jer 1:15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

Later we will find that the evil coming from the north includes the Babylonian forces under the command of Nebuchadnezzar. It is true that the main portion of the Babylonian empire lay to the east of Palestine rather than to the north, but it was necessary to go around the sea and invade Palestine from the north.

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But why is the plural used? Why speak of families and nations rather than merely naming Babylonia. An empire does not normally consist of one group of people. This one had swallowed up others. When the invasion came, the powerful leaders of that empire would use the gates of Jerusalem as courts of judgment. It would not be those of God's nation who would handle the gavel. It would be their conquerors.

**Jer 1:16 And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.**

From the very earliest days God had warned his people that they would be in great trouble if they decided to worship any other than Himself. He had said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This command had been treated as if it was of no importance. That was not to continue! They had even gone so far as to worship idols which they had made with their own hands. How foolish! Wood, stone and metal cannot see, hear nor bless.

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

Today we might well say, "Roll up your sleeves and get on with the work." Those of that day wore loose robes which were tucked into the belt in order to give freedom of movement. There was no time to lose. Jeremiah was to obey the commands of the Lord without hesitation.

Nor was he to be intimidated by frowns and scowls upon their faces. They would not like what God had to

say to them. If the prophet showed fear the people would become even more insolent. This would lead to confusion on the part of Jeremiah.

**Jer 1:18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.**

The latter part of the eighth chapter of Romans should be compared with the truths declared in this verse. Here is one man whom the Lord says will be as strong as a well defended city if that man is on the Lord's side. Neither princes, priests nor the people as a whole are strong enough to defeat a man armed with the sword of the Lord.

**Jer 1:19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.**

God made it crystal clear that the preaching would not meet with pleasure on the part of those who heard it. For too long Israel had gone their own way and turned their back on the Master of the cosmos. Many of them would rather die than kneel in submission. Yet Jeremiah was to do his part whether or not anyone listened.

Many a preacher of the present day will understand much of the opposition which Jeremiah was to face. There are those who meet every Sunday to be seen in the house of worship, yet they will fly into a rage if they are condemned for their wicked ways. Such a situation is not to bring a halt to the preaching of the gospel. The same held true for God's chosen prophet twenty-seven hundred year ago.

## Chapter 2

In the first chapter we had a record of the call of Jeremiah by the Lord in order that he might preach the Word of God to the people of Israel. They had gone so far astray that the Lord felt it necessary to make an appeal for a spiritual renewal and return to a much higher plane of righteous living. He had made such appeals over and over again, but the situation was becoming increasingly critical.

Although Jeremiah was but a very young man, he was selected to call for the change. He objected that he was but a child in comparison to the assignment which God had placed before him. God insisted that he accept the work and there was an agreement that he would do that.

This second chapter will spell out just how critical the Lord considered the matter to be. He will show what He had done for Israel, and then compare what Israel had done in response to His blessings. The picture is not a pretty one.

**Jer 2:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**

**Jer 2:2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.**

Jeremiah repeatedly reminds us that it was not his own message that he was proclaiming. It was that of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe who had originated the warning.

Israel is to be reminded of the dedication of His people as they left the land of Egypt to move out into the

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wilderness. Like a new bride, they had trusted their future in His hands. As a newly married woman, Israel had poured out her adoration for her God who was powerful and loving enough to overcome the power of Pharaoh and confidently follow His directions as she moved into the wilderness between Egypt and Palestine.

That wilderness was so severe that men had avoided settling in it. It had not been cultivated. No food had been raised and harvested. Following the pillar and the cloud, Israel had been delighted to accept the divine blessings. Some two million of them were led through that wilderness as they were fed and protected. They were conscious of the love of the Lord and they were ready to return His love in obedience.

Jer 2:3 Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

By saying Israel was holiness unto the Lord, He was declaring that they were a very special people in His sight. They needed Him and they knew they did. They were as precious to Him as a firstborn child or the first portion of the harvest which was dedicated to Him before anything else was to be taken for their own personal use.

God's concern over His people was so great that any who made the decision to injure them would face His wrath. Israel had already seen what happened to the Egyptians in the damage they suffered in the ten plagues. It should have been impossible for them to fear any enemy who might stand in their way. That was true in the time of Moses. It should still have been true in the time of Jeremiah; but sadly they had forgotten.

Jer 2:4 Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel:

Jer 2:5 Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

The Lord wished to know just how Israel felt He had neglectful in His care for them. During the reign of Manasseh they had turned from Him to the false gods of the neighboring people. They had proven themselves to be far more attracted to those gods who were no god, than they were to the Only One who had the power and wisdom to direct their paths. Where had their devotion gone?

Jer 2:6 Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

It seemed not to have occurred to Israel that it was not the false gods that had loved them and brought them through that horrible wilderness. Just a little reflection on their part should have caused them to be filled with gratitude for the one who had led them from bondage in Egypt and through such a difficult area as they had passed through.

Jer 2:7 And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

The One who truly loved them had taken them from slavery through deadly perils and into a land flowing with milk and honey. The response to that loving care had been that they polluted the land as well as their own souls. They were the possession of the Lord and they had turned themselves into an abomination.

Jer 2:8 The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

The ones who should have taken the lead in instructing the people had completely ignored Him. The priests, the prophets and the princes had led the departure from loyalty.

This, of course, is the general pattern when a nation departs from righteousness. The leaders become self centered. They think only of their own satisfaction. The people soon learn the horrible lesson and follow in their footsteps. In the case at hand the attraction was the pleasures of sexually oriented worship. Baal was no god, but as long as the people reveled in their fertility worship, they proved they preferred what this vain and useless imaginary god had to offer over what their True Husband offered.

Jer 2:9 Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.

Though Jeremiah, the Lord was still pleading with His people to repent of their evil ways and return to Him. Even if they failed to hear His plea, He would extend it to

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generations to come. That is precisely what He has done. Through the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ, the plea still rings out for men to discover what they have lost.

**Jer 2:10 For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.**

**Jer 2:11 Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.**

They are invited to search anywhere they choose. They will not find another nation which has forsaken a God as wise and powerful as He is that they might defile themselves with that which is utterly vain.

**Jer 2:12 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.**

Both heaven and earth are called upon to witness what has taken place. The earth lies polluted. The heavens watch in shocked amazement.

This causes us to wonder if the heavens mentioned here contain intelligent life which is conscious of that which takes place on this special speck of matter which we call earth. There may be lessons we mortals are teaching other spiritual beings of which we are completely unaware.

**Jer 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.**

Jeremiah was to inform Israel that they were guilty of two extremely serious types of sin. First, they had turned their faces away from the Source of the water of life. It is very commonly known that one week without physical water can be deadly to a human. It may take a little longer to cause one to meet eternal death from the denial of God's water of life. But it is certain death if it is continued.

The second type of sin Israel had committed was to seek refreshment from cisterns which leaked and could not hold water. It was not just that any water which might be found in such cisterns would be polluted; but because of the breaks in the walls there would be no water found in them.

**Jer 2:14 Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoiled?**

This question does not use the word spoiled as one speaks of a spoiled child. It has to do with losing that which one once possessed. Slaves have lost their freedom. Israel had lost far more than that.

**Jer 2:15 The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant.**

The young lions were the enemies who were now able to take prey from them without being hindered. Assyria, Babylon and Egypt all feasted upon them at one time or another. The cities of the land had been left in ruins, or if not yet in that state, they would be.

**Jer 2:16 Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.**

Noph and Tahapanes were cities of Egypt. Noph was Memphis. Tahapanes was once called Daphne. The Egyptians had been able to batter and bruise the pride of the sinful nation. God had permitted this because His people had in effect declared their independence from Him.

**Jer 2:17 Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way?**

This questions answers itself. This misfortune had not been forced upon them. They had chosen a way of life which invited just such consequences. One cannot direct his own steps. If the One who knows the way is forsaken, the traveler will be lost.

**Jer 2:18 And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?**

Israel lay between Assyria and Egypt. She would turn first toward one, then toward the other. Those waters would kill. They would not give life.

**Jer 2:19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.**

All that God really needed to do as punishment was to leave Israel to meet the natural consequences of their

sins. Without the support of the divine hand, either of these foes could not be overcome. Since they had failed to fear Jehovah, they would find themselves fearing those greedy neighbors.

**Jer 2:20 For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.**

There had been a time in which the people understood how God had broken the band of their bondage. They had declared their allegiance to Him. It was a most hollow promise. They had used both the high places and the groves of trees to pay honor to Baal. They had lowered themselves to the level of a common street harlot.

**Jer 2:21 Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?**

Israel was from the seed of Abraham, the father of the faithful. How tragic it was that from such a seed would come a weed instead of the noble vine which the Lord could expect from His planting.

**Jer 2:22 For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD.**

The stains of sin were so ingrained that the finest of cleansers known would be useless in removing them. It would have been much like trying to pour water on moldy bread to remove the mold. The bread would be in worse

shape after the attempted remedy. The remedy for the sin stains could only be found in the hand of God. And then it could only be useful if Israel repented of their wickedness.

**Jer 2:23 How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways;**

The people had no one to blame but themselves. They might try to claim innocence. This would be futile. It was clear to all that the nation was shifting directions like a running camel with no sense of direction. She would run first toward Egypt, then toward Assyria or Babylon.

**Jer 2:24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.**

She could well be compared to a female donkey who was in heat. The male would not even have to look for her. She would sniff to see which way the wind was blowing and she would find him. Israel was so passionate in her desire for the fertility rites of Baal that she would not be satisfied until she found them.

**Jer 2:25 Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.**

The path upon which the people were traveling would leave them barefooted and thirsty. She was so spiritually

blind that she did not even see the catastrophe which lay ahead. If she wished to love those who would betray her, she would ignore all warnings.

Some men and women of the present day are just as blind. They will go to a party, meet a stranger and go to bed with that stranger, only to find later that they have a disease which will remain with them unto the end of their lives.

**Jer 2:26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets.**

When a thief is apprehended in the midst of his crime, he finds shame heaped upon his head. An even worse shame was to come upon that people who had taken the glory of God and left it trampled on in their haste to share in the sexual sins associated with the worship of Baal.

**Jer 2:27 Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.**

The stock was an image carved from the pole left when a tree was cut off at several feet from the surface of the ground. Israel was so foolish as to bow before such a stump and glorify it as if it had brought them to life. If it were not so tragic, it would be humorous that when help was desperately needed, the people would run back to God for assistance. If it would not be the stock which would be called upon. It would be Jehovah. Such ignorance!

**Jer 2:28 But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.**

If Israel is so insistent on worshiping groves and stocks of trees let them call out to those vanities for help in time of need. There were certainly enough of them. However, tree stumps do not come to one's assistance in a time of need or perilous danger.

**Jer 2:29 Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD.**

It would be useless for Israel to come crawling on their knees to Jehovah after having made it so plain that His will meant nothing at all to them. He had done them no wrong. Yet they had shown no remorse over having broken His laws. That kind of behavior is not the kind which makes friends and influences the Lord.

**Jer 2:30 In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.**

Generation after generation God had allowed bitter experiences to fall upon the disobedient Israelites. It made little difference. They followed false prophets and murdered the faithful ones. They treated those who tried to correct them as if they were roaring lions.

**Jer 2:31 O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land**

**of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?**

In the darkness of Egypt and the wilderness of Sinai, the people had received help. In spite of that help, they had decided they had no need of a God they could not see. They would make their own laws.

**Jer 2:32 Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.**

This is one of the most vivid statements in the entire book of God. A bride places her wedding gown in a cedar chest. She opens that chest on occasion to bring back the memories of those days of bliss in the time of the honeymoon. As the bride of the Lord, Israel had taken the opposite direction. She had allowed God's rivals to push the precious memories out of their minds.

**Jer 2:33 Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.**

Israel had gone so far as to learn new ways to find satisfaction. Jehovah was not enough. She needed the orgies which were offered by the servants of Baal. She had actually become so skilled in her wickedness that she could teach the street walkers a thing or two.

**Jer 2:34 Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.**



The Lord had not had to search for the sins. They were evident on every hand. Innocent persons had been killed in their made rush to find pleasure. One would have had to be blind not to see the filth with which they had covered themselves.

**Jer 2:35 Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.**

There is some disagreement about the grammar in this verse. There are quite a number who feel the verse is saying the people had persuaded themselves that they had not faced the anger of God because they were not guilty. The real reason was that He had not quite reached the degree of wrath which would be felt not too far in the future.

**Jer 2:36 Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.**

Their determination to find assistance by alliances with Egypt when attacked by Assyria, and in Assyria when attacked by Egypt, would leave them embarrassed and ashamed of both of these evil companions.

**Jer 2:37 Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.**

When one is in great sorrow and has no more place to turn, the hands will sometimes be placed on both sides

of the head to ease the confusion. Other times the hands may be placed upon the head as that person is marched as a prisoner who has been defeated in battle. Such shame was ahead for those who had despised the Lord who had blessed them so abundantly.

## *Chapter 3*

Humans find it very difficult to learn lessons from observing the facts of history. That point is illustrated with great force in this chapter. The northern kingdom of Israel had been punished for her infidelity to the Lord. The southern kingdom of Judah should have learned the importance of obedient trust. She did not do that. As a result she was to join her older sister in captivity.

**Jer 3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.**

“They say” indicates that not only has God spoken on this matter; men and women around the world understand the distance between a husband and a wife who has turned from him to join herself to another man. Such behavior is a disgrace to the land in which it occurs.

Jeremiah uses this truth to warn Judah not to continue her wayward ways. Spiritual harlotry is even more disgraceful than fleshly harlotry. How can a nation which has filled itself with idolatry expect the Lord to take her back as if she had never betrayed Him?

**Jer 3:2 Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness.**



High places is probably a better description of the sites where God's people had gone to worship their idols. Most of these places are not what many of us would label as mountains. They were, however, higher than the surrounding land. Jeremiah challenged those of Judah to lift up their eyes and fasten them upon those high places and see if there were any of them where God's people had not practiced their adulterous actions with their sexually oriented worship of idols. The implication is that they would have great difficulty in point out a high place where they had not sinned.

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

There were two serious consequences of those sins. First, the rains which would normally have watered the fields in the spring had not come. Harvests would be drastically reduced. Second, His people had marked themselves as whores who were not even ashamed of their pollution.

Those women who made themselves available to many different men were marked on their forehead to indicate their way of life. God's wife had marked herself in His eyes.

**Jer 3:4 Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?**

It was high time that the Lord be recognized as He who had brought them into existence and had guided them with holy instructions. The sins they were entering into were positive proof that they had rejected Him. He

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was still pleading with them to apply the truths they had been taught and turn from their affair with the idols.

Jer 3:5 Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

Just how long could God restrain Himself from punishing them? Would He never call them to account? In our own day we would say that His people had done everything they were big enough to do, whether right or wrong. This had consisted of both words and actions. This must be discontinued.

Jer 3:6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

Manasseh had been a very wicked king. Under his rule Judah had departed from righteousness. Josiah attempted to restore some semblance of loyalty to the Lord, One hundred years before the time of Jeremiah and Josiah, the northern kingdom had gone into Assyrian captivity as a result of just such sins as Judah was committing a century later. Jeremiah was called upon by the Lord to take note of the horrible situation which had come about in the southern kingdom. Josiah's efforts had only produced a surface reformation. The hearts of Judah were still not focused upon Jehovah. She was guilty of backsliding.

There is more to this matter of backsliding than just relaxing the conscience and taking life as it comes. The backslider, as mentioned here, is one who plants his feet and stiffens his back in resistance to being led.

Jer 3:7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

God had given the northern kingdom every opportunity to give up her rebellious ways and resume a proper relationship with Him. Even so, she had set her will up higher than that of her spiritual husband. Those of the southern kingdom of Judah had a double opportunity to learn. The Word of God had been taught to them. The plight of the northern kingdom had been clearly visible to them. There was no excuse for following in the tracks of her older sister.

Jer 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

God had not failed to take note of what was happening, any more than a human husband would overlook the signs that his wife was playing the field. He had watched for Judah to learn from the things which had happened to Israel. Rather than seeing a sign that Judah had attempted to avoid the sins of Israel, He had seen her join her sister in adultery with idols.

Jer 3:9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

We might consider the word “lightness” of her whoredom to be just the opposite of serious. Not so! It was because Judah had taken the entire scene so “lightly” that

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she was in danger of having the same bad consequences as Israel had.

**Jer 3:10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.**

To “feign” is to pretend. The half hearted reformation which Josiah had inspired was only a put on. We are expected to worship God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. We may occasionally slip, but it should not be because we do not really care.

**Jer 3:11 And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.**

The reason for the Lord’s statement here is that Israel had not had the opportunity to see what Judah had seen. Even though Judah had seen what happened to Israel, she walked the same path.

**Jer 3:12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.**

The north was where Israel had been and also the direction which she took when being captivated. Assyria lay to the northeast of Israel.

Even at this point the Lord would have been willing to receive the northern kingdom back into His good grace if she had been willing to repent. If sometime in the future she did make that decision God’s anger would be restrained.

**Jer 3:13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.**

The key to a return was the acknowledgement of the transgression she had committed. She had been willing to carry on with one idol after another. She had not been willing to heed the voice of her Maker.

**Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:**

The day would come in which a remnant of Israel would return to her Husband. It would be a small fraction of the number who went into captivity, but there would be a faithful remnant, and they would be blessed.

This promise has two applications. First, both the southern and the northern kingdoms had a remnant return to Canaan. Second, a small fraction of the Jews would later accept the Messiah and become one as His bride, along with gentile believers.

**Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.**

The word “pastor” is closely related to the word “pasture.” A pastor is one who guides the sheep of God to rich pastures. The food which the pastors were to provide was knowledge and understanding of the Word of the Lord.



**Jer 3:16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.**

When the days spoken of in the previous verse came, the Mosaic age would be replaced by the Christian dispensation. The ark contained the ten commandments and a copy of the law. The new covenant would not require earthly Jerusalem to be the center of Jehovah's worship. The spiritual Jews who believed in Christ would be coming from all nations. Wherever two or three were gathered in His name, He would be in the midst of them.

**Jer 3:17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.**

The focus changes a bit right here. With the decree of Cyrus that the Jews could return to Palestine, they would no more kneel before their idols. They would know Jehovah is Lord. Their hearts would be turned to Him.

**Jer 3:18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.**

Upon the return there would be no northern and southern kingdoms. There would be one Israel. Canaan

would once more become the inheritance promised to God's own. However, there would be two steps in this process. The first would be the return of a united people to the earthly land of Canaan. The second would be the inheritance of the Kingdom of God under His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Jer 3:19 But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.**

There was but one way the Lord could give a rebellious people a favored name once more. They would have to recognize Him as a loving Father. Then they could be treated as He had wished to treat them from the time He had first chosen them.

The goodly heritage of the hosts of nations would be the family of God which heard His call and came to Him from all the nations of the earth. This would of course include the Gentiles.

**Jer 3:20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.**

The people are reminded that their treacherous actions were not acceptable. If they were to find themselves in His favor once more it would be because they had confessed their sin and were willing to do His will.

**Jer 3:21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel:**

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for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

The voices which God heard from the high places was due to His people having turned from Him to idols. They had placed their confidence in sticks and stones and had failed to remember the blessings of the Lord who had led them as a Good Shepherd leads his sheep.

Jer 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

The reader may have noticed the repeated use of the term “backslider.” Jeremiah finds it a very close fit for those who have once enjoyed God’s blessings, and then insulted Him by praising that which was no god. If they have truly understood the error of their ways, He is willing to return their affection.

Jer 3:23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

It was faulty reasoning which caused Israel to head for the idols of the high places to find salvation. That could only come from the hand of the God of heaven. The mountains and the hills were far from being high enough to contain the True God. He is higher than the highest heaven.

Jer 3:24 For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.

Our chapter closes with what appears to be a genuine confession of sin upon the part of those who had once been God's beloved. They had squandered the efforts of their ancestors who had been faithful. This could be seen in the damage done to both their livestock and their families. Those who truly understood the need for divine guidance would blush in shame.

Jer 3:25 We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

When one goes to bed, that one lies down on a mattress and covers himself with sheets and blankets. Israel had laid themselves down in shame and pulled a covering of confusion over their heads. This had gone on for an extended time. As long as they could remember they had ignored the Lord whom they should have recognized Him as their Creator, Sustainer and Provider.

Chapter 4

At this point the threat from the Babylonians has become very real. The chapter tells of Jeremiah's tear filled plea that God's people might hear and repent before the storm strikes.

Jer 4:1 If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.

How long suffering the Lord is! Even at this time if Israel and Judah will reconsider their sinful ways, He is ready to respond to such a change of heart. But this has to mean a true and whole hearted turnabout. Under those conditions they need not fear being removed from the promised land. Otherwise such a removal is certain.

Jer 4:2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

Oh how much His people could have accomplished if they had remained true to Him. If they had loved truth, lived in righteousness, condemned the wrong and encouraged the right, other nations could have been inspired by their faith and glorified in the Lord of all men. That had not been the case.

Jer 4:3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

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The message is particularly directed to the southern kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem now. There is work which should have been done. The seed of God's Word should have been planted and produced a bountiful harvest of souls. Just the opposite had taken place. The soil had been allowed to grow up in thorns. It lay uncultivated with almost no hope that any change would be made. Mankind would have to wait while those of Judah and Jerusalem wasted their time and energy in worshipping idols in the high places.

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

Circumcision was a cutting off of the flesh which was required of every male child born to the Jews. It signified a willingness to forego fleshly desires and dedicate one's self to the divine will. The circumcision which is called for here is a cutting off of the evil thoughts of the heart. It is spiritual circumcision rather than fleshly. Unless this was done they could expect the fury and wrath of the Lord to sweep over them like an unquenchable fire.

**Jer 4:5 Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.**

Just how late was the hour? It was so late the enemy was on the way. It was time to blow the warning trumpets which would call the citizens of Judah to prepare for the coming storm. There was a need to gather within the

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walled cities where they might defend themselves as well as possible. Even that would prove not to be sufficient.

Jer 4:6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

To set up the standard was to lift a banner over Mount Zion to let the enemy know there would be resistance to the invasion. It would do little good. The Chaldeans were coming en masse from the land of Babylonia. The destruction they would wreak upon Judah would be horrible.

Jer 4:7 The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

The symbol of the Babylonians was that of a lion. Vicious lions inhabited the thickets near the Jordan river, and would pounce upon prey which came too close. The Babylonians were leaving their own land to make this strike against the cities of Judah. God promises through Jeremiah that it will be impossible to defend those cities. They were to be leveled to the ground. The inhabitants would be taken away.

Jer 4:8 For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.

They might as well dress in sackcloth and grieve. It would be a waste of time to attempt a stand against

this powerful enemy without the support of Jehovah. Since they had insulted Jehovah, they could expect doom.

Jer 4:9 And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

Shock and amazement were to strike every level of society. Rulers, priests and prophets would be just as weak and helpless as the lowliest peasants. This was hardly what Israel expected to happen. Were they not God's peculiar people? In the past such events as the victory over Pharaoh came to their mind. God had been there in the past. Surely He would be there again.

Jer 4:10 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Some of the commentators see great difficulty in finding the meaning of this verse. It does seem that the troublesome people of God had made the mistake of believing their false prophets who had been teaching them their sins were not serious. Everything was bright and rosy ahead. Peace was assured.

Now look what Jeremiah was saying. The sword of the Babylonians was on it's way from the north country. It would succeed in reaching into the very depths of the hearts and souls of all men.

Jer 4:11 At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high

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**places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,**

The message now was that a destructive wind would move through the land. There were two kinds of wind. One kind was helpful in the harvesting of grain. It blew the chaff away and left the kernels of wheat. This wind which was coming upon Judah now was not helpful. It would leave ruins in it's wake. God's sinful people would have reason to weep bitterly.

**Jer 4:12 Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them.**

**Jer 4:13 Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.**

The full wind was the army of Nebuchadnezzar. The judgment of the Lord was that sentence must be passed against His spiritual wife who had committed such spiritual adultery. It would be as when storm clouds gather and cover the sky. The war chariots would be drawn by swift horses and would be impossible to resist. The statement "Woe unto us!" sounds exactly like our saying in these later days, "Woe is me!" No truer statement was ever made than the one the citizens of Judah were making.

**Jer 4:14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?**

A dirty heart can cause death. The only remedy for the coming tragedy was to remove the wicked thoughts

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which they had been entertaining. The truth was that it was already too late. Israel was not about to change, and the enemy was thundering closer and closer. The lightning would soon be flashing.

Jer 4:15 For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim.

Dan was a city in the far north of Canaan. The Babylonian forces would pass through that area first as they moved southward toward Jerusalem. The word was arriving before the enemy came into sight. Damages were already being inflicted.

Jer 4:16 Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

The nations were those in the area whom God had declared could have been taught of the glory of the Lord if Israel had remained true to Him. Now they would see the people of Israel go down to utter defeat. That would bring disgrace upon the One who should have been honored.

Jer 4:17 As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.

The keepers of a field would set up watch to see that nothing escaped their harvest. The watchers of Babylon would take their harvest back to the land between the rivers. All of this would be the result of Judah's rebellion toward the One who had blessed and kept her for centuries.

Jer 4:18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

This tragedy was not the fault of Jehovah. It was the direct result of the evil hearts of the people. They had given themselves to idols. They had played the whore with any who offered them pleasure for a moment. Their hearts had been untouched by every plea from God's prophet Jeremiah.

Jer 4:19 My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

It is the prophet who cries out over his inner despair. To the very depths of his being he is sick. No physician was able to prescribe a medicine which would change the turmoil to peace. His soul could only say, "I hear the trumpet calling for the destruction to begin."

Jer 4:20 Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

This was not to be just an arrow flying here and there. It was to be such an upheaval that wave after wave of terror would come. The damage would be swift and complete. It would come in a moment. It would reach into the humblest of living quarters.

Jer 4:21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

The pronoun turns to the first person now. God is asking and answering some critical questions. It was very unpleasant to see the banners waving over the horses and chariots. The call of the trumpet to sound the beginning of the battle pierced into God's own heart. Why did it have to be this way?

Jer 4:22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

The reason was that the people of Israel and Judah had been stupid. Sottishness is related to drunkenness. His people had lost all semblance of rationality. They had practiced evil so much that they knew just how to bring it about. They had neglected to do good until they had forgotten how. There is no sadder sight than to see one who has in the past known to do that which is right, but who has turned from it to answer the call of the devil.

Jer 4:23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

When God created the heaven and the earth it was first said to be without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The ruin coming upon Judah was so great that it could be compare to that undone condition.

Jer 4:24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

The quaking of the ground was such as resembled a great earthquake. We are today familiar with the rumble of a freight train in the middle of the night. This may be a way of comprehending what the noise of the battle was like.

Jer 4:25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

Jer 4:26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger.

All the land which had flowed with milk and honey was turned into a desolate wilderness. The humans had been killed or taken away captive. The cities had been hammered by the anger of Jehovah. When God blesses, men have reason to give thanks. When God punishes, men have reason to weep bitter tears.

Jer 4:27 For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

Just a little imagination will bring a tear to the eye of a servant of the Lord all these years after the fact. Almost nothing was left of the blessedness of the past. Notice that I said, "Almost nothing." God made a solemn promise that He would not make a full end of His people and their hopes. We know today that the remnant which remained from such destruction was used as a base for the coming of the Son of God to send the gospel call ringing across every nation of the world. God's eternal plan will not be erased.

Jer 4:28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

But for the time it must have looked as though everything was hopeless. God swore that He would devastate the land and the people. He would keep His word.

Jer 4:29 The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.

The Israelites would be so soundly defeated that they would leave the city of Jerusalem and try to hide in the mountains and thickets where the horses could not go and the enemy could not see them.

Is this not a hideous sight. The people who had once conquered this land and driven out those whom God had condemned for their wickedness, were now being condemned and conquered for their own wickedness. Oh what fools we mortals be!

Jer 4:30 And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

What was to be the aftermath of the defeat. Would God's people dress up like a scarlet harlot to attract help from men? That would hardly do. These were the very ones who rejoiced to see her agony.

Jer 4:31 For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

Judah was in such pain that it could be described as that of a woman in the throes of labor pains in the birthing of her first child. She sometimes cries out loudly for help. She spreads out her hands in a plea for assistance. She condemns those who cause her misery as murderers. What she should have been doing was determining that she will not repeat those sins for which she was being punished.

Chapter 5

We have, in chapter four and chapter five, an example of the chronological problem found in the book of Jeremiah. Chapter four talks as if the complete destruction of Jerusalem had already been accomplished. Chapter five discusses the coming ruin at the hands of the Chaldeans. This leads some writers to see the book as a patchwork, written at different time periods and assembled after the fact.

It is possible that Jeremiah is talking about a vision in chapter four, and then returns to his own warning period before the destruction in chapter five. This is not the only place where the problem of time sequence is puzzling. We will handle this chapter as dealing with a time before the attack on the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem.

Jer 5:1 Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.

Jeremiah is challenged to go out into the busy parts of the city of Jerusalem where he can come into contact with many persons. He is to do his best to find a man who seeks truth and exercises good judgment. If he finds such, the Lord will pardon the city. This is hyperbole, or exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. We today might say, "The whole city had gone to the dogs." The ancient historian Diogenes was said to have gone out into the streets with a lantern in broad daylight in a search for an honest man.

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**Jer 5:2 And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.**

The citizens of the city found it easy to say that as surely as the Lord lives—This was meaningless. This can be seen as using the Lord’s name in vain. One ought not to dare use the name of Jehovah when his entire life denies that he believes God even exists. Jeremiah is grieved that there is such little respect for the God of all the earth.

**Jer 5:3 O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.**

The prophet wonders why the Lord can present truth to men and then find them defying that truth. They have been punished severely, yet have set their jaw and continued on their wayward paths.

**Jer 5:4 Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God.**

Jeremiah attempts to find an explanation in the fact that he has first gone to the poor and uneducated. Perhaps it was because they simply did not know any better. Maybe they had not heard or understood the truth, or maybe they failed to grasp the seriousness of ignoring God’s warnings.

**Jer 5:5 I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way**

**of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.**

To check on such a possibility Jeremiah decided to go to the influential men of the city who would have no excuse of ignorance to present. When he did this he found that they were just as rebellious as the poor and deprived were. The nobles were more apt to think they were capable of directing their own steps. They refused to wear the yoke which the Lord placed upon their shoulders.

**Jer 5:6 Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased.**

The wild animals mentioned here had the characteristics of the Babylonians. They were as intimidating as a roaring lion. They were as vicious as a hungry wolf. They were as swift as an attacking leopard. The result would be that the Israelites would be demolished as the Lord brought punishment upon them for their hearts which were as hard as stone.

**Jer 5:7 How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.**

Did they truly believe God would forgive them for what they were doing. They had been blessed

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bountifully. It made no difference. They departed from His commandments and ran in masses to the houses where idols were worshipped. They were abandoning the source of their spiritual blessings and sitting at the empty tables of the false gods.

Jer 5:8 They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

Was this adultery limited to wayward hearts, or did it include sexual promiscuity? This verse can hardly be misunderstood. Each man was like a stallion who neighed after his neighbors wife. The sin was both spiritual and fleshly.

Jer 5:9 Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

The people might well look forward to punishment for insulting the Lord in their unfaithful way of life. The nation must be punished.

Jer 5:10 Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD'S.

This command is meant for the Babylonian warriors. They were given permission to destroy the city. The supposedly invincible walls and gates were to fail before the attack. The people had forsaken the Lord. He was ready now to forsake their defense, and He had good reason to do that.

Jer 5:11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD.

Jer 5:12 They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine:

Both the northern and the southern kingdoms had betrayed God. They might as well have sworn that He did not exist. They had acted as if He was a liar. They felt that since they were known as the “elect” of the Lord, no serious harm could befall them.

Jer 5:13 And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.

Any prophet who spoke the truth to them was considered as being full of “hot air.” Because they had rejected the Word of the Lord, they would find it was not hot air which had been offered to them. It was God’s truth.

Jer 5:14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Since the truth as presented by Jeremiah had warned Israel without having been heeded, God would cause His Word to be much more than hot air. It would be fire which would devour the insolent people as a forest fire sweeps across the land.

Jer 5:15 Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty

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**nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.**

The punishment would consist of an invasion by a foreign nation. It would have three qualities.

1. It would be mighty and powerful.
2. It would be one which had been around a long time.
3. It would be one whose speech would not be understood.

All of these characteristics fit the Babylonians extremely well. Israel would have reason to tremble before them.

**Jer 5:16 Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men.**

The quiver held the arrows of the bowmen. That quiver was capable of swallowing up the lives of the unfaithful Israelites. There would be no successful means of protection against them.

**Jer 5:17 And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.**

Israel had not appreciated the fact that the Lord had provided their food. They would now have the opportunity to find out what it was like to have that blessing removed from their lives. The invading army would consume the food and leave their cupboards bare. Both meat and bread

would be taken from them. Nor would the fences or walls around their cities prevent this from happening. The sword of the enemy would be too sharp.

**Jer 5:18 Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you.**

As He had done in verse ten above, God assured them that He would not bring the nation to a complete end. There was to be a remnant kept from extinction. There were still plans for the seed of Abraham. The Babylonians would not eradicate those plans. The branches of the vines might be lopped off. The stems might be cut down to the ground. But the roots of the nation would be left to rebuild it in time for the Saviour to make His appearance.

**Jer 5:19 And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours.**

The people would ask why the Lord God would allow all these horrors to come upon them. The prophet was to make the answer absolutely clear. The misery had come because the people had shown far more love for strange gods than they had for Him. Therefore, He would send them into a land of strangers where they would become servants of those strangers.

**Jer 5:20 Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,**

**Jer 5:21 Hear now this, O foolish people, and**

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without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

A new message was then to be delivered to the people of the once chosen nation. They had closed their eyes and stopped their ears in the past. Now that they had opened their ears to ask why this was happening, He would tell them.

Jer 5:22 Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

They had failed to honor His authority. The laws of the entire creation had been put in place through that authority. Even the heaving waves of the sea were under His control. They remained within the bounds which He had set for them.

Jer 5:23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

While the natural world lived and moved at His command, Israel had decided they would defy Him. Their will would be set up in opposition to His. There was no fear nor trembling before His majesty.

Jer 5:24 Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

It would be well if the noblemen of the earth in our present day could learn the lesson God was placing

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before Israel then. The order that brings blessings to men through the finger of God cannot be replaced by the wisdom of men. Scientists may make hydrogen bombs, but it was God who made the hydrogen and put into place the scientific laws which regulate it's activity. The rain does not disappear for a century and then return. It comes at times which make the harvest possible. Man is only beginning to scratch the surface of the infinite knowledge of Jehovah the Lord. We need Him, and we had better believe it!

**Jer 5:25 Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.**

Why had Israel lost so many of these blessings. It was because they had lacked any gratitude for the love of the Lord which made them possible.

**Jer 5:26 For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.**

It was not necessary to look into the strange lands to find those who lived by evil rules. Such persons lived within the very walls of the capital city of the Jews. They did not hesitate to take any advantage possible with respect to their fellow man.

**Jer 5:27 As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.**

There are two possible meanings in this twenty-seventh verse. The unfeeling power mongers treated

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other men like caged birds. They became rich and fat at the expense of those whom they entrapped. Some writers believe this is a reference to decoy birds placed in a cage to lure wild birds into position where they could be snared and made use of.

Jer 5:28 They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

Either way, the powerful were walking in ungodly ways. They overlooked the wicked deeds of the ungodly. They failed to stand up for the rights of the poor and needy. They lived by a set of values which was quite the opposite of that which the Lord laid out.

Jer 5:29 Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

The word “visit” in this verse has a much different use than it does in God’s command to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. God’s visit would be one which would leave sorrow behind it. He would not be insulted in the manner that Israel had demonstrated.

Jer 5:30 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;

Jer 5:31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Our chapter closes with a hideous scene. The prophets prophesied that which the people desired, whether or not

it was in line with the will of the Lord. The priests took advantage of their place in the temple services to live in luxury. And how did the common people react to these sins? They believed the false prophets and continued to offer their sacrifices to the priests rather than to the Lord. God asks a very pertinent question. "What will ye do in the end?" We can rephrase this as "What will all of this lead to?" It will not lead to heaven.

I take the freedom to quote an entire paragraph from James Burton Coffman's commentary on this present chapter. See it below.

"The judicial hardening of mankind was at this point complete, it was the third such emergency in God's dealings with humanity. (1) There was the condition before the flood, and God's answer then was the Great Deluge. (2) Then there was the organized wickedness that culminated in the Tower of Babel; and God's answer then was the confounding the languages of humanity and the introduction of the device of the Chosen People. (3) Now that the whole race of Adam, Jews and Gentiles alike had given themselves to Satan for the third time, what would God do? He sent the Blessed Saviour in his FIRST ADVENT. That is the reason God has been so careful to announce three times in the last two chapters that "This is not the full end of Israel." This will be a mission of mercy. Is this hardening of all mankind ever going to happen again? The answer is YES. And what will God do then? (4) The Final Judgment will come upon Adam's rebellious race."

The above quote is one of the most perceptive the present writer has read from anyone other than the inspired writers themselves. Dear Reader. Will you be ready??

Chapter 6

The picture changes slightly as it is looked at from different angles and at different intensities. Jeremiah does everything within his power to impress the citizens of Jerusalem and the surrounding area of the seriousness of the confrontation of the Babylonian army which cannot be avoided. The people do not listen. The judgment will be nearly unbearable.

Jer 6:1 O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

Judah and Benjamin were the two tribes making up the southern kingdom. Jerusalem lay in the territory of Benjamin. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were told by the prophet to come together and flee from the capital city. Tekoa and Bethhaccerem were to villages within ten miles of Jerusalem. They were to sound the warning from both of these outposts when they noted the army approaching them from the north. There would be a massive destruction of everything which stood in their way.

Jer 6:2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.

The daughter of Zion was Jerusalem. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah speak of the city in that way. Here the city is compared to a beautiful attractive woman. She is being sought out by strangers who think they see thrilling experiences just ahead.

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**Jer 6:3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.**

This is a strange verse in that God usually used shepherds as those who lovingly and kindly led their sheep to green pastures. That is not the case this time. These shepherds are the ones who lead the Babylonian forces. They arrange themselves around the city and anticipate feeding upon anything connected with Jerusalem which suits their selfish appetites.

**Jer 6:4 Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.**

**Jer 6:5 Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.**

The Babylonians are licking their chops. It is evening and they do not wish to delay their conquest until the following day. It is suggested that they attack while it is dark and plunder the city's riches. They intend to leave nothing of value when they are finished.

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

The trees they were planning on cutting down would have been of the sturdy variety which could be piled up along with dirt to give a means of surmounting the protecting walls. They were aware of the fact that Jehovah

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was ready to punish Jerusalem for the wickedness which she practiced.

Jer 6:7 As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds.

The water from a well is tapped intermittently. The water from a fountain or spring flows continuously. The evil with which Jerusalem was filled was poured out without cessation. The Lord was grieved at the sight of His people turning upon one another in an attempt to serve themselves.

Jer 6:8 Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

This verse sounds as if there was still a small crack in the door for forgiveness if Israel would repent. There really was no hope. They were quite determined to stubbornly resist any interference from the arm of the Lord. They would do as they pleased.

Jerusalem is not the only example of such an attitude. We are aware of many in our own towns who follow the same philosophy. "Let God go His way, and we will go ours!"

Jer 6:9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets.

Thus Israel's major city was to be stripped like a vineyard is left without grapes after the harvest. Just

in case there is a grape or two left. The Babylonians will look again to be certain they have not overlooked anything tempting.

Jer 6:10 To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

Is there anyone who will listen to the warning of Jehovah? It appears not. The ears which should be hearing Him are so intently listening for wickedness that they cannot tear themselves away to escape from the upcoming disaster.

Jer 6:11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days.

This is Jeremiah speaking. He has been responsible for telling the people of the ever building fury of God at their sins. He can control himself no longer. He must make it known in all of it's painfulness. The wrath will be poured out upon every class and age in the land. Those who are not in Jerusalem itself will feel it. Those who are in the city will feel it. It will strike the young, the mature, the aged, the women, the men. Husbands and wives will be separated from one another and from their children.

Jer 6:12 And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I

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**will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.**

The houses they have built for their own families will be taken over by strangers. There are two ways God can stretch out His hand toward men. He can do so with the intent of rewarding them for righteous behavior. He can do so with the intent of punishing them for the love of sin. It is the latter which was about to take place.

**Jer 6:13 For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.**

Covetousness is exactly the opposite of the nature of God. He desires that men and women have as much as they will responsibly care for. He does not lie. What a terrible situation we have here. This kind of a God has loved His chosen people and blessed them for many long years. They now look with envy upon what others have. He has been truthful with them. They promise to keep the covenant with Him and then despise it.

**Jer 6:14 They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.**

This verse is not a statement that the spiritual disease which has infected Israel has been reduced because of their willingness to hear and obey Him. This is a statement that the false prophets tell the people things will be better shortly and that they are not as bad as they seem. They were as bad as they seemed. They were

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worse, and they were not going to be better tomorrow. The prophets were deceiving them.

Jer 6:15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Shame is a sign of a sensitive conscience. There was no such thing in Israel. When they committed all the host of evil things which they did, they did not even feel the faintest blush of shame. The prophets who had deceived them would find themselves right in the midst of the coming horrors. All would fall together, prophets, priests, rulers and people.

Jer 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

God commands that they lift up their eyes and look around. If they will honestly do that they will find two ways. One way is the direction they are going. It leads to unending misery. The other way is that which was followed by Israel when they trusted in the Lord. That way led to peace and rest for the soul.

Dear reader, we do not need to be constantly looking for new ways that we can substitute for THE WAY of the Lord. God has given a pattern for worship and service. When we decide this is not sufficient and begin bringing in novelties which suit our own tastes, we can

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very easily end up in the same condition that Israel faced as the Babylonian army approached the city of Jerusalem.

**Jer 6:17 Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.**

The watchmen which God had set over His people were the ones who transmitted His will to them. They had sounded the warnings in many different ways. None had produced any desired effect. The people insolently shot back at the messengers that ‘We will not hearken.’

**Jer 6:18 Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.**

The following announcement is to be heard by all nations. God is not to be trifled with. That which He found in Israel would be dealt with. That which He finds in any other people will meet a similar response. We were created in the image of God. The muddying of that image is a serious mistake.

**Jer 6:19 Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.**

If the Lord brings evil upon His own chosen people for such disobedience, He will do the same to others. His people had allowed their thoughts to directly contradict those which He expected from those whom He had blessed for so long. If one desires a harvest of misfortune, the best way to obtain such a harvest is to sow the seed of

rebellion and cultivate it daily. That was what Israel had done. Do not reject the Word of the Lord.

**Jer 6:20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.**

It did not matter that the people were going through the formality of offering sacrifices to Jehovah alongside those they offered to Baal and other false gods. They could send to the farthest reaches of the world for exquisite perfumes to improve upon what He had commanded. Those sacrifices might smell sweet to the hypocrite who offered them. They were anything but sweet in the nostrils of God.

**Jer 6:21 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.**

What kind of stumbling blocks are to be laid in the path of the Israelites? They are of such a nature that those who fall over them will die. There would be no favoritism. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

**Jer 6:22 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.**

A terrifying nation would come against Jerusalem from the north. It would be powerful and would have come from distant parts of the earth.

**Jer 6:23 They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.**

This foe would be merciless. They would be well armed and would ride upon horses. They would be well organized for the purpose of attacking the filth ridden city which had boasted of the finest temple in the world. When God is with a people things go well. When He is forced to turn against them, it becomes a taste of hell on earth.

**Jer 6:24 We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail.**

Yes they had heard of the power and might of the Babylonians. It was enough to cause one to be paralyzed with fear. The cries of anguish would resemble those of a woman in child bearing. One difference being that grown men would feel the pangs as sharply, or more so, than the woman in labor.

**Jer 6:25 Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side.**

That nation which had struck fear into opposing armies when God was on their side were now to learn what it was like to face a foe whom God was using as a chastiser.

**Jer 6:26 O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make**

**thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.**

Beautiful Jerusalem was to dress up in sackcloth and “wallow” in the ashes of mourning. This was more vigorous than what was normally done when one went through the sackcloth and ashes grief. The usual case was to pour ashes upon the head. This time Israel is told to “wallow” in ashes. The enemy was on the march. They would come suddenly.

**Jer 6:27 I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.**

Once again Jehovah speaks directly to the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah had been charged with informing Israel of the danger involved in their departure from the way of the Lord. He had discharged that duty. It was not his fault that the ruination of Jerusalem was just ahead.

**Jer 6:28 They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters.**

These last three verses of the chapter provide a model of God's feelings toward those who had been His own inheritance. They were like brass and iron when they should have been like pure gold and silver. They were not only corrupted. They were also corrupters of others.

**Jer 6:29 The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away.**

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He had heated the bellows that they might fan the fire which was intended to purify them. It was all in vain. They were so riddled with impurity that the purifying methods had been useless. The wickedness remained even after the heat had been applied.

Jer 6:30 Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

As a man might give up in an attempt to purify silver, and finally declare that it was too tightly bound with that which was undesirable that it might as well be cast aside, God had declared Israel to be reprobate. More radical treatment must be planned.

Chapter 7

Jeremiah is given another assignment in his role as prophet for Jehovah. He is to place himself at the gate of the temple and preach to the people as they come to that area. This chapter and the one following give us the substance of what he was to set before them. It seems more like the Lord is simply giving His evaluation of the situation rather than expecting any positive response from those who hear.

Israel is told precisely why God can no longer tolerate their hypocrisy, immorality and idolatry. That the severity of the judgment which is not far off is made unmistakably clear.

Jer 7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Jer 7:2 Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.

The gate of the temple was the place where the prophet could come into contact with a large number of people who most probably fit the description he was about to spell out. There is reason to believe this may have been the time of one of the three feasts of the Jews. Large crowds would gather at the temple during those activities. These were people who had come to "worship the Lord." The problem was that their worship was not limited to Jehovah. One god was just about as good as another in their way of thinking.

Jer 7:3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

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Knowing full well that His admonitions were not going to be given any serious consideration by these people who were so determined to have their own way, the Lord still let them know the situation called for a change in their thoughts and actions, even if they decided to ignore Him. They were being given the opportunity to know what had to be done, even if they did not do that. If they had changed, God would have withheld the tragedy toward which they were going full speed ahead.

**Jer 7:4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.**

Chants were one of the techniques used in the worship services. We today sing several verses of a hymn which repeat the same thought in one verse after another. The repetition of the words "The temple of the Lord" were supposedly a way of expressing their respect for the temple. In actuality they had practically no respect for it deep down in their hearts. The words they repeated were bald faced lies.

**Jer 7:5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;**

What kind of changes did the Lord require? He will list several of them. The first was that they must treat their neighbors fairly. They could not talk about love while in the temple and then proceed to mistreat others when they left for home.

**Jer 7:6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent**

**blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:**

Such oppression was most apt to happen when the victim was in a helpless condition such as was true of orphans, widows and those who came into their midst without friends.

Not only were they prone to mistreat others. They went so far as to kill those who were unable to stand up for their rights. Thirdly, they followed gods made with their own hands, or who were found in the sky such as the Sun, moon and planets. These sinful ways could lead to nothing but injury to body and soul.

**Jer 7:7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.**

Critics of the Bible are very apt to produce such statements which seem contradictory in the Word of God to discredit it. God has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Then He provided a way by which souls that sin may be forgiven of that sin if they will repent the serve faithfully. Note the "if."

Now He makes it clear that He had given the promised land to the Jews forever and forever. That statement could hardly be made any stronger. BUT they will not be allowed to control that land forever if they fail to keep the covenant which had been set up between them and Jehovah. It is also true that God made plans for a new covenant even from or before the time of Abraham and Moses. His promises always rest upon certain conditions. If the conditions are met the promises will not fail. If the conditions are not met, the promise is not binding.



**Jer 7:8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.**

They had placed their trust in the false prophets who had persuaded them all was well when it was far from well. Sin is deadly. When one treats it as frivolous, grief is invited.

**Jer 7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;**

The accusations the Lord is making against Israel are prohibited in the ten commandments of the law as given by Moses. They kill, commit adultery, worship false gods and mistreat their neighbors.

**Jer 7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?**

Then they put on their finest clothes and prance down to the temple to cry out, "The temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord." They seem to contend that they were immune to any punishment because they had been delivered and cared for through many centuries. God would not cause them misery! Or would he??

**Jer 7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.**

God said those who were acting as Israel was were in the process of making the temple a den of robbers. How

could a statement like this be true? Yet we know Jesus used the same words when He accused the scribes and Pharisees as doing the same thing. Thieves and robbers take that which others have and use it for their own profit. Religious persons who use the congregations of God as easy marks for their own enrichment, and have no understanding of the strength which comes from working with others rather than using their associations to improve the conditions of their neighbors can most certainly be described as robbers. They break the commandment which says, "Thou shalt not covet."

**Jer 7:12 But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.**

In order to give these of Judah a real life lesson on what was about to happen to the temple, the Lord invited them to take a short trip up to Shiloh and see that He had done to those who had done precisely the same kind of things those of Judah were doing all these years later. When Israel entered the land, the ark was set up in the tabernacle at Shiloh. Then, when sin overwhelmed the northern kingdom, the Philistines were allowed to come in and take the ark to their own places of worship. The ten tribes later were taken into Assyrian captivity.

**Jer 7:13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;**

Judah had failed to learn that God has both goodness and severity. He had given Judah plenty of opportunity to

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turn back from the punishments which were not coming. He had called and called, but they had more important things on their mind than answering His call.

Jer 7:14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

Since Judah had turned a deaf ear to Him, the Lord would pass the same sentence upon Judah and He had placed upon those who despised His commandments at Shiloh. The priests, the prophets, the princes and the people were all parties to the departure from the faith. They would all share in the punishment.

Jer 7:15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

Ephraim was used as a means of referring to the ten tribes of the north. Judah held the same position with respect to the south. If God had sent the sinners from the north to Assyria, He could certainly find a place to send sinners from the south. Neither God nor His temple were to be despised as Ephraim and Judah were doing.

Jer 7:16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

The Lord says the same thing in three different ways. It will be of no avail to pray for those who do not honor His presence. One does not ask for help from another who does not exist, or whom one does not see as a friend.

Jer 7:17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah is now asked if he sees the extent of the idolatrous worship which is going on in and around Jerusalem. Everyone is involved in the infatuation with false gods and goddesses.

Jer 7:18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

This was not just a one man operation. Entire families were involved in the worship of the gods. The children gathered the wood. The fathers built the fires and the mothers and daughters prepared the cakes and drink offerings. They did not do these things deliberately to provoke Jehovah to anger, but that was just what they did.

The queen of heaven was most likely the moon. With the sun as the dominant male god, the moon as a female partner, with the entire host of heaven as offspring. These imaginary gods and goddesses led those who worshipped them to engage in sexual abuses which had little to do with devotion to beloved husbands or wives. It is hardly any wonder that this provoked the pure and holy Jehovah.

Jer 7:19 Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

It was not only Jehovah who was provoked. The nature of the things these unfaithful Judahites were

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doing could only lead to tremendous confusion. What was right? What was wrong? The situation was much the same as it is in some so-called civilized nations today. The blur which society has created between right and wrong leaves many people running in circles.

**Jer 7:20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.**

There were not much left that God did not include in the target of His fury and anger. Man, beast, trees and fields were all to feel the fire of that wrath. It would most definitely not be a small bonfire which lasted for a few minutes and then went out. It would be nationwide and would last on and on.

**Jer 7:21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.**

The sacrifices Judah was offering to Jehovah were completely valueless. There were two kinds of offerings which are involved in this present situation. There were peace offerings which could be eaten. There were burnt offerings which were not to be eaten. God was telling the people that the corruption in their lives was so complete that they might just as well eat the burnt offerings. They were only an offense to Him.

**Jer 7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them**

**out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:**

**Jer 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.**

Before peace offerings and burnt offerings were ever commanded by the Lord, He had commanded that His Word be heard and obeyed. If that was true, He would be their God. As His people they would receive manifold blessings. However, they must walk in the way that He set before them.

**Jer 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.**

When men harken to the Word and will of God, they make spiritual and material progress. When they decide it is better to walk in their own ways and follow the evil imaginations of their own heart, they not only do not make progress. They slide into the ditch. Sadly Judah had imitated the ways of the northern kingdom and both were ready to fall into the ditch.

**Jer 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:**

It was not that the Lord had failed to give them the best of instructions. He had done so. Many prophets had



been sent to guide His people away from sin and toward the goals He had laid out for them. How is it that men and women are so foolhardy as to stop their ears and close their eyes to that which would lead to eternal happiness. The other way is as terrifying as the right way is blessed.

**Jer 7:26 Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.**

Why also do men not learn from the experiences of those who came before them. A case in point was that of Jehoiakim, who was the son of Josiah. Josiah had done everything he knew to do to reform Judah. Then his son reversed all the progress which his father had made.

School teachers become very familiar with students who stiffen in their chairs and glare at them with rebellion in their eyes when they are told they must change their ways. God has the same problem on a much, much larger scale.

**Jer 7:27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.**

I said in the beginning of the comments on this chapter that God knew beforehand the people would not pay attention to the warnings He was giving them through Jeremiah. When the prophet calls out to them, they will react by going on their way as if nothing had been said.

**Jer 7:28 But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their**

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God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

When the people proved they were unwilling to obey the will of Jehovah, Jeremiah was to describe their condition to them as the Lord saw it. They were incorrigible. Truth meant nothing to them. They told lies and they were living a lie.

Jer 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

The Nazarites took a vow that they would refrain from worldly activities and would dedicate themselves completely to the service of God for a given period of time. During this time they were not to cut their hair nor shave their faces. If, however, a Nazarite was to touch a corpse it defiled him and he must begin fulfilling the vow over again. He was to cut his hair and restart the vow. The people of Jerusalem had at one time been faithful to God. Now they had defiled themselves and needed to cut their hair and start over.

Jer 7:30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

Jeremiah was still in the vicinity of the temple gate. He pointed out that the things being done by Judah were polluting that temple. They had gone so far as to set up some of their idols within the temple itself. That could not be ignored.

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**Jer 7:31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.**

I have not read from any Bible student concerning the puzzle which is found in this verse. The ordinary understanding of the high places was that they were placed on hills or mountains which were thought to be closer to that which they worshiped. This time the statement is the the high places were in the valley of the son of Hinnom. Could it be that any location which was dedicated to the worship of a god was considered a high place just for that reason?

The last thing Jehovah would have considered was to command His people to burn their own children as sacrifices to Him. The only child which He planned to be sacrificed was His own Son who was not burned, but was nailed to a cross.

**Jer 7:32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.**

If filling the valley of Hinnom with the dead was the desire of Judah, God would make that possible. When the Babylonians attacked the city of Jerusalem, the area of Tophet would be running over with dead bodies. There would be no more room to bury.

**Jer 7:33 And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.**

A most abominable condition for a Hebrew was to have his body disrespected after death. God promised that the bodies of these who had mocked Him would be made available to the vultures and the jackals to tear into pieces and eat.

**Jer 7:34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.**

That city of Jerusalem which was apparently bustling with activity at the time Jeremiah stood at the gate of the temple and preached the words of this chapter was to find itself in the atmosphere of a funeral parlor. There would be no joy when the Babylonians destroyed the temple and carried the majority of the people off to a land they had never seen. The silence in the city would be deafening.

## Chapter 8

The unwillingness of those of Judah to hearken to the pleadings of God to turn from their wicked and idolatrous ways is underlined here. The resulting destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the mockery of the Babylonians is most hideous.

**Jer 8:1 At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves:**

The time being spoken of here is that of the arrival of the enemy from the north. They will show no leniency whatsoever. The tombs and graves of the ones who should have turned the people back to the Lord were to be spread out over the face of the earth. We can reasonably assume there were two reasons for these deeds. Riches were often buried in these graves and tombs. Such valuables would have been well worth the effort. One writer tells us that there were over one thousand talents of gold buried with the body of Solomon.

**Jer 8:2 And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.**

The bones and ashes of these dignitaries would not be returned to the resting places. They would be exposed

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to the sun, moon and host of heaven which had been worshiped by these idolators while they were alive. Any remains would be allowed to decay and provide fertilizer to the ground.

The sun, moon and stars, along with the rest of the host of heaven could care less for the remains of those who had used them as objects of worship. The True and Living God will some day raise the righteous to live in His presence in a land of endless day.

Jer 8:3 And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

Those who remained alive after the destruction of the city would rather have been dead than to live in the horror of the places where they had been taken into captivity. Certainly there are conditions in which the living would prefer to die, but do not.

Jer 8:4 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?

Through Jeremiah, the Lord was asking how it could happen that His people had fallen from His favor and failed to rise up again. Why would they turn from Him and be so obstinate about returning?

Jer 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

In place of reversing their disobedient ways, they had only continued to move farther away. They loved the

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deception which had controlled their lives. They would soon discover just how deadly the lies inspired by Satan would turn out to be.

**Jer 8:6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.**

God had listened intently for any sign of repentance on the part of Judah. None had come forth. What He had observed was a grand rush into wickedness which resembled the rushing of war horses into the dangers of the battlefield.

**Jer 8:7 Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.**

The stork is not known as a particularly intelligent member of the bird family. Still, it knows when to migrate. The turtle, the crane and the swallow all follow the call of nature as to when to come and go. The people of Judah had displayed less respect for God's will than had any of these. Why did they not know the judgment of the Lord. It was because they were entirely too busy devoting their time to other goals, particularly with the worship of birds, beasts, fish, sun, moon and planets.

**Jer 8:8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.**

Solomon made the statement that the beginning of wisdom is in the fear of the Lord. Regardless of the

intellectual ability of a person, that person is a fool who acts as if there were no God. They would have been far better off if God had not even delivered His law, than for them to have received it and turned their backs.

**Jer 8:9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?**

Yes, the supposedly wise men were ashamed of the Lord and His instructions. They were not penitent, but they were to be greatly dismayed when taken into captivity and made to serve as slaves to the Babylonians.

**Jer 8:10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.**

Those who were using their intellects to feed off others were to find their covetousness stopped in it's tracks. Their fields and even their wives would be lost to their captors. The most respected as well as the less prestigious would find themselves suffering the same fate. Living a lie brings grief from the hand of God.

**Jer 8:11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.**

These priests and prophets were supposed to aid the people in developing spiritual health. The only thing they had done was to deceive them with the false hope that they could act in defiance of the Lord and still live at peace.

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Jer 8:12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Did it disturb either the leaders or the people who followed them when they committed such sins? Not only were they not ashamed, they did not even find it necessary to blush. The priests and prophets would find that when the devastation came, they would be punished right along with those of lesser recognition.

Jer 8:13 I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.

The greedy selfishness which had been shown by the entire nation would be answered by a loss of everything they held dear. Even the crops would fail. The blessings which had been poured out upon them would disappear. They had not praised God for them, and they would lose them.

Jer 8:14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

What was left for them to do? The danger was almost at the doorstep. Perhaps the thing to do was gather

themselves behind the walled cities and wait silently for something miraculous to happen. That would be false hope. It would be peace when there was no peace. God was going to replace His blessings with bitterness. Instead of milk and honey, there would be gall and vinegar.

Jer 8:15 We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

Those who defy Jehovah usually think they are on the road to prosperity. They could not be more wrong! Everything which appeared to be rosy would turn out to be poverty and despair.

Jer 8:16 The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

In the case of prophecy, the past, present and future are sometimes blended. Jeremiah writes here as if the disaster had already fallen upon them. It might just as well have. It was certain. The army of the Babylonians would pass through Dan in the north and move southward into Judah. The land, the city and the people themselves would be devoured.

Jer 8:17 For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.

The people had chosen the ways of Satan, the serpent, over the Word of the Lord. God would send those who were servants of Satan into their midst. Nothing would stop

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them. They would be even more deadly than poisonous snakes.

**Jer 8:18 When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.**

Jeremiah now speaks from his own heart. It is weary from the sight of destruction which he has envisioned. Sorrow has sapped all of his strength.

**Jer 8:19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?**

The prophet can hear the cries of the people he has tried to warn. There are tears in the eyes of what should have been God's faithful. There are cries of triumph from the throats of the invaders. It is as though there were no God to protect His people. Those of Judah are in despair. Those of the strangers are filled with mockery.

Does Jehovah not know? Does He not care? The answer is that they have chosen to worship that which is not God. He will honor their choice and allow them to find out what it is like to have none.

**Jer 8:20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.**

Time has run out for the disobedient. When the blessings should have been in the process of being counted, it was found that there was nothing to count. The growing season was over. The crop was a failure.

There was no way to salvage that which they had disdained.

**Jer 8:21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.**

Any Christian who has labored diligently to bring others to the Lord and then build them up in His service, only to see those for whom he had such hope fall back into sin, can partly realize that which Jeremiah was experiencing. It is a mixture of anger and disappointment. Jeremiah was hurting along with those whom he had tried to heal from spiritual disease.

**Jer 8:22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?**

It was not because there had been no physician and no medicine. One who is sick must go to the physician and must take the medicine which is prescribed if he is to be cured. The area of Gilead was famous for the healing salve which was produced there. Those who were sick knew to go there and get the balm. Judah had watched her northern sister die from such neglect. Now she had done the same. The Great Physician in heaven had offered the cure. They were to rid themselves of their idols and worship Him. They would not take the prescription. Their sickness would only become nigh unto death.

## Chapter 9

Is the reader becoming just a little nauseated after reading of God's feelings toward His people so repeatedly? The present writer must confess that if this is not enough to turn men away from sin, there is little that could be done to accomplish that. Our present chapter tells the thoughts of Jeremiah, or maybe the thoughts of Jehovah through the lips of Jeremiah. Either way it leaves us with great sadness.

The chapter then goes on to spell out what God intends to do to the people as a result of their complete indifference to His blessings.

**Jer 9:1 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!**

Some interpret this as the Lord weeping rather than Jeremiah. I think not! Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. There is good reason for that title. His grief is too deep for words. May we suggest that his heart is weeping more copiously than his eyes. Why is the term "daughter" of my people used? Could it not be that one looks upon a daughter with a greater degree of tenderness because of her need for loving care? Men tend to be more stoic when women shed tears.

**Jer 9:2 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.**

Jeremiah longs for a place where he could become secluded and not have to bear the sight of the wicked

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people who have walked in sin and degraded the entire nation.

Jer 9:3 And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

The mouths of these who are supposed to be the chosen of the Lord are constantly ready to fire arrows of deception. Their tongues are poised like bows which can project lies without ceasing. They have no affection for the Lord and only move from one evil word or deed to another. They are certainly not friends of God.

Jer 9:4 Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.

Not a one of them is trustworthy. They covet their neighbors possessions and spread gossip and slanderous comments which sometimes are true and sometimes are pure lies.

Jer 9:5 And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.

The Lord expects every man to love his neighbor as himself. That is much easier to do if the neighbor proves worthy of that love. It is not that easy when the neighbor is wallowing in wickedness and spouting lies about one's character. Judah is working at these sins so energetically



that they tire themselves out in attempting to destroy each other.

Jer 9:6 Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

There are occasions when the best of men and women stumble into telling a falsehood. That was not the condition the Lord saw in Judah. They did not stumble into error. They sought it out and lived in it.

Jer 9:7 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

The Lord's patience had reached the point where He had decided to apply some of the strongest medicine available. When a competent physician finds that minor treatments will no longer eliminate the diseases or malfunctioning of his patient, that doctor will sometimes perform surgery. Or he may prescribe medicine which seems worse than the problem with which the patient suffers.

The Lord declares that He will try His people in the fires of persecution. How else could he deal with the spiritual cancer which afflicts their souls?

Jer 9:8 Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

One of His own people would walk up to another and greet that individual as if he or she was a dear friend. But

deep down in his heart he despises the person. When the one whom he has spoken friendly words to while facing him disappears from his sight, he does not hesitate to do him injury.

Jer 9:9 Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

God asks the question as to whether those who do such things ought not to be punished severely for their evil intentions. It is apparent from this verse that God can be hurt in much the same way that His people are hurt. When the inner depths of a man's being are cut and bruised, he feels a need to retaliate. God appears to have somewhat the same reaction to the insults when His people revel in sin.

Jer 9:10 For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone.

The punishment which will come at the hands of the Babylonian army will leave the land weeping, from the highest mountains down to the wilderness where the livestock browse no more. The bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle have disappeared.

Jer 9:11 And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

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The once proud city of Jerusalem which had been admired by many other people was to become a scrap heap. Jackals and vultures would have to search through the remains to pick out a few remnants of food. Not just Jerusalem, but also the surrounding cities would lie deserted.

**Jer 9:12 Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?**

Was there just one wise man who recognized the importance of obedience to the voice of the Lord. What a wonderful thing it would be if someone could declare that word so emphatically that the people would turn and walk in righteousness. As it was, the entire land was dying. It was to be utterly ruined to such a degree that there would be difficulty in just traveling through it, to say nothing of settling down to live there.

**Jer 9:13 And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;**

**Jer 9:14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:**

**Jer 9:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.**

For more than one generation the people had placed their own will before that of Jehovah. They had

abandoned the laws and statutes which He had given them and decided to direct their own steps. Sadly those steps had chosen to place the admiration of Baal before that of Jehovah. This is the second time in just a few short verses that God promised to feed his people wormwood and gall. The milk and honey had been removed.

**Jer 9:16 I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.**

That which God promised to do here came to pass. Part of His chosen people had already been removed to Assyria. Now others were to be taken to Babylonia. These were strangers to Israel and Judah. We might add that massive numbers of the people fell at the point of the sword, both during and after the invasion and transportation to those strange lands.

**Jer 9:17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come:**

There was a custom of sending for professional mourners in times of great grief. Judah might as well decide which ones they would call. There was going to be a strong need for them.

**Jer 9:18 And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.**

The mourners would inspire more weeping than would otherwise be true. The tears would flow like rivers from

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their eyes when they experienced the woes which were just ahead.

Jer 9:19 For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out.

How could the people of Judah be so confused and grief stricken? God had explained through His prophet Jeremiah just what they might expect. They were acting as if they had been spewed out of the land without good reason. That was about as far from the truth as one might get.

Jer 9:20 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation.

The women who had given birth to children were to learn from the experiences they were to have. They were to teach their daughters and their neighbors the need for weeping and wailing in the developing of an attitude of repentance. If that did not happen, the worst was yet to come.

Jer 9:21 For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.

Death was not just in the streets. It had found it's way into the homes of both the poorest and the richest. The children and the young men who would have held

the promise for the future were being laid dead before their eyes.

Jer 9:22 Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather them.

When harvesters reaped the grain from the fields, they would leave behind that which was not worth collecting. It would be just that way with the carcasses of the men of Judah. They would be strewn across the land with no one able or willing to give them a decent funeral.

Jer 9:23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

There are three qualities in which mankind glories. Those are wisdom, power and riches. There would be no glorying in these things on the part of Judah after the land had been sacked. All three of these glories are no more than garbage when God has been neglected.

Jer 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

There is one thing in which men and women may take great pride. That is in the knowledge and understanding of Jehovah. If they had reached that state of mind, they would realize that the suffering they had brought upon

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themselves was not something in which God took great delight.

That same truth is just as applicable today as it was in the time of Jeremiah. If all men would measure up to the expectations of the Maker, they would discover that loving, righteous spirit. There would be no need to weep the kind of tears which Israel and Judah had wept.

**Jer 9:25 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised;**

The Jews seemed to have the idea that since they were a part of the people who practiced circumcision of the flesh, God would excuse them from their sinful ways. He assured them that was not true. They would be punished along with those who were not counted among the circumcised.

**Jer 9:26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.**

We now come to a list of nations which the Jews looked down upon because they did not circumcise their male children. There are five of the nations surrounding Israel and Judah that are mentioned. However, note that Judah is listed right in the midst of them. All of these nations had defied the Lord in one way or another. Judah was no exception. They would be punished right along with the rest of the list. Although they had circumcised the flesh, they had never cut off the love of evil from their hearts.

We dare not leave this topic without drawing the

parallel between circumcision and baptism. Baptism is critical in God's plan of salvation. We are told to be baptized and wash away our sins. It is not just being immersed in water which results in the removal of sin. One must allow the blood of Christ to penetrate the heart and leave it pure and spotless. We must then be willing to allow God to aid us in keeping it free from sin stains.

## *Chapter 10*

There are two basic thoughts in the material before us this time. One is that the worship of idols is utter folly. The other is that the Babylonian army is approaching and the devastation will be horrifying.

**Jer 10:1 Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:**

We are reminded again that it is the Word of the Lord which Jeremiah is presenting. It is not his own thoughts. He may inject a thought on occasion, but the heart of what he is telling Judah is from God.

**Jer 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.**

Regardless of what takes place, whether they were to stay in the land, or whether they were to be taken from it, the instructions from Jehovah were to restrict their worship to Him, and Him only. There would be events take place in the heavens that would cause concern on the part of those who worshiped the sun, moon, stars and planets, but such were not to have any effect upon His people.

Both Egypt and Babylon are known to have placed great emphasis upon such things as meteorites and eclipses. There would be temptation in Babylon for those of Judah to adopt the religious practices of their captors.

**Jer 10:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.**

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Another error upon the part of the heathen was the worship of idols made with their own hands. Nothing could be more ridiculous. A man goes out into the forest and cuts down a tree. He then shapes it into an object which he intends to worship.

Jer 10:4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

He then decorates it with precious metals and fastens it in place with hammer and nails. Thus it become immovable. He stand back and admires the finished product. He then offers sacrifices to it and kneels before it.

Jer 10:5 They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Since the wood was taken from the trunk of a tree, it stands erect. That does not mean it has either human or godlike properties. It cannot speak. It must be carried from one place to another. It is but a decorated piece of wood. It cannot injure anyone; nor can it bless anyone. How silly it is to place any fear or dependence upon them.

Jer 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

There is but one God. He is infinitely wise and powerful. He is also the Creator and governor of the entire

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universe. He can destroy. He can bless. To worship Him is wise. To worship wood, metal and stone, or the heavenly objects is stupidity.

**Jer 10:7 Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.**

One could look among any of the nations of the earth for the most intelligent men. There would be none found who could even begin to compare with the Eternal King who reigns supreme.

**Jer 10:8 But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.**

Those who worship the false gods have no more reasoning ability than the brute world. Vanity is emptiness and uselessness. The piece of wood might make a good bonfire. It would certainly not react to human needs.

**Jer 10:9 Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men.**

We might make guesses as to the exact location of Tarshish and Uphaz, but the point here is that everything about the idol is brought about by the hands of men. They may be polished artists, but they have made their false god. The True God is the One who made THEM.

**Jer 10:10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.**

Unlike the idols, Jehovah is a living personality. He reigns from His spiritual throne. He has always reigned, and He always will. When men disregard His instructions, they will find they must face His wrath. No man or no entire nation can resist that wrath. When I was a child I did not try to fight back when my father said, "I am going to spank you." I knew that would only make things worse. The same is true when men attempt to fight back against the wrath of the Almighty.

**Jer 10:11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.**

The false gods will be here today and gone tomorrow. This is true even of the heavens and the earth. This heaven and earth will pass away. A new creation will replace it. Therefore it is not wise to kneel before this present creation, or any part of it.

Verse eleven has been a center of controversy. It is the only verse in the book of Jeremiah which was written in the Aramaic language, which is the language of the Chaldeans or Babylonians. It has been claimed by some students of the Bible that this is an indication that some copyist of the scriptures decided to inject it, and that it is only an interruption of the thought before it and after it.

We cannot agree. Those of Judah were going to be taken to Babylon. There they would meet others who held

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the same ideas which had caused them to be taken into captivity. We must ask ourselves who the “ye” and the “them” of this verse were. Does it not seem reasonable that the ye are those who will be taken into Babylon, and the them are those in that land who would insist that they worship the false gods? This would certainly not be an interruption of the thought before and after this verse.

Would it not also be reasonable to reply to the Babylonians in their own language. God had provided just such a reply.

Jer 10:12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

There are three strong evidences that it could only have been an infinite personality that brought the universe into being. Only such a One could have the necessary power. Only such a One could have the necessary knowledge. Only such a One could have the judgment to apply such power and such wisdom.

Jer 10:13 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

All that is necessary to believe in Jehovah is to note the wonder involved in a thunderstorm. The energy of the sun evaporates water from the bodies of water such as oceans, seas and lakes. This water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. When the water has ascended into the atmosphere, it is broken down into the two individual elements. Then a lightning bolt is ignited

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and the two recombine into water. The latter reaction produces enormous energy, and the water then falls back upon the earth to irrigate the land and quench the thirst of mortals.

This is GOD at work!

**Jer 10:14 Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.**

Any man who thinks he has made a god before whom he should bow down has been deluded by his own imagination. The belief in the idol is a lie. It is deadwood.

**Jer 10:15 They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.**

Those who continue to follow this stupidity believe a lie and unless they turn from it they will be damned. Every such falsity will find a time of destruction.

**Jer 10:16 The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.**

Oh how different is Jehovah, the God of Israel. He is the Creator of all. Israel was correct when they served Him. They belonged to Him and He blessed them. He is LORD!

**Jer 10:17 Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.**

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What then was God's advice to Israel? It was that they needed to prepare for that which was certain to arrive. They were going to take a trip. Their walled city of Jerusalem would not prevent that journey.

Jer 10:18 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find it so.

The Lord was not just going to remove His people from the land of Canaan. He was going to throw them out with violence. It would be as if a man placed a stone in a sling and whirled it around and released the stone. It would be forced to leave its point of origin and drop down in another location.

Jer 10:19 Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous; but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.

This verse sounds like the words of Jeremiah. He hurts for himself and he hurts for those who have been so foolish as to have brought the wrath of the Lord down upon them. Still, he knows that the sorrow is deserved and the people, including himself must accept the consequences of sin.

Jer 10:20 My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.

Now it seems that the pronoun "My" is God speaking. Is this the tabernacle of the Lord, or is it the tabernacle of Jeremiah? Either one might be correct. God's tabernacle

had long been gone. That of Jeremiah might as well have been gone at the time of this writing. The children appear to be those of the Lord. They had chosen idolatry over their Father in heaven. There were none left who were devoted enough to worship Him according to His directions. The tabernacle was a tent. It had curtains which could be lifted up or let down. There were cords which fastened it in place.

Jer 10:21 For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

The New Testament speaks of pastors and elders of congregations of the Lord as being identical. A pastor is one who shepherds a flock. The pastors discussed here were the persons in authority over God's children. They had become foolish and stupid. As a result the people were to be starved for lack of pasture. They would go to Chaldea.

Jer 10:22 Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons.

Bruit is a word translated from a Hebrew term meaning "noise." In this verse it would have been better to translate the statement as "The report of the noise of Babylonian armies is being heard." It is a monstrous disturbance coming out of the north. That is the direction from which the invaders came. Jeremiah knew full well that the object of their coming was to leave Judea in ruins.

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**Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.**

I know of no passage in the entire Book of God that is more meaningful than this one. Israel had been trying to direct their own steps without depending upon guidance from the mind of God. Very often the wisdom of men is simply not deep enough to see the consequences of spiritual misguidance. God has provided modern man with a spiritual map which, if followed carefully will result in our reaching the destination which will please both ourselves and Him.

Why then do so many discount the Holy Bible and lean so heavily on their own foresight, which is so limited?

**Jer 10:24 O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.**

The prayer of Jeremiah is so appropriate that all men would do well to make use of it. We need the correction of the Lord. But we pray that the correction will not be full destruction.

**Jer 10:25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.**

Those heathen who do not know God or call upon His name are ones who have come to this condition through their own disrespect for His aid. They have had the opportunity. They have not taken it.

It does seem strange for the faithful in the Christian age to pray that the Lord vent fury upon those who fail to call upon Him, but these people of whom Jeremiah speaks have devoured God's children and ruined the land which was provided them by the divine hand.

## *Chapter 11*

We are told in this chapter that breaking a covenant made with God is deadly. His people had been given many blessings, but would not obey His will. Both are intimately connected. One cannot expect to continue receiving protection, support and guidance from Him if obedience is not forthcoming.

**Jer 11:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying,**

Has the reader found out by this time that Jeremiah was primarily speaking for Jehovah and not for himself. No point has been made more clear. Those who preach from God's pulpit are to declare HIS Word.

**Jer 11:2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;**

Is this some new covenant that God is ready to establish, or is it the same covenant which was made with His people at Mount Sinai? It is the one agreed to at Sinai. The context demands that position. See verse 4.

**Jer 11:3 And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,**

God blesses those who hear and obey. He curses those who turn a deaf ear. Both individuals and nations have had reason to learn this truth. The time of the antichrist which comes before the final judgment is brought about as a result of disregard for the Word of the Lord. After

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practically the whole world rises up in rebellion, they are to be destroyed. There was a covenant made at Sinai, and there is a new covenant which came into being in the time of Christ and the apostles. Neither of those covenants may be despised without being repaid by the wages of sin, which is death.

Jer 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

The covenant of which Jeremiah is speaking was created when God released Israel from the bondage of Egypt. The words of this verse are practically identical with those of Exodus 6:7 and Deuteronomy 28:1-2. Also Deut. 27:26. See below.

Exod 6:7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Deut 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

Deut 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Deut 27:26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

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**Jer 11:5 That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.**

The people had received that land flowing with milk and honey when they entered the land of Canaan. God had promised it to them, and He delivered on that promise.

Jeremiah very well knew the truth of what the Lord was saying. He added his “Amen”, or “So be it.”

**Jer 11:6 Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.**

There was to be no excuse of ignorance on the part of Israel and Judah. God’s warnings and promises were proclaimed in such manner that every person of the nation could know them if that person was willing to take heed.

**Jer 11:7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.**

God’s proclamations had been continued over the years from the time of Sinai to the time of Jeremiah. Each time His people turned from His Word, He had repeated the warnings.

**Jer 11:8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of**

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their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do: but they did them not.

In place of hearing and obeying, allowing Him to direct their steps, they stubbornly persisted in distrusting Him and mapping out their own paths. That must not be done.

See Jeremiah 10:23.

Jer 11:9 And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

A conspiracy occurs when a number of persons agree to a plan for working against an authority. The northern kingdom had tried this and had been punished. Now the people of Judah were repeating that horrible sin.

Jer 11:10 They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

How far back does the word “Forefathers” reach? It could mean only the immediate ancestors who sinned grievously when Manasseh ruled. But it could also reach back to the time when God's people adopted the worship of Baal and other false gods after entering Canaan.

Jer 11:11 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

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It was now too late to evade the punishment which the Lord had determined to bring upon them. The Babylonians were on the way. Even though Judah cried out in prayer for God's help, there would be none. They had passed the point of forgiveness. God knew they would require severe measures to cure their idolatrous ways.

**Jer 11:12 Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.**

If His people were absolutely determined to worship false gods, they were invited to call out for help to them. They would find that they could offer no relief from the curse.

Can present day humanity profit by what took place then? There are many idols presently being worshiped, such as money, fame and human wisdom. None of these can offer permanent solutions to the curses which will come upon those who reject Jehovah and place these goals before Him.

**Jer 11:13 For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.**

Judah had quite a number of cities. Jerusalem had many streets. Altars to Baal and other gods had been set up in every city and every street. The sweet savor of incense rising from the altars to the false gods only irritated the nostrils of the True and Living God. The sweet savor which pleases Him is that of prayers rising from the dedicated hearts of the faithful.

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Jer 11:14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

God's disgust with the people had reached such a point that He would hear neither their own prayers, nor the prayers which Jeremiah might offer on behalf of these sinners. If one wishes his prayers to be heard and answered by the Lord, he had better first hear what the Lord has said to him.

Jer 11:15 What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.

And who is God's beloved who has wrought lewdness in His house? It is the nation which He has allowed to call themselves by His name. They have offered their meat offerings to His rivals. Then they took pleasure in what they had done. Both their sacrifices and their own bodies were despised in the eyes of the Lord.

Jer 11:16 The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

There had been a time when the Lord saw His people as a green olive tree with the promise of a fine yeild of fruit. What a change had taken place. They were now in such a condition that He was ready to burn them up, just as one might destroy an olive tree which had it's branches broken and no fruit in sight.

Jer 11:17 For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

There was nothing more God could have done to promote the health of His olive tree. He was now ready to bring curses upon it. They had not brought Him a harvest. They had angered Him by offering sacrifices to Baal. When one takes the blessings provided by God and uses them to promote His foe, He will take preventive action.

Jer 11:18 And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it: then thou shewedst me their doings.

Jeremiah had been made aware of God's irritation and His planned punishment of Judah. The prophet was hated so much for his description of their idolatry that they were planning to destroy Him.

Jer 11:19 But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

Jeremiah had been completely unaware of their murderous plans. He was like a pet lamb or a well fed ox that was being taken from a safe position and led to the slaughter. They were so angry that they had decided

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to cut down his green olive tree and go on their merry way.

**Jer 11:20 But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.**

The new testament calls for men to pray for those who despitefully use them. Jeremiah had been told not to pray for these wicked persons. Why was this? May I suggest that the murder they were planning was not limited to the life of the prophet. It was a conspiracy against the Lord Himself. Jeremiah was certain that the Judge of all the earth would do that which was right.

**Jer 11:21 Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:**

Anathoth was the town of Jeremiah. These who were seeking to end his life were some who had known him for some time. How sad it was that they were now telling him to cease prophesying in the name of Jehovah or they would kill him.

**Jer 11:22 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine:**

God promised that He would punish those who had devised a plan for murdering His prophet. He would turn the tables on them. It would be their own young men who



would lose their lives by the sword of the Babylonians. In addition, their children would starve to death.

**Jer 11:23 And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.**

There was to be a remnant who would survive the ordeal which was coming up. But the men of Anathoth who had planned to kill Jeremiah would not be in that remnant. They would all receive exactly that which they had planned for the prophet. They would die for their evil intentions.

## Chapter 12

We now have a question from Jeremiah that thousands of others have asked themselves and God. Why do the wicked prosper? The Psalmist considered it, as did Job who was known for his patience. God answers the question and then predicts the entry of the faithful Jews and the Gentiles into His blessing to come.

**Jer 12:1 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?**

Jeremiah humbles himself before God before asking the question which might indicate that he doubted God's judgment. He assures the Lord that he knows He is righteous, but he wonders why the way of the wicked prospers. How can they who deal treacherously with their fellowman be happy? We can rest assured that if we have asked this same question, we are far from being alone.

Job may be centering his question on those who had made plans to murder him, but he could also have had the cruelty of the Babylonians in mind.

**Jer 12:2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.**

Why did God even plant them in the first place? Why did He allow them to take root and grow in their wickedness? They had been allowed to praise God with the lips, and then defy Him in the heart.

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Jer 12:3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

The prophet then makes a comparison between the wickedness of those who intended to kill him, and his own sincere efforts to serve faithfully. Job felt that they should be torn away from among the righteous and killed.

Jer 12:4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

Job feels that the good people are being made to suffer because the wicked have acted foolishly. The entire land is hurting, including the humans, the animal world and the vegetation. These wicked ones have persuaded themselves that God will not destroy them for their folly.

Jer 12:5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

Now we have God's reply to Jeremiah. He wonders what Jeremiah will do when conditions become even worse than they are. If Jeremiah is having trouble in the easier part of the race, how will he react when things become far more depressing? It was as if he were having trouble crossing the Jordan river when it was shallow, and not even thinking about the difficulties which would come when it flooded.

Jer 12:6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

God assured Jeremiah that He knew of the evil plans of those who set out in opposition to the righteous, and even to Himself. He knew of the conspiracy to take Jeremiah's life, even while they spoke kindly to him face to face.

Jer 12:7 I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.

The implication is that Jeremiah did not know as much as He did about how the present and the future are related.

Jer 12:8 Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

It grieved the Lord, just as it grieved His prophet that those whom He had blessed over the centuries would roar out in opposition to Him like a ferocious lion in the forest. He assured Jeremiah that He hated such rebellion on the part of those whom He had favored with His blessings.

Jer 12:9 Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

Many of us have seen what happens in a hen house when one is seen to be different from the rest. Very



often the others will attack that one and even peck it to death. Jeremiah is different. He may expect the persecution which has been directed toward him. All of the unrighteous will do their best to eliminate His preaching of the Word of God.

Jer 12:10 Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

When God speaks of pastors, He has reference to those who are charged with leading sheep to rich pasture. Some in that day, as well as some in these latter days, have abused that charge and used their position to fleece the flock instead of feeding it. They do not hesitate to destroy that which God holds precious. Much of the religious world today is a spiritual wilderness because of such greediness on the part of supposed leaders.

Jer 12:11 They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

Both the people and the land mourn because of the disobedience of the wicked. There are some who seek to please Jehovah, but the vast majority were walking in sin even as they claimed to be godly.

Jer 12:12 The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.

The Lord was allowing the Babylonians to invade the land as a punishment to those about whom Jeremiah had

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complained. They would send those who would use the sword to devour things from one end of the land to the other. Even the righteous would share in the mourning. He will go on later in the chapter to explain the need for a view that reaches much farther ahead than Jeremiah has seen.

**Jer 12:13 They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.**

The wicked think that they have prepared for a great day of victory. Nothing could be farther from the truth. What they have been sowing will lead to a harvest of thorns. There will be enormous pain. It will cause them to be ashamed of the path they have taken. They have made the Lord angry. The results will be awesome.

**Jer 12:14 Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.**

The evil neighbors were such as the Assyrians, Babylonians, Edomites, Moabites and Egyptians. All of these had attempted to injure Israel and Judah. These enemies of His people were to be uprooted from their own land. The Lord's people would someday be allowed to return to Canaan.

**Jer 12:15 And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have**

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compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

Although God would allow Judah to be removed from Canaan for a time, He would not destroy them completely. They would be captives for a time and then would be permitted to return to the blessings which were promised.

Jeremiah is making a mistake if he judges God's actions by his own shortsighted view. When time was ripe, God would cause the wicked to see punishment and the faithful to inherit their reward.

Jer 12:16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.

There is a note of the Messianic age in these last two verses. Both those of Judah who had brought about the calamity which was descending upon them, and the enemies who persecuted them, were to have an opportunity to repent and serve Jehovah. Some of the very people who had misled His chosen nation would see the error of their ways. That would justify His allowing them more time. Heaven would really be worth it all.

Jer 12:17 But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

There is an "if" in both of these last two verses. If the strangers learn to worship the True God, they can be

included in eternal joy of heaven. If the rebels continue to defy Him, they will find their nation destroyed and an eternal future of torment.

Thus there is an answer to the question as to why the wicked are allowed to prosper at the expense of the righteous. It lies in the comparison between the temporal and the eternal. Jesus Christ provided the example for Christians today. He was God with us. He lived without sin. Yet He was persecuted unto death by the scribes, pharisees and hypocrites. He went willingly to the cross because He knew the pain would be but for the moment. He would take His seat at the right hand of the Father and would rule there endlessly. And so it is with the righteous today. There is pain and sorrow which comes about because we live in a world that challenges it's Creator. If we can focus upon the fullness of joy and the endlessness of heaven, it will make sense.

Chapter 13

Two metaphors are presented in chapter thirteen. The first is the dirty girdle. The second is the wine bottles. Both describe the filthy spiritual condition of God's people. They are to be given a chance to become clean, but they have ingrained such sinful conduct into their very hearts that any improvement is not to be expected.

Jer 13:1 Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

God commanded Jeremiah to obtain a linen girdle and put it on his loins. We do not know the condition of the girdle at the time he got it. We do know that it was to be placed on his loins and not to be washed. Over a period of time it was bound to become soiled. Clean linen is a very attractive fabric. Linen is mentioned many times in the Bible as being of superior attractiveness. The soil on dirty linen is particularly noticeable

Jer 13:2 So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.

Jeremiah did as he was told by the Lord. There is a difference of opinion as to whether it was used as an outer garment, or was placed underneath other clothing and next to the body.

Jer 13:3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,

Jer 13:4 Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.

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**Jer 13:5 So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.**

After an undisclosed amount of time, the Lord gave another command. The prophet was to wear his girdle and go to the river Euphrates. There, he was to remove the linen girdle and hide it in the hole of a rock.

Since it was approximately four hundred miles from Anathoth where Jeremiah abode, to the Euphrates river, there are some who wonder if this was a closer location with a similar name. This seems unlikely. The distance from Judea to the land of Babylon is a part of the seriousness of the captivity. I believe Jeremiah made that extended round trip twice. This would make a total sixteen hundred miles he would have traveled. He probably received the needed strength from the hand of the Lord.

**Jer 13:6 And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.**

**Jer 13:7 Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.**

After some extended period of time God told Jeremiah to go again to the place where he had hidden the girdle and remove it from its hiding place. He made the trip from Anathoth to the Euphrates again.

We can imagine that the girdle which was attractive at first had now become so badly soiled that it was not fit to wear. It was "good for nothing!" What was the purpose of hiding the girdle in Babylonia until it was soiled beyond

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any profitable use? God was going to hide His chosen people in Babylon because they had demonstrated while they were still in Canaan that they were unprofitable servants.

There was a difference however. The girdle became even more rotten while in the strange land. The remnant who returned from Babylonia were spiritually cleaner than when they were taken there.

Jer 13:8 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jer 13:9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

God then drew a parallel between the hiding of the once attractive girdle which became filthy and was hidden in the bank of the Euphrates and His people which He had once cherished and who were to be hidden in that same land for some seventy years. They were also so filthy of soul that they caused Him to be ashamed of them.

Jer 13:10 This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

Throughout human history it has been the case that a large majority of those who come into this world as infants in a pure condition become rotten with sin. They fail to hear the wisdom of the Holy God, and set out to direct their own paths so as to fulfill their fleshly desires. They become “good for nothing!”

Jer 13:11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the

whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

God had wrapped His people around Him in order that they might see the need to cling to Him. They were brought into existence that they might praise and glorify His name. Tragically they had failed to do that. They had dishonored Him and had stopped their ears to His wisdom. The situation had deteriorated to the place where drastic methods had to be put into place.

Jer 13:12 Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?

Jeremiah was commanded to tell the people that every wine bottle would be filled with wine. This was not such a great revelation to the listeners. They knew that was the purpose of wine bottles. They probably also knew that there had been a bountiful crop of grapes, and that there would be enough wine to fill all of the bottles.

Jer 13:13 Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.

Then came an explanation of the meaning of God's statement. The people were the wine bottles. He was going to give them enough wine to fill them to a state

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of drunkenness. From the highest dignitary in the land to the least of the commoners, they would stagger in confusion. They would find that directing their own steps led to terrifying disorder.

**Jer 13:14 And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.**

Just as wine bubbles and boils while in fermentation, His people would turn against one another without aim or purpose. When that happened the Lord would not reach down and pick them up from their confused state. He would allow them to experience the end of their pride filled march to the drumbeat of Satan.

**Jer 13:15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.**

**Jer 13:16 Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.**

Those of Judah still had the power of choice. The Lord had not forced them to remain filthy. If they would hear Him and heed His call for them to glorify Him before they plunged into the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death, there was room for repentance. At the same time, He knew very well that they were so saturated with selfishness they would not hear.

**Jer 13:17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye**

**shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.**

It was Jeremiah who was speaking for the Lord. He could hardly bear to deliver the message of destruction. Genuine tears would roll down his cheeks. Even deep in his soul, he would suffer at the thought of such a future for the ones he had loved. The people would be taken to that land beyond the Euphrates and hidden there until only a remnant of them would ever come back.

**Jer 13:18 Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.**

Even the king and queen of the land were to be humbled. Their crowns would become meaningless. They would be ruled by others. There would be no glory for them, nor for any others who had failed to give glory to Jehovah. The finest way for men and women to gain glory is to first glorify God. Then God will glorify them.

**Jer 13:19 The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.**

The north had long been in the captivity of the Assyrians. Now the cities of the south would meet a similar fate in the land of the Chaldeans. It would be rendered powerless.

**Jer 13:20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?**

All they need do to see the future was to look toward the north from which the invading army was marching from Dan toward Beersheba. When the damage was done the king and queen of Israel would look in vain for the people over whom they had reigned.

**Jer 13:21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?**

There would be no avenue of escape from the disaster. The rulers had trained lesser captains to superintend the whole of the population. That had been a waste of time. Those who were so trained would find themselves ruled by sorrow even as a woman is controlled by her labor pains in childbirth.

**Jer 13:22 And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.**

In case the people of Judah, or Jeremiah himself, wondered why God had not been more lenient with them, He would make it even more clear. It was because He had already extended His grace as far as it would reach. The people had demonstrated their determination to continue in the wickedness. They had committed adultery with Baal and other gods. Their nakedness would be exposed to the world just as the nakedness of adulterous wives of Judah were stripped of their clothing and made ashamed before all.

**Jer 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.**

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It was no more likely that God's people would change their sinful ways than it was that a black man could change the color of his skin, or a leopard could rearranged the spots of his coat. They had become such habitual rebels that they would not return to Him.

Jer 13:24 Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

When grain is winnowed by the wind, the chaff and other undesirable portions is carried away. That was precisely what would happen to Judah. They were to be carried away from the precious land of Canaan.

Jer 13:25 This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

The people had chosen their lot. They could have chosen to be faithful, but they did not. They had ignored the truth and had feasted upon lies. Therefore they would be allowed to keep company with the Babylonians who followed that same manner of life.

Jer 13:26 Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

The punishment would be similar to that in which the skirts of an adulterous woman were raised up to uncover her genitals and leave her in embarrassment and shame. To this very day we are reading about Judah's unfaithful conduct. Her shame reached through the ages and around the world.

Jer 13:27 I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?

The Lord would make certain that others saw the same abominable sins which He had seen throughout the land. It would take a lengthy period of time to make His people see these things and clean themselves up. Jeremiah is caused to wonder if it will ever happen, and if so, how long it would take.

Chapter 14

A series of hardships falls upon the people of Judah. They include famine, drought and pestilence. Any call for divine help to relieve the woes is out of the question. All that can be done is to wait for the punishment to run its course.

Jer 14:1 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth.

If this is a vision it is presented in such vivid terms that one forgets this could be the case. It seems more likely that the word which came to Jeremiah deals with what is already beginning to sweep the land and the people; but that it goes much farther and predicts that the present afflictions were but a sample of what was ahead.

Jer 14:2 Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

The city gates of Jerusalem, where the marketing centered were nearly deserted. It is not the gates which are black unto the ground. It is the people who are mourning. They are dressed in black mourning clothing and are either seated upon the ground or kneeling with the foreheads touching the ground. A piteous cry for help arises from their lips.

Jer 14:3 And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads.

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The supply of water has run so low that children or servants are being sent to find some. They return with no success. The wells, springs and cisterns are dry. Everyone is ashamed and bewildered. The covering of the heads is a custom which shows their degree of confusion.

**Jer 14:4 Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.**

When one's skin becomes dry it will turn color and chap. Wrinkles will form on the surface. The earth does somewhat the same. Huge cracks will form as the moisture evaporates. Farmers know it will do no good to plow the ground since any growth of vegetation requires rain, and there is none.

**Jer 14:5 Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass.**

The hind is the female deer. She drops her calf in the field. Then she deserts it because there is not enough pasture for her to produce the milk needed to keep her offspring alive.

**Jer 14:6 And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.**

The wild asses moved up into the higher regions and gasped for moist air. Their eyes became glazed and fixed in their sockets leaving them sightless. Like the hind, they could find no grass.

**Jer 14:7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our**

**backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.**

Either Jeremiah, or the people call out for God to hear their plea. An admission is made that they had been stubborn and have sinned against the Sustainer of life. They realize that He can see the corruption in their lives. They also feel that He has the power to remove the immense suffering. The tenth verse seems to say this was a prayer of Jeremiah on behalf of the people.

**Jer 14:8 O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?**

What a tragedy it is that humans must wait until disaster strikes before they truly trust the Lord. Even when they call upon Him in time of trouble, they do it with the lips and not with their hearts. Israel had developed the attitude that since they were God's chosen people, He would never abandon them to such horrible conditions as they were being exposed to.

Had He not promised to bless them forever? Why had He not kept His promise? He was acting like a traveler who could be found in the land at one time and then passed on to other places. They needed Him all the time, not just for a night.

**Jer 14:9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.**

What would the surrounding nations think when Israel could not pray for help from their God and receive

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that help? Was He too weak to save them? If He was in the midst of them He must know that they had been recognized as His people. It would deface His own name among the nations if He did not come when needed.

Jer 14:10 Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

Now we come to the answer provided by the Lord to the plea of Jeremiah. His people had listened to the false prophets. They had been offered lies that there was peace when they had made themselves foes of Jehovah. The people had loved the lies and chosen them over the truths which Jeremiah had presented. The people had followed their own imagination and wandered wheresoever they pleased. Now they expected the Lord to accept their excuses and the prayers on their behalf. Their sins were not about to be forgiven because they were not about to become faithful.

Jer 14:11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

Jeremiah is told that any prayer for the comfort of the people will be unheard. Since they will not hear Him, He will not hear them.

Jer 14:12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Fasts had been commanded by the Lord, and were useful when they were accompanied by righteous lives. Burnt offerings provided a sweet savor in the nostrils of God when the offerings were made by men who sincerely believed and trusted in His ability and willingness to guide their footsteps.

Their fasts and offerings had not met these qualifications. They would be disregarded and the people would face swords, famines and diseases.

Jer 14:13 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.

Jeremiah attempts to justify the people because their false prophets had assured them these troublous time would never come upon them. Jeremiah was correct in that the people had been fed with falsehood. He was not correct in concluding this would excuse them from punishment. The sword, the famine and the pestilence would come in spite of what they had heard and believed from the false prophets.

Jer 14:14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

God assured Jeremiah that these prophets had not been sent out among the people with His blessing. They had been presenting useless and damaging deceit.

We must ask ourselves what could possible motivate a person to do such foul things. This should not be any great mystery. It has happened in all the ages. There are those even today that will proclaim “Once saved, always saved.” The Lord could hardly have made it clearer that men can believe a lie after they have begun to follow God’s truth, causing them to be damned. Satan has been successful in persuading multiplied millions that God is so gracious and merciful that He will smile upon those who disobey at Satan’s call.

Jer 14:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

Those lying prophets who claim to prophesy in the name of the Lord, but who teach the doctrines of Satan and his followers will find themselves destroyed by the same horrors which their victims face for having believed their lies. The sword and the famine were certain for both the people and the falsifying prophets.

Jer 14:16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

The people who have been so gullible as to believe the lies of the false prophets will end up losing their lives and being thrown out into the streets. Their entire families will meet the same end. Husbands, wives, mothers, sons

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and daughters will all lie dead in the streets with no one to bury their bodies.

**Jer 14:17 Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.**

Jeremiah must accept the fact that the suffering is unavoidable. A virgin daughter is ordinarily loved dearly by her father. The God of heaven had fondly looked at Israel in this manner. Now she had been broken and battered. Do we not find a river of tears in the eyes of Jeremiah, and possibly a few in the eye of Jehovah.

**Jer 14:18 If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not.**

When one goes out into the fields, the slain with the sword are seen. If one goes into the city itself, those who have died of starvation lie dead in the streets. The prophets and the priests have led the people into a land of terrifying sights. It is one they had not seen before.

**Jer 14:19 Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul lothed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!**

These last few verses indicate just the slightest hope that God will relent. Is it just possible that He

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has not rejected His people forever? They had admitted their transgressions, and still the troubles were seen on every side. There had been no healing. Would there ever be?

Jer 14:20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.

The fact that they had acknowledged their sins caused them to feel that God would forgive those sins. This would have been true if they had accompanied their confession with evidence that they were ready to leave their wickedness and obey Him.

Jer 14:21 Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us.

They make a strange request. If the Lord does not forgive them and continues to allow them to suffer, it will bring dishonor upon His own name. This was rank ignorance. They were the ones who were disgracing His name. It was not Him.

The same type of reasoning caused them to plead with Him not to break the covenant. They had broken it over and over again. He had not broken it. If they had honored their promise to be His people, He would have honored His promise to be their God.

Jer 14:22 Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.

Jeremiah, and perhaps at least some of the people, had come to the realization that there was to be no help from the idols and other false gods of the gentiles. If they were to receive relief from the sword, famine and pestilence, it would have to come from the Creator of both heaven and earth. They would find it necessary to wait until He felt the punishment to be sufficient.

Chapter 15

Jeremiah had tried to make intercession for the people to the Lord. Now God instructs him that they have gone beyond that point. They must be punished. Jeremiah feels that his work has been in vain. The Lord assures him that He is quite aware of what the prophet has been doing, and that the work is not useless.

Jer 15:1 Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

Jeremiah had pleaded in the previous chapter that God had been long-suffering and merciful in the past. Would he not extend the same privilege to those who had been wayward this time?

The answer from God is both definite and absolutely clear. Israel has overstepped the point where they can escape punishment. Even if the great lawgiver Moses, who had interceded successfully for the people many years ago, and the great prophet Samuel, who had also succeeded in interceding successfully in his day, were to plead for this present nation, they could not have persuaded God to turn back the punishment. Israel is to be taken from under His protective eye and sent forth to their unhappy destiny.

Jer 15:2 And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.

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When the time comes, the people will be sure to ask Jeremiah where they are to be sent. He is to answer them bluntly. Some will die at the point of swords. Others will starve to death. Yet others will live, but they will be taken into captivity. Their freedom will be lost. They have turned their faces away from Jehovah. Now they will find out what they turned to.

**Jer 15:3 And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.**

By the time the punishment has run its course, they will be slain by the sword. Then the dogs will tear the bodies into pieces. The meat eating birds will pick the most of the flesh from off those bones, and the wild beasts will complete the devastation. The wages of sin is death!

**Jer 15:4 And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.**

Those who remain alive and in captivity will be scattered to the ends of the earth as a result of following the way of the wicked king Manasseh who promoted the idol worship which they are practicing in the time of Jeremiah.

Today one can look in about any nation on the face of the earth and find Jews. Hitler despised them so much in the land of Germany that he tried to eliminate every one of them. Rather than promoting the name of Jehovah which they were obligated to do, they have

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placed much of their skill and energy into financial pursuits.

Jer 15:5 For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?

The Jews would so exasperate the gentile world that they would receive no pity or consolation for the fate which they brought upon themselves.

Jer 15:6 Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

The Lord spoke to the nation as a whole, and not just to Jeremiah. They had stopped their ears and closed their eyes to the guidance and other blessings which He would have given them had they been cooperative. Since they had not desired His blessings, He would stretch out His arm against them instead of in their support. He had suffered their disobedient insolence as long as He was going to. Does God actually repent. This verse says He does. It is not that God had sinned and is sorry for that sin. It is that He turns back from the direction He has been moving and takes another path of action.

Jer 15:7 And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people since they return not from their ways.

The gates of the land were where they people determined what goods were worthy of purchasing

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and which were but chaff. God would fan the people themselves and keep only that which was worth saving as a remnant. They will lose their children as well as their own lives. If they will not repent, He will.

**Jer 15:8 Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.**

The young men will be lost on battlefields, leaving their wives as widows. In the prime of life they will be spoiled, leaving mothers in great grief. The spoiler will be the invading army which will bring sudden terror upon both mothers and wives.

**Jer 15:9 She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.**

A healthy woman who had given birth to seven children would find that her sun had gone down when it should have been shining the brightest. She would be completely bewildered at the horror which was falling upon the land and the people. Any who were not killed would be removed from the land.

**Jer 15:10 Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me.**

With this tenth verse Jeremiah is bewailing the fact that his life has been one of strife and contention. He felt that he was hated by both Jews and outsiders. He was not one of those who lent money upon high interest and then made life miserable for those who did not or could not pay the loan back. He had neither loaned to others or borrowed from others in that fashion. Yet the people were cursing him for telling them that which God had commanded him to teach.

**Jer 15:11 The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction.**

God promised Jeremiah that all of the people would not be eliminated. He would even see to it that Jeremiah was treated well when the punishment and affliction fell upon the nation of Israel. This prediction was fulfilled. Jeremiah was treated with more respect than many of his fellow countrymen.

**Jer 15:12 Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?**

Jeremiah was not to expect that the strength of the army of Judah would be sufficient to turn back the more powerful forces of the Babylonians who were sweeping down upon them. Defeat was inevitable.

**Jer 15:13 Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders.**

The invaders would take their possessions away and they would receive nothing in return. In this they would

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be paying for the sins which they had committed in the worship of idols and other false gods. They would be taken from that land in which they had committed such sins and removed to another.

Jer 15:14 And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon you.

The people who were not slain would be marched to Babylon, where they would be strangers. They had set a fire of wrath in the mind of God. It would flame up until it had burned them to cinders.

Jer 15:15 O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.

Jeremiah pleads for his own life. Does God not remember how diligently he had obeyed the command to preach to Judah and call out for them to turn from evil? Surely the longsuffering of the Lord would allow him to escape from the bitter fate which had been promised for the sins of those who had refused to hear the prophet's warnings. He had suffered much torment from their stubborn refusals and mocking remarks. Must he suffer with them?

Jer 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Jeremiah contended that he had not defied God. He had accepted the task which was laid upon him. He had been happy to hear God's words, digest them and rejoice that he could be known as a prophet of Jehovah.

Jer 15:17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

His claim was that he had not joined the sinners in their insolence. The very opposite was true. He had been ostracized by those to whom he preached. They were so indignant toward him that he had taken much abuse at their hands. He felt ALONE.

Jer 15:18 Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?

Jeremiah did exactly what many other preachers of the Word of God have done. He began to question the judgments of the Lord. He asked, at least in his mind, if he could not trust God. It seemed as if he was fighting against an incurable sore. He was beginning to wonder if God would truly promise good things and then fail to bring those good things to pass.

This present commentator has dealt with some of the very same thoughts which passed through the mind of Jeremiah. When one preaches that which is not pleasant to the listener, the result is very often not repentance. It is defiance and hatred toward the preacher. If one preaches tradition, right or wrong, most will remain calm. But if one preaches that the listeners have been opposing God and will be punished for their opposition, the preacher

often feels he is following in the footsteps which led to Golgotha.

Jer 15:19 Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

Jeremiah received a fairly stern rebuke for his complaint. God told him that if he would return, he would be allowed to stand with God again. But what was meant by calling upon the prophet to return? It was that he was in great danger of becoming vile himself. He must carefully sort out and cast away that which was wrong. If He would cling to the Word of God and refuse to join the sinners, he could still act as God's mouthpiece. If he did not, there was great danger ahead. He was to cause the people to turn to him. He was not to turn to them.

Jer 15:20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

It was true that the people had fought back against the preaching which Jeremiah had delivered. But with God's help their arrows of mockery would fall harmless, and His word would prevail in the end. God would provide Jeremiah with a wall of protection which would not break down.

Jer 15:21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

God is the only Redeemer and Deliverer of mankind. The wicked will do their best to prevail against the righteous. When all is finished, the righteous will be victorious. The wonderful book of Revelation at the end of the Bible has that for it's central theme. There is victory in Jesus! Destruction awaits the wicked. Heavenly joy is in store for the righteous.

Chapter 16

That which is described in this chapter was not originated in the mind of Jeremiah. He would have desired quite different conditions had it been his own wishes and desires. He is told of the pleasures of life which will be denied to himself and his people as a result of the disregard for God's instructions.

Jer 16:1 The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,

Jer 16:2 Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place.

Conditions were to be so severe that family life would only lead to greater sorrow. God had encouraged His people to marry and produce children. Now He warned that it was better for the prophet to abstain from taking a wife and bringing children into the kind of world they would face.

Jer 16:3 For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land;

A list of the horrors which mothers, fathers, sons and daughters would face is begun. God Himself desired faithful children who would turn to Him as their spiritual Father. At this time He must warn the people that parenthood is a perilous journey.

Jer 16:4 They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried;

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**but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.**

The deaths would be so many that there would be little time for lamentation. They would not even find time to bury the dead. Just as garbage is cast off and often left strewn around, the corpses of those who had lost their lives would be strewn across the countryside without a funeral. The people would die by the sword and by starvation. They would then be eaten by carnivorous birds and beasts. Would the reader bring children into the world to face such a fate?

**Jer 16:5 For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, even lovingkindness and mercies.**

People of that part of the world have long been known for gathering and expressing their grief with loud cries and many tears. This was not to be done during the invasion. God had allowed these sorrows to come upon them. When His mercy and lovingkindness are removed, the mourners would find it necessary to accept the deaths as necessary.

**Jer 16:6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them:**

The powerful, wealthy and respected in the land need not think that they will be exempted. There will be no

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difference between the rich and the poor. Both will lie unburied during the monstrous disaster.

Cutting one's flesh and tearing out the hair were common signs of sorrow at the time. They were to abstain from such demonstrations. The punishment was deserved.

Jer 16:7 Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.

The relatives and friends of the dead were not to offer any comfort over the loss of the loved ones. Even if a father or mother died, the tears were to be held back and the grief was to be hidden as well as possible. When sin has taken over, death will follow.

Jer 16:8 Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink.

It is a common thing in almost every country of the world for the friends of those who have lost those dear to them to bring food which can be consumed. This eliminates the need for such food to be prepared by those who are cut to the very heart. No such food would be offered, partly because everyone would be involved in the grief.

Jer 16:9 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

The sorrow would be so great that joy and happiness would disappear. Even wedding ceremonies would be gloomy, if they were used at all. Brides and bridegrooms alike would be too glum to break into laughter.

Jer 16:10 And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?

Jeremiah would face some sharp questions when he delivered the awful truth which the Lord had commanded him to reveal to the people. They would deny that they had done anything which would deserve such a penalty. What could they possibly have done to warrant this kind of suffering? He would be asked to explain just what sins they had committed.

Any person who has been charged with disciplining others will just begin to understand the reason for this question. People, from children to adults, do not recognize the seriousness of their misbehavior. As an example, this present writer had seen enough of small children running through the church building. He finally took one of the youngsters who was about five years of age and marched him in the direction of the auditorium where his parents were seated. The youngster tried his best to wrench himself loose from my grasp. He told me he had not been running, and he was not running at the time. I told him he had been running and the only reason he was not running was that I had hold of his arm. Adults such as those of Judah will respond to discipline in the same way, except that it may be a bit more sophisticated.

Jer 16:11 Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law;

Jer 16:12 And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

The people really did not believe their sins were so grievous. And so Jeremiah told them. It was because from the time of their forefathers until the present they had flirted with false gods. They had served them and worshipped them. During this time they had ignored Jehovah and His laws.

But were these people of the present generation to be blamed and punished for what their forefathers had done? That was not the point at issue. They had the examples of the punishment which came to their forefathers and had not learned from those examples.

Jer 16:13 Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

Other lands had other gods which they supposedly served. Israel and Judah had received the blessings and instruction of the Only True God. Since they had chosen to worship the gods of the Babylonians, the Lord would send them into that land where they would find it necessary to depend upon those “nothings” to help them. Thus they could discover the impotency of gods made of wood, metal and stone, or seen in the starry sky.

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**Jer 16:14 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;**

The people should have remembered the historical record which told of the Lord's having brought His people of out bondage in Egypt. That had been a major event in the history of the people of Israel.

**Jer 16:15 But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.**

But now this would change. There would be a delivery from the bondage in Babylonia which would be even more noted than that which took place in the crossing of the Red Sea. God's people would be taken from all of the lands where they had been sent. They would someday be returned to the land which He had given to their forefathers. This promise was kept when the decree of Cyrus the Mede was issued that they could return.

**Jer 16:16 Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.**

At that time the people would be searched out from the places where they had been sent. It was not only that permission would be given to return. A positive effort would be made to find them and bring them back

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to the land which God had blessed with in the long ago. Hunters and fishermen do not just stroll around. They look carefully in the places where they feel they will find that which they seek.

Jer 16:17 For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

Jehovah is omnipresent. No one can be hidden from His sight when He chooses to observe them. Every sin which is committed is on record unless God's plan for removing it's stain has been followed. The people of Judah, like those of the northern kingdom of Israel had not complied with the terms of forgiveness. Their guilt was unquestionable.

Jer 16:18 And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

Spankings come in more than one number of strokes. God was going to give His people a measure of correction that would leave no doubt as to His attitude toward their actions. They had filled the land with murder, lies, covetousness and other pollution. Particularly, they had scattered the remains of their idols everywhere. God hated this filthiness.

Jer 16:19 O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have

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**inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.**

Jeremiah does not dispute further against Jehovah. He even gains a foresight as to what is going to happen in God's family in the latter days. Those same gentiles who have disdained Him and praised their false gods, will come from all parts of the earth to serve The True God.

When we place this verse alongside verse sixteen, there is strong reason to believe God placed a vision of the great commission before the prophet Jeremiah. There will be a victory for Jesus. He was God with us.

**Jer 16:20 Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?**

For the present, the Lord would tend to the business at hand. Those who had made their own gods were to come face to face with reality. Those gods were "no gods."

**Jer 16:21 Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD.**

The punishment was to be so great that once and for all the Jew would learn that there is but ONE GOD, and that He, and He alone, is LORD.

## Chapter 17

Chapter seventeen is a mixture of several different thoughts, expressed in somewhat different styles. This has resulted in difficulty assigning a specific date to the material. It may have been written in piecemeal fashion rather than at one time. However, it continues with the same tearful predictions and accusations respecting those of Judah.

**Jer 17:1 The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;**

How difficult was it to separate the people of Judah from the sins they had in their hearts and on their altars? It was as if the writing tool was a pen of iron with the point of diamond. It was written so indelibly upon their hard hearts that it was well nigh impossible to remove it. But these sins were very evident to the eye of the Lord, and they required drastic measures in attempting to erase them. Their inner thoughts and their outer actions agreed that they were a rebellious and wicked people.

**Jer 17:2 Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.**

What was being written on the hearts of their children must also be considered. Those children were accustomed to seeing the altars erected in the groves of trees at the high places. Childhood memories may be clung to for a lifetime. Even these children would have difficulty in ridding themselves of the adoration of idols.

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Jer 17:3 O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders.

God's mountain was Mount Zion upon which Jerusalem was built. The field would have been the surrounding area. God's people were not intended to go to the groves and high places. Their worship was to be limited to Jehovah. They had not taken heed to God's will in that matter.

Jer 17:4 And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever.

They had been guilty of discontinuing their loyalty to the Lord. The result was that the Lord was about to discontinue them from the land which He had promised to them. Their blessings were conditional upon their loyalty. They were trusting in themselves. Their idols were completely vain.

Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

God's promise had been that He would bless those who served Him, and He would curse those who departed from Him. Judah had placed their confidence in themselves and in the idols which they had made with their own hands.

Proud nations, one after the other, have risen to

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prominence only to fade away in basing their hopes on their own wisdom and ignoring the wisdom of God.

**Jer 17:6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.**

The heath is thought to have been a species of juniper. It has been described as a tall stem with very little branch or leaf structure. It grew in desert areas where little else would grow and where humans were almost non-existent. A salt land is not productive of vegetation. Judah has chosen that type of spiritual environment. They are withering.

**Jer 17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**

**Jer 17:8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

The person who places his confidence in Jehovah will find that he thrives like a tree which has access to an abundant supply of fresh water. His roots go deep. When the heat arrives, there is still the ability to remain alive and yield the type of fruit which is useful. Such a person has the love of God engraved on his heart. God takes pleasure in such persons and blesses them.

**Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**

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If a person decides to walk according to his own heart, or that of another men directs him, that man will fall to deceit and evil ways. A man may have serious trouble understanding his own heart, to say nothing of the hearts of others. Man is not guilty of sin inherited from his ancestors, but all too often he reaches out for the same wicked goals and uses the same wicked methods to reach those goals. Only in partnership with the Lord will he be capable of finding the true way of life.

Jer 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

The biblical heart and reins are the seat of the emotions and purposes. God can read those emotions and purposes as easily as we humans might read a book with large print and simple words. He can then assign curses and blessings as He sees fit.

Jer 17:11 As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

This is an attention getting verse. We do not know precisely the identity of the bird mentioned. It is translated as “Partridge” because the partridge had a reputation of setting upon the eggs which had been abandoned by another bird. After hatching the eggs, the young birds would abandon the partridge who had hatched them. Riches follow the same route. If one accumulates riches at the expense of others, he may very well find that they have flown away long before the end of his life. He shall then be known for being a foolish person who places his priorities in the wrong order.

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**Jer 17:12 A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.**

**Jer 17:13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.**

God's throne is worthy of the highest respect by all men. Our hope lies in following the directions of the Divine Lord who sits upon that throne. The one who places his confidence in that throne will find a sanctuary. The one who departs from the will of the Lord will find that his hopes have been blown away as if they were written in the dust of the earth.

**Jer 17:14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.**

Jeremiah is willing to let the Lord be his guide. When he develops spiritual maladies, he will turn to God to bring him back to a healthy condition. If God is the one who tends to his problems, he knows the Great Physician will be available to him and will prescribe the correct medicine. He is depending upon the greatest doctor of all.

**Jer 17:15 Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now.**

The people are asking the prophet why he does not produce the word of the Lord.. If the Lord is the one whose words were being preached by Jeremiah, it was high time that some guidance and mercy would be made available.

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The hurt prophesied by Jeremiah was too much to bear. Perhaps his Tutor would send an antidote to take away the predicted curses. Speak up, Mr. Jeremiah!

Jer 17:16 As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee.

A pastor, as mentioned in the Word of God is one who presents spiritual food to God's flock. Jeremiah claims he has been loyal to follow the Word which God gave him. He did not desire that the horrors he predicted would fall upon the ones to whom he had preached. Even so, he did his very best to preach only that which the Lord had approved.

Jer 17:17 Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.

The prophet requests that God not subject him to the fear which is to come upon those who bowed before idols. He felt that the Lord could protect him from from at least a portion of the anguish to come.

Jer 17:18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

This verse sounds out of character for Jeremiah. He loved the people to whom he preached. But over and over God had indicated that he might share in the punishment which was to be visited upon the wicked. He pleads

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that he not be subjected to the confusion and dismay concerning which he had been warning them. It seemed to him that everyone should receive punishment which was appropriate to the sins of the wicked. God should know how much was needed. He did not feel that his own life should be as miserable as those who had made spiritual war against Jehovah.

**Jer 17:19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;**

**Jer 17:20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:**

Jeremiah was told by the Lord to stand at a gate of Jerusalem where the people moved in and out of the city. We do not know which gate, but it does mention that the kings used this particular gate. They were not immune to the preaching which the prophet was to do in teaching against sin. He was to fearlessly tell the people what had caused the wrath of God to become so heated.

**Jer 17:21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;**

Many causes had already been presented. This time that which had irritated Jehovah was the neglect of keeping the sabbath day holy. They had been bringing loads of products through the gates of the city when they

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were expected to be resting and hallowing that seventh day of the week.

Jer 17:22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

What does one do on the sabbath if no burden can be carried, and no work is to be done on that day? The day could be used for reading, prayer and discussion of the Word of the Lord. They had not been treating it in that manner.

There is an infection which takes place when one forsakes that which God has commanded. If the sabbath can be broken, then other commands are apt to follow. Over a period of time the person may then drift into secular activities and depend upon their own wisdom for finding their way in life. That is exactly what had happened to God's people at the time of Jeremiah's preaching.

Jer 17:23 But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

When an immature child is told to do something it does not want to do, it will stiffen it's back and straighten out it's body. It will not listen to what the parent says. Judah had acted like a spoiled child.

Jer 17:24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein;

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How different it would have been if the people had respected the will of the Lord with respect to resting on the sabbath! They would have been more spiritually minded. The land would have had rest on the seventh year. God would have been pleased with their cooperation.

**Jer 17:25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever.**

If the people had been obedient to the will of the Lord, their rulers could have continued to occupy the throne, and could have ridden in chariots and upon horses. The people could have remained in the city of Jerusalem for many generations; at least until the Son of God entered into time.

**Jer 17:26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.**

Honoring the commandments of the Lord would have allowed the entire land to thrive. There would have been more than enough to provide for the various offerings and sacrifices which God had expected to be made. The temple could have been filled with joyous hymns of praise.

**Jer 17:27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.**

To reject the will of the Lord was to bring tragedy down upon themselves. If they were determined to use that which God sanctified for His use to further their own business affairs, He would set a fire which would burn the city. The fire would be impossible to put out.

They had despised the sabbath. They had turned to the worship of idols and also lying, covetousness and other sins, God was now about to bring the curse of Babylonian invasion upon them. The city would be destroyed. Many would be killed by the sword. Others would starve or die of disease. Those who survived would be carried off into the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where they would have ample opportunity to reflect upon their foolhardy choices.

## Chapter 18

The Lord has the right to alter His course of action toward men as He observes their response to His blessings. He is a potter who has in His hands the ability to destroy that which disappoints Him and replace it with that which pleases Him. Israel had highly displeased Him. They could expect new and different treatment from Him.

**Jer 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,**

It might be interesting to the student of the Bible to count the number of times the chapters of this book begin with almost these identical words. Jeremiah wanted it to be plainly known that He was voicing the Word of the Lord, and not his own.

**Jer 18:2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.**

God's truths may be seen in every direction one might look. The entire universe is a schoolhouse for mankind. In the present instance the Lord directed Jeremiah to go to the house of a potter. There he would discover a lesson from the Creator.

**Jer 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.**

The potter sits beside a pair of wheels. One is underneath a table surface through which it can make contact with another which rotates horizontally. As the potter uses his feet to rotate the lower wheel in a

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vertical plane, the upper wheel spins or rotates like an old fashioned phonograph.

The potter places a lump of clay upon the surface of the upper wheel and as it turns, he uses his hands to form a vessel for a desired purpose. Some are extremely skillful at creating beautiful vases, etc. The potter was working at his wheels when Jeremiah arrived.

Jer 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

As the prophet watched, the vessel which he was trying to form according to his taste did not turn out as he desired. He then abandoned the misformed piece and used the clay to make another which pleased him.

Jer 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Jer 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Here was what the Lord had wanted Jeremiah to see. He proceeded to explain that He could do as the potter had done. Mankind is being molded by the hand of God. As the Potter, God observes the results of His efforts. He then has the power to either approve or disapprove of the labors.

There are those who have used these verses, along with Romans 9:14-24 to support the theory of predestination.

Rom 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Rom 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Rom 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Rom 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Rom 9:22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Rom 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Rom 9:24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

There are, however, two great differences in God's dealings with humanity and the potter working with the clay. Men were created in the image of God with free will. They can make a conscious and deliberate decision as to whether or not they will yield to the Divine Hand

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of the Lord. Secondly, God does not make the decision to abandon sinful men before those men are given a chance to please Him. Men are given every chance to turn from that which displeases Him and He will then forgive, if they will repent.

The lesson the apostle Paul was teaching is that if the Jews who have enjoyed the blessings of God for so long, still turn from Him, He can turn to the Gentiles and the remnant of the Jews who will obey. He will form a new vessel which will please Him.

**Jer 18:7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;**

**Jer 18:8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.**

If a nation which has disappointed the Lord, causing Him to make plans for uprooting that nation then repents from the evil which displeased Him, He has the right to alter His plan for that nation.

Just as men have the power to repent of their evils ways, God has the power to repent of the punishment which He had planned to administer to them. In the latter days when the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles, they would be used to form a new vessel for the Lord's use. If Judah had decided to forsake their sins of idolatry, etc. they could have been invited to enjoy blessings again. Sadly, they did not.

**Jer 18:9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;**

**Jer 18:10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not**

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my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Just the opposite is true also. When God observes that all is going well with a nation, He will plan to pour forth blessings upon it. But let us suppose that nation becomes obstinate and turns from obedience to rebellion. God then has the power to change His attitude and actions toward that nation and bring punishment upon it. Both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah had become as displeasing to Jehovah, just as the marred potter's wheel had been to him. The people were headed directly toward elimination of God's blessings.

Jer 18:11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

Although He had not predestined Israel to choose the way of rebellion, He did know beforehand what choice they would make. Still, He placed the choice before them. They could turn from their wicked ways if they would. There were to be given every chance!

Jer 18:12 And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

It is inconceivable that the people would declare war against the same Lord who had protected them, guided them and sustained them through the many centuries the Mosaic covenant had been in effect. But, that is exactly

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what they did. They replied that they would do as they pleased. They would direct their own steps. They did not need His help.

**Jer 18:13 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.**

God as good as said, “You have made your bed. Now lie in it!” They would be deported from the good land which He had given them and they would have a chance to see whether even the heathen acted as they had done. The people were compared to a pure and wholesome virgin who chose to defile herself with any who might come along.

**Jer 18:14 Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?**

A man who lived in a place where he could enjoy the fresh water which melted off the snow from the mountains, or had access to cold fresh water that flowed directly to him, would be extremely foolish to forsake such blessings and choose to leave them. Just such a ridiculous decision had been made by those whom the Lord had blessed in the past.

**Jer 18:15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;**

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By forgetting God's loving care in past days, and turning to the worship of vain and useless idols, along with other imaginary deities. They had lost their way. They were following paths which were not properly prepared for travel.

Jer 18:16 To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

The tragic consequences for the land and the people would be so devastating that anyone who paused to take note of the conditions would shake his head in astonishment.

Jer 18:17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.

The east wind was a fearsome force in the land of Canaan. It crossed the Arabian desert before reaching that land. The Babylonians would come upon them with withering force. Everything would be ruined as they marched through. The people of Judah could expect no support from the Lord. They had turned their back on Him. He would return the favor.

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

The people began to blame Jeremiah for the coming misfortune. They refused to believe God would allow

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their priests to lose the authority they possessed through the law of Moses. God would be with them and in their opinion Jeremiah was teaching blasphemy. They conspired to quiet his tongue. They were ready to take any measures necessary to silence his words which were so unwanted.

**Jer 18:19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.**

Jeremiah discovered their intentions. He called upon the Lord to take notice of the grave danger in which he stood. Both his reputation and his life were at risk.

**Jer 18:20 Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.**

The prophet had a penetrating question for Jehovah. Were these who were enemies of God to be allowed to return evil for good. They were attempting to destroy his very soul. He pointed out that he had taught what God had commanded him to teach. He had not done it because he wished to hurt them. His wish was that they would repent and give up their idolatry and other sins. This would have removed the wrath of God.

**Jer 18:21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle.**

The things mentioned in this verse were the very things God had promised would take place if the people continued in their defiant ways. They would die by the sword, by the famine and by pestilence. There would be the death of young men and a large number of widows would be left to support the children, if they had not lost their children to the enemy.

**Jer 18:22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet.**

Yes, the cries would rend the air. The word “troop” implies a large number of soldiers. Those who were trying their best to entrap Jeremiah and silence his predictions would find themselves the target of the invaders.

**Jer 18:23 Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger.**

“Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord. I will repay.” What seems like a vindictive prayer from the lips of an otherwise tender hearted man is perhaps a mixture of self concern and also of support for the forthcoming agonies which God had commanded him to predict.

## *Chapter 19*

God now tells Jeremiah to demonstrate the complete disgust He has for the nation of Israel. He is about to demolish that nation and leave it in such condition that it will never be reconstructed to its former status.

**Jer 19:1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;**

Here it is again. "Thus saith the Lord." The prophet is instructed to find a potter's vessel which is made of clay. He is then to gather older men from among the people and also from the priests.

This is interesting in that one wonders why these elders would respond positively to a call from this man whom they were coming to dislike more and more as a result of his criticism of their disdain for the Word of God. They must have still had some feeling that Jeremiah had authority to make such a call.

**Jer 19:2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,**

The prophet was then to lead these men to the valley of the son of Hinnom. This was a valley outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem where worship of Baal had been conducted. This was a place where the words he was about to speak would have more impact than perhaps any other location.

**Jer 19:3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem;**

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Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

These kings of Judah include more than just the single ruler at the head of the nation, which is thought to have been Jehoiakim. The dead rulers who had reigned previously would not have been able to pay heed to what the prophet was about to say. These must have been men in high places who had been recognized as dignitaries. Some of the elders whom Jeremiah had assembled may have been such persons.

The prophet begins his address. The Lord has promised to bring terrible things upon both the rulers of Israel, and the citizens of the city of Jerusalem. These horrors would be so devastating that they would have an effect similar to that of a clap of thunder that was so loud the ears would feel the effects for some time after the events.

Jer 19:4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

The reason for these drastic measures had been presented before. It was to be repeated and expanded. They had used this valley to burn incense to false gods. These gods were introduced to them by the surrounding nations. They had not worshiped them in the past. Neither had the Israelites of past times. They had shed the blood of innocent persons, including their own children. The valley was a witness to their sins.

Jer 19:5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings

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**unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:**

Israel had worshiped from high places in the days gone by. But God had commanded that it not be done after they entered the land of Canaan. They had now returned to such a practice and had caused their sons to be burned as offerings to Moloch, Ashteroth and others of the Baal class.

**Jer 19:6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.**

As a consequence of their vile use of the valley, it would have a name change. It would from that time on be known as the valley of slaughter. The literal meaning of the word “Tophet” is not clear. Verses following this one leave the impression that it was a spot where garbage, manure and sewage were dumped. Reports are that a fire continually burned there. That may well be why Jeremiah was told to choose the site for the braking of the potter’s vessel. Israel had deteriorated until they were refuse.

**Jer 19:7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.**

The Lord promised that the choices made by the leaders of the nation and the proud city of Jerusalem would be shown up as weak and damaging. They would result in defeat before their enemies, and the consumption

of their bodies by flesh eating birds and wild beasts. Jews liked impressive funeral ceremonies. Little could be more depressing than to see so many dead that their loved ones must lie with their bodies half eaten by these animals.

**Jer 19:8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.**

Jerusalem would be so damaged that anyone who passed by the city would be apt to wrinkle their nose and express their amazement with a hissing sound. Most of us have seen sights which almost took our breath away because they were so gruesome. Both the odor and the sight of the ruined city and it's surroundings would be enough to turn their stomachs.

**Jer 19:9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.**

Is it possible that a parent could become so hungry that he or she would cook and eat the flesh of their own infants and dear friends.? If one believes the Bible, it is possible. On three different occasions this is recorded. Twice it is found in the Bible and once from the pen of Josephus when the Romans defeated Jerusalem and besieged the city in 70 A.D.

See Lamentations 2:20 and 2 Kings 6:28-29.

It is not entirely impossible that just such things might happen again in the days of that last battle with Antichrist and his forces.

**Jer 19:10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,**

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Chances are that the potter's vessel which Jeremiah had obtained at the Lord's command was a beautiful piece of art work. But he was told to break the bottle into pieces in the view of the elders and rulers of the people.

Jer 19:11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.

This is what is known as an object lesson. The potter's bottle represented the people of Israel. The breaking of the bottle was intended to teach that Israel had become no more than rubble in the eyes of the Lord. There was no way by which the nation and the city could be put back into order when they had been smashed into little bits. The "valley of slaughter" would be so filled with bodies that there would be no room to bury any more.

Jer 19:12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet:

Just as the onlookers had seen the potters bottle broken, the Lord would break the city of Jerusalem into pieces fit only for the dung pile.

Jer 19:13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

All of the houses of the city of Jerusalem would become as polluted as the garbage dump of Tophet. WHY?

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Because they had provoked the jealousy of Jehovah by their adulterous worship poured out before the false gods they worshiped in the sky from the roofs of their houses.

**Jer 19:14 Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people,**

Having concluded his words at the Tophet dump, Jeremiah moved to the courtyard of the temple. This was the area where the common people were permitted to enter. He continued his words of warning from the Lord.

**Jer 19:15 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.**

The serious tone did not diminish. God was prepared to bring down upon Jerusalem and its suburbs every bit of the evil which had been described to them. They should have listened to the warnings given before this time. What they did do was to stiffen their necks in stubbornness and make it absolutely certain that they would not hear and obey God's Word. These were strong words. They were certain to meet serious resistance from listeners who were setting their jaws in defiance against God's commands. They were placing themselves in position to find out in person whether or not the God of Heaven and Earth meant what He had said.

## *Chapter 20*

There is good reason to think that the beginning verses of this chapter belong more appropriately with the one before. The action in this chapter was precipitated by the words which Jeremiah had spoken about the leadership of Israel.

**Jer 20:1 Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.**

It is believed that this Pashur was second in command to the king himself. When he was told that Jeremiah had prophesied such horrors for the nation, he became inflamed with anger. Men in high position do not take favorably to severe criticism. They usually feel they are above such things and that no one should take it upon themselves to be so bold.

**Jer 20:2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.**

Pashur decided to take the matter into his own hands. He struck Jeremiah and placed him in the stocks where all could see what a fool he was to level such criticism on the governor of the house of the Lord. This is the first record of anyone laying hands on the prophet. He had been subject to tongue lashing, but not to physical abuse.

Stocks varied in form. One of the typical stocks was one in which the hands were fastened in holes from which

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they could not be extracted. The head was bent forward and the stock was closed upon the neck and both arms. The legs were also pulled forward and extended through another set of holes. When all was locked together the pain was excruciating. The embarrassment only added to the severity of the experience.

Jer 20:3 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib.

Jeremiah was left overnight in the stocks. We cannot imagine the pain which he must have endured over those several hours before he was removed the next day. The experience had not put the prophet to silence. He did that which Pashur had certainly not expected. He added other predictions to those which had already been made.

Jer 20:4 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

Jeremiah declared that Pashur was a danger to himself and to all of those who lined up behind him. The coming invaders would kill them all. Pashur would live to see the horror with his own eyes before his life was taken.

The nation of Judah was to be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Large numbers of the people would be slain by means of the sword.

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**Jer 20:5 Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.**

The proud city of Jerusalem would be sacked. All of the work which had been done to build the city would be cancelled. The riches which had been accumulated by the rulers of the people would be taken from the city and carried to Babylon.

If Pashur thought the words previously spoken by Jeremiah were worth putting him into the stocks, what must he have thought after hearing this tirade.

**Jer 20:6 And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.**

Pashur himself would be taken with the rest and removed to Babylon. He would die there and be buried in that far off land. Those who supported him would find themselves in the same predicament. Jeremiah added that while he had been telling the truth, Pashur had been telling lies and assuring the people that all was well.

**Jer 20:7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.**

The prophet then made a very serious mistake. He began to criticise the Lord. He felt that he had been

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deceived into believing that if he prophesied the truth, he would be protected. Now he had been tortured instead. Everyone had turned against him and made a mockery of the words he had spoken.

Jer 20:8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

He had become so disillusioned that he felt he had become an object of derision because he foretold violence and the spoiling of the land. He had only been doing that which he had been commanded to do, and yet the troubles had become unbearable.

Jer 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

He went so far as to determine not to say anything more regarding the Lord's intentions toward the people. That did not solve things. He knew he had a duty that was not being carried out. He found that it was impossible to remain silent and ignore the command of God.

Jer 20:10 For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

Even his previous friends had turned against him. They watched for him to cease his criticisms and

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predictions. They were convinced he would listen to the uproar which had come about through his prophecies and would back off. They would then punish him for the things he had said.

**Jer 20:11 But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.**

His foes were not to prevail against him. They were setting themselves up in opposition to Jehovah. Anyone who does that will ultimately find themselves defeated. They will find themselves everlastingly confused. May I take the liberty to repeat one of the most important thoughts God has given to mankind. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps."

**Jer 20:12 But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.**

Jeremiah still maintained confidence that the Lord knew and appreciated his efforts to obey the divine will. Since God knew his inner thoughts, as well as those of the ones who were persecuting him, he had laid his case before Him. Overall his case would be handled justly. Those who had abused him for telling the truth would be called to account.

**Jer 20:13 Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.**

What a transition in thought from this verse to the next. Here the prophet praises God for delivering the poor and abused from the hands of workers of evil. In the next he curses the day when he was born. How can these two contrasting thoughts be reconciled? Jeremiah may be doing the same thing which thousands of us have done; that is swinging back and forth in pessimism and optimism. This is certainly not an abnormal thought pattern.

**Jer 20:14 Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.**

**Jer 20:15 Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad.**

Notice that Jeremiah does not curse God. He curses the day when he came into this sin burdened world. It was not a happy day that produced this babe from the womb of his mother. He was even grieved over the message which came to his father that a son had been born to him.

**Jer 20:16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;**

This is the man who bore the news to Jeremiah's father. The prophet feels that this man would have been better off if he had never reported the news. God had overthrown cities and brought about grief and shouting when He did that. But He had not expressed any sorrow over what He had done once it was done.

**Jer 20:17 Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me.**

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Two things could have taken place which Jeremiah thought would have been better than announcing the news that he had been born. For one thing, the man who bore the news could have killed the babe instead of announcing his birth. The second was that Jeremiah might never have been delivered from his mother's womb. Either would have been better than what he was suffering from those who hated him for speaking truth.

Jer 20:18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

He wished to know what kind of reasoning would justify one being born to see such sorrow as he had endured. His efforts to serve God had been counterproductive. He felt they should have brought him happiness. They had done just the opposite.

Chapter 21

King Zedekiah has become desperate. The Babylonian army is at the door. He knows very well that the nation has insulted the Lord, but hopes that Jeremiah will be able to call for help more successfully than any other individual.

Jer 21:1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

The Lord is fully aware of the difficulties facing Israel. If they had been faithful to Him, he would no doubt have stepped in to prevent what was happening. He is ready to reply to Jeremiah's request for advice. This time Zedekiah has sent another man named Pashur to the prophet. This is not the one who rose up in fury against Jeremiah before this. We use last names today to identify the children of a father. In that day they did this by saying "the son of." This Pashur was the son of a different man than the other.

Zephaniah also went along. This meant Zedekiah was using the two best men he knew of to plead for help.

Jer 21:2 Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

Jeremiah was asked to see if God would not do as he had before when 185,000 Assyrians were killed in a single night as they attacked God's people. Would the

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Lord help with a miracle, as He had done then? The king knew Israel had no chance at all of defending themselves against Nebuchadnezzar without divine help.

**Jer 21:3 Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:**

**Jer 21:4 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.**

The answer the Lord sent back to Zedekiah was not precisely what he had hoped for. Rather than fighting against the Babylonians, the Lord said that he would turn back Israel's own weapons in order that the Chaldeans would be able to break through the walls of Jerusalem and penetrate to the very midst of the city.

**Jer 21:5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.**

God has an arm, a hand, and a finger which are all capable of defeating any foe. He has a strong right arm, an outstretched hand, and in the case of Jesus Christ casting out devils, He also has a Finger. (See Luke 11:20.) When God becomes angry, watch out! And God was very angry with Israel.

*Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

**Jer 21:6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.**

This time it was not to be the Babylonians who would feel the wrath of God. It was to be the people of Israel. They would die without help from the One whom they had spurned.

**Jer 21:7 And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.**

After allowing the victory over Jerusalem, the Lord said the king and the people who were still left alive from the battle, the famine and the disease would be captured and taken to the land of the Chaldeans. There they would meet further agony at the hand of their enemies.

Dear reader, it does not pay to make God angry! Israel was finding that truth out the hard way.

**Jer 21:8 And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.**

God had created man with a free will. He could choose between various paths of action. In the case at hand, he would be allowed to choose between a way which led to life, or a way which led to death.

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Jer 21:9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

Those who chose to remain in the city and decided to fight against the will of God would die from those things which had killed many of their fellow citizens before this. They would have chosen death. Those who decided to do as the Lord commanded would admit defeat and be taken to Babylon. They would suffer, but they would live.

Jer 21:10 For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

God had loved the city of Jerusalem. He had blessed it beyond perhaps any other place on the surface of the earth. In return, His people had turned the city into a brothel and a place for offering worship to idols. Jerusalem would be set on fire.

God said He would bring evil upon the city. We all know that God is not the father of evil. In this situation, God was bringing troubles upon the people, but what He was doing was for their welfare. The future could be wonderful if they would but cease their rebellion.

Jer 21:11 And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

Jer 21:12 O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn

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**that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.**

The king of Judah needed to hear well what was said next. God spoke through Jeremiah and said the house of David, which had supplied a long line of kings, had earned punishment for themselves and also for the people who had followed their lead. This fire which had come upon them would burn until the people realized the need for turning from their false gods.

**Jer 21:13 Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?**

The term “Mount Zion” can lead those who have not seen the location of Jerusalem to think the city was built upon a very high elevation. This is not the case. There is a medium rise at the point where the city sat. There were valleys near it that cause it to appear higher than it really is. Still, the people had been convinced this “City of the Lord” would never be conquered. With God on their side, no army had a chance against them. If they had been faithful this would have been a correct view. Tragically, they had not proven faithful. Thus there were those who could successfully attack them and enter into their city and their homes.

**Jer 21:14 But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.**

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” God is an excellent fruit inspector. He knows whether our fruit

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has been good or evil. He knows how much fruit we have produced in our lives. Both Israel and Judah had disappointed Him greatly. The area where Jerusalem is located today is not heavily forested. It may not have been at that time. The forest may well stand for the jungle of evil which had grown up around their sinful ways. The fire could have referred to the heat to which they were being subjected by the Babylonian forces.

The morning newspaper of the community in which this present writer lives tells of a young man who did much as the Israelites. He had a choice between the way of life and the way of death. He chose to arm himself and rob a bank in the middle of the day. He fought a gun battle with the local police and was shot in the leg. A picture in the paper shows the bare leg where the clothing had been ripped away in order to administer treatment. The leg was just a bloody mass. He was a fortunate man. He could have lost his life instead of just the use of his leg. He apparently had a previous criminal record. One wonders if this experience will convince him that the way he has chosen up to this point is a way he wishes to avoid in the future.

God's people were not to be completely destroyed. A remnant was to be saved to act as a beginning place for a new spiritual kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ. Entry into that kingdom is an opening of the door to a way of life. How foolish to choose death when life has been offered!

Chapter 22

After enduring repeat after repeat of warnings for the same sins by the people of Judah, we come to one of the more intense chapters of the entire Holy Book. It marks God's removal of the line of the kings of Israel and Judah. The Lord had warned of the danger when the people first demanded a king such as those of the nations around them. As always, God was right! Although He had continued to work through the line of kings, The time had come when His wisdom became very evident.

Jer 22:1 Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,

The words this time were directed to the king. Jeremiah was to go to the house of the king of Judah and deliver the message. This could have a double meaning. It could be aimed at the present king and the palace in which he lived, or it could include the entire line of the kings. As in many other instances, it seems that both may be true.

Jer 22:2 And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:

The primary target of the words was to be the king who sat upon the throne of the nation at that time. It is called the throne of David because a promise had been made that from the seed of David, a King would arise who would perpetually occupy that throne. Jesus Christ

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occupies it today. He came to us through the lineage of David.

However, the words also were to be relayed to the people of the land who were ruled by the king.

**Jer 22:3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.**

This is not only a direct claim that judgment and righteousness had not been executed in the past. It is also a warning that it must not occur in the future. The sins which are listed were included in the original law of Moses. The kings had used their position to bring advantages to themselves at the expense of the people over whom they ruled. A king is not defined by the grandeur of the house in which he lives. He is defined by the advantages he provides to the people over whom he rules. The kings of God's people had not in general provided such advantages. They were headed for serious trouble.

**Jer 22:4 For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.**

The problem at this time is that they had been given all the time God intended for them to have to govern His people effectively. If they had done these things,

the prestige of the kings would have been upheld by the divine arm.

**Jer 22:5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.**

Since they had proven that they were not inclined to serve others, but looked for personal gain at the expense of the people, the Lord was going to bring desolation upon the royal line. Israel's existence as a proud nation among all the other nations of the earth would be demolished. The royal household would be eliminated until the new and eternal Son of God ascended to that throne.

**Jer 22:6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited.**

Even though God had opposed the appointment of a king in the beginning of the nation's existence, He did not wish to see the throne embarrassed as it was about to be. Gilead and Lebanon were two very precious portions of the land. They had provided cedar and oak for houses. It was from Mount Nebo in the area of Lebanon that Moses first looked down at the promised land. Even though they were both valuable in the sight of the Lord, He was going to leave them desolate and uninhabited.

**Jer 22:7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.**

There is a bit of a problem here. God has already made the preparations for these destroyers. They have their horses and chariots and they are prepared to put the ax to the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan. He has already said He will set a fire in the land which cannot be quenched.

It is not always easy to tell the exact chronological sequence in the book of Jeremiah. At times we jump from one time period to another without an explanation of the change.

**Jer 22:8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?**

As one stands today at the ruins of the walls of Jerusalem and ponders what the site may have looked like in the past during the glory days of the city, we do exactly as this verse states. Why was it necessary for this to happen. What did this city really look like before the disaster?

**Jer 22:9 Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.**

There was to be no doubt as to why the disaster was sent. Israel had lived under a covenant with Jehovah. He had kept His portion of that covenant. Israel had not kept their part. The kings had allowed the worship of idols. The people had relished the experience. God was exasperated with them. Ruin was just around the corner.

**Jer 22:10 Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth**

**away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.**

The dead was Josiah. He had been a good king. God had been pleased with his rulership. They need not weep for him. God would administer mercy and justice toward him. The one for whom they ought to weep was Shallum, the present king. He would be removed from the land and would never again see it.

**Jer 22:11 For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more:**

**Jer 22:12 But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.**

God was making a solemn promise. Shallum was the son of Josiah, but he had certainly not walked in the footsteps of his father. Shallum is also known as Jehoahaz. He ruled only three months, after which he was removed from the throne through the power of Pharaoh-Necho whom he had trusted to aid in defending Judah against the threat from the Babylonians. Necho took him to Egypt and it is believed that he died there without ever returning.

The Egyptian Pharaoh replaced him with Eliakim, who was also known as Jehoiachim.

**Jer 22:13 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;**

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Jehoiachim was a cruel tyrant of a ruler who forced workers to build him an elegant palace. He withheld wages from them and anyone who interfered with his plans was murdered without hesitation. He care nothing for the downtrodden such as widows and orphans.

Jer 22:14 That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

The house was to be constructed with large rooms, lined on the inside with beautiful cedar, which was then painted with vermilion, or bright red.

Jer 22:15 Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?

The Lord wished to know his motivation for taking the rulership. His father Josiah had certainly not lived in the pattern which he was following. It had gone well with Josiah but it was not going to go well with this bloodthirsty and greedy son.

Jer 22:16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.

Josiah had known the Lord. To know the Lord is far more than just having heard His name, or having gained the rulership of His people. Knowing the Lord is to have the Spirit of the Lord and walk in His commandments.

Jer 22:17 But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

Jehoiakim was about as far from demonstrating the loving kindness and mercy of Jehovah as one could get. He looked upon everything around him as being his if he could take it. Oppression and even bloodshed were not considered being out of bounds.

Jer 22:18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!

There was to be no lamentation when Jehoiakim passed on. It was common in that part of the world for mourners to emit groans and cries such as “Ah my brother” or “Ah sister.” When a man like Jehoiakim dies, he is fortunate if anyone grieves at all, or if there is even a funeral ceremony.

Jer 22:19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

The prediction was that this cruel man would be treated like a donkey at his death, and that he would be dragged to the gates of the city and thrown outside the gates like refuse. That would not be quite up to the luxurious live in a paneled cedar house with servants, etc.

Jer 22:20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.

With the death of Jehoiakim the friends of Judah would abandon her. She need not look for any assistance from any side. It would be futile.

Jer 22:21 I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.

God had instructed Judah when it was still in a secure and prosperous condition. The instruction was rebuffed. The people treated the commandments of God just as a spoiled child might say, "I won't." This was not just a one time occurrence. It had happened repeatedly.

Jer 22:22 The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

The wind has a way of blowing away chaff. Those who had been charged with spiritual nourishment of God's people had proven themselves to be chaff. The supposed allies fit into the same category. Shame and confusion would be poured out upon the people and the land.

Jer 22:23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!

As Jeremiah thought of the tragedy ahead, he thought of the contrast between one who relaxed in the decorated cedar lined rooms of a mansion, and the outcry of a women in the process of delivering a baby. The word “gracious” is usually a desired characteristic. Not this time. It is here a term of sarcasm. Jehoiakim was to be an object of pity and not of respect.

Jer 22:24 As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

The signet ring on the right hand of the Lord would be a prize possession. Even if Jehoiakim were as precious as such a piece of jewelry, the Lord would not hesitate to remove him and throw him into the hands of his enemies.

Jer 22:25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Jehoiakim would be turned over to Nebuchadrezzar, the king of the Babylonians. who were ready to kill him as soon as possible.

Jer 22:26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

The mother of the king was to share in his future ignominy. Both were to be removed from Judah and would die in another land which was strange to them.

Jer 22:27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

Once cast out, there would be no possibility of returning.

Jer 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

This sounds like a question. It is not! It is a statement that Coniah is no more than an idol which had lost respect of the people and had been broken into pieces. He was like a potter's vessel which had not served it's purpose and would be smashed.

Jer 22:29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

Nations from all over the known earth would need to take heed of God's thoughts concerning Coniah. They should carry a lesson to all who heard the report. Do not do as this man did!

Jer 22:30 Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

This is somewhat strange in that Jechoniah, or Coniah did have children. However none of his children ever ruled over Judah in that land and sitting on David's throne. The statement in Acts 2:31 that a great one would sit

on David's throne does not state that He would do so in Jerusalem. It speaks of the Christ who sits "at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

I will add just a word here about the multiple names for the same kings of the land of Judah. A man took on a new name when he was enthroned.

Jehoiakin = Coniah = Jeconiah.

Jehoahaz = Shallum.

Jehoiakim = Eliakim.

Chapter 23

This chapter is a continuation of the condemnation of the princes, priests, prophets and people of Judah. Particular reference is made to the leaders who have fed themselves at the expense of the flock. A promise is made that God will gather the true Israel from the many places where they have been scattered and will send a Shepherd who is to be known as THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. This Messiah will call both the Jew and the Gentile into one fold.

This is followed by a blistering curse which is to fall upon those who prophesy their own words and pretend they are presenting the Word of the God of heaven.

Jer 23:1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

The relationship between the shepherd and the sheep in the time of Jeremiah was a very close one. The shepherd was with them continually. He led them to the finest pasture. He protected them from wild beasts which might attempt to feed upon them. This was a type of the relationship God expected of those who had been charged with the feeding and protection of His precious flock called Israel. No shepherd was ever more jealous of the security of his flock than was Jehovah. The pastor, or shepherd of His flock was in dire straits if he led Israel into danger by lying to the people.

Jer 23:2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and

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**have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.**

That was exactly what the leaders of Israel had done. It was as if the shepherd had plunged into the midst of the flock and driven them in all directions without the slightest concern for their welfare. To “visit” was to care for their needs. The new testament call for Christians to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction is not talking about knocking on their door and telling them the visitor is glad to see them. It is a command to find out what their needs are and to help fill those needs. God declared that those who had visited the flock in such manner as to drive them into danger would find themselves visited with evil from His own hand.

**Jer 23:3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.**

God still had a family. The faithful were but a small percentage of what the number had been in the past, but He still recognized them, and He still had future plans for them. The obvious first reference here is to the return from Babylonian captivity. That return did take place in the small number who returned to Jerusalem after the seventy years had passed.

Far more important is the gathering which God predicted would come in the Christian age in response to the call of His Son. The increase would then amount to many millions of faithful from countries all over the earth.

**Jer 23:4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more,**

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nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

There is but one Great Shepherd; that is the combined three persons of the Godhead, made up of the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit. But there were to be lesser shepherds who would replace those false shepherds among the princes, prophets and priests of old. These new shepherds would be the elders or bishops of the church. Serving under the supervision of Christ, they would feed and protect the flock of God in the new age.

Jer 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

From the descendants of David, God would raise up a branch. The word “branch” could well be translated as shoot. David’s descendants were not to be obliterated. As the stump of a tree may still have life and give rise to a new growth, this branch from the line of David would become a King of kings. He was to reign and cause judgment and justice to increase upon the earth.

Jer 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The only way by which Judah may be saved is through heeding the call of Christ. The only way Israel may dwell safely is through uniting with the spiritual body of our Lord. There is but one person who ever lived that can be said to fit the description of the Great King

of this verse. That person is the sinless Son of God. He is truly THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Jer 23:7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

It was a miracle of the highest order that allowed the children of Israel to be delivered from Egyptian bondage and led through the wilderness to the promised land. But, there is a release from captivity that far exceeds that delivery. It is the release from the bondage of sin and entry into the Kingdom of heaven.

Jer 23:8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Even the delivery of the remnant of the Israelites from the bondage in Babylon was but a forerunner of the freedom from sin and the march toward the New Jerusalem in the skies.

Jer 23:9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

It is the prophet Jeremiah who is uttering these words. As he remembers the horrible tragedy which the

false prophets have brought upon the captives, he feels the sorrow to the very depths of his soul. An abundance of wine can make a person numb of mind. Jeremiah is sick in both body and spirit as a result of the damage done by the lying prophets.

Jer 23:10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

The adulterers spoken of here are of both kinds. Worship of idols is spiritual adultery as those who practice it are betraying their spiritual husband. Sexual intercourse with another who is not one's spouse is the betrayal of both that spouse and the Lord. Because the prophets had diluted the Word of God, the people find themselves living in the midst of drought and are seeing their influence for righteousness cancelled. They walk every way but the right way.

Jer 23:11 For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

When those who are designated as the spiritual leaders of the people become corrupt, there is faint hope for the people whom they are supposed to be leading. God has been sickened by such corrupt leadership of His flock. Within His very household sin has infected the heart of the nation.

Jer 23:12 Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil

upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

Walking on a slippery ice covered path in midst of darkness will cause stumbling and falling. The people who allow spiritual leaders to send them on such a journey will ultimately find that they have come to an unexpected end. The pleasures of sin may last for an hour, a day, a year or even the major part of a lifetime; but they will not last when the end of the road of time has blended with judgment and eternity.

Jer 23:13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

One of the most impressive books this writer has read was one titled "God Hath Spoken." This time the thrust of the present verse and those nearby is that "God Hath Seen." Nothing is hidden from the all-seeing eye of the Lord. He knows of the sins of the prophets who were supposed to be relaying His truth to the people. They had joined themselves to the worship of Baal. They had misled His children.

Jer 23:14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness; they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

Just imagine, my friends. The prophets of God who were in the front line of the war against sin were preaching that all was well among the people. At the

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same time they were practicing adultery. They lied unashamedly. By their deceitful ways they caused sin amongst the people to become habitual. Those who had not yet sinned were encouraged to enter into it. Those who had been participating in it were convincing themselves it was no matter of great importance.

God caused the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to be burned up as a result of just such behavior. He hates these sins just as much now as He did then. Those who insist on living in such wickedness will be plunged into an eternal lake of fire.

**Jer 23:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.**

Eating wormwood and drinking gall denotes that which is sour and that which is bitter. The prophets who were deceiving the people of Israel were pouring their lies in among the people. This would result in sour and bitter lives for both the leaders and the followers.

**Jer 23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.**

The target of the words now changes to those who have been taken in by the lying prophets. The fact that they have been fed with deceit is not justification for swallowing that poisonous diet. God's faithful must not believe those who speak from their own black hearts

and disregard the Word of the Lord. "Hearken not unto their words."

**Jer 23:17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.**

Those who have proven they have no respect for the Word of God are prone to listen to the words of the false prophets. They believe that which they want to believe. When they are told that nothing terrible will happen to them as a result of their sins, they believe it because they wish to continue in their sins. The false prophets are only too willing to provide them with lies..

**Jer 23:18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?**

It seems difficult to find any who have remained faithful to the will of the Lord. To be safe, men must hear the Word of God. They cannot rely upon falsehoods. They must then pay attention to that Word and honor it. God was unable to find many that followed that pattern.

**Jer 23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.**

God had already determined to send a storm of evil upon those who defied Him. It would sweep over them like a hurricane. The wicked were to reap as they had sown. Those who sow to the wind will reap the whirlwind.

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Jer 23:20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

If the sinners think they can outwait the Lord they are very mistaken. He will not be satisfied and reverse His actions until those who walk in sin have turned away from it. The latter days are those in which at least some of the people will have come to understand the folly of fighting against that which God has decreed. The verse does give some hope that there will be that remnant that will get their thinking straightened out.

Jer 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

The falsehoods which were being presented to the people were not originated in the mind of Jehovah. He had not sent them out. They went about their evil ways and preached their lies without His authority. This attitude has not been confined to the prophets of ancient Israel. All one has to do is turn on a television set in this year of 2003 A.D. and they will see acting jobs which are offered by men and women who twist the scriptures to their own ends. It is horrifying that thousands of persons are so gullible that they will believe anything which is placed in front of them.

Jer 23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

If these charlatans had preached the Word of the Lord, they could have turned the idolatrous and adulterous people from their evil deeds. As it was, they were being encouraged to plunge deeper into the den of the devil.

Jer 23:23 Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

Jer 23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

How could those people believe they could hide from God? Did they really believe there is a God? If they did believe He existed, they must have felt He was limited in His abilities. There is no place in the universe that man can sin without God being aware of it. He is omnipresent. Unlike man, He is everywhere at all times.

There are no secret hiding places. The sins of men are open and evident to the eye of Jehovah. The lying prophets and the deluded people are both alike in that unless they repent they will surely perish.

Jer 23:25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

Dreams were one of the methods God communed with His true prophets. Those like Daniel received truths which the Lord wanted the people to hear and heed. These false prophets were claiming they had received such dreams when this was not the case. They loved the adoration and the power they enjoyed when the people believed their lies.

Jer 23:26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

This was not always going to be an enjoyable way of life. God is the God of truth. These liars have hearts which pour out the imaginations of their own purposes. God is not about to ignore their foolish opposition. If man is going to achieve the purpose God has for placing him in existence, he must seek out truth. All of the side roads lead to hell.

Jer 23:27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

Generation after generation had acted in similar manner. There were always those who spread untruth to their neighbors. The result was that men forgot the real reason for their being. The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all one's heart. The second is like unto it in that one must love his neighbor as himself. These people were breaking both commandments because they had lost confidence in a True God and had turned to Baal.

There are Baals today. They are not known by that name, but they are carbon copies of the original. Men have set all kinds of goals for themselves that have nothing to do with their Maker. This spells disaster!

Jer 23:28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

If a man has a dream of his own, he must let others know it was just that and no more. When men's visions are compared with the purposes of the Lord, they must be examined carefully to see if they are compatible. If not, they must be rejected by the dreamer and by the ones who hear of his dreams.

Those who preach from the pulpit or privately must constantly differentiate between their personal mental exercises and God's eternal Word. One is like chaff which is swept away by the wind. The other is like wheat which sustains life.

Jer 23:29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

Yes, the Word of God is like a fire. It has energy which is capable of warming the hearts of men with hope for the future, or burning their false hopes and dreams to ashes, depending upon the reaction men demonstrate to the truth.

It is also like a hammer, in that it is capable of breaking the hardest of rocks, or building up the house of the Lord. In either case the effects are constructive to the goals of men or destructive to those goals. The Word of God cannot be successfully ignored.

I will add that the Word of God is the Sword of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit and the Word work together to achieve God's ends. A sword does nothing by itself. Before anything is accomplished by the Word, it must be activated by the Spirit. One may memorize the entire Word of God and live in opposition to it. Satan is an example. He can, and has quoted the Word, even while opposing the will of the Lord. The prophets described in this chapter may very well have known the Word of God,

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but they had none of the Spirit which is necessary to use the Word in a way pleasing to the Lord.

**Jer 23:30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.**

Those who knew the Word of God and wished to make the proper application of it were having it undermined by the servants of the father of liars. They were stealing the Word of the Lord from the hearts of the people by deceiving them.

**Jer 23:31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.**

These prophets were deadly enemies of righteousness. They pretended to speak for God when they had no concern for Him whatsoever. They were in fact fighting against Him. When that happens, be assured the one who fights against God will have classified himself or herself as a foe of the Lord. Do not be deceived. God will defend Himself.

**Jer 23:32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.**

The spreading of error such as these false prophets were doing caused men to walk in sin. But what is meant by “lightness?” Is it not the measure of importance which

the words of these men are spouting. They have been said to be chaff. Chaff is light. It has no weight. Any influence it has is detrimental rather than profitable for righteous living.

**Jer 23:33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.**

A burden is a load which must be carried about. God had laid a burden upon Israel. The prophets and other leaders were to see that the burden was placed upon the shoulders of the people. The one who acts as if God would allow men to sin without consequences was pretending there was no real burden. When such a position was taught and believed, the people had forsaken the Lord and He would forsake them.

**Jer 23:34 And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.**

Any person, whether prophet, priest or one of the common people, who placed his own wisdom in place of that of Jehovah would be punished for his deception. Men are not to add to the Word of God. They are not to subtract from that Word. The wickedness caused by teaching the wisdom of men instead of the wisdom of God will be assessed by the damage done. The punishment will fit the sin.

**Jer 23:35 Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?**



We are not to inquire as to what men have declared as eternal truth. The vital question is, "What has the Lord spoken?" If man speaks that which is contrary to what the Lord has spoken, sin and death will follow.

**Jer 23:36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.**

Do not claim to be presenting the Word of God when you are presenting your own thoughts. You will be held responsible for such teaching. The words which you speak will lie heavily upon your own shoulders and you will answer to Him for any distortion of His statutes and commandments.

**Jer 23:37 Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?**

Let the false prophet know that you are interested only in what the Lord has revealed to Him. You could care less for his personal mental meandering. The burden you wish to carry is the one Jehovah has placed upon you.

**Jer 23:38 But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD;**

When a man declares that he is speaking the burden of the Lord when he is not doing so, places the value of his own thoughts equal to, or above those of God. If God

has not declared a thing to be His expectation, man had best be quiet. Do not command that which the Lord has said must not be done.

**Jer 23:39 Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence:**

Such proud perverters of the truth prove that they have forgotten the authority of the Lord. They have forgotten and forsaken Him. Since they have tried to cast Him out of their presence, He will withhold His blessings from them.

**Jer 23:40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.**

The Jews had received blessings which no other people had enjoyed. For them to teach and to believe the lies which so many of them were accepting was unthinkable. God's promise was that those who spurned Him would themselves be spurned. They would carry a burden of shame which would become a part of the history of the world. There are Jews today in almost every part of the world. Many of them are rich and powerful. Others are living in abject poverty. The strange part of this is that both classes are looked upon with a great deal of ill feeling.

The only answer to this problem lies in the acceptance of the Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind. Some have taken this stand. Most have not. What does the future hold for the Jew?

## Chapter 24

Those who had allowed themselves to be taken to captivity in Babylonia are compared to good figs. Those who chose to remain in Judea are compared to bad figs.

**Jer 24:1 The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.**

The Lord took Jeremiah to the temple area. There, before the temple, there were two baskets of figs. This was after King Jeconiah and many of the Israelites had been taken off into Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar their king. Many of the people had been taken also. The ones who were left in the city of Jerusalem were those who did not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up against the invaders. They were thought to be no threat to the rule of the invaders.

Among those who were carried away were carpenters, metalsmiths and others who were thought to be useful to the Chaldeans, or who were thought to present some danger to Chaldean control of Judea.

**Jer 24:2 One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.**

One of the two baskets of figs was very good. They were like the first juicy fruit which appeared in the early

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part of the season. The other basket had figs which were rotten and no one would wish to eat them.

It is well to note that both were found close to the temple.

Jer 24:3 Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

The Lord asked Jeremiah what he saw. He replied that he saw some very good figs and some very bad figs. There were some which were so bad they could not be eaten.

Jer 24:4 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

God then explained the meaning of the two baskets of figs.

Jer 24:5 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.

The good figs represented the people who had been carried away into the land of the Chaldeans, or Babylonians. God had caused them to be sent out of Judea in order that they might learn a lesson which would work for their good over the long run.

Jer 24:6 For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and

I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

The time would come when these captives would be returned to the promised land. They would be allowed to put down roots and He would not pull them up again. There was a return to the land and one finds the name Israel once more mentioned as a nation all these years later. But, as we move on through the chapter, we see a grander view of this return.

Jer 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

When they returned from the idolatrous land where Baal was worshiped on every corner, they would have decided to once more recognize the covenant which God had made in the long ago when He said, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." They would be cured of their idolatry.

Jer 24:8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

Israelites who were left in Judea under the governorship of Zedekiah were those who were not willing to take a stand for Jehovah. Zedekiah, his princes and the people who were allowed to remain in Jerusalem and Judea were the evil figs.

Jer 24:9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

These bad figs would be scattered throughout many nations of the earth. They would become a byword in every place where they were driven. They would be mocked, cursed and taunted by those among whom they dwelt.

Jer 24:10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

The same three curses which had been brought upon them before would be renewed. They would be killed in battle. They would be starved. They would die from diseases. This last prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies battered down the walls of the city of Jerusalem. The Jews as a fleshly nation, supported by the Lord would soon be replaced by a spiritual kingdom made up of both Jews and Gentiles who showed themselves willing to glorify Jehovah and love His with all of their heart.

Chapter 25

Here we have the prophecy of the seventy year captivity which was to come upon the people of Judah as a result of their disregard for God's authority. The Babylonians were to punish God's people. Then they were to be punished themselves, along with many other nations. The cup of God's wrath would finally be poured out upon nations around the world.

There is a strong connection between what is forecast for ancient Israel and that which forecast for the new spiritual Israel of these latter days. The final judgment of all men, as presented in the book of Revelation, is introduced in the last portion of the chapter.

Jer 25:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

Josiah had been a good king. His son Jehoiakim was just the opposite. Jeremiah's prophecy came in the fourth year of the reign of that evil king. Nebuchadnezzar was in his first year of rulership in Babylon. Through the inspiration of God, Jeremiah was allowed to see from the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign until the conquest of Judah by that king. Of course the final judgment prophecy reached to the very end of the present heaven and earth.

Jer 25:2 The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

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**Jer 25:3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.**

Jeremiah had presented the Word of the Lord to the chosen people for a period of twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah to the time when this prophecy was declared. He told them he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. He had started early and worked late. Even though they had been blessed with these warnings, they had continued in their sins.

**Jer 25:4 And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.**

It was not just Jeremiah who had rung out the message of the Lord. There numerous others who had joined him in such dedication. They loved the people and desired to turn them from destruction. The love and the words of warning were wasted on them. Had the message been clear? Most certainly.

**Jer 25:5 They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:**

The promise of the Lord had been that the land was to be theirs for ever and ever. However, it was assumed that this promise hinged upon their proper respect for the





tremendous blessings which had been given them. God does not waste His blessings. He knows at what point they are being twisted to sinful purposes. That behavior will come to a halt when His mercy and longsuffering have been exhausted. That time was not far ahead.

One of the difficulties in studying the book of Jeremiah is the constant moving back and forth in time. This chapter presents information which reaches back to the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. We have already discussed events which took place years later.

**Jer 25:6 And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.**

Jeremiah and other prophets had made it as plain as words could tell that the idolatry which was being practiced was hateful to Jehovah. They had been told that God required undivided loyalty to Himself. He would not tolerate rivals who competed for the worship and service which He expected to be offered to Him.

**Jer 25:7 Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.**

The deliberate and sinful ways were not brought to an end. That had provoked Him to anger, as they placed their own will in contention with His. He did not wish that they be hurt. They were His creation and He desired that they enjoy peace and happiness. This could not be if they chose to defy Him.

**Jer 25:8 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words,**

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Jer 25:9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

The Lord was going to send Nebuchadnezzar and his allies around the sea of Galilee and cause them to enter Canaan from the north. They would not only come against Judah. They would take control of many other nations of the area. These nations would be left in ruins. These ruins would be so hideous that those who observed them would shake their heads in wonder that such could happen.

Jer 25:10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

Joy and happiness would be eliminated from those nations. The normal activities which lend to happiness would be quieted. Marriages would lose their optimism. The grinding of flour and the light of candles in the homes would no longer be seen. One cannot ignore the law of the Lord and escape the consequences. As an example, one cannot drive eighty miles per hour on an icy road without having a wreck. God set up both natural and spiritual law. Those who fail to heed them will find their lives full of weeping.

Jer 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these

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**nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**

The land of Judah would be turned to desolation. The nations who tried to stop the Babylonians in the march across the country would be defeated. They would find themselves enslaved to Nebuchadnezzar for a period of seventy years.

**Jer 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.**

After using Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish the punishment of Judah and other nations who might come to their aid, such as Egypt, the king of Babylon and his nation would be made to drink of the same cup of God's wrath. The noted city of Babylon would become a desolation. Note the difference in the addition of the word "perpetual" with respect to the land of the Chaldeans. Judah would become a desolation. The land of the Chaldeans would become a perpetual desolation. It would never reach prosperity again.

**Jer 25:13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.**

God is now speaking about the book which He had caused Jeremiah to write. It contained the description of the misery which would come upon all the nations that set themselves up against His divine purposes. Judgment

will begin at the house of the Lord, and then will be brought against every enemy of righteousness, from the beginning until the end.

**Jer 25:14 For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.**

The message still applies to many nations and great kings who decide their wisdom is to be chosen over that of Jehovah. They are determined to worship not only their own wisdom, but also that which they have built with their own hands. This would include not only idols of metal, wood and stone. It would also include palaces, towers and bank accounts. We might also include chariots, horses and nuclear weapons.

**Jer 25:15 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.**

Jeremiah is commanded to place in front of those who oppose the Lord the punishments which are laid out for them. Individual and nations will be forced to take a deep drink of this bitter medicine. There will be no possibility of turning it down. It will be drunk.

**Jer 25:16 And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.**

Will those nations repent? It seems they will not. They will break out in fury at what they will consider

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unjust treatment. It will not be unjust. It will be deserved. Why can men not grasp this truth? God's sword cuts both ways. It defends His faithful from the attacks of Satan. It chastises the offenders either for the purpose of correction, or if all else fails, it leaves them slain on the battlefield of good versus evil.

Jer 25:17 Then took I the cup at the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:

Jeremiah obeyed the command of God. Many nations were made to drink of the gall and vinegar which the cup contained. The reader is reminded that Jeremiah repeated over and over that he spoke the Word of the Lord and not his own. The punishment would be God's punishment, but Jeremiah was commanded to declare it.

Jer 25:18 To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day;

Just who was to be included in this list of nations who were to drink of the cup? The first to drink would be those who had had the greatest opportunity to reap happiness and blessings. That would be the city of Jerusalem, and other cities of the land of Judah. It would most certainly not exempt the kings and princes. Four words are strung together to picture the monstrous tragedy. They are (1) desolation, (2) astonishment, (3) hissing, and (4) cursing.

God's people of the northern kingdom had already felt the sword of the Lord. Judah was only beginning to understand.

Jer 25:19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;

The list of nations who had entered into the same type of sins as had Israel and Judah is given now. I will not take the time and space to present details on the evil of each of these nations. God began with His own people and included nations from every direction. Egypt was placed first because the Pharaoh of Egypt had thought to repel the charge of the Babylonians. He had been defeated in preventing the punishment of the city of Jerusalem and the land of Judah, but He had tried. God intended to chastise those who had received the finest of His blessings. That intention was to be carried out.

Jer 25:20 And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,

Here are listed nations of the coast of the Mediterranean.

Jer 25:21 Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,

Now we see a list of three nations just east of the Jordan river.

Jer 25:22 And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,

Jer 25:23 Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners,

Jer 25:24 And all the kings of Arabia, and all

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**the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,**

**Jer 25:25 And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,**

The list reaches out to those nations farther east, including the land of Arabia.

**Jer 25:26 And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.**

At this point we begin to see a lot farther into the future. All the nations on the face of the earth, including Babylon (Sheshach) will be forced to drink the bitter cup. Can the reader who has spent any time with the prophecies of the book of Revelation not see the final judgment typified in the description of verse twenty-six?

**Jer 25:27 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.**

The nations will be made deathly sick. They will stumble and fall like drunken men. They will vomit and lie in that which has been spued from their mouth. There is a symbolic nature in this prophecy. There is also a very literal nature.

The morning newspaper tells of 500 persons who were gathered in a second floor bar in the city of Chicago. A fight broke out and everyone stampeded to get out.

Twenty-one persons had died, and many others were injured in the effort to get 500 persons out through one single exit. Does this sound a little like our verse twenty-seven?? The time will come when far more than 500 will be horrified that they are at the edge of the fiery pit.

**Jer 25:28 And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink.**

The wicked would have a choice. They could accept the punishment voluntarily, or they could refuse. If they refused, they would be made to drink anyway. The only difference at the final judgment will be the absence of any choice.

**Jer 25:29 For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts.**

Was it possible that the people of Jerusalem and Judah thought they would evade the cup? If so, they were sadly mistaken. The sword of the Lord would descend upon every one of His foes. Oh how foolish can men be! The sword of the Lord can protect the righteous. It can slay the unrighteous. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

**Jer 25:30 Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon**

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his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

We have all heard of the “grapes of wrath.” When the time of punishment has come God will give a mighty command from heaven. That call shall proceed from His throne and will sound much like the loud cry of the persons who walk upon the grapes to separate the juice from the pulp. Every man on earth will hear the call. Even those who have been sleeping in the grave shall hear and come forth.

Jer 25:31 A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.

God’s anger will be known world wide. Those nations who have contended with Him will hear the trumpet sound. He will hold court and divide the guilty from the innocent. The enemies of righteousness will feel the sword which is unsheathed from it’s resting place. The patience of Jehovah will have reached it’s end. Those who have been true to God will breathe a sigh of great relief. The sword will pass over them. The wicked will shed bitter tears and cries of anguish as the sword cuts it’s deadly swath and leaves the adulterers, liars, thieves and false prophets squirming in it’s wake.

Jer 25:32 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

The evil spoken of here is not the wickedness of the people. It is the punishment which falls upon them as a consequence of that wickedness. It will not pass over as the destroying angel passed over the houses of those in Egypt which were marked with the blood of the Lamb. The wicked in judgment will not have been cleaned by the blood which washes away sin. They will meet the anger of the Lord head on.

Jer 25:33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

As the storm of God's wrath moves across the face of the earth, the masses of evil corpses will cover the ground, but there will be no time for grieving over them. They shall be left without burial to rot before the scavengers who will feast upon them.

Jer 25:34 Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

The searchlight turns upon the leaders; those princes, prophets and priests who deceived the people into thinking all was at peace when the war against God was rumbling in the distance.

They will fall like a precious vessel. Their prestige among men will not prevent their being shattered to pieces. It will be better never to have led than to have led others into the jaws of the lion.

Jer 25:35 And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.

There will be no possibility of running far enough or fast enough to escape from the destroying arm of the Almighty. The most prestigious of the leaders will find themselves in the same predicament as those whom they led astray.

Jer 25:36 A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture.

The pasture which will be destroyed is the good land which was placed at their disposal. They will howl with disbelief when they find it has been turned into a cursed desolation. The people whom they could have led to bask in the glory of God will stumble in the darkness into which they have been so determined to walk.

Jer 25:37 And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

We have a hymn titled "I'll Fly Away." It is a beautiful hymn, looking forward to the joy of heaven. As the peace and happiness of the wicked flies away, their song will be one of great regret for having chosen the wrong path.

Jer 25:38 He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

When the river rose, the lions who made their home in the bushes of the banks would prowl across the countryside in anger, attacking that which came their

way. The lion of Judah had been disturbed. He was ferocious! The sword, the famine and the pestilence were among the methods He would use in letting His displeasure be known.

Chapter 26

Jeremiah was a fearless prophet of God. His life was in danger, but in spite of that he did exactly what God directed him to do. As a result he was brought before the nobles of the land to stand trial. The entire picture reminds us of events during the trial of Christ. The religious leaders were calling for death. In the case of Christ the death took place. In the case of Jeremiah, he was released.

Jer 26:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying,

Josiah had been a good king and had done his best to reform the wicked ways of the people after Manasseh had allowed lawlessness and idolatry to saturate the land. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah, but he did not follow up on the attempted reformation.

Jeremiah was given the task of presenting the Word of the Lord to both the leaders and the people. It was a highly difficult job, but the prophet accepted the responsibility.

Jer 26:2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:

It was not out on a street corner that Jeremiah was to declare the prophecy. He was told to go to the very center of the religious and political life of the nation.

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That center was the court of the Lord's house, the temple. The prophet was warned not to leave out a single word of God's message.

This has been God's instructions from the beginning. Adam and Eve found out just how serious one word was when they listened to Satan who said "Thou shalt not surely die." The result was expulsion from the beautiful garden and proof that God was right when He had said, "Thou shalt surely die." Satan added one word. Jeremiah was told not to diminish a word.

**Jer 26:3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.**

It was God's desire that His people turn from their sins in order that He could avoid punishing them. If they repented He would not find it necessary to bring painful things upon them to turn them and prevent them from perishing as individuals, or as a nation.

**Jer 26:4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,**

The Lord's actions toward the people would be dependent upon the willingness of the people to hear His word and live in accordance with His law. He had not failed to instruct them as to His will. They must obey or face the consequences.

**Jer 26:5 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened;**

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God has two quite different types of servants. There are the faithful, such as the good prophets, who respect His authority and serve Him in a spirit of love. There are others such as Nebuchadnezzar, who serve without realizing they are doing so when they fulfil the prophecies of evil which is to come upon a disobedient people.

Repeatedly and often God had sent faithful prophets who had declared His Word, just as Jeremiah was to do. The people were to be accused of not listening seriously to the directions given by those prophets.

Jer 26:6 Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Shiloh had been a center of religious life in Israel's past. It had been a resting place for the ark of the covenant. Then during the time of Eli and his wicked sons, God's law was dishonored. The result was that the Philistines captured the ark. That place called Shiloh is known to this day as a shame to the name of the Lord. Jerusalem was likened unto it.

Jeremiah stated bluntly that the same type of punishment would come upon Jerusalem and the temple if the people did not hear and obey God's voice.

Jer 26:7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

The place where Jeremiah was speaking such words was located where the priests and prophets could hear what he was saying. It is a sad fact that there are those who serve in such positions who serve from selfish motives. The contributions and the power they receive

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as a part of their duties corrupts some men badly. These priests and prophets were guilty of abusing their positions. They reacted violently.

**Jer 26:8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.**

It is a wonder that Jeremiah was allowed to reach the end of the prophecy. The angry religionists laid hands on the prophet and shouted out that he must certainly die for his words. There are those who would have become timid at this point and say, "I really did not mean everything I said. You misunderstood me." Jeremiah was not that kind. He stood his ground.

**Jer 26:9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.**

One of the chief convictions of the priests, prophets and most of the people was that the temple and the land would never be taken by another nation. This was one thing that had led to their leniency in the keeping of God's commands. They felt that He had made a promise that such as Jeremiah was predicting could never come to pass. What then did he mean by saying that the temple area would be made like Shiloh? The "minor" sins which they had committed would surely not result in the desolation of the great city with it's temple! Mob rule was about to take over.



**Jer 26:10** When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house.

The princes of Judah were the ones who held authority just short of that which Jehoiakim, the king possessed. They had the right to pass a death sentence, or to declare an accused person as innocent. When they heard of what was happening at the temple, they came quickly and seated themselves at a new gate where court cases were conducted. Thus mob control was at least postponed.

**Jer 26:11** Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

The trial was on! The priests and prophets spoke to the princes and the people, voicing their accusations toward Jeremiah. Had they not heard what he had said? He had uttered a prophecy which predicted the destruction of the city. That was surely a reason to put him to death.

**Jer 26:12** Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

At least Jeremiah was given the chance to defend himself. He began to plead his case before the same audience as the priests and prophets had addressed. His first words were that the words he had spoken were not his own. They were from the God of heaven. The

implication was that he was ready to repeat them if called upon.

**Jer 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.**

The thing for the people to do was listen to the Word of God and change their ways that they might cause Him to change His plan of action toward the sinful lives of His people.

This is the same response as preachers and elders should give to those who would fight against God's Word at any time. The truth is that the faithful servant of God will preach what God has revealed. He will not add or take away one jot of tittle of the message.

**Jer 26:14 As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.**

The Lord could have caught Jeremiah up and delivered him to a place far away from the danger he faced at that moment. Interestingly, He did not. There was a need for a choice on the part of the people. Would they really murder this man who had told them the truth? Jeremiah laid the decision out clear and plain. He was in their hands. They had the power to kill him if they chose to do that. He was ready to die if that was their choice. They must make up their minds just how he should be treated.

**Jer 26:15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath**

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sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

There was, however, one thing they should take into consideration. If they killed him they would have the guilt of killing a prophet of God upon their souls. The guilt would rest upon both the people and the city. God had sent him. He had done as he had been commanded. Again we compare this with the words of Jesus, “Father forgive them. They know not what they do.” Those today who fight against obedience to the truth of the Word of God would crucify the Christ afresh. They would also cry out at this point for the death of those who speak unwelcome words such as those of Jeremiah.

Jer 26:16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

Jeremiah had made his case with the noble princes, and also with the people. They believed him that he had spoken as a voice for the Lord. Since that was true, it would be a sin to kill him. They did not want his blood on their heads. There was a need to listen to his message.

Jer 26:17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

The word “elders”, as used here, refers to those of advanced age who had lived through many years and had even seen the ruins of Shiloh. These persons knew what God could do. That which He caused to happen to Shiloh

could most assuredly be done with Jerusalem and the temple. They wished to be heard on the matter.

Jer 26:18 Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

They brought up the case of Micah the Morasthite. Micah had prophesied well before this, in the time of king Hezekiah. He had uttered words almost exactly the same as Jeremiah had done. He had predicted that if the people did not repent the time would come that Mount Zion on which Jerusalem was located would be turned into a condition such that a plow could be driven right over it. The city would be laid out in a heap of ruins. The site of the temple would become like a thicket of thorns.

Jer 26:19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Then the elders asked what had been done to Micah. Was he killed for having pronounced such a fate on the holy city? No, his life was not taken. King Hezekiah had prayed that the will of God might be respected. This resulted in God changing His mind and relenting of the punishment they would have suffered. These elders preferred that Jeremiah might be allowed to live.

Jer 26:20 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.

But there was yet one witness. This was Urijah, a prophet who had also spoken like words to those spoken by Jeremiah. What had happened in his situation? Was he killed?

Jer 26:21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;

The same king Jehoiakim was reigning at the time of Urijah's prophecy. There was a good chance that he would decide upon death for Jeremiah. When Urijah heard of the decision of Jehoiakim to kill him, he fled into the land of Egypt. Perhaps he would be safe there.

Jer 26:22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt.

It was not so. Jehoiakim sent a group of men into Egypt to bring Urijah back.

Jer 26:23 And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

They succeeded in their charge. They brought Urijah back and Jehoiakim caused him to be killed. He then threw his body out into the area where poor and noninfluential persons were buried. He was treated as scum.

Jer 26:24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

Then a influential man named Ahikam interceded for Jeremiah. Ahikam had served in several important tasks in the past. His intercession may have been just the thing that was needed to prevent the slaughter of faithful Jeremiah. It was decided that Jeremiah's life would not be taken at that time.

One last note. Why was the account of Urijah included? The reader might well anticipate that after Jehoiakim had executed Urijah, the city and the land would have suffered greatly for having committed this crime. Nothing is said to that effect. This present commentator has concluded that this was to underline the point Jeremiah had made before. They could have killed him. They could have caused him to be released. But, if they killed him, his blood would be upon the city of Jerusalem, the land of Judah and the ones who had perpetrated the crime.

Chapter 27

A confederation of nations is attempting to rebel against the control of Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah declares that God's will is opposed to this arrangement. The Lord has decreed that Babylon is to have dominion for seventy years. It is foolish to fight against God.

Jer 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

There is practically unanimous agreement that it was Zedekiah who was intended here rather than Jehoiakim. The rest of the chapter verifies this viewpoint.

Jer 27:2 Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,

Jeremiah had received a command from God to make made bonds (bands) and yokes. He was then to place them on his own neck. This was a visual lesson that could hardly be misunderstood. Judah would be help under subjection to the Babylonians for an extended period of time.

Jer 27:3 And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah;

After wearing them, he was to present them to five different kings who were considering a combined effort to break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar over their rulership.

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They had been urging Judah to join them in the effort and had sent ambassadors to Jerusalem to king Zedekiah to put their plan into action. These ambassadors were from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon. Jeremiah was to give them a message from the Lord.

**Jer 27:4 And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters;**

The ambassadors were to return to their rulers and inform them as to God's will in relation to their efforts at freedom.

**Jer 27:5 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.**

God reminded them that it was He who had created the earth and all that is in it, including men and nations. Thus He had the power to give it to whoever He deemed best to fulfil His ultimate purpose for all things. He was responsible for both the time of appearance of national power, and also the duration of their control.

**Jer 27:6 And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.**

In the present time of Jeremiah, God had given the land of all of the nations mentioned into the control of Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian was serving the long range purposes of God when he invaded and took control

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of the people of these nations.

We should add right here that later on after Nebuchadnezzar had served his purpose, he was caused to eat grass like the cattle of the field. God was his Master.

Jer 27:7 And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

All of the nations known to that part of the world were destined to serve him until the seventy years of Judah's punishment had run their course.

After this seventy years matters would be reversed. Other nations and kings would invade and conquer the Babylonians and place them under bondage.

Jer 27:8 And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Any of these nations who refused to serve Nebuchadnezzar would be cursed with war, famine and disease until they were brought down. Can we make a suggestion as to the long range plans of God in this situation?

Why would God allow a wicked ruler, such as was Nebuchadnezzar, to assume such control? We believe the answer to this question is found in the book of Daniel.

Daniel foretold the arising of four empires which would oppose His people. These four were the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. These four great empires would rise and fall in succession until it was time for the Kingdom of God to appear on earth. God's kingdom would then prove to last forever. God had not approved of human kings from the time of Saul when His people had demanded a king like the nations around them. The present Babylonian empire was to be given it's chance to prove human government workable. It would fail as did the other three. God's kingdom will not fail.

Jer 27:9 Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:

People of all times have wished for absolute knowledge of the future. They have gone to each of the classes mentioned in this verse to gain such knowledge. God is the only One capable of providing such infallible truth. If the prophets, sorcerers and dreamers gave them predictions contrary to that which Jeremiah had provided through the Spirit of God, they were not to be followed. Judah and these other nations would serve for the time appointed.

Jer 27:10 For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

These falsifiers were prophesying a lie. Believing them would bring about deportation from their own land and destruction of their nations would follow.

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**Jer 27:11 But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.**

In contrast, those who were willing to serve the Babylonian ruler would be allowed to remain in their own territory and live in relative safety. But, the will of God would be done. Babylon would rule until the seventy years was concluded.

**Jer 27:12 I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.**

**Jer 27:13 Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?**

Note that it is Zedekiah who is mentioned as the king of Judah in both this verse and in verse three. This indicates that he should have been the one named in verse one.

Jeremiah was true to the Lord in reminding those of Judah that only by subjecting themselves to the king of Babylon would they be allowed to live. If they chose not to comply with God's order, they would suffer war, famine and pestilence.

**Jer 27:14 Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.**

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The enchanters, sorcerers and others who were telling the people that the yoke of Babylon could be broken were only telling the people what they wanted to hear. It was a bald faced lie.

Jer 27:15 For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

These prophets were speaking their own thoughts, not those of Jehovah. If the people of Judah and the other nations were to believe them, they would find themselves extinguished as national powers.

Jer 27:16 Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Harken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

One of the false hopes the lying prophets were putting forth was that the power of Babylon would soon be broken. It was true that they had taken some of the valuables of the temple back to Babylon, but those would soon be brought back. This was absolutely untrue.

Jer 27:17 Harken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?

There was no reason for the city of Jerusalem to be laid ruin. This would happen if they did not serve out the punishment. Otherwise the desolation would come.

Nebuchadnezzar was not interested in extinguishing them. He only wished to demonstrate his power and enrich his own treasuries.

Jer 27:18 But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

That which these false prophets were predicting was the wrong advice. What they needed to be telling the people was that they should pray for the treasures which remained to be left in the temple and in the palace of the king.

Jer 27:19 For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city.

The Babylonians had not removed all of the valuables. The two pillars in front of the temple, the brazen sea which held water for ceremonial washings and a number of other things had been allowed to remain. The people should be thankful for the fact that they were not removed.

Jer 27:20 Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;

Has the reader noticed that “all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem” had been carried away captive at this

time. That was in line with what Jeremiah had said when the prophets and priests accused him of prophesying against the city and the people.

Jer 27:21 Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;

Jer 27:22 They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

Jeremiah still was not quite finished. “Thus saith the Lord.” The wickedness of the people had proceeded so far that the rest of the treasures would be taken to Babylon. They would remain there until God decided to restore them. This restoration was permitted by the decree of Cyrus, shortly after the fall of the Babylonian power to the Medes and Persians.

Chapter 28

The false prophet Hananiah challenged the prophecy of Jeremiah. He predicted the return of the captives from Babylon within two years. Jeremiah stated that the true prophecy would be determined by whether or not it was fulfilled. Hananiah died two months after his challenge was presented.

Jer 28:1 And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,

In this verse we have definite proof that it was not Jehoiakim who was reigning at the time. Even the strictist of the conservatives admit that this was Zedekiah, as given in our present chapter. It was in the fifth month of the fourth year of Zedekiah that these things took place.

Hananiah was one who spoke “smooth things.” The people wished to see the captives restored, and so Hananiah decided to soothe their minds. This false prophet was of Gibeon which was a center of priesthood. That does not seem to have inspired him to a love of the Word of God. He did not hesitate to deny the word of Jeremiah which had come through the Lord Himself. Before both the priests and the people, Hananiah pretended to have heard a new message from God.

Jer 28:2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.

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Hananiah even used what is called the “prophetic past” in his challenge. He spoke as if the yoke of the king of Babylon had already been broken. It had not been!

**Jer 28:3 Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD’S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:**

This false prophet even went so far as to state a time limit for the return of the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had caused to be removed from the temple grounds. This statement placed Hananiah in a very tight spot. If the prophecy did not take place within the time limit, he was a false prophet.

**Jer 28:4 And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.**

He went further with his prediction. Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim who had been king of Judah was to be returned along with all of the captives who had been taken into captivity.

**Jer 28:5 Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD,**

This prophecy which contradicted that of Jeremiah could have sent the latter into a fit of anger. It did no such thing. With the priests and the people listening,

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Jeremiah retained his composure and replied to the words of Hananiah.

Jer 28:6 Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

Jeremiah gave an enthusiastic “Amen” to the happy thoughts which Hananiah had suggested. It would be most pleasant to see the vessels back in the temple grounds, and the people returned to the land of Canaan. The “Amen” however did not mean he was taken in by the lie of Hananiah.

Jer 28:7 Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people;

Jeremiah invited the attention of the priests and other listeners to what he was about to say. They had a choice to make as to whether what he had said, or what Hananiah had said was correct.

Jer 28:8 The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

Jeremiah pointed out that he was not the only one to have taken the stand which he had taken. There were a number of earlier prophets who had predicted that war, famine and pestilence lay in the future for any who opposed the divine plan for God's people. That would

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include powerful nations who hated them, and would also include the Israelites themselves. God's plan would be carried out in the face of every foe.

**Jer 28:9 The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.**

If a prophecy came to pass as the claimed prophet had predicted, the world would know the man or woman was a true prophet. If the predicted events or conditions did not come to pass, all would know he was a liar and had not been sent by Jehovah.

**Jer 28:10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.**

Hananiah then took a bold step. He removed the yoke which Jeremiah had been wearing to illustrate the yoke of bondage which was being placed on the necks of Israel and broke it into pieces. He had some advantage over Jeremiah in that what he was saying was more pleasing to the ears of the people than were those of the true prophet.

**Jer 28:11 And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.**

Hananiah had mimicked the methods of the true prophets. He had given a visual lesson which would

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have more impact than would words alone. He fearlessly predicted that the yoke Nebuchadnezzar had placed upon Israel would be broken. This would be done within a period of two years.

Again we are caused to admire the poise of Jeremiah. He did not fly into a fit of rage. He walked away, ready to let his previous words speak for him.

Jer 28:12 Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the prophet, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

After having departed from the presence of Hananiah and the witnesses of the confrontation, God presented His true prophet with added instructions. He was to return to Hananiah with a reply to the lies of the false prophet.

Jer 28:13 Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.

He was to tell Hananiah that God had taken note of the breaking of the wooden yoke which Jeremiah had worn. In spite of Hananiah's bold prediction, it would not come to pass. A yoke far more difficult to break would be placed upon the captives. It would be as much stronger than the present one as iron is stronger than wood. The implication is that Hananiah was in line for a powerful lesson from the Almighty.

Jer 28:14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve

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**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.**

Jeremiah was told to inform Hananiah and any others who might be interested that He would put that iron yoke upon any and all nations who stood in the way of His punishment for idolatry and other corrupt ways. Even the animals upon which the people depended would be deported along with them.

**Jer 28:15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.**

Since Jeremiah knew the will of the Lord with respect to Hananiah's lies, he had no hesitation in going back to him and telling him he had placed himself in a perilous position. He had caused the people to believe in that which was not to happen. The yoke of the Babylonian king was not to be broken within the two years specified by Hananiah.

**Jer 28:16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.**

Jehovah placed a death sentence upon the head of the lying false prophet. He was to die and be taken off the face of the earth within not two years, but one! He had been fighting against God. He would be proven wrong.

**Jer 28:17 So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.**

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Only two months after the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah, the latter died in the seventh month of the year.

The reader lives many centuries after this debate between the two men. That does not mean the animosity of the Lord has decreased one whit toward those who defy Him. They may not die as obviously as did Hananiah, but unless they repent of the damage they have done their end will be certain and horrible.

Chapter 29

Jeremiah had remained in Jerusalem when the captives were taken to Babylon. He was vitally concerned over the condition of the people, both in Jerusalem and in Babylon. In the chapter before us he was doing his very best to encourage God's people in both places to battle through the troubles they faced until God's purposes for them were carried out.

Jer 29:1 Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

Note that this letter was not to Jerusalem. It was to those who had been taken from Judea to Babylon. They were in need of spiritual strength to continue through the coming difficulties. They included elders, priests and prophets. All of these needed encouragement to steady their faith. Most would be in captivity until death removed them from their grief.

Jer 29:2 (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

Jeconiah, the king had been removed from the throne and the Babylonians had placed Zedekiah in that position. The queen is mentioned because at this time she held a position of respect among the people of Israel. There were

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eunuchs in the group. The question arises as to whether these were men who had decided not to marry in order to give full attention to duties related to the temple, or whether they had been castrated by those who took control of the land. This may not be completely clear from the Biblical record.

One thing is certain. Those listed were in for a very great change in their pattern of activities at the time Jeremiah wrote to them. They were in need of just such encouragement as Jeremiah was attempting to give them.

**Jer 29:3 By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,**

As the present man on the throne of David, Zedekiah, had sent two men to Babylon with a letter which was to be given to the captives. It was to go through the hands of Nebuchadnezzar before it reached those addressed in the letter. The probability is that Zedekiah felt the tone of the letter would be interpreted by Nebuchadnezzar as useful in keeping order and discipline alive rather than a spirit of rebellion.

**Jer 29:4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;**

The letter was directed to the captives, even though it did have to pass Nebuchadnezzar's inspection. It should be noticed that God uses the pronoun "I" rather than saying the Babylonians had been the primary reason for

the change in living conditions for these captives. The Lord had arranged for them to be taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

**Jer 29:5 Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;**

The people were to be subject to those who had the rule over them. There was a need for cooperation with those who had control. This is God's method through the centuries. His people have a potent enemy in Satan. The fight is a spiritual conflict. It is best fought by demonstrating resentment toward the major general of the opposition and showing just such behavior as the devil would abhor. They must fight the good fight of faith. That would bring the victory which overcomes the world. They were to work hard and try to live lives fitting for subjects of the Almighty God. This would work toward their own benefit, both in the present world, and also in the one to come.

**Jer 29:6 Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.**

They were not to commit race suicide. They were to marry and produce descendants who could be used by Jehovah to carry on His long range plans. This would best be brought about by demonstrating spiritual strength in the midst of what might appear on the surface to be utter disaster.

**Jer 29:7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and**

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pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

God's people were to "work and pray" in order that peace might abound in the land of their captivity. The greatest hope for the future did not lie in creating disorder through disobedience. It was to be found in patient faith. That was the basic lesson which they had failed to learn in the past.

Jer 29:8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

There were those in their midst who pretended to be spiritual leaders who were not such. They would try to persuade them to act contrary to the purposes of the Lord. Their dreams of power and a quick delivery from the penalty which had come upon them with the permission of God were directly opposed to God's will. He intended for them to remain in bondage for a set period of time. That would not be changed by following the advice of the dreamers who gave them false hope.

Jer 29:9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

That which these false prophets and diviners were promoting was not coming from God. They were signing His name to a set of directions which He had not authorized. This was a very serious sin. It was to be resisted, just as those who teach addition to, subtraction from, or substitution for God's Word in any time or location are to be avoided.

Jer 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

The Lord had determined that the captives were to remain in Babylon for a period of seventy years. This was not a sinful situation. It was in harmony with His desire to teach men obedience to His will. The lesson would require seventy years to teach. It was not to be cut short!

Jer 29:12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

Jer 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

After the seventy years had passed God's faithful would come to a realization of the need to hear and obey His will. They would begin to understand the wisdom of prayer and obedience. When they prayed and searched with all their might to do His will, He would be found as their Friend. He would hear and bless those who sought Him. "Seek and ye shall find."

Jer 29:14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

A tremendous message of hope was provided. He would ultimately remove them from bondage and would bring them out of the regions of darkness. He would lead His faithful out of bondage and into freedom. Today this is being done through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The capital of the Kingdom of God is not now in earthly Jerusalem. It is supervised from the throne of the Son of God in spiritual Israel. Jesus Christ is the hope of the world.

Jer 29:15 Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon;

The captives had been making a very serious mistake in believing the false prophets who were telling them it would not be long before they would find themselves back in their earthly homes in the land of Judah. Those prophets were wrong. The seventy years of captivity which had been promised would not be shortened.

Jer 29:16 Know that thus saith the LORD of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity;

In addition, God had a message for those who had not been taken from Judah. They had avoided the distress of living in Babylon as captives. That did not mean they would escape God's discipline. Jeremiah was to tell the captives that those who remained in Judah would suffer even greater troubles than those who had passed into Babylon.

Jer 29:17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and

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**the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.**

People who look for the easy way out of the spiritual conflict between Satan and God may think at times that they have avoided misery. That is not true. Those who remained in Judah were in God's sight as rotten figs which He considered unfit for use. They had chosen the hard way rather than avoiding it.

**Jer 29:18 And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:**

Those who thought they had secured safety in Judah by separating themselves from the flock of God were in for a major surprise. The result of their opposition to life in Babylon would be not just a movement into that land. It would result in being scattered from one end of the world to the other. They would then be despised by those among whom they were driven.

We should point out here that the persecution of the Jews by Adolph Hitler was a perfect illustration of the truth of God's prediction. Hitler considered the Jews to be the biggest obstacle in his program to build an empire. They died by thousands just as the present verse predicts.

**Jer 29:19 Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and**



**sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.**

If the people who were sinning before the captivity had listened to prophets such as Amos and Hosea, it would not have been necessary for God to correct them by allowing them to see the end product of such sinning as they would see in the land of Babylon. They had not listened to the warnings of the prophets and thus they had to learn the hard way.

**Jer 29:20 Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon:**

God actually says He “sent” them. What He did was to allow Nebuchadnezzar and his forces to come into Judea and take them. The outcome is the same. They ended up learning the need for avoiding idolatry while they were in that strange land.

**Jer 29:21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes;**

Because certain of the men who remained in Judea were telling the rest of the captives that they would shortly be returned to the promised land, God was going to punish those lying prophets with death. They would be killed in the sight of those to whom they had lied. Nebuchadnezzar would come to know what these men were doing and would cause them to be killed.

**Jer 29:22 And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;**

Their death would become so well known that those who were in captivity would spread the word around that those who were still alive had better refrain from telling the people they would return soon. They knew Ahab and Zedekiah had been placed in the fiery furnace. The same could happen to them. The reader will recall that Daniel was to have been killed by this same method, although he and his friends survived.

**Jer 29:23 Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.**

These lying prophets were a sorry lot. They spoke that which served their own purposes; at least they thought that was the case. While they were urging the people to break the hold which Nebuchadnezzar had upon them, the false prophets were committing adultery with their neighbor's wives. Such actions are abominable in the sight of God.

**Jer 29:24 Thus shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,**

In addition to the activities of Ahab and Zedekiah, another individual named Shemaiah had added more fuel to the fire. Jeremiah had a message for him also.

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The message was not his own. It was that of Jehovah the Lord.

Jer 29:25 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

Jer 29:26 The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks.

Shemaiah had opposed the will of the Lord when he sent letters to those who were back in Jerusalem that God had made him a priest to take the place of Jehoiada. Shemaiah clearly took the same wayward path that Ahab and Zedekiah had taken before him. He had claimed Jeremiah was not truly a prophet of God, but only pretended to be one. Shemaiah accused Jeremiah of being a false prophet. He demanded that Jeremiah be arrested, imprisoned and placed in stocks as punishment.

Jer 29:27 Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?

Shemaiah wanted to know why Jeremiah had not been corrected for calling himself a prophet. He claimed Jeremiah was fighting against God by telling the captives in Babylon that they would be there for seventy long years.

Jer 29:28 For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, This captivity is long: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

Shemaiah accused Jeremiah of lying in his statement that the people of Israel should accept their condition and not think about a quick return. Shemaiah was serving his own interests. He had not been given instructions to make such accusations against Jeremiah.

Jer 29:29 And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

Jer 29:30 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

Zephaniah decided it would be best to reveal the contents of the letter from Shemaiah to Jeremiah. He read the letter to Jeremiah. Then the Lord stepped in. He informed Jeremiah what step to take next.

Jer 29:31 Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:

Zephaniah was to send word to the captives that Shemaiah had made a promise he would be unable to keep. The Lord wished the captives to know Shemaiah had been lying to them. He had caused them to believe the captivity would be less than seventy years. God had not sent this evil Shemaiah as a prophet. They WOULD spend the entire seventy years under the yoke of the Babylonians.

Jer 29:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

Severe punishment lay ahead for Shemaiah. He would have no descendant to live among the Israelites. Shemaiah would not live long enough to see the good things which God had planned for the future of His people. By teaching opposition to the divine will, Shemaiah had brought a curse upon himself. The people would be in captivity for some time after he had met his death.

Chapter 30

The Lord is preparing Jeremiah for that which is to come in the future. In the land of Babylon they are learning the need for concentrated attention on the commandments and statutes of God. Step by step this knowledge will come, but it will be a seventy year learning period.

Jer 30:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

We begin by realizing the importance God places on accurately following His instructions in every service to Him.

Jer 30:2 Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.

The will of the Lord was to be recorded in written form in order that it might be referred to at any time. He always provides the needed guidance to those who are determined to put into practice that which He has placed before them. A written record is somewhat more trustworthy than one which is only spoken.

Jer 30:3 For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

The period of seventy years in captivity would bring the desires of God and His people into a much greater degree of harmony.

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**Jer 30:4 And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.**

We are now given the Lord's directions with respect to the reestablishment of obedience of His divine will.

**Jer 30:5 For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.**

The birth of the nation is not going to be easy. A woman does not simply lie down on a bed and a few minutes later find that she has given birth to a son or daughter. The new nation which God is planning will require careful planning cooperation. There had been much fear and trembling among His people as they found themselves in bondage to those of Babylon.

**Jer 30:6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?**

The people of Israel were going to find the birth of the nation to be a laborious process. The exertion of the Israelites would be comparable to the stress on a woman who is being told to bear down to move forward the delivery process. Israel need not think the birth of the nation would be simple and easy.

**Jer 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.**

The time of the birth of a baby is a time of tremendous stress for the woman delivering that child. Israel was

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about to move into a new status in the eyes of the Lord. She would become independent of those labor pains. All would not be pleasant, but the end result would be freedom from a very unpleasant bondage.

Jer 30:8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

The time would come when the yoke which had been laid upon the neck of Israel and Judah would be broken. Strangers would no longer possess strict control over their duties, rewards and punishments.

Jer 30:9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

When that time came rather than serving the Babylonians, they would be freed from that service to serve under a descendant of David. This Ruler was not ready to come into their presence at this time, but certainly would arrive when the time was right.

Jer 30:10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

God was not directing these remarks to David himself. They were addressed to his descendant who would rule from afar. Jacob's people would be allowed to return to

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their land and would find peace and quiet with no fear of being removed

**Jer 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.**

When God is with one, who can successfully defeat him. God would arrange a time in which to eliminate the nations to which Israel would be scattered. He did not intend to erase His people from the face of the entire earth. But He certainly intended to correct them. There were things wrong which had to be attended to.

**Jer 30:12 For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.**

Without the proper treatment the sins of Judah would be overwhelming. That which was wrong was in need of radical treatment.

**Jer 30:13 There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.**

There had been those nations in the past who would come to the aid of Israel. That day was behind them. The proper medicine for their healing was just not available to them.

**Jer 30:14 All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of**

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a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased.

Why was it that Israel's past allies had pulled back from the alliance? It was because the Lord had bruised His people in punishment for their determination to live by their own rules. The allies did not wish to maintain friendship with a people who were being punished by greater power than they could match.

Jer 30:15 Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

The Israelites were weeping and feeling that there was no hope of escaping the burdens which were being laid upon them. The Lord wanted them to know that He had brought the afflictions upon the people because they would not respect His laws of behavior.

Jer 30:16 Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.

It was not to be so forever. The ones who were punishing Israel would find themselves in captivity as time passed. They would find out how unpleasant it was to be preyed upon by those who were stronger than they.

Jer 30:17 For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD;

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**because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.**

At the time of the writing of the book God was dictating to Jeremiah, Zion had been embarrassed to the point where she was labeled as an outcast to both God and man.

The Lord promised that this condition would not last forever. After the period of correction, the Lord would heal the sores and bring a healthy nation into being.

**Jer 30:18 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.**

After His people had been properly disciplined, God planned on having the city of Jerusalem rebuilt upon the very foundation where she had been proud in the past. This portion of God's actions would be in strict contrast to that which had been poured out upon His people in Babylon.

**Jer 30:19 And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.**

The result of the restoration would be an outpouring of thanksgiving and merry voices. The number of the faithful would increase impressively. The people would become respected by their neighbors.

**Jer 30:20 Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.**

The promise was made by the Lord that they would have many healthy children. Things would go well with them and God Himself would see that those who tried to take unfair advantage of them were attended to.

**Jer 30:21 And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD.**

What a beautiful picture is being painted at this point. Israel would be ruled by their own people. There would be a close relationship between the Lord and the leader of Israel.

**Jer 30:22 And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**

God desires this relationship ahead of all others. If men love Him and keep His commandments, He will return the favor by doing that for His people that they could not begin to do for themselves.

**Jer 30:23 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.**

While the pleasant breezes were creating most pleasant conditions of life for those who would love Him

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and obey His will, just the opposite was to become the fate of the wicked. A storm of His fury would sweep over them, leaving disaster in it's path.

Jer 30:24 The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he hath done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

It would be necessary for God to pour out His anger upon the disobedient until His will was recognized and respected. The latter days are the day of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. That Kingdom will ultimately conquer every foe. They must not forget that these latter days only appear when men despise evil and embrace righteousness.

Chapter 31

We have now come to a happier chapter in the story of God's people. We must remember that the book of Jeremiah is not based on an orderly chronology. We jump back and forth in time until we sometimes get lost in the process. This time we have God's assurance to the faithful that He has not forgotten them. The captivity was necessary as a means of demonstrating the consequences of abandoning God's Way and attempting to direct our own steps. The difficulties would accomplish the purpose of turning men's minds back to the need for divine direction.

Jer 31:1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

Jehovah's people may have forgotten Him and gone their own way, but He had not forgotten them. All that was taking place was a part of His providential care. They were His people and He loved them.

Jer 31:2 Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

Those who had survived in Egypt and in the conflicts which took place in the wilderness had been favored with His grace as they passed into the land of promise.

Jer 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

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Over the centuries Jehovah had proven that He loved those who loved Him. He had led them sometimes as a parent drags a foot stomping child into the doctor's office. All that had been done was out of His loving kindness.

**Jer 31:4 Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.**

The Lord had built the nation once from a small beginning to a population of over two million. He intended to rebuild again after the miseries of Babylonian captivity were left behind. Once more they could become a happy people. Their hearts would not forever groan as had been the case in Babylon.

**Jer 31:5 Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.**

Samaria was in the northern area of Canaan. Thus these words of promise were directed to both the northern and the southern portions of that land. They would be able to plant vineyards and eat the grapes as a part of everyday life.

**Jer 31:6 For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.**

They could look forward to the day when those of both the north and the south could gather on Mount Zion and worship God together.

However, there is a question here. Is this restricted to the pre-Christian age, or does this prophecy reach forward to the time when Mount Zion is more than an elevation in the physical features of the land of Israel. They did come to happier days after the return from Babylon to Israel, but there were much happier days than that which lay in the Kingdom of Christ now and eternally. The verse may very well refer to both.

**Jer 31:7 For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.**

To whom is the Lord addressing these words? Surely the people of Israel would have reason to sing and shout with gladness, but does not the verse also apply to nations in all parts of the earth. The publication of the news that Israel has been returned to a more stable relationship with her God would be sufficient to gladden the hearts of nations from one end of the world to the other. This is a happier world because of the influence of God's children.

**Jer 31:8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.**

We have previously noted that the Babylonian forces invaded Canaan from the north. After the defeat by Babylon, Israel was scattered far and wide. Again the context of the verse sounds applicable to the fleshly Israelites who had been scattered abroad, but also can

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apply to spiritual Israelites who have now been gathered from all nations of the world.

Jer 31:9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

The people would come back to God's fold with penitent hearts and tears in their eyes as they realized how badly they had reacted to the wondrous blessings of the Heavenly Father. As they returned to Him, He would bless them as a human father might bless a firstborn child who had been led astray and then returned home.

Jer 31:10 Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

All the nations of the world should take heed and discuss these events. God had allowed His people to be scattered, but they were so precious to Him that He had made great efforts to bring them back into his sheepfold.

Jer 31:11 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.

This verse is one of those that point far ahead of the time in which it was written. God paid a heavy ransom in order that His scattered sheep might find their way home. His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ was subjected to all

kinds of persecution during His thirty-three year stay on earth. He then was placed upon the cross and murdered to demonstrate the horror of sin. The Babylonians were stronger than was Israel without the help of Jehovah. Men and women today are facing foes which are stronger than themselves without the help of that One who is stronger than all.

Jer 31:12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

The height of Zion was once located in physical Canaan. As the people returned from captivity, they would rejoice in coming together once more to enjoy the blessings of the True God. The crops would once more fill the granaries and the shelves of the kitchens. The sheep and cattle would thrive and produce both food and clothing. Even more important, the souls of the people would become fresh and upright as they partook of the water of life. Great sorrow would be replaced by even greater joy.

Jer 31:13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

There are various kinds of dances. Young women and young men are spry in those early years. They are capable of expressing their joy in sprightly movements. This does not have to be sexually oriented close dancing.

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It could just as well be what we know as tap dancing which does not necessarily involve body contact between those of opposite sex. The elderly as well as the young were promised that mourning would be replaced by joy, and sorrow would fade.

**Jer 31:14 And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.**

The priests of Jeremiah's day were a select group who supervised the sacrifices and who led the people in their worship. They would find great happiness in such leadership. The general population of Israel would find similar joy in harvesting the blessings of their renewed relationship with their Maker.

**Jer 31:15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.**

There had been terrible weeping at the time the people were carried off into the scattered land to which they were taken. This Ramah was the site of Rachel's burial. We have a scene pictured in which Rachel rises from the grave to observe her children of Israel. She is grief stricken to find that they are not to be seen. They have been killed or carried into other nations.

Matthew made use of this scripture to speak of the murder of babes in Bethlehem. (See Matthew 2:17-18.)

*Matt 2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,*

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Matt 2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

The point here is that descendants of Rachel were being killed and leaving great sorrow, just as had been case in days gone by.

Jer 31:16 Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

God calls for Rachel to cease her weeping. Her childbearing was not in vain. Israel would be removed from captivity and returned to their own land.

Jer 31:17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

The situation was far from hopeless. Rachel's descendants would be regathered through the mighty hand of the Lord and brought back within the borders of the promised land.

Jer 31:18 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

After having been exposed to the rigors of the captivity, Ephraim, which was one of the precious children of Jacob

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and Rachel, was groaning under the burden of guilt for his sinful past. He had been like an ox which had not been broken to the yoke. Now he was ready to take that yoke. He would labor in the vineyard of the Lord.

**Jer 31:19 Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.**

What is the sequence of events which take place as man is turned from defiance to submissive faithful behavior? When Israel found that the wages of sin were far more difficult than was the yoke of God, they were ready to change their direction. God filled that need by leading them from Babylon. His people were then ready to slap their hand upon their thigh in remorse and shame for their folly. Youthful rebellion against parental instruction can bring on miseries untold. Israel was learning that valuable lesson.

**Jer 31:20 Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.**

Ephraim was not just a son of Rachel and Jacob. He was a child of God. Just as Rachel grieved, God grieved. It had been necessary to punish His wayward son, but He had not forgotten him. God's children are always dear to Him, until they reach the point where they will not hear His voice. Ephraim had not reached that point of no return. There was still reason for hope.

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Jer 31:21 Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

God's people knew the path they had followed in departing from Him. They were to cease their deadly journey into sin and turn their steps back in the way they had traveled as they moved from righteousness to sin. Their steps must be retraced until they came again to the land of promise and the Holy City.

Jer 31:22 How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

Israel is now pictured as a young woman who has abandoned her purpose in existence. She was meant to bring forth children who would praise and would obey the Heavenly Father. God was not going to help her return to that great purpose. She would bring forth a man child. That man child would become known as the Son of God. It was, of course, not a new thing in the earth for a woman to carry a son within her womb. It was a new thing for Israel to cooperate with the God of heaven to bring His only Begotten Son into our midst.

Jer 31:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.

As the scene moved into the future, God informed His prophet that the time would come when those in Judah

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and other cities of the land of Canaan would cry out in thanksgiving for the return to the land. They would plead with God to work with them in making it a land of justice between men and holiness toward the Lord.

**Jer 31:24 And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks.**

Conditions would come to pass that the people had known in the past. The cities of the promised land would find themselves populated with those whom God had led there from Egyptian bondage. They would till the fields and tend the flocks. HOME SWEET HOME!

**Jer 31:25 For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.**

God was promising rest for the weary. He was promising joy in the place of sorrow. This would come to pass when men learned the difference between the rewards of righteousness and the sorrow of sin.

**Jer 31:26 Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.**

Now what have we here?. Jeremiah has been dreaming. Sometimes when men dream they wake in the midst of nightmare. Other times they wish they could return to dreamland. The vision which Jeremiah had just experienced was altogether too short. It was sweet, and it was also sure and certain to become reality.

**Jer 31:27 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house**

**of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.**

We are not told how long it would be before the days of Jeremiah's dream would see reality, but when that time did come, things would be drastically different than they were when Jeremiah went to sleep. Israel would grow in numbers. They would also grow in possessions. The misery of those horrifying years in Babylon would be replaced with prosperity and peace.

**Jer 31:28 And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.**

The uprooting, destruction and affliction of various kinds was a necessary part of God's plan which allow brighter days for His children in the Christian age. Work with the Lord dear reader. He can bring sorrow and He can bring great joy. Why choose sorrow?

**Jer 31:29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.**

**Jer 31:30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.**

It seemed in the days of the captivity that the children were suffering to the third and fourth generation as a result of the disobedience of their fathers. This will not be true in the final judgment. Every person will answer for his or her own sins. The one who has eaten the



grapes of wrath will be the one who suffers from the aftertaste.

**Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**

These verses toward the end of the present chapter allow us to see something of the reasons behind God's dealings with His people in Egypt and again in Babylon. Those experiences were but a schoolmaster to bring His people to the time when Christ could be brought into the world to introduce a new covenant which will last until time shall be no more.

**Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:**

That covenant which was made with the fathers was presented through Moses and was binding through the days of the wilderness wanderings and on into the days of the prophets of Israel. It was written on tables of stone. God treated His people as a man would treat his wife. They did not return that love. They broke the covenant.

**Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

That covenant which was given on Mount Sinai was to be replaced by a new law. That new law would be vastly different from the first. It would be written on the hearts of God's people. It is of course true that some men's hearts are as hard as stone and the law of the Lord has little impression upon such hearts. Nevertheless, the grace of God, as shown through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, is a greater, stronger motivation than those principles which were written on stone as the ten commandments.

**Jer 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**

Under the new covenant presented through Christ, is it no longer necessary to teach our fellow men? That can hardly be the heart of the statement in this verse. We are told in the gospel age to "Go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The time was to come when that command would be honored. Those of every nation, even the children, would have the opportunity to know the will of the Lord. Sin would be forgiven, not just rolled forward.

**Jer 31:35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:**

As long as the sun emits it's light in the day, and the moon and stars shine at night, every nook and



cranny of the globe will shout that Jehovah is LORD OF ALL.

**Jer 31:36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.**

As long as the heaven and the earth continue, the children of God will be recognized throughout the world. They had been sent into captivity for a few years. They would come out to bask in the sunshine of His love even beyond the point when time is dissolved in eternity.

**Jer 31:37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.**

Just how far do the heavens reach? Just how complicated are the scientific truths which lie behind the structure of this globe upon which we live. We have been searching for the answers to these questions for the entire history of mankind upon this earth. The difficulty of plumbing the depths of such knowledge is as endless as the truths embedded in the cosmos. The spiritual descendants of Jacob will be distinguishable forever. God will not forsake His own. He will always have a people.

**Jer 31:38 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.**

Just how large will the new city of Jerusalem be? It will dwarf the ancient dimensions of the earthly city of Jerusalem.

**Jer 31:39 And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.**

Gareb and Goath were not inside the city walls of ancient Jerusalem. This new city was to extend far, far beyond those old walls.

**Jer 31:40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.**

In addition, those places where death and tears reigned are to be replaced by the holiness of God. This new city is described in much greater detail in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation. It shall be holy. It shall be eternal.

I do not wish to miss it. —Do you?



## Chapter 32

The prophet Jeremiah had a mountain of faith, but when he was told to buy a plot of ground when the Babylonians were at the very gates of Jerusalem, he required some encouragement from the Lord in order to bolster that faith. To his credit, he accepted the encouragement and his actions then became a support for the belief of others that one day the people would be returned and would be able to claim the land which belonged to each one.

**Jer 32:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar.**

Zedekiah had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to be ruler over Judea at the time of the Babylonian conquest. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah were well entrenched in their power seats.

**Jer 32:2 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.**

Matters looked exceedingly dim for Judah. Babylon had taken control of nearly all of the known world at the time. Jeremiah had been arrested and was confined to the court of the prison. This was better than a dungeon cell, but was far from the freedom he might have wished for.

**Jer 32:3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and**

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say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

The reason Zedekiah had caused Jeremiah to be placed in confinement was that the prophet had predicted the fall of Jerusalem into the control of Nebuchadnezzar and the transfer of many captives into the attacking Chaldean army. God would allow the invading army to overcome all Israeli resistance.

Jer 32:4 And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes;

Jeremiah had predicted that Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon where he would be at the mercy of Nebuchadnezzar. The two rulers would meet face to face and look one another in the eye.

Jer 32:5 And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

The prediction included the fact that Zedekiah would be forced to go as a captive to Babylon. It would be of no use whatsoever to put up resistance. Such resistance would be doomed to defeat.

Jer 32:6 And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jer 32:7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum

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**thine uncle shall come unto thee saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it.**

Even under these discouraging circumstances God told Jeremiah that a near relative would come to him with a request that he buy a piece of property which fell naturally to him if he chose to purchase it. It may have seemed a good time to sell the field as Hanameel was trying to do. If the Chaldeans were going to take it by force, it would seem only a disadvantage to pay for the field and have it removed from your possession.

**Jer 32:8 So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.**

Hanameel was Jeremiah's cousin, the son of his uncle. Since the Lord had told Jeremiah that just this sort of thing would happen, he knew that he would be making the right decision to buy the offered field. It is always wise to follow the advice of the Lord, even if that advice appears to be inadvisable from the human standpoint.

**Jer 32:9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.**

A deal was agreed upon. The price of the field would be seventeen shekels of silver. This would likely not have been in the form of minted coins, but rather only weighed

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out on scales. It is difficult to estimate the exact value in terms of present day calculations.

Jer 32:10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

The evidence of the sale was properly recorded and the money was passed between the seller and the buyer. There was to be a way that Jeremiah could back out of the agreement if things did not go well. The prophet did this with the confidence that Israel would be returned to the land with the help of the Lord. God had promised it.

Jer 32:11 So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open:

A contract of this sort was recorded in two copies. One of the copies was sealed where neither party could manipulate the details. The other copy was left unsealed where witnesses could verify that it was a binding agreement.

Jer 32:12 And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

Jeremiah then gave the written record of the purchase to Baruch in the presences of witnesses who had verified the validity of the contract. This was done where many of the Jews who were with Jeremiah in the prison court

could report the facts if the need came up at a later time.

Jer 32:13 And I charged Baruch before them, saying,

Jer 32:14 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.

Baruch acted as a sort of notary public. He was to see that the record was signed, sealed and delivered. The evidence was to be placed in a secure earthen vessel where it could remain protected for many years.

Note; The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in just such earthen jars as are mentioned in this transaction. They remained secure for several centuries.

Jer 32:15 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

Jeremiah made certain that the onlookers knew the reason for his willingness to invest money in the property. God had promised that His people, even though taken to Babylon, would be come back in the future and repossess the land. They would build houses, plant fields and build vineyards. His property was safe!

Jer 32:16 Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying,

Even so, after Jeremiah had delivered the records of the sale to Baruch for safe keeping, he felt a need to

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make contact with God to settle his mind. Is this not much the same as Christians do in the present day. We have a great deal of faith that Jehovah created all things, and that He remains in ultimate control of the destiny of mankind. Yet we feel the need to lay our burdens upon Him through sincere prayer.

**Jer 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:**

Jeremiah declares his confidence that the Lord is capable of doing anything that is within the realm of righteous thought and actions. He has both the power and the wisdom to accomplish his goals.

**Jer 32:18 Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,**

This verse does not teach that God will hold the children guilty of the sins which their parents committed. It does teach that He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation as long as those children follow in the evil footsteps of parents who are determined to sin in spite of the instruction offered to them. He is great. He is mighty. He is Lord. Men show good judgment when they hear His will and obey it.

**Jer 32:19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons**

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**of men: to give every one according to his ways,
and according to the fruit of his doings:**

Men will be rewarded according to their deeds. God sees every action and knows every thought. He has proven in days gone by just how much He is willing to do for those who place their lives under His control. His servants need not fear that when this present life is completed and the final books are opened, the Heavenly Father will see that all things work together for the good of those who have sought the good way.

Jer 32:20 Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day;

Jer 32:21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror;

The Lord had shown decisively that He is capable of caring for His followers. He demonstrated that ability in delivering His people from Egypt. He showed it in leading them through the wilderness. He showed it after they arrived in Palestine. As long as they remained faithful to Him, He blessed them beyond all expectations. When foes set out to destroy them He protected them with His mighty arm and struck terror into the hearts of all foes. He does not betray His own.

Jer 32:22 And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;

The Lord had promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others that a wonderful land lay ahead of them. It was to be placed within their control with blessings they had not previously enjoyed.

Jer 32:23 And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:

And God did keep His promise. He helped them to drive out the wicked people who dwelt in Canaan. It was not because Israel was perfect and holy that they were given the land. It was because the Canaanites had demonstrated great wickedness and deserved to be removed.

But there was a difficulty. After having received the land, Israel had followed in the same wicked paths as those who had been driven out to make room for them. That had caused the Lord to bring the Chaldeans in upon them. Now they would have to endure great hardship until they learned the need for seeking the truth which makes men free. That lesson still lay ahead of them.

Jer 32:24 Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it.

As Jeremiah looked out over the city walls, he could see the devices which were able to hurl gigantic stones against the walls of Jerusalem. A bitter end seemed

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almost impossible to avoid. There would be famine, sword and pestilence. How could God ever return the people after the enemy captured them and herded them off into Babylon?

**Jer 32:25 And thou hast said unto me, O Lord GOD, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.**

Amazingly God had told Jeremiah to buy the field which is was his right to buy. What good would witnesses do if the Chaldeans had utter and complete control over all affairs of the land?

**Jer 32:26 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,**

**Jer 32:27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?**

Jeremiah was assured that he had made the right choice in purchasing the field. He would find that what looked absolutely impossible from the human viewpoint was quite possible through the power and wisdom of God. The only things God cannot do are those which would mar His holiness. In that case, He would no longer be God.

**Jer 32:28 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:**

The sinful conduct of His people had made it necessary for the Lord to let them learn by experience that the wages of sin are not just unpleasant. They are horrifying.

He will let them learn this truth as a result of falling into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

**Jer 32:29 And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.**

The city of Jerusalem would be set afire. The very housetops upon which incense and drink offerings were offered to those who were no gods would be burned up along with the houses which they covered. We learn from this situation just what it takes to make the Lord mad. It takes the dedication of lives to that which can only lead to death and destruction. My parents punished me a number of times while they were angry. This was not because they wished to abuse me. It was because they knew the things I had been doing would lead to self destruction. I am pleased today that they had that foresight which I did not yet have. It pleases me that God becomes angry enough with me to send punishment which is severe enough to turn me from what He knows will lead to eternal torment.

**Jer 32:30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.**

Grown men and women are here called “children.” The reason for this is that they were thinking and acting

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in a manner which more nearly fitted those who were immature in the spiritual sense. His children had formed gods with their own hands, and then bowed down before them. Such conduct was the ultimate insult to the Creator of their souls. Corrective measures had to be applied.

Jer 32:31 For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face,

This city was Jerusalem. It was a very special city in the eyes of Jehovah. He had blessed it beyond all other cities of the earth. His people had used it to pay tribute to those which were no gods. This had been true almost from the very beginning of the city. They had done their very best to bring such divine wrath upon it that it would be erased from His sight.

Jer 32:32 Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

There are four classes listed here that should have been grateful to the bottom of their hearts for all that God had done for them. All four classes begin with the letter “p.”

1. The **p**eople.
2. The **p**rinces.
3. The **p**riests.
4. The **p**rophets.

They had become divided into two nations, Israel and Judah. They had sunk into moral depravity so deeply that it would require extremely drastic measures to return them to any resemblance of respect for the Heavenly Father.

Jer 32:33 And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

When men find themselves in the deepest of troubles, they will lift their faces toward the heavens and plead for help from the only source strong enough to provide that help. When men find themselves so independent that they turn their back upon that source of help, the results of such insolent behavior will bring cursings rather than blessings.

God had done all that could be done for them in providing all of the necessities of life. In return they turned their backs to Him. Repentance and spirituality had been urged upon them with no effect.

Jer 32:34 But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it.

The people had even gone to the extent of placing their hand made false gods in the temple which was intended to be used to honor the Only True God. It had been polluted beyond description. In their eyes the name of the Lord had been turned to mud.

Jer 32:35 And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass

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**through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.**

This place known as the valley of Gehenna was used by the Lord to help men understand the meaning of the everlasting fire of hell. Children were thrown into the fire as sacrifices to Molech. God had once used the blood of a lamb on the doorsteps of His people's houses to tell of the one great child sacrifice which was to provide the blood for all others who would lay their lives at His feet. Jesus died in order that others would not find it necessary to offer the lives of their infants in our own day.

**Jer 32:36 And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;**

What was to be done to a city which was willing to turn it's back upon Jehovah? It would have to be something so impressive that it would be remembered as long as mankind walked upon the face of the earth. Israel was delivered into the hands of sword, famine and pestilence. It was predicted beforehand. It came to pass! It is still remembered.

**Jer 32:37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:**

The punishment would not last forever. When the pain had been given time to sink in and bring new attitudes, God set out to return Israel to that promised land. They would return, and they would be enabled to dwell there safely.

**Jer 32:38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:**

As long as they continued to give Him the honor, the glory and the power over their lives, He would on His part give them the glorious lives they could enjoy as His people. The statement found in this verse is one of the highlights of the entire book of holy scripture. The relationship between Jehovah and His people cannot be surpassed when all is right.

**Jer 32:39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:**

One heart is that which welds a people together that all may find happiness in common goals. That supreme goal which stands higher than all others is to love the Lord with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.

**Jer 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.**

God takes the initiative. He does not expect men to first turn to Him before He blesses them. He is ready to make an everlasting covenant with assures His unending blessings as long as those who claim to be His people back

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up that claim with obedience to His Way. His Word is to have free play in their heart. If they will never depart, He will never forget.

Jer 32:41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

We recognize the power of the words written above. If parents think they love their children, they need to take a careful look at the love God has demonstrated toward His children. He has made the solemn promise that He will continue to care for His own with a love even greater than we are capable of understanding.

Jer 32:42 For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

The agony which had been poured out upon the wayward nation was only a means of letting us know what wondrous joy can be ours if we rest in His arms when this life has run its course.

Jer 32:43 And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

That land which had been taken over by the Chaldeans would one day be returned to the possession of a returning people. Until that time it would be left desolate and abused by that idolatrous nation.

Jer 32:44 Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah had bought a field. The event had been witnessed properly within the land. The mountains, valley and cities would once again be inhabited by those who worshiped the Lord in spirit and in truth. This would be true in the days of return from Babylon to earthly Jerusalem. But in a higher sense, it would be true of those who return from spiritual Babylon when they hear the call of the Son of God. God offers a choice. Will it be life? Or will it be death?

Chapter 33

This chapter deals with the predicted future return of the tribes from Babylon, but at the same time presents information on the far more important release from the bondage of sin which Jeremiah and others predicted for spiritual Jews who find that release in the Messiah.

Jer 33:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

Jeremiah had already received one revelation from the Lord. Now for the second time he is favored with a prediction of major hope for what at the time seemed almost impossible to imagine. The people would be taken into captivity. They would remain in that condition for a time, but when God saw fit they would be allowed to return to Judea. They must not lose hope for the future of the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The seed of Abraham would be blessed beyond all nations. A King would arise who would reign from the line of David.

Jer 33:2 Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it; the LORD is his name;

Jeremiah is to tell the people that the Maker of the nation of Israel would never forget it. He had established it for wondrous purposes which had no yet been fulfilled. Israel must have patience and perseverance in spite of the knocking of the Chaldeans at the gates of the city of Jerusalem. "It could mean the nation of Israel, or it could go much farther and be the entire human population. The

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perils ahead were certain, but they were also certain to cease one day.

**Jer 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.**

We must admit that Jeremiah had already received information about great and mighty things, even during his stay in the prison. He had come into possession of information which could only have been provided by Jehovah. He was now to receive more of such information. The new message was to be far more welcome than the dismal predictions of the past.

**Jer 33:4 For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword;**

This new information would concern the rebuilding of the city which was being ripped to pieces by the stones and spears being projected into it by the present attackers. All was not to be lost.

**Jer 33:5 They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.**

The result of the present conflict with the Chaldeans would be most unpleasant at first. The dead bodies of the Israelites would be strewn across the surface of the land.

This would come about because of the insolence of the people toward Jehovah. Their wickedness had provoked Him to great wrath. They had turned their back to God. He was now to turn His back to them and allow slaughter to fill the valleys with corpses.

**Jer 33:6 Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.**

There was a cure for the moral disease which afflicted them. God would offer that cure and if they would accept it, peace and truth could replace the pain and suffering which they had already felt, and which was to increase in the near future.

**Jer 33:7 And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.**

The promise is that the bondage will cease. The people will someday be allowed to break that bondage and find freedom. As we move through the chapter we will find that the freedom is on a much higher level than the ability to break the yoke of the Babylonians.

**Jer 33:8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.**

This new freedom was to be freedom from the guilt of sin. The people had been exceedingly wicked, which had brought about the punishment they were facing in

Babylon. That shame and guilt could be eliminated as the sins were forgiven.

**Jer 33:9 And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.**

One of the severe problems which had arisen was the result of failure to honor the Lord. That which was to take place in the future would cause other nations to be far more respectful of the God Israel worshiped. Those onlooking nations would come to desire the goodness and prosperity which had been enjoyed by the seed of Abraham.

**Jer 33:10 Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,**

Jeremiah had been obedient to the Lord in prophesying destruction and desolation of the land of Canaan. Things were to change very greatly.

**Jer 33:11 The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of**

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the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

As had been true in the past, the joy of life would once more be felt in the promised land. Weddings would be held. Praise would rise to the Lord for his mercy and blessings. The captives who were to spend time in Babylon would come back and live in peace as they had done before.

Jer 33:12 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.

Before those happy days of weddings and praises, there would be desolation in the land. It would affect the countryside, as well as both the animal and human population.

But this would pass and the cities would be repopulated. The fields would yield their harvest. The shepherds would gratefully count their sheep and find them to be present.

Jer 33:13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the LORD.

Both within the walls of the cities, and also in the green pastures outside those city walls the hand of the Lord would be opened wide with a pouring out of good things.

Jer 33:14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

Beginning with this verse Jeremiah is told that the wonderful promises God had made to the seed of Abraham would be honored. These blessings had been delayed by the need to correct their wicked behavior; but that did not mean the promise had been cancelled. The fulfillment was still awaiting.

Jer 33:15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

Yes, it was true that David was dead. But it was not true that the promise was dead. The promise was alive and well. When a shrub is cut off we sometimes see a green shoot arise from what appeared to be completely lifeless. This was going to happen with respect to David. The royal line of David would be carried on through a shoot or branch of righteousness. This new King would promote righteousness and fair judgment in a new Israel.

Jer 33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

The southern capital of Jerusalem would find peace and security. She would be recognized by a new name. That name would be “the Lord our righteousness.”

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This is strange to our ears. Has Jerusalem ever been known by this name? Not in so many words, but quite certainly in the spiritual sense. Today we speak of the Church of Jesus Christ as the New Jerusalem or the “City of the Living God. The citizens of that New Jerusalem are added to the Lord and become a part of His body, which is the church.

**Jer 33:17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;**

Now that Christ has been anointed as King of kings and Lord of Lords we have a perpetual seed of David upon the throne of the throne of glory in New Jerusalem.

**Jer 33:18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.**

Some might complain that the Levitical priesthood is no longer with us. Yet the Bible claims every Christian is a part of the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ. As long as there are Christians offering themselves as living sacrifices, that royal priesthood will be presenting the sacrifices which God desires and values much more highly than burnt offerings of lambs and bullocks.

**Jer 33:19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,**

**Jer 33:20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;**

There is yet more good news to be given to Jeremiah and then through him to the faithful of all the ages. The new covenant which God offers through Christ is as dependable as the day follows the night. As long as the sun lights the sky by day and the moon reflects it's light at night, God's promised blessings through the seed of David are certain.

**Jer 33:21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.**

One can hardly become more certain of anything than that the day will follow the night. The Christ would come. His priesthood of kings is presently here. Let men give Him the glory which He is due.

**Jer 33:22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.**

Dear reader, you are invited to try that which God says cannot be done. Go out on some clear summer night and start your count. I dare say that it will not last beyond five hundred. You will find it impossible to tell whether you have already counted a given star or not. Men estimate the number. They do not presume to give us an alphabetical list of the whole of them. A complicating factor in the present challenge is that Christians are coming into existence daily all over the world. All that came before only pointed the way toward the vast multitude who are proud to call themselves by the name Christian.



**Jer 33:23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,**

**Jer 33:24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.**

There were those who were complaining that Jehovah had broken His covenant with Israel and Judah. Those who made such claims were wrong. Israel might despise themselves. Other nations might decide God had abandoned them. His promise, however, was just as sure and certain as it had ever been. As long as the people were willing to honor Him as their Only God, He would in turn bless them as only He could do.

**Jer 33:25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;**

For assurance that the providential care of the Lord would continue, Israel could look into the sky. When night and day ceased to arrive in their appointed time, the people could begin to wonder about God's dependability. Until then there was no such need.

**Jer 33:26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.**

Jehovah had just made a promise that was a secure as His own veracity. If the sun, moon and stars no longer

followed His commands men could cast their concerns upon Him. The entrance of the Messiah into this world has been assurance of His reliability. Serve Him and cast your cares upon Him.

## Chapter 34

God had rescued Israel from the hands of the Egyptians and cared for them during the wilderness wanderings. They had been allowed to take the promised land and set up the temple and the government which the Lord saw fit for them. Over a period of time they had abused those privileges. The situation had become so serious that God decided it was necessary to bring the Babylonians in upon them in order to wean them from idolatry. Nebuchadnezzar ruled the Babylonian empire at the time of the chapter before us. He was being allowed by the Lord to invade Canaan in order that the Israelites be taught to honor the will of the Lord.

**Jer 34:1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying,**

**Jer 34:2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire:**

God had used the tongue of Jeremiah before this to announce His will to the people. This time the news was to be very important. Nebuchadnezzar was bringing tremendous forces against the Israelites. His empire was the most powerful on earth at the time.

Jeremiah was to make contact with Zedekiah who was in his tenth year of rulership over Israel. Zedekiah was to be told that God was ready to give the land to the

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Babylonian king. That king would set the land on fire, and take control of it.

Jer 34:3 And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

Zedekiah would be unable to avoid capture. He would speak face to face with Nebuchadnezzar. Then he would be taken to Babylon as a captive. Of course all of this was a result of the disobedience of the Israelites to the laws of the Lord.

Jer 34:4 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword:

Although Zedekiah would be taken captive and moved to Babylon, his life would be spared for some time. During that time he would have some degree of influence over the people back in Canaan.

Jer 34:5 But thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee; and they will lament thee, saying, Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD.

Zedekiah was made the promise that he would die a peaceful death. He would be given honorable treatment as had other kings of Israel. Incense would be burned and lamentation would be heard in connection with his burial. This kind of burial is a bit surprising in view of the fact that Zedekiah had evidently tried to straddle the

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fence in pleasing the invaders and at the same time act as king of God's people. Nevertheless, he would receive a dignified funeral ceremony when the time came.

**Jer 34:6 Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem,**

Jeremiah faithfully transmitted the divine message to Zedekiah.

**Jer 34:7 When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.**

**Jer 34:8 This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them;**

There were two fairly important cities in the south of Canaan which had resisted the Babylonian forces when others fell. The two were Lachish and Azekah. It was apparently while the Babylonians were attempting to captivate those two cities, and before they finally took Jerusalem that the Egyptians came to the support of Israel.

Zedekiah decided it would be wise to release all of the Israeli slaves who were serving their own people. This would increase the defensive pressure which could be mustered. To insure cooperation of the entire nation, Zedekiah caused a covenant to be made with the solemn promise that the slaves would be freed. This was in accord with the directions God had given many long years before this. Every seventh year all bondservants were

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to be released from that service as a part of the sabbath year.

Jer 34:9 That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother.

No Jew was to be a continual servant of another Jew. These freed servants, along with the help of the Egyptians could perhaps ward off the threat of the Babylonian army.

Jer 34:10 Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go.

When the command first came that the bondservants should be released, the condition was extremely perilous. The persons in control of servants were willing to cooperate in order that the Babylonians might be resisted. The ancient order that one Jew should not serve another seemed to be a reasonable step to take. They therefore set the bondservants free.

Jer 34:11 But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

Later, the Babylonians had to divert their attention to the Egyptians who had come to the aid of the Israelites. The freedom of the servants then became less desirable. The pressure was reduced for the moment. The action

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had not been from the heart. It was rapidly reconsidered. They went out after the freed servants and brought them back into subjection. God's will had not been changed. The only thing which had changed was the urgency of the need to hold off the Babylonians. When the Egyptians derailed the attention of the Babylonians, the servants were brought back. God did not appreciate this hypocrisy.

**Jer 34:12 Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,**

**Jer 34:13 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying,**

God sent Jeremiah with a message to the people. The message dealt with the deceit which had been shown by the masters of the bondservants. It was pointed out that when Israel was released from Egyptian bondage God had made a covenant with Israel that any Hebrew who was serving another Hebrew must be given freedom after six years of service.

**Jer 34:14 At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.**

The sabbath year was to be a reminder of God's rest upon the seventh day, after the creation of the universe. It was also to mark a time for release from bondage in Egypt. Over the years this command had been neglected.

Servants were being kept in bondage beyond that seven years period. This had never been pleasing to Jehovah.

**Jer 34:15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name:**

**Jer 34:16 But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.**

Now when it seemed advantageous to have the bondservants side by side with their former masters in fighting off the Babylonians, they had remembered this command. However, as soon as the Egyptians had drawn away the power of the Babylonians, the masters had gone right back to their former disregard for God's command.

**Jer 34:17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.**

Since God's lessons had not been learned very well, there was a need to reemphasize them. The Lord was going to proclaim a similar kind of liberty toward His people as that which they offered to their servants. They were to find themselves in the midst of the same war,

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famine and pestilence which had brought misery upon them before. They were to be taken captive and removed to various parts of the known world.

Jer 34:18 And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

That covenant which had been made between God and His people had been one of great solemnity. Both the Lord and the people had promised to respect it. A calf had been separated into two halves. The people had then passed between those parts to show their agreement. Now that covenant had been treated as if it did not exist. The Lord would respond in an appropriate way.

Jer 34:19 The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf;

Jer 34:20 I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.

The princes of both the northern and southern kingdoms, along with the priests, the eunuchs and the people who had agreed to the freedom of the bondservants would themselves be made bondservants. They were to be abandoned by Jehovah and delivered into the hand of the Babylonians, where many would die by the sword. They would become food for the scavenger beasts and birds. Others would be captivated for a period of seventy years.

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**Jer 34:21 And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.**

Any assistance Israel had received from the hand of God in the past was to be removed. King Zedekiah and all of the lesser lights of Israel would come back upon them. Slavery would envelope both Israel and Judah.

**Jer 34:22 Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.**

The power of the Egyptians was within a short time turned back. When the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, were able to return to the attack of the city of Jerusalem, they proceeded to do so. They did just as the Lord forecast they would do. The city was captured. It was burned and treated unmercifully. The citizens of the city were deported, leaving it relatively deserted.

The student of the Bible is left wondering if humanity will ever come to the realization that God cannot be mocked. He is not a man, that He may be deceived without even knowing what is happening. Those who receive the final reward in heaven will be the ones who have proven they will make every effort to hear Him, love Him and obey Him. The service rendered to Him then will be sincere. The reward will be unending.

## Chapter 35

The difficulties in following any one line of thought in the book of Jeremiah are great. The present writer is convinced that one was right who said that the material appears to have been written on many different occasions, and then combined into one work at a later time. We find ourselves back several years from the date of the previous chapter as we take a look at events of the reign of Jehoiakim.

The purpose of the information presented is to show the need for God's children to be far more responsive to His leading. The descendants of Rechab were more loyal to their earthly ancestor than the children of the Heavenly Father were to Him.

**Jer 35:1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,**

**Jer 35:2 Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.**

Jeremiah was commanded to go to the Rechabites and offer them wine to drink. God knew they would refuse the invitation. Rechab had forbidden them to drink wine. They had proven loyal to the wishes of their ancestor.

When we are told that Jeremiah was to go to the house of the Rechabites, this did not mean that they had a meeting place similar to the houses of others. The house here was the family rather than their living quarters. The house of the Lord was the temple. Thus we have the term "house" used in two different senses within the same verse.

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Jer 35:3 Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites;

Jer 35:4 And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door:

Jeremiah did as the Lord commanded. He took the whole tribe of the Rechabites to the temple and offered them wine. We are told that the Arab tribes who live in that part of the world at the present time do not drink alcoholic beverages. They may have many faults, but this does not seem to be one of them.

The reader may wonder at the command to offer these persons wine to drink when God has given the command that none shall be given to wine, nor drunken with wine. Also we read that Jesus provided wine for His followers at times. This should not be a puzzle to us. The fruit of the vine was called wine whether it was fermented or not.

Jer 35:5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

Jeremiah placed pots of wine where they could be easily accessed, along with cups to dip the wine from the pots. Then he offered them the opportunity to drink as they pleased. It seems likely that Jeremiah knew even at the time he offered the invitation that these people did not think it right to partake.

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**Jer 35:6 But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever:**

The Rechabites quickly let it be known that they would not drink the wine. Jonadab, who was the son of the man from whom they had taken their name, had commanded they abstain from wine forever. For over two hundred years they had respected this command and had abstained from doing so.

**Jer 35:7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.**

There were other things which were forbidden to them. They were not to build permanent houses, but live in tents. They were to refrain from planting vineyards or even sowing seed which would require harvesting later. The purpose seems to have been to avoid becoming dependent upon the luxuries of life and survive on the nourishment which could be obtained from flocks and herds, plus that which they could gather wild as they moved from place to place.

**Jer 35:8 Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;**

**Jer 35:9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:**

**Jer 35:10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.**

They explained that they had carefully obeyed the command of their father and had not built houses nor cities. They did not intend to alter that pattern just because they were among people who did not act according to their way of life.

Would it not be far better for mankind if the refusal to do that which we believed to be wrong would hold even if we find ourselves in the midst of those who defile their bodies and souls with that which they have been clearly taught are sinful thoughts and actions?

**Jer 35:11 But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.**

Why then were these traveling nomads to be found within the walls of the city of Jerusalem? It was because they feared for their lives as they saw the Babylonians coming. They did not wish to be exterminated by this oncoming horde of the Chaldeans and Syrians. They were not there to partake of the wine. They were there to escape destruction.

**Jer 35:12 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,**

**Jer 35:13 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD.**

In view of what Jeremiah had seen of the respect of the Rechabites toward their earthly father, He was told to go

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to those who were of the southern kingdom and resided in the city of Jerusalem and tell them to pay closer heed to what God had commanded them as His children.

Jer 35:14 The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.

Was the difference in behavior due to the fact that the Rechabites had been clearly told what was expected of them while God's people had not had that same advantage? That was certainly not the answer. The Lord had given His people every opportunity to know His will. They had no excuse.

Jer 35:15 I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

Over and over the Lord had sent prophets to inform His children that He found the worship of idols abominable. He had repeatedly sent those messengers, calling upon them to turn away from the false gods. He had promised them that if they maintained their loyalty to Him as the Only True and Living God, He would allow them to live in the land of Canaan without interruption.

The last words of this present verse are pathetic. "But ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto Me."

Jer 35:16 Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:

That which was about to befall His own people was suited to their deliberate disobedience. It had become necessary to take very serious corrective action.

Jer 35:17 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

Parents become very disturbed when their children wander off and fail to listen to their parents voices. This writer recalls one time when a brother found some interesting rocks in a stream and because separated from the rest of the group. Both parents were calling his name and thinking he might have been drowned. It turned out not to be the case. He was safe and had been so interested in his playthings that he did not answer their call. God had called Israel, but they had not answered His call

Jer 35:18 And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you:

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Jeremiah was told to inform the Rechabites that their loyalty to Jonadab their father who was the son of Rechab would result in some pleasant conditions with regard to the well being of their tribe.

**Jer 35:19 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.**

The tribe of the Rechabites would never become extinct. There would be someone from that group who would sustain a favorable relationship with Jehovah forever. There are some who contend that descendants of that group can still be found in that portion of the world at the present time.

## Chapter 36

Jeremiah's prophecies are read to the princes of Judah. The princes take the matter to king Jehoiakim. The king causes the roll to be burned in the fire, piece by piece. God commands that the material be rewritten with even more pronouncements made against the disloyal nation.

**Jer 36:1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,**

Again we have a precise date given to us. The fourth year of king Jehoiakim is thought to have been 604 B.C. Some have doubted the existence of writing at this time in history, but there is abundant proof that writing appeared much prior to this date.

**Jer 36:2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.**

The action taken by Jeremiah and Baruch the scribe were authorized by the Lord. Jeremiah was to obtain a roll upon which a large amount of material could be placed. Two words are used here that may seem contradictory. They are not. We think today of a book being composed of pages, and not a roll. In the situation described in this chapter it was a roll with many columns. The columns are called leaves as the king cast them into the fire.

Jeremiah had prophesied for many years at the time

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this command was given. Without divine assistance he could not have recalled everything he had spoken through those years. He was being offered that help.

Jer 36:3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

God had pronounced severe penalties upon His people as a result of their disregard for His instructions. This did not mean He could not reverse the warnings. If the people would repent of their sins, He was willing to forgive those sins. This brings up an interesting question which the present writer does not completely understand. If God sees from the beginning to the end, why does He not know the actions of every man and woman throughout all of history. The answer no doubt has something to do with the free will of man, and it may be that God deliberately chooses not to see some of these decisions. Whatever the case, we accept the fact as presented. God awaited the decisions of men before such punishments or rewards were carried out. He was ready to forgive if His people were sorry and were ready to do better.

Jer 36:4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

Baruch seems to have been a personal scribe for Jeremiah. Jeremiah called for him and requested that he write the things which God had commanded as the prophet dictated the account to him. The words were to be written on the roll or scroll. The material would have

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been either papyrus or vellum. This roll would have been very lengthy.

**Jer 36:5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD:**

This verse sounds as though Jeremiah had been confined to quarters outside the temple at the time. It may be that he was simply refused permission to go there. At any rate, he called for his scribe Baruch to come into his presence.

**Jer 36:6 Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD'S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.**

After having dictated the material to Baruch, Jeremiah instructed him to take the roll to the temple and read what had been written in order that the people might be well informed and make a proper decision as to how they were going to react.

It was a day which had been proclaimed as a fast day. There is some doubt that this was a day which God had set as a fast day. The Jews sometimes took it upon themselves to appoint such days without a command from God. There would have been a very large number of persons present in the temple area as a result of the importance of the day.

**Jer 36:7 It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return**

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every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.

Since the threatened punishments announced through the prophet were extremely serious, Jeremiah felt that there was still some chance that the people might see the error of their ways and plead for the Lord to forgive them. As it was at the moment, God's anger was at a dangerously high level.

Jer 36:8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house.

Baruch did as Jeremiah asked him. One wonders just what went through the mind of Baruch. Would he be in danger because he had recorded and read the warnings which were contained in the roll? It would have been quite possible.

Jer 36:9 And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

Since the people had indulged in many sins, particularly idolatry, they may have been using the occasion as more of social occasion than one of reflection on spiritual matters. Whichever was true, there were large numbers of them who came from cities throughout the southern kingdom.

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**Jer 36:10 Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house, in the ears of all the people.**

Baruch faithfully read the material from the scroll. He chose a position in a courtyard of the temple near what was known as the "new gate." Many heard the reading and had opportunity to discuss what they had heard. This was what Jeremiah had hoped for. The following sequence of actions was not what he had hoped for.

**Jer 36:11 When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD,**

**Jer 36:12 Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.**

The names of these princes of Judah have little meaning for us today. They would have had much meaning to the citizens of the land at that time. These were dignitaries. They certainly did not have equal power with the king, but when they spoke, others listened. These princes were gathered in the scribe's chamber at the time Michaiah arrived to report what he had heard from Baruch at the gate of the temple.

**Jer 36:13 Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.**

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Jer 36:14 Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

Michaiah summarized the information he had heard from the reading Baruch had done. This resulted in a request for Baruch to come and appear before the princes. The report at least had made an impression upon people of influence. Baruch came and brought the roll with him to the scribe's chamber.

Jer 36:15 And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears.

Jer 36:16 Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

Baruch was then asked to read from the scroll to the princes. When he did so and the princes heard from the contents of the scroll, they became much concerned. We are told that they were afraid. Of what were they afraid? Kings are not known for appreciating others knowing things ahead of themselves, particularly if those things have to do with an unfortunate future for the land over which they rule. Jehoiakim could have taken exception to the fact that these princes knew of dangers which he had not fully realized. They felt that it was advisable to inform the king as soon as they had enough facts.

Jer 36:17 And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

The princes wished to know whether Baruch had heard what he had written first hand, or whether they had been passed from one to another before he heard them.

Jer 36:18 Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.

Baruch assured them that the words had come directly from the mouth of Jeremiah. He then wrote them down on the roll or book. They were a dependable report.

Jer 36:19 Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be.

The princes advised Baruch to get with Jeremiah and hide so securely that no one would know of their location. We now wonder what caused the princes to support the safety of Jeremiah and Baruch. It would appear that they believed the report and did not wish to further anger Jehovah.

Jer 36:20 And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.

When the princes appeared before the king, they left the roll behind in the scribe's chamber. They told the king only that which they recalled from the reading.

Jer 36:21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the

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**king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.**

The king took immediate action. He sent Jehudi, one of the princes, to retrieve the roll from the scribe's chamber and bring it into his presence. Then he caused Jehudi to read from the roll in order that he could hear it personally. This was done in the presence of Jehoiakim and several of his princes.

**Jer 36:22 Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.**

The season was chilly. The ninth month corresponded to a part of our own month of December. The king sat in his winter house with a fire burning before him. He was living in style. He was in no mood for bad news.

**Jer 36:23 And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.**

As soon as Jehudi had read a portion of the roll, the king took a penknife and cut that portion from the rest and cast it into the fire. The verse speaks of leaves, but the word should probably have been translated as columns. These rolls were sewn together to form the roll. Columns of writing appeared side by side and could be cut off at any desired place. Finally the entire roll had been read and cast into the fire, where it was burned up.

**Jer 36:24 Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.**

This is one of those very tragic verses in the Bible. Men of pride have great difficulty in subjecting themselves to the Word of the Lord. Jehoiakim had that problem. His princes followed his example. They did not recognize the wisdom of the command which tells us to “Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.”

**Jer 36:25 Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them.**

Three of the princes dissented from the rest. They requested that the king not burn the roll. Their plea was futile. Jehoiakim was ready to demonstrate that he would do as he pleased. No prophet would tell him what he could or could not do.

**Jer 36:26 But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.**

The king commanded three men to go and find Jeremiah and Baruch. Ordinarily this would have been a fairly easy command to obey. This time it was not. The Lord arranged for the safety of the two. They were not to be found.

There will come a time when Satan and his henchmen

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will attempt to destroy every servant of Jehovah. That attempt will be unsuccessful. Those who have had their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb of God will be in no danger. They will be hidden from the venom of the Serpent.

Jer 36:27 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,

Jer 36:28 Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

It is really quite useless to fight against the will of Jehovah. The Words given through the mouth of Jeremiah were to be preserved. They were to be rewritten with every word from the first roll included in the second. Burning the Word of God does not evade the punishments defined in that Word. If we were to burn every Bible in the world, the Word of God would still be valid.

Jer 36:29 And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

God spoke to Jeremiah and commanded him to give a further message to the king. The king was condemning Jeremiah for stating that the king of Babylon would come and wreak destruction upon the land of Judah. Jehoiakim was mistaken. The king of Babylon would come and do just as had been written on the roll.

Jer 36:30 Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

Jeremiah was to prophesy that the king would have no one to succeed him on the throne of David. Even more, his body would not be given a royal burial. It would be thrown out into the heat of the sun by day and the frost by night. Slaves usually received that type of burial. Jehoiakim had acted without considering the folly of his deeds.

Jer 36:31 And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

Jehoiakim, his seed and his princes would share in the punishment which would come. The burning of the roll would have no effect other than to increase the severity of the misery which should befall them. They had every opportunity to hear and obey. They had disdained that opportunity.

It should be noted that the son of Jehoiakim did take the throne for a period of but three months. The time was so short it was insignificant.

Jer 36:32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of

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**Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.**

If the king thought he would silence Jeremiah by his order to arrest him, he had made a poor decision. All that resulted was a rewriting of the roll with all that was contained in the first writing, plus many other words. It is doubtful that we have those many other words in the present day Bible. After having spent as much time as this commentator has in reading the record of Israel and Judah in the Bible on our desk, we are thankful to God that we have been spared any further horrifying details.

## Chapter 37

Zedekiah has been named king after three months of rule by Coniah or Jehoiakin. He becomes very concerned over the pressure being placed on him from Nebuchadnezzar. It is not his nature to be subservient, but he is finding it necessary. He goes to Jeremiah for word from the Lord. He is given that word and finds it unpleasant to the highest degree.

**Jer 37:1 And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakin, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah.**

**Jer 37:2 But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.**

Nebuchadnezzar was actually in control of Judah at the time. Zedekiah had little choice but to accept the situation, but he did continually have to listen to the Babylonian king. He would have been far better off if he had taken heed to the word of God as spoken by Jeremiah. He had shown little desire to go in that direction. The entire nation was too independent to hear Jehovah

**Jer 37:3 And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.**

Zedekiah who was to a large extent a puppet of Nebuchadnezzar sent men to Jeremiah to ask him to pray for the nation. It is almost amusing, if it were not

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so tragic, that men will defy God repeatedly as long as they feel they have control. However, when they lose that control, they will slip quietly around and ask for His help.

Jer 37:4 Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison.

At the time Zedekiah sent to him Jeremiah was still free to come and go, mingling with the people. Later he would be put into prison. His life swung back and forth like a pendulum depending upon the political climate at the time.

Jer 37:5 Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

The Egyptians recognized the threat of the Babylonians over the entire geographical area. They were not great friends of the Israelites, but they felt the need to assist them against Nebuchadnezzar just as a means of self protection. They decided it was time to move into the fray. When the power of Egypt began to come into the picture, the Babylonians felt the need to leave the siege of Jerusalem and march out to meet the oncoming Egyptians. This relieved the pressure on Zedekiah for a short time.

Jer 37:6 Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah saying,

Jer 37:7 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent

you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

God provided Jeremiah a reply to the messengers of Zedekiah. He was told to inform the king that any relief from Nebuchadnezzar which the Egyptians could provide would be temporary. The Egyptians would return to their own land. We are not informed as to the reason for their change of attitude. We can only assume that they realized the enemy was more powerful than they had at first estimated.

With the retreat of the Egyptians, Zedekiah was face to face again with the army from the east.

Jer 37:8 And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

The message of the Lord to Zedekiah was that the Chaldeans would resume their attack upon Jerusalem. They would succeed in conquering it and would set the city ablaze.

Jer 37:9 Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart.

Zedekiah and his army were badly deceived if they had any idea they could hold out against the powerful Chaldean forces. They may have felt that the enemy had departed for good. That was not true. They would return and renew the siege.

Jer 37:10 For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and

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**there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.**

Jeremiah uses a bit of exaggeration here to emphasize the message he received from Jehovah. If every man in the Chaldean army had been wounded they would still be strong enough to conquer Jerusalem and leave it in ashes.

**Jer 37:11 And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,**

When the Chaldeans had been diverted from their attack upon Jerusalem, Jeremiah took advantage of the occasion to depart from Jerusalem and go to his place of nativity in Anathoth. There are several suggestions as to his motives. One is that there was property which he wished to claim. Another is that it was the better part of valor.

**Jer 37:12 Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.**

By moving to the land of Benjamin Jeremiah may have been doing two things. One would have been the renewal of relationships where he had been raised. The other could have been the need to separate himself from the press of the activities taking place in the heart of Jerusalem.

**Jer 37:13 And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose**

**name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans.**

Those who consistently preach the Word of God can find a great deal of animosity building up among those to whom they point out need for reform. Jeremiah had been true to the Word of the Lord when he predicted that the Chaldeans would be victorious over those in Judah and Jerusalem. This could well have been understood as support on his part for the goals of the Chaldeans. That was not a correct evaluation, but apparently some viewed him as a traitor to his own people.

The gatekeeper of Benjamin, whose name was Irijah arrested Jeremiah and accused him of betraying his own people.

**Jer 37:14 Then said Jeremiah, It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes.**

Jeremiah denied flatly that the accusation was true. It did no good at all. The authorities took him to appear before the princes of the territory. Jeremiah's reputation for predicting bad fortune for Israel and Judah had created considerable hatred, even though he was only doing his duty as a prophet of the Lord.

**Jer 37:15 Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison.**

At least for the moment those who hated him had the upper hand. They beat him and placed him in prison

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in the house of a scribe called Jonathan. The house of that scribe had been turned into a dungeon for guarding prisoners.

Jer 37:16 When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days;

The impression we gather from the context is that a pit had been dug beneath the house of Jonathan. There were cave like rooms dug out from the center and each of the prisoners was assigned to one of the miry cabins or caves. We hear of prisoners being fed bread and water. From the record it seems that Jeremiah did not even have a continuous supply of bread.

Jer 37:17 Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

King Zedekiah knew that Jeremiah was a prophet of God. He felt this would work to his own advantage. He could have secret meetings with the prophet and take advantage of the information he could gain from the meetings. He removed Jeremiah from the dungeon area, took him to the king's house and began to interrogate him. Did the prophet have any word from the Lord. It was difficult for the people who had been blessed so grandly in days past to admit that they had offended God to the point where He would allow the people to be deported and the temple ravaged. Did not the prophet have some bit of good news?

Jer 37:18 Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?

Jeremiah immediately went on the offensive. Would Zedekiah please tell him what he had done to damage the king, the people or the nation? There was no justifiable reason for imprisoning him.

Jer 37:19 Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?

Jeremiah almost sarcastically asked the king how it had come about that the prophets who had prophesied the departure of the Chaldean forces were still free, and he who had prophesied they would come back and renew the attack was kept a captive in the dungeon.

Jer 37:20 Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.

After having given the king such a bold reply it would seem that Jeremiah would have hesitated to press Zedekiah for release from the prison. He did not hesitate for a moment. He felt that his advice had been proven accurate and that the king should release him from the pit before he died there.

Jer 37:21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court

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**of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.**

Surprisingly, Zedekiah was touched by the plea of Jeremiah. He removed him from the dungeon area and allowed him to move out into the courtyard of the prison. This was still not complete freedom, but it was much healthier than the mire in the pit. Jeremiah was also allowed a limited ration of bread as long as the city still had a supply.

## Chapter 38

Jeremiah finds himself in the greatest danger he has yet faced. His predictions as to the fate of the nation have been taken by some as traitorous and demoralizing to the defenders of the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah. There is a steady series of plans to silence him by either death or imprisonment. Others are unwilling to face up to the handwriting on the wall. Jerusalem is in dire straits. She has no hope left. The surrender to the Babylonians is just a matter of time.

**Jer 38:1 Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,**

Certain influential persons have heard the statements of Jeremiah to the effect that the city of Jerusalem is doomed. They are extremely unhappy over what the prophet is saying, even though it is the truth, as pronounced by the Lord.

**Jer 38:2 Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.**

Jeremiah kept saying those who surrendered to the Chaldeans would live while those who fought against them would die in the battle, or by famine and pestilence. Jeremiah did not leave it at a bare statement. He claimed

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that which he was predicting was from the mind of God.

Jer 38:3 Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

According to Jeremiah, the Lord Himself had said the city of Jerusalem would be overcome by Nebuchadnezzar's army and would be controlled by his military might. To the princes of Judah these were words of cowardice. Jerusalem was God's city. Neither the city nor the temple would ever be allowed to be desecrated by those who served other gods, such as Baal.

Jer 38:4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

The princes went to king Zedekiah and demanded that Jeremiah be killed for his statements. It did not matter that these statements were from the mind of God. If they could kill the prophet, the danger would be dissolved and the nation could depend upon God's jealousy for His people, His nation and His temple. They failed to realize that killing the truth is not a victory for falsehood. Their demands for the life of Jeremiah were stronger than the king could oppose.

Jer 38:5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you.

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Zedekiah broke under the pressure. He informed them that he was turning Jeremiah over to them. As ruler of the people Zedekiah did not see any way he could prevent them from the murder they were planning.

**Jer 38:6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.**

These unreasonable men then took Jeremiah and threw him into a dungeon that was in the court of the prison. This was not the same place as that in which he had been confined for several days before this. This time they lowered him with cords until he sunk into the mire. The only water available was the mud which surrounded him.

**Jer 38:7 Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;**

A certain Ethiopian eunuch had heard of what had happened. He decided to go to king Zedekiah and plead for the life of the prophet. The king was sitting at a gate of the city, probably tending to affairs of the land.

A eunuch was not necessarily a castrated man. Sometimes the word only refers to a servant. But this man seems to have been associated with the king's harem. When that was the case, the attendant was usually castrated to prevent any sexual relationships with the kings wives and concubines.



**Jer 38:8 Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king saying,**

Ebedmelech, the eunuch took it upon himself to speak to king Zedekiah. This was a courageous act upon his part. It could have caused him to lose his own life for interfering in high level politics.

**Jer 38:9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.**

He pleaded with Zedekiah that Jeremiah had been done wrong. He contended that this was not just a confinement. It was a death sentence. Jeremiah could not get out of the dungeon and there was no more food left in the city. He would starve to death.

**Jer 38:10 Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.**

The king listened to Ebedmelech. It is extremely likely that his conscience was causing him great agony of soul. Jeremiah had done nothing wrong. He had been treated with the greatest of cruelty, and the king had been too weak willed to defend him. He knew very well that if Jeremiah was left in the dungeon he would be dead in a short time. He gave Ebedmelech permission to take thirty men and remove Jeremiah from the mire of the dungeon.

**Jer 38:11 So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.**

The number of men mentioned being involved in the release has been pointed out as unnecessary for the task at hand. This is not necessarily true. The princes who caused the prophet to be cast into the dungeon would have used violence to prevent his release if they thought there was a possibility of that happening. The thirty men would then be needed.

**Jer 38:12 And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.**

Ebedmelech knew the whereabouts of some cast off clothes and rags of various kinds. He called upon Jeremiah to fasten these materials under his arms so the ropes by which they would lift him up would not injure him. It would require great tension on the ropes to lift the prisoner out of the mire into which he had sunk.

**Jer 38:13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.**

The men succeeded in lifting Jeremiah out of the dungeon or cistern as it is called in some translations. He was the allowed to stay in the courtyard of the prison. This was not complete freedom, but it might prevent a quick death from lack of water and food.



**Jer 38:14 Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me.**

After Jeremiah had been lifted up and had been placed in the courtyard, the king sent for him to come to a private area of the temple where he could speak with him. He declared that even if the news was bad, he wanted the truth told to him. Jeremiah was to hide nothing.

**Jer 38:15 Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?**

Jeremiah tried to extract a solemn promise from king Zedekiah that if he told the truth, the king would not have him killed, and that he would give careful consideration to the advice Jeremiah provided from the Lord.

**Jer 38:16 So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.**

Zedekiah was ready at this point to keep secrets with Jeremiah. If Jeremiah would declare the truth to him concerning what he should do, he would promise not to have him killed, nor would he place the prophet in the hands of those who had already tried to take his life.

**Jer 38:17 Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house:**

According to the word of the Lord, if Zedekiah would surrender to the princes of Babylon, he would not be killed. In addition, such action would prevent the city of Jerusalem from being burned to ashes. But all of this depended upon Zedekiah's willingness to place himself in the hands of the Chaldean king.

**Jer 38:18 But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.**

If Zedekiah was dead set upon resisting to the last, he would find the city taken over by the Chaldeans. They would burn the city and would take Zedekiah prisoner. The results would be most horrible.

**Jer 38:19 And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.**

Zedekiah was torn with indecision. He felt that if he surrendered to the Chaldeans, he would be turned over to the Jews who had already been captivated. They would humiliate him because he had been taken captive just

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as they had. Kings are not known for being willing to graciously accept ridicule and mockery. Zedekiah was fearful for both his life and his prestige.

Jer 38:20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.

Jeremiah assured Zedekiah that this would not take place. If the king would take heed to the voice of God and allow the land to be placed under the rule of the Babylonians, Zedekiah would be allowed to live. His condition would certainly not be pleasing to him, but it would be better than death and the complete ruin of the city of Jerusalem.

Jer 38:21 But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me:

Jer 38:22 And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back.

Jeremiah declared that he would not hide anything. If Zedekiah tried to fight back at the attack of the Chaldeans the consequences would be very, very difficult. The wives and concubines of the king would be taken and would be given to the princes of the king of Babylon. The women who had been taken would mock Zedekiah for his inability to defeat the enemy. He would end up with his feet sunk

in the mire of the dungeon and all support would be melted away.

Jer 38:23 So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.

Any resistance led by Zedekiah against the forces of the Chaldeans would only worsen the situation. Zedekiah would be treated in whatever way the king of the Chaldeans pleased. The city would be left leveled to the ground with smoke rising from the ashes left from the burning.

Jer 38:24 Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.

Zedekiah then apparently took the words of the Lord through the lips of Jeremiah seriously. He was at least partially grateful for the truth. But he did ask that Jeremiah not reveal to anyone the conversation which had taken place between them.

Jer 38:25 But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee:

Zedekiah foresaw that his private meeting with Jeremiah might be discovered by the princes who so much wished for the death of the prophet. If this were

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to happen and they came to Jeremiah wanting to know what passed between the two, Jeremiah was only to tell them a part of the conversation.

**Jer 38:26 Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there.**

Jeremiah was to say that he had requested not to be taken back to the dungeon at Jonathan's house and die there. This would not be a lie. It would only be telling a part of the truth. He would not be asked to tell the "whole truth."

**Jer 38:27 Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived.**

Zedekiah was quite right in his speculation. The princes did come to him asking him the nature of the conversation between the two. The princes did not pursue the matter farther than Zedekiah had suspected they would. They left Jeremiah without further investigation.

**Jer 38:28 So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken.**

After this Jeremiah was allowed to move around in the courtyard of the prison until the city was taken by the Chaldeans. However, do not get the impression that

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all was well. There was still starvation, violence and disease. There were still lessons which had to be learned by the people of God. It would require seventy years for those lessons to teach the Israelites the foolishness of worshiping idols.

Chapter 39

One prophet after another had predicted the fall of the city of Jerusalem. God had given every opportunity to His people that they might consider the sins which they had plunged into and leave them behind. The period of mercy had now been brought to it's end. The city is brought to it's knees. The Chaldeans enter and God's wrath is vented upon His unfaithful children.

Jer 39:1 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

For eighteen months the Chaldeans had besieged the city under the command of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Conditions inside the city walls had grown impossible to deal with. There was starvation. There was disease. There was confusion. This could go on no longer.

Jer 39:2 And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up.

Zedekiah had been a weak ruler. It is surprising that he managed to maintain any degree of control. He had attempted to play one side against the other as the Egyptians lay on the west and the Chaldeans to the east and north. The battering rams and other equipment possessed by the attackers finally did their job and the citizens of Jerusalem were at the complete mercy of the invaders.

Jer 39:3 And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even

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**Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.**

The gates of walled cities were the targets of those who wished to keep control. The princes of the Babylonians managed to take the main gate of the city. The only choice of the king and the citizens of Jerusalem was to find a way of escape.

**Jer 39:4 And it came to pass, that when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.**

Zedekiah had been warned of what was now happening. He knew his own life and that of his army was about to be snuffed out if he did not find a path to the outside. He waited until the darkness of night to make his attempt to leave when he could not be seen. He did manage to get out without being captured and fled toward the plain of the city of Jericho.

**Jer 39:5 But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.**

The Chaldeans discovered what had happened and began pursuit. They caught up with Zedekiah and captured him. He was then taken to face Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, as might be expected, passed sentence upon him.

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Jer 39:6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

When this present writer was a boy of twelve or fourteen year of age, he came across a number of magazines which bore the title "Terror" and "Horror" upon the front cover. The experience of reading the book of Jeremiah is worse than the stories which were found in those books. Zedekiah was forced to witness the slaying of his sons. The nobles or princes who had been so determined to bring an end to the prophecies of the Lord as given by Jeremiah were now killed.

Jer 39:7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

Zedekiah was taken into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar in chains and after being brought face to face with the Babylonians ruler had his eyes put out. We understand that the word used to describe the removal of his eyes could have been translated as "gouged out."

Jer 39:8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

The palace of the king of Judah was burned. The houses of the citizens of the city of Jerusalem were also burned. The walls of the city were demolished. Jerusalem was helpless before the foe.

Jer 39:9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city,

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**and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.**

The people who still remained in the city were taken to Babylon along with those who had already seen the handwriting on the wall and deserted to the attackers.

**Jer 39:10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.**

The captain of the Chaldeans left the poorest of the people in the city and turned over the vineyards and fields to them. This does not necessarily mean they were able to realize any sizable benefit from this. The fruit of their labors may have been taken from them as soon as they harvested those fields and vineyards.

**Jer 39:11 Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,**

Now we find an interesting twist. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the captain of his guard to take the supervision of Jeremiah and see about his welfare. The reader might well have expected the prophet of Jehovah to have been quickly murdered by a worshiper of Baal. Surprisingly, this was not done.

**Jer 39:12 Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.**

The command was to do the prophet no harm. It went even farther. If Jeremiah made a request, that request

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was to be filled. What was the reason for this favorable treatment? It was a result of Jeremiah's statements that there would be a Chaldean victory. Nebuchadnezzar saw him as an ally, even if he did worship Jehovah rather than Baal.

Jer 39:13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabsaris, and Nergal-sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;

Jer 39:14 Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

Jeremiah was removed from the court of the prison and was placed under the supervision of Gedaliah. He was thus allowed to live amongst the poor who had been left in the city after the rest had been taken into Babylonian captivity.

Jer 39:15 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

We flash back slightly here to the time when Jeremiah was still in the court of the prison. This constant movement back and forth in time is a problem in the understanding of this book. I tend to agree with those who say the book was written in pieces and was united later on. Let us pray that we may trust the facts which are given, in spite of the difficulties in following the order of events.

Jer 39:16 Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts,

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**the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee.**

The Lord had not forgotten the favors which Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian eunuch had granted Jeremiah. Jeremiah was told to tell Ebedmelech that although the horrors which had been predicted for the city of Jerusalem were to come to reality, Ebedmelech would escape the brunt of the punishment.

**Jer 39:17 But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid.**

Ebedmelech might well have concluded that he would be killed either by the princes who had plotted the death of Jeremiah, or by the Babylonians after they vanquished the city. His life would be safe. His respect for what he considered the will of the Lord was be rewarded.

**Jer 39:18 For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.**

I recall the words of a famous poet who said, "God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." The truth of that statement can be seen throughout the book of Jeremiah. This time God promised to protect Ebedmelech as a reward for his support of Jeremiah and his trust in the hand of the Lord. Now we see through a glass darkly. The time will come when we shall understand far better than we do today just why our lives were directed in the pathway which God chose to bless us.

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Chapter 40

We are now interested in the aftermath of the victory of the Chaldeans over the city of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. Utter chaos reigns. As is usual when there is such confusion, there were those who wished to take advantage to fulfil their own greedy ambitions.

Jer 40:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

As a result of the Chaldeans being lenient with Jeremiah because of his predictions of their victory he was released from the chains with which he had been bound. The captain of the guard had taken him along with other prisoners and was ready to take him to to Babylon.

Jer 40:2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

The captain took Jeremiah aside and informed him that he knew of the prediction Jeremiah had made. He realized that the Lord had declared ahead of time that these troubles would be poured out upon the people of Jerusalem and Judah.

Jer 40:3 Now the LORD hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

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He also admitted that the misery had come about because the people had sinned against the Lord. They were suffering as a result of their rebellion.

**Jer 40:4 And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.**

The captain of the guard gave Jeremiah a choice. He was removing the chains and Jeremiah could either go with him to Babylon with the other captives, or he could remain in Judah. He was free to do whichever he chose.

**Jer 40:5 Now while he was not yet gone back, he said, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go.**

Before Jeremiah made his choice, the captain suggested that he go back to Gedaliah, the governor who had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to rule over the poor Jews who had been allowed to stay in the land. He provided Jeremiah with food and a reward for his predictions of victory for the Chaldeans. Jeremiah was then free to follow the captain's advice or go where he pleased.





**Jer 40:6 Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.**

Jeremiah made the decision to go to Gedaliah, the governor and dwell among the poor Jews who had been left in the land.

**Jer 40:7 Now when all the captains of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon;**

Those who had been in authority over the Jewish forces found the Nebuchadnezzar had made Gedaliah the governor and had given him authority over those who had not been carried to Babylon. The situation did not seem quite as severe as at first thought. Perhaps they could come back and survive in the land if this governor was not about to murder every Jew in sight.

**Jer 40:8 Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.**

Gedaliah was supervising the territory from Mizpah. The men who are mentioned above were very fortunate that they were not killed. Now they were appealing to Gedaliah for the opportunity to return to Judah. This

is the sort of thing which can happen to a man with the gentle nature of Gedaliah. Unwittingly, he allowed the men to return.

**Jer 40:9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.**

He even made the promise that if they were willing to serve the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans, all would be well. They would be safe.

**Jer 40:10 As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken.**

Gedaliah intended to be subservient to the Chaldeans. He advised those who would do so to prepare for the coming winter. They had been assigned fields and crops which those who were taken to Babylon had previously owned. The last words of this verse do not apply to the Chaldeans having taken the cities. They apply to the Jews who had been left behind and had received cities which they could use to make a living.

**Jer 40:11 Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan;**

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The Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites had never had peaceful relations with the Jews in Judea. No doubt the Jews who had hidden in those lands were much relieved when they found that things were not as dangerous under the supervision of Gedaliah as they had first expected.

Jer 40:12 Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.

These displaced persons started coming back into Judah to resume their lives. They gathered a sizable amount of food which would last them through the difficult months ahead.

Jer 40:13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,

Those captains of the Jews who had been befriended by Gedaliah discovered that there was great danger ahead for the friendly governor. They did not wish to see him killed.

Jer 40:14 And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

They informed Gedaliah that among those who were returning there was one named Ishmael who was plotting to murder him. A man with the gentle personality of Gedaliah finds it difficult to believe someone such

as Ishmael would plot his death. He discounted their warning.

Jer 40:15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?

Johanan was one of the Jews who had found mercy through Gedaliah. He pleaded with the governor to let him kill Ishmael secretly. No one would be the wiser. There was no reason that Gedaliah should have his life taken and all the Jews who had been allowed to remain in Judah would be scattered far and wide. If Ishmael had his way the Jews who were still in the land would meet death.

Jer 40:16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

Good hearted Gedaliah did not believe Johanan. He told him not to kill Ishmael. He should have known better. His days were numbered. Evil men have no compunction at all in doing anything which will advance their power. Ishmael was an evil man.

Chapter 41

It would have been best if Gedaliah had paid attention to the warning of Johanan that Ishmael was plotting his death. He did not heed the warning. This chapter tells of the slaughter which came about as a result of ignoring the evil mind of Ishmael.

Jer 41:1 Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

Bible students disagree on the amount of time which had passed since Gedaliah had been appointed by the Chaldeans as governor of Judah. Some contend that it was no more than two or three months. Others believe it to have been as much as five years. The evidence is not conclusive.

It is highly suspicious that Ishmael was the originator of this fellowship meal. He had plans for the removal of Gedaliah and this could well have been but one step in the plan. The eating of a meal together was supposed to be a sign of friendship. This one was just the opposite. Ishmael knew this but Gedaliah did not. Ishmael had managed to gain the support of ten of the king's princes and they were at the table with Gedaliah and Ishmael.

Jer 41:2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan

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**with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.**

During the meal Ishmael and his cohorts murdered Gedaliah at swordpoint. This left the leadership of the land in the hand of anyone who was crafty and powerful enough to take it.

**Jer 41:3 Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.**

Not only did Ishmael and his partners in crime kill Gedaliah. They killed the Jews who were close enough to the situation to know what had happened. Some of these Jews who were killed were military guards who were expected to protect the governor.

**Jer 41:4 And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it,**

Ishmael managed to keep the murder of Gedaliah secret for two days. What was to be his next step in the conspiracy?

**Jer 41:5 That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the LORD.**

Gedaliah found that eighty men were headed for Jerusalem to mourn the destruction of the city. They had

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shaved their beards and torn their clothing as a sign of their grief. They had offerings and incense which they intended to use when they arrived at the ruins of the temple.

Jer 41:6 And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

Ishmael went out from Mizpah where he had already committed such horrifying acts. He pretended to be as grief stricken as they were. He wept as he met them. He invited them to go with him to the governor Gedaliah. They had no idea that Gedaliah had been slain.

Jer 41:7 And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.

Ishmael and his cohorts then killed all but ten of the eighty mourners and threw their bodies into a pit or cistern. He had no conscience at all when it came to accomplishing his plans for power and possessions. The only half reasonable motive for killing these mourners was perhaps to strike fear into the hearts of the Jews who had been left in the land by the Chaldeans.

Jer 41:8 But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

Ten of the eighty mourners begged Ishmael not to kill them. They claimed that they knew the whereabouts of valuable crops which they could reveal to him. This time the liar was deceived. He left them alive in the expectation that he would come into possession of the treasures.

Jer 41:9 Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with them that were slain.

The pit where the bodies of the seventy mourners who were killed was large enough to hold all of the bodies. It had been created when Asa of Judah had feared Baasha of Israel would cut off water supplies to the city of Mizpah.

Jer 41:10 Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

Ishmael then took a number of captives from the city of Mizpah. They included even the daughters of the king. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the military forces in the area had assigned these persons to the supervision of Gedaliah and now that Gedaliah was dead, Ishmael assumed control. He took a sizable number of these

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captives and headed toward the land of Ammon. If he had managed to reach that land, he might well have been rewarded handsomely by the king of the Ammonites.

**Jer 41:11 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,**

Meanwhile Johanan, the one who had warned Gedaliah that Ishmael was plotting his murder, heard of the horrors which Ishmael was bringing upon the area of Mizpah. Johanan wasted no time in gathering a company of men to cut Ishmael and his men off before they reached Ammon.

**Jer 41:12 Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon.**

Johanan and his men pursued Ishmael and his captives and caught up with them in Gibeon. The great waters were not a sea. They were in all probability just a large lake.

**Jer 41:13 Now it came to pass, that when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad.**

Those who were with Ishmael were not in sympathy with him. They had been captivated and forced to accompany him as he fled to Ammon. When they saw Johanan and the military who were with him, they were

pleased and no doubt let it be known that they were about to join Johanan's forces.

**Jer 41:14 So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.**

Ishmael's men had no way of resisting those who were with Johanan. The captives found it relatively easy to separate themselves from the clutches of the wicked Ishmael. They joined those who were with Johanan.

**Jer 41:15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.**

Sadly, Ishmael and eight of his men evaded the forces of Johanan and managed to reach the land of Ammon. If the captives had been taken with them, they would have most certainly been enslaved in that land. But at this time there was a serious problem still remaining. What would happen when the Chaldeans found Gedaliah, the governor whom they had appointed had been murdered.

**Jer 41:16 Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:**

**Jer 41:17 And they departed, and dwelt in the**  
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habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

Johanah and his military, as well as the captives, decided they dared not return to Mizpah. They concluded that the best solution to their situation was to head for the land of Egypt. Egypt had shown some sympathy for the position of the Jews in the past. It was true that they had been forced to return home when defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, but it might be that the Chaldeans would find it too risky to travel all the way to Egypt to punish the innocent fugitives.

Jer 41:18 Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

Let us conclude our discussion of this present chapter by making a comparison between the character of Gedaliah and that of Ishmael. Gedaliah was the appointee of Nebuchadnezzar to maintain order in Judah after the conquest of his Chaldean forces over the Jews. Repeatedly he had demonstrated his concern for the welfare of those under his supervision. He even went so far as to invite Ishmael to eat with him. He could not believe Ishmael would be so evil that he would use the occasion as an opportunity to take his own life.

Ishmael may have been one of the most traitorous individuals mentioned in all the pages of the Bible. He was envious of the office to which Gedaliah had been appointed. He would do anything and everything within his power to eliminate his rival. We have no certain evidence of the earthly end of Ishmael. We do have very

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convincing evidence that those of his class will stand trembling before the judgment seat of the Lord when the graves are opened at the END.

## Chapter 42

In this chapter the group who had sided with Johanan in the defeat of Ishmael have become quite concerned over their own safety. They expect that Nebuchadnezzar will send sizable forces to punish the uprising. Jeremiah is asked to inquire as to what should be done. The answer to the prayer is not satisfactory to the group and they decided to ignore it and flee to Egypt.

**Jer 42:1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,**

There was great concern among the entire group who had given their support to Johanan in dealing with Ishmael. They had decided they needed to commune with Jehovah through the prophet Jeremiah. Here is proof that Jeremiah was a part of the group.

**Jer 42:2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)**

They asked Jeremiah to hear their request for advice from the mind of God. The prophet had proven his ability to communicate with the Lord in the past. There were not many of these survivors of the past disturbances left, but they were fearful that all of them might be snuffed out. Their request was that Jeremiah pray for this remnant that they might know what should be done.

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Jer 42:3 That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

The privilege of prayer is a precious blessing. It should be used by the faithful whenever man cannot deal by himself with the difficulties of life. It should also be used when things are going well. The group promises that they will listen to the Word of the Lord and walk in the way He points out.

Jer 42:4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

Jeremiah gives them a “Yes” answer. He will pray to the Lord and present their request for advice. Still, he is a bit anxious over their sincerity. He explains that when God gives his reply that Jeremiah will have no hesitation in giving that reply to them. It will not matter whether it is in accord with their own reasoning or not. He will declare it without modification.

Jer 42:5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.

The group then advised Jeremiah that with God as their witness, they would do exactly what God commanded. In doing this, they had placed themselves in a precarious position. If they did not keep their word,



they could expect curses instead of blessings from the hand of God.

Jer 42:6 Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

How could they have made it any plainer that they were eager to obey whatever God pointed out as His will. Jeremiah had every reason to believe they were sincere. He did as they asked him and prayed for divine guidance.

Jer 42:7 And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

It was a period of ten days before Jeremiah received an answer from God. We are not told the reason for this delay. It may be that God wished for them to have sufficient time to think over the importance of doing His will once it was made known to them. God sometimes answers prayer very quickly. At other times, such as this, He waits until He knows the time is right.

Jer 42:8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,

Jer 42:9 And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;

When Jeremiah had received God's reply to the prayer, He called all of the group together. This included

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the leaders and those who followed them. Joshua then made it clear that it was God's message that he was about to present to them. It was the result of the prayer they had asked him to offer.

**Jer 42:10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.**

It was the will of Jehovah that they remain in the land of Judea. If they would do that, He would support them. He would see that they were not uprooted. The Bible student should be careful about the meaning of the word "repent" when God declares that He repents. This does not mean He has sinned. God does not sin. What it does mean is that He is ready to change His attitude toward His people. If they will submit to His directions they will not be harmed, though they remain in Judea.

**Jer 42:11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.**

God knew they were asking because of fear that Nebuchadnezzar would harm them as a result of their actions toward Ishmael. He wanted them to know there was no reason to fear the king of Babylon. He would see that no injury would come to them from that king.

**Jer 42:12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.**



They could expect that they would be taken into Chaldea, but that should not prevent them from staying in the land until such captivity came. Even if they were removed from their own land, God would see that the people had a chance to return to that land. The reader will recall that after an extended stay in the regions of Babylon, God's people were allowed to return.

**Jer 42:13 But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,**

Now we come to that which the people did not wish to hear. They had already been making preparations to leave the land. In spite of what they had promised both Jeremiah and Jehovah, they flatly refused to stay in the land of Judea. They had placed their own human reasoning power against that of God. God's directions had taken second place.

**Jer 42:14 Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:**

The feeling of the people was that in Egypt they would be secure from the sights and sounds of war. In Egypt they felt they would find a sufficiency of food. In effect, they had charged God with either ignorance or neglect for their safety. They had suffered through war, famine and disease before this. In Egypt that would no longer be their lot! How wrong!!

**Jer 42:15 And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the**

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LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

Jer 42:16 Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

Is Jeremiah speaking here, or is it the Lord? It is best to see this as Jeremiah's declaration of God's directions. They might think that war, famine and disease would no longer threaten them in that land. On the contrary, if they were determined to go to Egypt, they would find all three of these horrors would follow them there. They would suffer there. They would die there. The way they had chosen would be deadly.

Jer 42:17 So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

Precisely the same problems which had faced the people in the past sufferings in Judea would face those who defied the directions given by the Lord and made their way to Egypt. They would all die from the punishment which would be visited upon them.

I would like to add a personal reflection with respect to the manner in which God teaches men. Many of the events of the Bible are parallel to present day situations. Palestine was the promised land. Egypt was the promise of escape from the burdens men bear when they place themselves in opposition to God's will. Nebuchadnezzar

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and the Chaldeans represent the pressures God's people feel from those who try to find spiritual satisfaction in the pleasures of this world.

There are many times in the lives of God's servants when they are tempted to run to Egypt to escape the disasters which are found on every side when traveling the Way of the Lord. That is not the answer. The answer is found in bearing up under the load and living righteously in the Kingdom of God while enduring and watching others endure the suffering which is brought on by Satan and the idolatrous lives in which the majority of mankind revel. Be patient. Be faithful. God will care for you and lead you to life eternal in His presence. You do not have to join the world. You do not have to run off to Egypt.

**Jer 42:18 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.**

These survivors of the Chaldean attack upon Jerusalem had seen just how serious the anger of the Lord could be. Four words are used to describe the end of the way which Johanan and his followers were about to seek out. Those four words are: execration, astonishment, curse and reproach. We might add a fourth word, DEATH. They would never see Judea again.

**Jer 42:19 The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.**

Many had been taken to Babylon. Others had been killed in their own land. Now this group had decided to turn to Egypt for help. That would be disastrous.

**Jer 42:20 For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.**

To dissemble was to say one thing and believe another. These people had asked for God's truth and had received it. They had sworn by the Lord Himself that they would do all that He directed them to do, with no exceptions.

**Jer 42:21 And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.**

The Lord had replied to their request. They had refused to follow His Way. Jeremiah was horrified by their rejection of the answer to their prayer. They could now expect the wrath of God to fall upon them. Lying to the Lord is about as foolish as men can get.

**Jer 42:22 Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.**

Jeremiah knew very well that nothing he could say would change minds of those who had asked him to pray for them. They had already decided what they were going to do before the prayer was uttered. All they really wanted

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was for God to agree with them. The same conditions they were trying to avoid in Judea would come upon them in Egypt. They would die by war, famine and pestilence.

It is not always easy to follow God's will. Even Jesus our Lord experienced this truth. But, the end of the other path is fire and brimstone. If the reader finds that I have called attention more times than necessary to the truth found in Jeremiah 10:23, let him or her bear with me once more.

Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Chapter 43

Here we have a drastic change in the attitude of Johanan and Azariah toward Jeremiah. Both of them had apparently felt that God would approve of a move into Egypt to avoid the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar at the death of Gedaliah whom he had appointed to govern Judea. Now that God has informed them through Jeremiah that He does not approve, they turn on Jeremiah whereas before this they had worked with him.

Jer 43:1 And it came to pass, that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, even all these words,

All of the people listened while Jeremiah was presenting the message he had received from Jehovah. He had not failed to declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He no doubt realized that the reaction would be negative.

Jer 43:2 Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshai, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:

Azariah was the first to speak, along with Johanan. They had been the two primary movers in gathering the group together and making preparations for going to Egypt. They accused Jeremiah of lying, and that he was not giving them the Word of the Lord. Surely God had

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not told them they could not leave Judea and go to Egypt to protect themselves!

**Jer 43:3 But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.**

They accused Jeremiah of being so weak that he would allow his helper Baruch to influence his report. What was happening, they claimed was that Baruch wished to keep them in Judea so that they could be carried away into Babylon and enslaved. These men with others in the group were called “proud men” in the verse just previous to this one.

**Jer 43:4 So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah.**

Proud men do not bow easily to the will of others. In trying to avoid enslavement in Chaldea, they made the mistake of failing to take heed to the voice of Jehovah. They had chosen the worst of two unpleasant scenes. They refused to remain in Judea, even though God had promised to oversee them.

**Jer 43:5 But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;**

Some of those who had left the land of Judah to get away from the power of Nebuchadnezzar had returned

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from those places where they had gone. All of these joined with the leaders such as Johanan and Azariah, planning to move out and head for Egypt. This would have left the land of Judah without any of the Jews whom God had led to that land and blessed after they settled there.

Jer 43:6 Even men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah.

Everyone whom the Babylonian captain had left under the oversight of Gedaliah was ready to head for Egypt. This included men, women and children. Even Jeremiah and Baruch were among the travelers. We conclude that Jeremiah and Baruch were not pleased with the move, but had little choice but to accompany the rest.

Jer 43:7 So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they even to Tahpanhes.

They made their way in the opposite direction from that followed by the Israelites when they left the bondage of Egypt for Palestine. They should have realized they were acting directly contrary to God's will. To put it mildly, they were asking for trouble.

Tahpanhes was located in the delta of the Nile. Perhaps they felt safe after having traveled that long route from Judea to a metropolis in a place far distant from Babylon. If so they were in for a great surprise.

Jer 43:8 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,

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**Jer 43:9 Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah;**

God allowed them to make the journey. Then, after they had arrived in Egypt, He spoke to Jeremiah with a new message. The prophet was to hide some large stones in the clay of the brickkiln at the very entrance of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes. He was to do this in the sight of those who had come from Judea. We are not told the details of the position of the stones, but are told that they were hidden.

**Jer 43:10 And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.**

Jeremiah was then to tell the people that He was going to send Nebuchadnezzar, as His servant, to Tahpanhes. When the Babylonian came he would use those stones which Jeremiah had hidden as a foundation for his own throne. He would govern the land of Egypt from that location.

**Jer 43:11 And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword.**

Nebuchadnezzar would come! And he would conquer the land of Egypt. He would then see to it that those who

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thought they had escaped sword, famine and pestilence to meet those perils head on.

Jer 43:12 And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace.

Jeremiah related God's message boldly. He feared God far more than he did Johanan and Azariah. God was going to burn down the temples or houses of the false gods of Egypt. The people would be captivated. Nebuchadnezzar would find it as simple to conquer the land as it was for a shepherd to wrap his coat around him.

Jer 43:13 He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

Egypt prided itself on the grandeur of its idols. Some were elegantly carved from precious wood. Others were composed of solid gold. Those gods would be treated for just what they were. The work of men's hands. The temples would be burned and the gods would be burned or carried off.

At this time those who felt that they had evaded captivity in Chaldea would find that they faced the same dangers from the same source. We can only wonder what God would have done for them if they had chosen to stay in Judea. He had promised they would not see harm. He would have kept His promise.

Chapter 44

We can see from this chapter that the Word of God as given through Jeremiah, with respect to the danger of fleeing to Egypt was exactly right. Over a period of time they joined the Egyptians in the worship of the host of heaven. Jeremiah reminded them that this was just what God knew would happen if they went there. The penalties for their rebellion are spelled out for the world to see down through the centuries. How great it would be if today's generation would learn from their wicked example, but it seems that it cannot or will not.

Jer 44:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,

Although we do not know just how long it was after the Jews arrived in Egypt after their flight from Judea, it seems likely that it was a few years. Enough time had elapsed that they were scattered over the entire land of Egypt. The cities mentioned in this verse are spread over the land.

Jer 44:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein,

Jeremiah received word from Jehovah about the divine displeasure resulting from the Jews failure to remember

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His statutes. They had seen what terrible things had happened in Judea. The land was laid in ruins and the Jews were gone. They had thrown away the blessings of that land flowing with milk and honey.

**Jer 44:3 Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers.**

The cause of their dispersion into Babylon and Egypt was their failure to recognize Jehovah as the only True and Living God. They had provoked Him to jealousy through their worship of supposed gods who had never done anything for them. They had taken up with impotent gods and spurned the True God.

**Jer 44:4 Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.**

In spite of the fact that the Lord had warned them earnestly and repeatedly about His hatred for this damnable practice, they had clung to it. How could they now reach out to the false gods of the Egyptians when they had such a number of warnings to avoid just what they were now doing?

**Jer 44:5 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.**

Incense was costly. It was also pleasant to the Lord. At this time the Jews had determined to burn incense to

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the imaginary gods and goddesses of the sky. The practice was both useless and cursed.

Jer 44:6 Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day.

Surely at least some of them could remember what had taken place in Jerusalem and the cities of Judea. Jerusalem had been laid flat to the ground and its houses burned. The land was left with practically no inhabitants.

Jer 44:7 Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;

They had seen the attitude of the Lord toward their idolatry in their home land. They should have known that the same thinking and actions would produce similar misery wherever they were at the time. They had seen men, women and children driven from that land and scattered over many nations.

Jer 44:8 In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

They had thought to leave the unpleasantness behind them when they fled to Egypt. That was extremely foolish

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thinking. The only thing they had accomplished was to provide an example for all time throughout the nations of the entire earth to avoid a repetition of their sinful treatment of the God who had loved and blessed them in the past.

**Jer 44:9 Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?**

God asks them how they could have forgotten what they did in Judah, and what came as a result of those sins. Both men and women had been involved in those past sins. Now they had done the same hateful things in Egypt that they had done in Judah. They might well expect a similar punishment this time.

**Jer 44:10 They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers.**

Instead of being responsive to God's pleadings of the past, they had failed to hear His Word and walk in righteousness. The law as given on Mount Sinai was being ignored as if it did not even exist. A covenant requires the agreement of all parties. God had kept His side of the covenant. His people had not kept their part.

**Jer 44:11 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.**

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Since His people had turned their back on Him, He would find it necessary to turn many blessings from them. He would work against their wicked ways. Again we have reason to take these scenes into our own hearts and determine that we will not repeat the folly of those who in that day aligned themselves opposite the will of their Creator.

Jer 44:12 And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, and fall in the land of Egypt; they shall even be consumed by the sword and by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.

The people had fled from Judea to Egypt because they feared the sword and the famine. He had promised that He would see no harm done to them from the king of Babylon. They had not trusted His Word. Now they would die from those same factors from which they had fled. They would become an example of disobedience to nations of the world from that time on.

Jer 44:13 For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:

Only two of the three items mentioned in this verse had been listed in the immediately previous verses. Now all three; the sword, the famine and the pestilence are listed. God rules in Egypt just as He did in Judea. He is everywhere, and always.

Jer 44:14 So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

Nearly every one of those who had run from Judea to Egypt would die and never return to their homeland. The only ones who would get back were a very few who managed to escape. Why were these few allowed to escape? They could easily have been destroyed along with the rest. One possible answer is that they were to carry the awful truth to those of other parts of the world to warn them of such tragedy.

Jer 44:15 Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah's words from the Lord struck the consciences of the sinning and deceitful Jews. They knew they were guilty of unbelievable wickedness. Yet they refused to admit just how mistaken they had been. Is this not a familiar pattern of thought and action which can be seen in multitudes of persons from then until the time I write these present words? Men place their own desires above the wisdom of God. When they suffer the consequences of their sins, they deny doing anything wrong, or else laugh in the face of the Almighty.

Those to whom Jeremiah had addressed the words had assembled to worship their false gods and goddesses. It was apparently an occasion of great importance to those idolators.

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**Jer 44:16 As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.**

This is not courage. This is foolishness. One does not spit in the face of the God of heaven and earth. Jeremiah had truly spoken to them in the name of Jehovah. They even recognized that fact. They gritted their teeth and promised to continue just as they had been. Let us see in the next verses just how they set out to justify their rebellion.

**Jer 44:17 But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.**

The words of their own mouths took precedence over the Word of God's prophet. They would continue to do just as they had been doing. The "queen of heaven" was the moon. She was worshiped under the name Ashtoreth. They burned sweet smelling incense in honor of what they thought was a goddess. They also poured out various liquids as offerings to her.

The people tried to justify themselves by claiming that while they were back in Judea they had learned that when they worshiped the false gods, they had a multitude of blessings. All went well with respect to war, famine and pestilence.

**Jer 44:18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings**

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unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

They also claimed that when they ceased to offer these honors and sacrifices to the false goddess, they had suffered from both war and famine. It is a bit difficult to identify the good times and bad times which were mentioned. The good times may have been extended to them through the longsuffering of the Lord, even though they had defied Him.

Jer 44:19 And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?

It seems that the women were right in the midst of this controversy. In their reply they also added that they had made cakes and poured out their drink offerings with the full consent of their husbands. Supposedly, if the husbands encouraged the actions of their wives, the wives were exempt from any sins. That is just not true. If a woman knows her husband wants her to do that which Jehovah has said not to do, she is just as guilty as if the husband had not spoken a word.

Jer 44:20 Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying,

Jer 44:21 The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind?

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Jeremiah was not intimidated in the least. It is probable that he had let all of the people know when they required him to go with them to Egypt that he was not a party to their rebellion against the Lord. Now he spoke just as bluntly as he had done from the beginning. They were guilty of wicked behavior. They were about to reap the harvest. God had not been ignorant of their sins in Judea. He had only put up with them in order that there would be no excuse when they faced the results.

**Jer 44:22 So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.**

The people had gone so far into sin that God could no longer tolerate their folly. It was because of their abominable conduct that the land of Palestine had been left desolate and cursed. It was not because they had ceased to burn incense and offer drink offerings to the host of heaven. They had the situation evaluated in complete reverse to the real difficulty.

**Jer 44:23 Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.**

The Lord did not give His instructions to the people in order that they could obey or disobey as they chose. He would really not have loved them if He had allowed them to spurn His guidance and walk straight to eternal destruction.

**Jer 44:24 Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt:**

Interestingly, Jeremiah told the people, and it seems that he particularly directed his words to the women who had made cakes to offer the goddess of fertility, that their excuses were just that, excuses! It was time to hear and obey. Or perhaps it had even reached the point that a change was not to be expected.

**Jer 44:25 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.**

The words and the deeds of the people were in agreement. They had vowed with their mouths that they would worship the queen of heaven. They had indicated that they were completely ready to back up their words. There was no indication of repentance whatsoever.

**Jer 44:26 Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth.**

Since the people had declared their independence from the commandments of the Lord, He replied that He

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would no longer respond to any call that they might make upon Him. Any statement that they made concerning the existence of ONE GOD would be considered deceit and not conviction.

Jer 44:27 Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

By their impudence they had placed themselves in opposition to God. He would abide by their decision and fight against them. That would result in wiping the vast majority of them off the face of the earth. Sword and famine would sweep across them until they were very nearly extinguished.

Jer 44:28 Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.

There would be a tiny fraction of the Jews in Egypt who would escape the destruction and find their way back to Judea. By the time God was through with His disobedient people who had fled Judea they would be enabled to see clearly who was right. It would be crystal clear that Jehovah knows best.

Jer 44:29 And this shall be a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:

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One particular sign would be quite convincing. They would suffer even more punishment than had already been poured out upon them.

**Jer 44:30 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.**

They should have learned the power of God by observing what had happened to Zedekiah when he fought against the divine will. Now they would receive a repeat lesson. The ruler of the Chaldeans would bring an army into Egypt and the Pharaoh of Egypt would be delivered into the hands of those who wished to kill him. The historian Josephus reported that this prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

## Chapter 45

The farther one moves through the book of Jeremiah, the more evident it becomes that placing material in time sequence was not first place in importance. Most bible students are agreed that the information presented here fits better between the eighth and ninth verses of the thirty-sixth chapter.

It is a message from the Lord to Baruch as given to him through Jeremiah. Baruch was severely depressed. It is not unlikely that he was even feeling horror of the prophecies more than the present commentator. Anyone who can seriously devote the number of hours Baruch must have given to writing out by hand these tragic words must brace himself first. They leave one in despair over the future of mankind in general.

**Jer 45:1 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,**

The fourth year of Jehoiakim would have been approximately 604 B.C. We can only begin to imagine the gloom of such a conscientious servant of God as Jeremiah, who had penned so many words of a pessimistic nature concerning his land and his brethren.

**Jer 45:2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch:**

Previous prophecies had been addressed to the nation of Judah in general. Now the object of discussion is Baruch himself. What is to happen to him during all of the

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suffering which he had been writing down as they came from God through the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet.

Jer 45:3 Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.

The Lord was aware of the mindset of the scribe. If not saying it aloud, he was thinking about both the plight of the Jewish nation and of his own future. All looked as black as midnight. Most of us have had sleepless nights. Baruch was lying awake at night thinking about the terrible predictions which he had been writing. He must have been concerned over his own safety and his own plans as they were connected with the oncoming sorrows.

Jer 45:4 Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.

Jeremiah was instructed to put things in focus for Baruch. God had planted His nation in the land of Palestine. He had built it up over a period of many years. But, it was now time to uproot that which He had planted and break down that which He had built. Israel had already been removed from the fold. Now Judah was about to follow in the like path.

It was not that God enjoyed what He was having to do to His unfaithful nation. Justice called for just what was ahead. Righteousness cannot be discarded in order to allow men to plunge themselves into the depths of idolatry and immorality. Mercy has a sad ending when it is strained beyond the breaking point.

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**Jer 45:5 And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.**

But could Baruch have any hope for personal achievement in the days ahead? It is implied that he will suffer much grief and sorrow along with others. The griefs which touch our friends also penetrate deep into our own hearts. Baruch must not give up. He had been an important part of God's dealings with His people. He had done much more than he might have realized as he wrote the record of Jeremiah's prophecies. Those who are serious about pleasing the Lord in every age since his will find that which he wrote to be rich food for the soul. He had character flaws. So do we. We can conquer our spiritual foes, both within and without by taking note of his dedication to the Word of the Lord.

## Chapter 46

This chapter marks the beginning of predictions against the different nations surrounding Palestine. We come first to the land of Egypt. Judea and Palestine in general were located between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea. Egyptian civilization had built up along the Nile river to the west of Palestine. The Chaldean culture settled along banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. Egypt and Chaldea were the two great powers and vied for prominence in the entire area. The Jews had switched back and forth from alliances with one of these powers and then the other. As this chapter opens they had leaned in the direction of Egypt. The Pharaoh of Egypt saw this as an opportunity to swing the balance of power in the direction of his nation. He set out to attack the Chaldeans. The results were disastrous for Egypt.

**Jer 46:1 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles;**

The Jews were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Gentiles were not from Jacob. Without the help of the Lord there is no way the Jews could have survived the constant efforts of Egypt, Babylon and other nearby nations to dominate them. It was only through the providential aid of God that they had not been permanently captivated and dissolved into the masses of the Gentile nations.

**Jer 46:2 Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.**

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This verse can throw the reader off balance if he is not wide awake. Egypt was located a great distance (perhaps as much as 500 miles from Carchemish which lay to the north of Palestine. The Egyptian army had moved to the very edge of the Chaldean territory. They were enthusiastic and confident that they would win the upcoming conflict with their long time enemy.

Jer 46:3 Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle.

These are the sounds of preparation for the battle. Bucklers and shields were protective armor which was worn to ward off the arrows and spears which were going to be hurled in their direction.

Jer 46:4 Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines.

We can almost see the horses and their riders, with the horses prancing and the riders shouting to raise their emotions to a high pitch. The helmets were protection for the head. The spears were of course offensive weapons. The brigandines were vests with overlapping scales. The confidence of the Egyptians was at a peak.

Jer 46:5 Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the LORD.

Suddenly the picture changes abruptly. Those same warriors are scattered and in complete disarray. Their leaders are cowering in fear and all are fleeing for their

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lives. How can this drastic change be explained? Were the Chaldeans so vastly superior that the battle was won almost before it began? Could it not just be that the Lord had injected fear into the hearts of the vaunted Egyptian military might?

**Jer 46:6 Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.**

The call came for those who were pursuing not to allow the Egyptians to get away. They were to stumble and fall in their efforts to move back from the Euphrates river.

**Jer 46:7 Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers?**

The confident Egyptians had moved forward like flood-waters ready to sweep everything before them as they went. Who would dream that they would be intimidated?

**Jer 46:8 Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.**

As all mighty contestants do, these soldiers were riding on high. In their minds there had been nothing but assurance that any cities which lay in their path would be brought to their knees in short order.

**Jer 46:9 Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow.**

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The call rings forth for the combined forces of Egypt, Ethiopia and Lydia to prepare for the use of the weapons with which they were noted as being skilled. The army of the Egyptians was not only made up of Egyptian natives. They hired mercenary soldiers to march by their side.

Jer 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

Little did this powerful force understand concerning what was going to take place. God was preparing a day of vengeance when those who had oppressed His people over the years would be turned into a sacrifice there at the river Euphrates. The swords would leave gaping wounds from which blood would flow out upon the ground. Both the Egyptians and the Chaldeans would add to the size of that flow, but the Egyptians would suffer by far the greater injuries.

Jer 46:11 Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured.

Gilead was not far away from the battlefield. It was known for it's knowledge of medicine. It would be necessary for the Egyptians to search out these medicines in an attempt to heal themselves. The defeat would be ignominious.

Jer 46:12 The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man

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**hath stumbled against the mighty, and they are fallen both together.**

Other nations that heard of the shameful defeat would have trembled at the thought of meeting the Egyptians in the past. Now the scene was completely changed. Those mighty and famed soldiers were turning against one another in their confusion. Again we repeat that this appears to have been the finger of God influencing the outcome of the conflict.

**Jer 46:13 The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt.**

Jeremiah had prophesied that just such a defeat would be inflicted upon Egypt by the Babylonians. But wait. The verse says the prediction would be that the king of Babylon would come and smite the land of Egypt. It does not stop with the statement that the Babylonians would ward off the Egyptians who were intent on invading Chaldea. The prophecy extends the humiliation to the very land of Egypt.

**Jer 46:14 Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee.**

Throughout the entire land of Egypt the news would be heard that defeat and bloodshed would leave the Egyptian nation staggering in shame. Migdol, Noph and Tahpanhes were scattered throughout Egypt.

**Jer 46:15 Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them.**

How then could it be possible that the powerful Egyptian military would be so completely overwhelmed? It was because the Lord at this particular time was supervising their fall. The Chaldeans could not have accomplished the victory without the arm of the Lord entering into the fray.

**Jer 46:16 He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.**

Jehovah had caused large numbers of the Egyptians to fall upon one another. They were actually fighting against those who were supposed to be fighting by their side. The army had become so fearful that instead of crowing and boasting, they were saying, "Let's go home!" The swords were too sharp.

**Jer 46:17 They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.**

Who was it that cried out that the Egyptian Pharaoh was little more than a windbag? Was it his own soldiers? Or was it the victorious Chaldeans? It could have been either. It could have been both. By the way, mercenary soldiers are not noted for steadfastness in the face of certain defeat. These were very much ready to return to their own nations.

**Jer 46:18 As I live, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among**

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the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.

The one who is speaking now is not the Pharaoh of Egypt. Nor is it Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans. It is the Almighty King of heaven and earth. He stands out in strength and power as Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel can be seen rising above their surroundings.

Jer 46:19 O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.

Egypt was to find herself dominated as a part of the Chaldean empire. She was to be left helpless and the land would become waste and deserted. From having a place as one of the great nations of the world, she would descend to serving others.

Jer 46:20 Egypt is like a very fair heifer, but destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north.

Egypt worshiped cattle gods and goddesses. The statement made in this verse sounds suspiciously as if the fair “heifer” was about to become a milk cow.

Jer 46:21 Also her hired men are in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back, and are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, and the time of their visitation.

Egypt's hired soldiers were like fatted animals ready for the stew. They had run like cowards when they found

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themselves facing Nebuchadnezzar and the arm of the Lord.

**Jer 46:22 The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.**

The bellowing proud voice which had once challenged the mightiest of foes now went slithering out of sight before the army which was invading the valley of the Nile. They would cut her down as an axe man cuts down the trees which loom up in his way.

**Jer 46:23 They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable.**

The forest is far more than the trees lining the Nile river. It represents all that is productive in Egypt; the vegetation, the livestock and the inhabitants of the land. They were to be helpless before the invading horde which seemed more numerous than the plagues of insects which periodically left Egypt so pathetically barren.

**Jer 46:24 The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north.**

The historians report that the women of Egypt were defiled almost at will by the soldiers who came into the land. Note that the verse does not say they came from the east. They came from the north as they moved from Carchemish southward through Palestine and then westward into Egypt.

**Jer 46:25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him:**

God's people had been all too prone to accept the gods of the nations that took them into captivity. While in Egypt they had worshiped the gods of the Egyptians. That nation would now be punished for the part they played in the seduction of Israel from the True God.

**Jer 46:26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD.**

Nebuchadnezzar and his forces would be enabled to kill and subdue the Pharaoh and occupants of Egypt. However, this condition would not last forever. The time would come when Egypt would resume some portion of the prestige it had before its defeat. It would be repopulated.

**Jer 46:27 But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid.**

Since Israel had called upon Egypt for help against the Chaldeans, it was natural that they would be left shaking in fear at the thought of what might be in their own future. Would this mark the absolute end of

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Egypt as a nation? God said no. This would not be so. His people would go into Babylonian captivity, but later they would be allowed to return to Palestine and spend some time at ease and unafraid. This came true with the decree of Cyrus the Mede that allowed them to return to Canaan.

Jer 46:28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

Israel was to remain confident that God would still include the Jews in His plans for the future of mankind. The nations that persecuted them would find themselves powerless or nearly so in time to come. God would punish Israel, but would not bring her to a full end. We who live in the twenty-first century can see how God has used the descendants of Jacob. The Saviour of the world was a Jew. The church was begun with a core of Jewish apostles. Many of the fleshly Jews have become spiritual Jews as they have united themselves with the body of Jesus Christ and serve under Him in His spiritual kingdom.

Chapter 47

As we pointed out before, this cluster of chapters we examine at present all are devoted to the punishment God lays upon those nations which persecuted His people at one time or another. We have already considered Egypt. Now we turn to the land of the Philistines.

Jer 47:1 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza.

We are never allowed to forget that it was the Word of the Lord which he spoke and not Jeremiah's own word. The Philistines held sway over the territory next to the Mediterranean Sea for a very long time. They were a thorn in the side of Israel from the time Israel entered the land of Palestine. In fact, the name Palestine is related to the word Philistine.

We do not know which of three different times the Egyptian Pharaohs smote Gaza that we read of here. Personally I feel that it was at the time the Egyptians were fleeing from the Chaldeans after the battle at Carchemish. However; as we have noted before, time sequence is not always easy to follow in the book of Jeremiah.

Jer 47:2 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

Flood waters often represent troubles on a large basis. The waters rising from the north. Both the retreating

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Egyptians and the pursuing Chaldeans would have moved through the territory of the Philistines after the battle at Carchemish. The unrelenting flood of military men flowing across the land would almost certainly have left the inhabitants howling with both fear and anger.

**Jer 47:3 At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands;**

Parents would have been so frantic that they would not even have hesitated long enough to go back for their children. If they had done so, they were too weak to put up any resistance to the flow of warriors sweeping down from the north.

**Jer 47:4 Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.**

There are always those who deny the possibility of prediction of events which are still future. If we are to believe the truthfulness of the scriptures we must believe this was a prediction of the spoiling of the Philistines before it happened. Tyre and Zidon were cities on the coast of the Mediterranean. They were to be stripped of every supporter.

**Jer 47:5 Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?**

Signs of grief and mourning among the people of that land and that time were the tearing out of the hair and cutting the flesh until it bled. The question is: "Just how long will the sorrow continue that brings on such sadness?"

**Jer 47:6 O thou sword of the LORD, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.**

Although it was human warriors who carried the swords as they passed through the land controlled by the Philistines, it was really the punishment the Philistines deserved for the difficulties they had placed in the way of Israel for many long years.

We can understand the intensity of their question as to how long the terror would go on. They plead with the sword of the Lord to go back into its scabbard and leave them in peace.

**Jer 47:7 How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.**

Their plea cannot be answered as they would like for it to be. God had determined punishment upon those of Ashkelon and such as the Philistines who lived on the plain at the edge of the sea. The sword could not be sheathed until God's charge had been accomplished.

And thus we can place the name of the Philistines beside that of the Egyptians as victims of the sword of the Lord. The next chapters will add to that list.

## Chapter 48

This is the third chapter dealing with the vengeance of God upon the nations surrounding His people who had made life difficult for them. The first two were Egypt and the Philistines. This one is directed against the nation of Moab.

The Ammonites and the Moabites were made up largely of descendants from the incest of Lot with his two daughters. Both of these nations lay side by side on the east side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Moab worshiped the false god Chemosh and sacrificed infants to that imaginary deity.

Critics of the Bible take aim at this portion of the prophecies of Jeremiah, claiming that the similarities between passages here and those in the works of other prophets such as Isaiah indicate duplication. That is not necessarily so. Jehovah could very well have used similar phraseology in presenting His predictions through more than one of the inspired prophets.

The study of this chapter is somewhat laborious because of the number of names of places which are mentioned. Also the figures used are somewhat difficult to grasp as to how they should be applied. The basic message is not unclear. Moab has mocked Israel and has at times seduced her into the worship of idols and false gods.

**Jer 48:1 Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.**

The Nebo mentioned here is not Mount Nebo from which Moses was allowed to view the land of promise. Along with Kiriathaim and Misgab, it is to be left in ruins,

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confusion and dismay. This was a distinct contrast to the condition of Moab for centuries before this. It was still in the future, but since God had predicted it there was to be no doubt that the curse would come.

Jer 48:2 There shall be no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from being a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee.

Jer 48:3 A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.

There had been admiration of Moab by other nations. It had been spared much of the grief suffered by others. It's agricultural activities were in contrast to the land grabbing hostility of some in the area of the Jordan valley.

That was to change. There were those who were plotting to bring it to an end as a nation. The sites of Madmen and Horonaim are not known, but they were to feel the edge of the sword of the Lord.

Jer 48:4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

Jer 48:5 For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

Throughout the land of Moab cries of anguish were to be heard. The youngsters would scream with fear and pain. Luhith was obviously some higher elevation, whereas Horonaim was found at a low level. The meaning is that from one end of the country to the other and from the mountains to the valleys the cries would ring out over the destruction.

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**Jer 48:6 Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness.**

Heath is found growing in uninhabited places. It would be advisable for the Moabites to leave their cities and head for the hills.

**Jer 48:7 For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together.**

The people had spurned the voice of Jehovah. They placed their trust in their own accomplishments. Those things which they treasured so highly would be taken by an invader. The false god Chemosh would find his reputation shattered. His worshippers would be captivated, including even his priests and his nobles.

**Jer 48:8 And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken.**

The villages and cities in which they took such great pride would be emptied of all that was prized by the citizens. The plains and the valleys would suffer destruction even as the cities did.

**Jer 48:9 Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.**

Moab would need wings like an eagle to flee successfully from the coming destruction. The cities would be left with no one to live in them. Some would die. Others would leave in an attempt to evade the horror.

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Jer 48:10 Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.

I think there is much reason to believe the destruction of Moab was to be from the Babylonian forces under the command of Nebuchadnezzar. These forces would for a time act as the sword of the Lord. They were to bathe that sword in the blood of the Moabites. If there was any hesitation in doing that, God would hold the invader responsible.

Jer 48:11 Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

Our family lived on a farm during my teen years. We had cousins who lived in the city. They would come for a while to stay at our home during their summer vacations. It was not difficult to tell who had been working hard and who had not. The city boys took a while to get accustomed to the work on the farm. They were not lazy. They just were not in physical condition when they first arrived. It took a week or so to get them limbered up. Moab had not experienced the difficulties of life that some had. He had found it possible to settle on his lees.

When grapes were trampled in those countries, the pulp was separated from the juice. The pulp would settle to the bottom of the wine vat. If it was left there undisturbed for a long enough time it would cause the grape juice to take on a bitter taste. Moab was like that. It had been undisturbed for a sufficient amount of time that it had become unpleasant.

Jer 48:12 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers,

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**that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.**

The Lord promised through Jeremiah that troublers would come who would disturb the Moabites. They would be treated like old grape juice which had been loosed from broken bottles and poured out. There were bitter days ahead.

**Jer 48:13 And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.**

The Moabites had great confidence in their god Chemosh. That would also change. They would become thoroughly ashamed of their god which was not god. Israel had once had a similar experience. Calves were placed at Dan and Bethel. They were objects of worship. God brought severe punishment upon both cities.

**Jer 48:14 How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war?**

**Jer 48:15 Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.**

The Moabites were confident that they could face any foe who came their way. They had never been tested, nor had their false god Chemosh.

Jeremiah made it clear that the Lord saw bad things ahead. The young men who would take it upon themselves to fight against the army of Nebuchadnezzar were moving toward their slaughter. The men would be killed and the cities would be plundered. They would be left deserted.

**Jer 48:16 The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast.**

**Jer 48:17 All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!**

While Moab was dwelling in comfort at the time this prophecy was pronounced, it would not remain comfortable for long. The troubles were approaching rapidly. Those who looked on at what would happen to that nation would be shocked at what they saw. Could a nation so strong and so pleasing in appearance be brought down so completely?

**Jer 48:18 Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and he shall destroy thy strong holds.**

**Jer 48:19 O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?**

Cities like Dibon which had sat in glory would be reduced to shame. The Chaldeans would leave destruction and poverty behind them as they spoiled the land. Those who saw the fugitives moving from the ruins would ask what was happening. Why should such a proud and glorious land so quickly become a place to flee from.

**Jer 48:20 Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,**

The answer would be that plans and activities had been turned upside down. The Moabites were in a state of great confusion. It was a time for moaning and groaning.

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Those who looked on should wonder if they too would share in such a fate.

Jer 48:21 And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath,

Jer 48:22 And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim,

Jer 48:23 And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon,

Jer 48:24 And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

Jer 48:25 The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD.

We could take the time to give some details of several of these Moabite cities. That is not necessary. This chapter is not a Biblical atlas of the cities of that land. These many cities are listed to show the completeness of the judgment upon the land. Horns represent power. Arms do the same. The horns of Moab were broken and the power of his arm was cut off. He had become weak and powerless.

Jer 48:26 Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.

The land of Moab had become so ecstatically independent of the Lord of lords that it was giddy and drunk. It had reveled in that condition. Now it had tipped the glass up until misery was to replace drunken joy. The drunken person who has numbed his nervous system spews vomit over his clothing and his surroundings. Moab was in such a condition. It would now find itself wallowing in it's own vomit.

Jer 48:27 For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy.

As Moab had seen Israel invaded by foes, it had made fun of the land across the Jordan. When speaking about that which was happening to Israel, Moab had been delighted and full of joy at Israel's misfortune. All of that mockery would soon come home to roost. It would be Moab that others laughed at.

Jer 48:28 O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.

The egotistical Moabites would find themselves forced to leave their pleasant cities and dwell in caves of the hills. Like the doves they would have to seek out natural openings in the hillsides and mountains in which to hide their families.

Jer 48:29 We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogance, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.

This is quite a list of evil characteristics. It includes pride, loftiness, arrogance and haughtiness of heart. God was ready to challenge these sinful ways.

Jer 48:30 I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it.

God knew that when Moab was attacked, it would demonstrate great wrath. But such would be useless. The self conceit would be revealed for just what it was, a fantastic lie.

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**Jer 48:31 Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres.**

Is it Jehovah, or is it Jeremiah that is reaching out in pity to these of Moab who are to suffer such humiliation? God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet because of his concern over the spiritual conditions of both Israel and the gentile nations. It is not difficult to consider either the Lord or His prophet mourning for the degradation of this land!

**Jer 48:32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage.**

Sibmah had apparently been known for the production of fruits and vegetables. That they have gone over the sea as far as Jasper indicates the products were transported over land and sea. There would now be reason to shed tears over the interruption of these food supplies.

**Jer 48:33 And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab, and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting.**

The days of wine production had been joyous days. They were days in which those who tread the grapes enjoyed one another's fellowship and expressed their

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happiness with shouting as they worked. That was to come to a halt. There would be no more of such jubilation when the punishment of the land had been laid upon it.

Jer 48:34 From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.

These cities which were scattered over Moab would in the future be shouting with fear and not with jubilation. A heifer of three years old would have been one who had never yet produced a calf. After dropping a calf she was no longer known as a heifer. Moab would mourn the fact that it had not reached goals of which it had dreamed. Dismay over the desolation of the country would be found everywhere.

Jer 48:35 Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.

Those who had been angering Jehovah because of their worship of false gods on the hills and other high places dedicated to such worship would find their activities impossible because of shortage of sacrifices. There would also be a shortage of persons to offer such sacrifices.

Jer 48:36 Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished.

The Lord did not enjoy placing such misery upon the Moabites. He would much rather have seen them love

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His commandments and obey them. They had not done this. It thus became necessary to let them know of His displeasure through the removal of much which they had held dear. The pipes mentioned were capable of producing mournful sounds. Everyone's hearts should have been emitting such sounds. Neither God nor men enjoy the punishment that was to come upon this land.

**Jer 48:37 For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.**

Hair was a matter of great pride among the men of all the nations of that part of the world. When problems became so great that they were unable to find solutions for them it was typical that they would tear the hair and cut it off to show their humiliation. They would also make cuts on the hands and wear sackcloth for their lower bodies. These demonstrations would cover the entire land of Moab.

**Jer 48:38 There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD.**

The housetops of the people were places where they would normally rest and enjoy themselves. This would be replaced by groans. The streets also would be echoing with the weeping of men, women and children.

**Jer 48:39 They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him.**

What a shocking surprise to see the Moabites derided! They were the ones who turned their backs on others less fortunate than they. Now others were turning away from the Moabites in mockery or in pity.

**Jer 48:40 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.**

Who is it that shall fly as an eagle and spread his wings over Moab? It was that predicted invader who would spoil everything in his way. Nebuchadnezzar's army was going to spread his wings over the once proud land.

Anyone who has seen a chicken hawk swoop down upon a half grown chicken and carry it away into the sky will understand what is being said here. Moab will have no chance whatsoever of avoiding the plunder of it's people and it's treasures.

**Jer 48:41 Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.**

When the invading forces strike, the hearts of the mightiest soldiers of their army were to melt with fear and trembling. Just as a woman in labor is almost completely controlled by her birth pains, Moab would find itself at the mercy of forces it was unable to control.

**Jer 48:42 And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD.**

Those who lift themselves up against the Lord have a long way to fall. The higher they lift themselves up, the harder they hit when they come back down. Moab had placed itself in just such a condition. Their conceit and pride were to be brought down with a loud and mighty thud.

**Jer 48:43 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.**

**Jer 48:44 He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.**

Moab was in double jeopardy. One can fall into a pit. He can be caught in a snare. Both of these tend to happen when one flees in fear. Moab was to first fall into the pit, and then when it managed to climb out of the pit to safety, it would find itself ensnared in even greater troubles. One does not escape from the year of the visitation of the Lord. If that visit is a celebration of righteous conduct. It will be a visit full of joy. If the visit is a review of the wickedness and sin of men, the visit will be awful.

**Jer 48:45 They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.**

It would do no good to flee to the city of Heshbon for protection. Heshbon itself would burst forth with

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flame and do great damage to those who mistakenly felt they could find security in even the most powerful cities of Moab. There would be no security anywhere. The proudest of the proud would fall side by side with the frail and weak.

Jer 48:46 Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.

The false god Chemosh would prove to be nothing. The men and women who had prayed and sacrificed to such nothingness would be carried away captive into other places. Chemosh could not help.

Jer 48:47 Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab.

This last verse of the chapter gives a glimmer of hope for the Moabites. In the latter days God promises to break the bonds of captivity for not only Moab but for every creature who hears and obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is true freedom in Christ. Dear reader, we live in those latter days. We must rise above our pride and lift our eyes to the God of heaven. We must save ourselves from this untoward generation.

Chapter 49

We continue with our examination of the curses the Lord was to bring upon the various nations who had made life difficult for Israel in days past. There a number of these nations included in the present chapter. This includes the Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, Arabians, and Elamites.

All of these nations were to be subdued by Nebuchadnezzar with his Babylonian forces. The reader would be well advised to consider the possibility of types here. The Bible closes with a description of the world in utter chaos. Antichristian forces compete with Christianity in the battle of Armageddon. The major part of the world arrays itself against the gospel of the Son of God and those who have given their lives to the paths of righteousness. A period of peace follows this tremendous spiritual conflict. Then Christ returns to judge the living and the dead.

In the present day Antichristian forces are attempting to dominate the very area where Nebuchadnezzar's forces were allowed to punish the nations listed in the chapters of Jeremiah which we are now studying. The city of Baghdad is very near where the original Garden of Eden was found. After having plunged themselves into sin by taking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, mankind has been living with death and destruction. War is being waged between God and Satan. The coming of Christ into the world marked the beginning of the end for Satan and his followers.

The gospel of Jesus Christ was to be preached to the entire world before the end arrived. There has now been time enough for that task to be completed. There is not a place on earth where men have not had the opportunity



to hear of that one who died on the cross to show the Way to eternal life.

After the punishments declared to be in the future of the nations surrounding Israel, God pronounced judgment upon Israel itself for having spurned Him. The so-called Christian world of today has many idols. They include wealth, power, pleasure and pride. God may well be ready to cleanse this present world through chemical, biological and nuclear warfare. Such a tremendous conflict could leave a population which would reject the idolatry and seriously follow the Prince of peace.

The reader is invited to compare the prophetic material found in both the old and new testament scriptures and then watch for the unfolding of those prophecies in the days to come. The major and minor prophets of the old testament and the book of Revelation may be the most powerful evidences of the existence of God and the truth of His Holy Word that are available to men.

Jer 49:1 Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?

The Ammonites and the Moabites were descendants of the incestual relationship of Lot with his daughters. These nations were enemies of Israel throughout many generations. When the northern kingdom fell, the Ammonites took advantage of the weakness to drive into that territory and claim the portion which had been allotted to Gad. This was inexcusable. That land belonged to the people of the Lord. The Ammonites were acting as if they were to inherit it. Israel was heir to that land which the Ammonites had taken. The people of Ammon were dwelling in the cities which were not theirs.

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**Jer 49:2 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the LORD.**

Rabbah was a chief city of the Ammonites. God was going to allow Nebuchadnezzar to move into that city. It would become a desolated ruin. The citizens of the cities of the Ammonites would be burned to death in the burning of their cities.

The time would come when God's people would inherit that which once was passed from generation to generation among the Ammonites. Such could take place when the gospel of Christ wins its victory over antichristian forces. God has declared that His people will inherit the earth!

**Jer 49:3 Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, and his priests and his princes together.**

The Ai mentioned here was not the one west of the Jordan and mentioned many times in the history of the Hebrews. This one was on the east of the Jordan and was in the nation of the Ammonites. The city would have reason to put on sackcloth and sit in ashes. The people would find themselves running around in circles. Their leaders, including the king, his important underlings and the priests who helped in the worship of false gods would all be taken captive and removed.

**Jer 49:4 Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that**

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trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me?

The land had boasted of her fertile valleys. The people had placed their trust in their wealth. They were backsliding in that they had no respect whatsoever for the Lord. They felt confident that no one could break through their security.

Jer 49:5 Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth.

The Lord would see to it that the carefree attitude would be replaced by fear of those on every side. They would be scattered in every direction. The scattering would be so complete that they could not be gathered up through human efforts.

Jer 49:6 And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.

There was One who could relieve the bondage. It would be done through God in the days to come. Ammon, along with those of other nations would be invited to free themselves by responding to the call of Jesus Christ. This call would come “afterward.” or in the days to come.

Jer 49:7 Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?

We leave Ammon and turn our attention to the Edomites. Teman was a prominent area within the boundary of Edom. This place was noted for it's wise men. Their wisdom had not included respect for Jehovah. That was a serious mistake. The beginning of wisdom is in the fear of the Lord. Their shallow form of wisdom would prove to be insufficient to protect them from the invader.

Jer 49:8 Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him.

Dedan was another well known place in Edom. The calamity of Esau would be the punishment for the Edomites constant mistreatment of the descendants of Jacob. They would need to dig down deep when the forces of Nebuchad-nezzar passed through their land.

Jer 49:9 If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.

Those who harvested the grapes would not pick every grape. A few stragglers would be left upon the vines. That would not be true in the case of those who gleaned the land of Edom. Everything would be taken.

Jer 49:10 But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not.

Edom, or Esau would be left naked before any who cared to look in his direction. His descendants would be

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poverty stricken. All who were friendly to him would suffer a similar fate. He would become a zero.

**Jer 49:11 Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.**

God has always had a concern for the orphans and the widows. This verse sounds as if God is assuring the Edomites that in spite of all the damage done to them the Lord would see that these two helpless classes would be upheld. The lesson here may be just the opposite. It may be a way of saying there would be large numbers of widows and orphans in need of help when their punishment had run its course.

**Jer 49:12 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it.**

The Edomites certainly did not choose the unpleasantness they were to face. They were forced to drink the bitter cup. They had thought that no such difficulties could come upon them, but they were sadly mistaken. They would drink the cup.

**Jer 49:13 For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.**

One can swear by none greater than the Lord. Thus the Lord swore by His own name that Bozrah, an important

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city in Edom, would be left as a disaster. The number of adjectives used to describe it's future is indication of just how complete the sad condition would become. It was to become a desolation, a reproach, a curse and a perpetual waste. It is precisely that even to the present day.

Jer 49:14 I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle.

Jeremiah declares that God has sent out an ambassador to the heathen who would come upon her. Other nations such as the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar, would combine to rise up against her.

Jer 49:15 For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men.

How sad it is to see those who have thought too highly of themselves brought down to low estate! In place of respect from others, Edom would see nothing but reproach.

Jer 49:16 Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

She had reveled in her self sufficiency and in her feelings that none could injure her in her secure position within the rocky clefts of the hills. Those who defy the will of God will find that no one is so secure they cannot be brought down, even from the greatest of heights.

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**Jer 49:17 Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.**

**Jer 49:18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.**

Those who have in these latter days visited the area which was settled by the Edomites verify that it certainly is nothing to demand respect. All one can do is wonder how a place of importance could have so drastically changed such that almost no one lives there any more. It was to be left in somewhat the same condition as were Sodom and Gomorrah when they were destroyed for their sexual abuses.

**Jer 49:19 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?**

When the heavy rains came and the Jordan river overflowed it's banks the displaced lions who dwelt in the heavy vegetation along the banks were forced out of their dens and were ferocious in attacking that which could provide them food. Edom would find themselves running like the scared shepherd whose sheep were being slain by the hungry lion.

**Jer 49:20 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and**

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his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them.

God had declared Himself against Edom and its population centers. Her foe would strike out at the very weakest of Edom until all was left in shambles.

Jer 49:21 The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea.

The distance from Edom to the Red Sea was considerable. Even so the fall of Edom would be heard as she crashed to the ground. We sometimes say “The bigger they are, the harder they fall.”

Jer 49:22 Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

The forces of Nebuchadnezzar would reach to the highest points of the cliffs of Edom. It would be as simple as the flight of an eagle. When the Chaldean eagle spread its wings over the land of Edom the bravest of men would find themselves as helpless as a woman in the throes of childbirth.

Jer 49:23 Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.

Damascus is the next focus of attention. Damascus was located in the land of Syria and thus that nation is to be dealt with. Hamath and Arpad were both found in that land also. They have heard of the horrifying things which have been happening to the neighboring nations of Moab and Edom. Hearts are becoming faint. The Syrians lie in the path of Nebuchadnezzar's march toward the west. The entire region rolls and boils like a troubled sea. Peace seems to be dissolving.

Jer 49:24 Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

Jer 49:25 How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy!

That famous city of Damascus was now left trembling with fear over what the near future held for her. The same figure is used to tell of her helpless condition. She is like a woman in the midst of childbirth. She was not in any condition to repulse the oncoming advances of the Chaldean army. She had in the past been highly praised. She had been a place of joy and hope. It certainly was not so as Jeremiah described her shaking and quaking before what she knew must lie just ahead.

Jer 49:26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts.

Your present commentator has never seen war first hand. The sight of bodies of young strong men lying dead by the dozens in the streets must be a fearful and unforgettable scene. Those of Damascus would see such nauseating things befall them.

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You are reminded again that the punishments which came upon each of these nations was the result of their having in some way worked in opposition to the will of the Lord.

**Jer 49:27 And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad.**

The wall of the famed city would be leveled to the ground. The palaces of the king would be left in crumbling stones and black ashes. Great treasures were harbored within the walls of both the city and the palaces. Many tears were to be shed over the tragedy.

**Jer 49:28 Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the LORD; Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east.**

Kedar and Hazor were cities within Arabia. The Arabians lived a different life style than did many others of the area. They made their homes in tents. They tended to flocks of sheep and goats. They moved from place to place as they searched for the best pasture for their animals.

Nebuchadnezzar had no more pity for them than for any other group. He would be allowed by the Lord to visit disaster upon the Arabs as he came upon them. No one was safe within the reach of his long arm.

**Jer 49:29 Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side.**

These pitiful nomads had almost nothing to begin with. Even that little that they had was taken from them. Their tents, their pots and pans, their livestock and all disappeared into the hands of the unmerciful soldiers of the Chaldeans. A life which was already nearly unbearable was to become even worse.

**Jer 49:30 Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you.**

There was nothing the people of Arabia could do to defend themselves against the mighty right arm of Babylon. He had determined to relieve them of their possessions and leave them in a panic of hopelessness.

**Jer 49:31 Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone.**

The description of the Arabs as a “wealthy” nation seems most strange. Some translators have rendered the word as “careless.” This would mean that the lack of bars and gates would mean they had little concern over anyone swooping in upon them and taking either their possessions or their lives.

**Jer 49:32 And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD.**



**Jer 49:33 And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it.**

The truth was that they had made themselves an easy mark for the Chaldeans. Their livestock would be stolen. They would be scattered even to a greater degree than that in which they had already existed.

**Jer 49:34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,**

**Jer 49:35 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might.**

The last of the nations to be discussed in this chapter is that of Elam. Elam is thought to have been closely connected with Persia, but is thought of here as a separate people. They were known for their skill with the bow. Their artistry with that form of weapon would come to naught. They would be overrun.

**Jer 49:36 And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.**

Those who came in upon Elam would move in from all directions. The people of Elam would then be taken and scattered among those invaders. There were said to be one hundred twenty-seven provinces in Babylonia. There could have been a very great scattering.

**Jer 49:37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them:**

As in the case of several other nations we have seen conquered and spoiled by the Babylonians, or Chaldeans, those of Elam had no chance whatever of defending themselves. They had behaved themselves in some manner which had brought the anger of God down upon them. The sword would not stop until Elam had been destroyed.

**Jer 49:38 And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD.**

The Lord would make it evident that no matter what nation it was that set itself up to oppose His purposes for mankind would find His rule stronger than theirs. Those of Elam would be made captives and would be scattered to the four winds.

**Jer 49:39 But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.**

Some see this last verse as a promise that the nation of Elam as a whole would be restored to it's former position. It is more likely that this verse means the same as several others before it. The Christian age brings an opportunity for all who will hear and obey the gospel call of the Son of God to escape from the bondage of sin and find peace in the kingdom of God.

## *Chapter 50*

Chapters 50 and 51 of this book of Jeremiah tell us of the fall of the Babylonian empire, particularly of the city of Babylon. Considering the fact that this ancient city lies in the near vicinity of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and that the book of Genesis tells us that is precisely where the human race began, it causes grave concern as tension builds between the Muslim religion and other parts of the world. It seems not unlikely that the close of human history on earth might well be precipitated in that Euphrates valley.

There may well be insights in these two chapters that point to the need to be prepared for a new heaven and earth.

**Jer 50:1 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.**

Jeremiah has given us a picture of the shame which was to be visited upon those nations which persecuted Israel. One by one they met the wrath of God and were brought down from their prideful positions. Now we come to the last of these powers; that is Babylon. The Chaldeans, under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, had been used by the Lord to punish the other nations who had abused Israel. The previous chapter had dealt with the overthrow of a number of these nations. Babylon had been an instrument of chastisement to hammer those nations into extinction.

Now that Babylon has finished her assignment, she will find herself facing a similar fate. Who would have thought that mighty Babylon would fall before any outside force? Yet it would fall, and we will read of that fall in these last chapters of the book of Jeremiah.

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Some declare that this is focused upon the city of Babylon. That is not what this verse says. It includes the entire land of the Chaldeans along with the capital city.

Jer 50:2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

The word is to be spread to all the nations of the earth that Babylon is taken. This is stated in what is called the prophetic present. The destruction was still to come, but it was so certain it could be referred to as having already been accomplished.

Jer 50:3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

The prophet Daniel had a vision of four great empires. Babylon was the first of the four. It was to be replaced by the Medo-Persian empire. That is what is being described in these fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of the present book of the Holy Scripture.

The Medes and Persians were to come from the north to make their attack upon Babylon. What seemed impossible was about to happen. That empire against which no other nation had been able to stand, was to fall before an even more powerful foe. Cyrus the Mede would lead a coalition of nations into the territory of the Chaldeans and would overcome them.

Jer 50:4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.

After some seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the Israelites would have repented of their defiance toward Jehovah, and their fascination with idols. They would seek out the Lord with tears in their eyes and look forward to leaving that land of bondage and returning to Palestine.

Jer 50:5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

The asking of the way to Zion was not an indication that they did not know in which direction that city of Jerusalem lay. They knew that all too well. What they were really wondering was how they could unite themselves once more to the Lord and depend upon His aid in returning to that city on Mount Zion.

They desired to make a new and perpetual covenant with God that they would be His people if He would be their God. They had found that idolatry had left them in misery. That misery must be left behind. Obedience forever was to prevent it's return. This new partnership with God was never to be treated as the Mosaic covenant had been. We must add that their intention was good at the time, but that it was not to last forever. They later turned away again.

Jer 50:6 My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have

turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.

Shepherds are supposed to lead their sheep to the finest pastures and protect them from wild beasts. God's leaders had failed in that charge. They had actually encouraged the people in their past unfaithfulness. They had worshipped idols on many high places. God had allowed them to be taken to Babylon to help them recall the need to worship Him alone.

Jer 50:7 All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

Their disobedience toward the Lord had been so great that those who conquered them convinced themselves there was nothing wrong about what they did since Israel had looked with disdain upon the Lord and the land which He had provided for them. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived in faith and in hope for the future because they walked in that faith. The present generation had insulted Jehovah and therefore the invading nations felt that they could hardly offend God if they were taking his people captive.

Jer 50:8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

But now the captivity in Babylon had run it's course. It was time for Israel to leave that land of bondage and

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to go back to the land of Zion. When male goats are running with sheep, the goats are known to take the lead. Israel was to leave the land of Babylon as rapidly as was possible.

**Jer 50:9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.**

Unless things had changed drastically, this would not have been possible. The Chaldeans had been strong enough in the past to run roughshod over every nation in their path. How could Israel, which was already their captive, expect to break the bonds and leave that land?

It would become possible because the Chaldeans would be occupied in attempting to defend themselves from a group of nations north of them, headed by the Medes and the Persians. These foes would be strong enough to defeat the Chaldeans, just as that empire had defeated others in the past. The warriors and the weapons of the foe would be much too strong for successful resistance.

**Jer 50:10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.**

She who had spoiled so many other nations would herself become spoiled. The invaders would take all they wanted from her. Their hunger for power and possessions would be filled from the treasuries of the Chaldeans.

**Jer 50:11 Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because**

**ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;**

The Chaldeans had grown as fat as heifers in a lush pasture. They had bellowed as a mighty bull might utter his challenge to all within the sound of his voice. None had been able to defend themselves from him. None had been able to attack him successfully. Could any outside foe even be imagined as strong enough to dislodge him from his position as king of the mountain.

**Jer 50:12 Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.**

The answer to the question above is a loud YES. Just as a mother might be ashamed and confused at the failure of her children, Babylon and Chaldea as a whole were to become the tail and not the head of the nations. She would become nonproductive. Her plight would be evident to any who cared to glance in her direction.

**Jer 50:13 Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.**

God is not mocked. When any people set themselves up in opposition to either Him or His people, they have more than met their match. Babylon had done that . It is true that they had caused God's lesson to Israel to be learned and had served the Lord involuntarily in doing that. However, they had done that without realizing they were accomplishing His purposes in enlightening Israel.

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The Chaldeans were wrong in what they did. This was to lead to embarrassment before the entire world. When men see a sight which takes their breath, they often let out a gasp or a whistle. We sometimes use the English word “Phew” to utter our surprise or amazement. That is what the nations would do after Babylon had felt the wrath of Jehovah.

Jer 50:14 Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD.

The call comes from the Lord for these invaders of Babylon to do all within their power and skill to destroy her. The reason for that call is that Babylon has fought against God. She must receive no pity. There is no hope for her repentance. Her end must come.

Jer 50:15 Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.

We can almost hear the sound of the warriors moving through Chaldea and approaching the city ruled by Satan. Her walls are to come tumbling down. Even the foundations of the evil city are toppled. Since she has attacked the Lord, she must suffer the vengeance of the Lord. She has caused others to suffer. She must suffer.

Jer 50:16 Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn

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**every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.**

From the time of God's vengeance there will be neither sowing nor reaping in that vile city. Those who have been captivated in Babylon and the surrounding empire will find time to flee to their own land while the Babylonians are busy dealing with the enemy from the north.

**Jer 50:17 Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.**

Because of their defiance of God, He had allowed the northern kingdom to be taken into Assyria. This had been followed by the removal of the southern kingdom to Chaldea. For many long years Israel had been subject to people who served idols. It was as if they had been eaten alive by those nations.

**Jer 50:18 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.**

Babylon and Assyria will not escape the vengeance of God for having taken His people into captivity, even though this was used by Him as a means of teaching Israel the horror of bowing down to those which were not gods. After the lesson of obedience had been presented, He would continue His plans for the development of a coming kingdom ruled by His own Son.

**Jer 50:19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and**

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Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.

What a tremendous promise! Israel had never been forgotten, even when they were serving the Assyrians and Babylonians. They would be rescued and returned to the land of promise. Carmel, Bashan, Ephraim and Gilead were places particularly dear to the hearts of the Israelites.

Jer 50:20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

What are “those days?” There may be a double meaning here. After Israel of old had served those seventy years in captivity God may be telling us they would repent and He would acknowledge their penitent attitude, no longer holding their disobedience against them. But it could also be a glimpse into the Christian age when the blood of Christ washes away sin, leaving the souls of the Christians white and pure. They also will have escaped from the bondage into peace of soul.

Jer 50:21 Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.

The Medes and Persians are to move into the land of the Chaldeans and go against the cities. They are to leave them wasted and desolate. All of this is to be done through the power of God’s aid.

Jer 50:22 A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction.

The battle was to be the greatest the world had seen up to that time. The first great empire seen by the prophet Daniel was to be replaced by the second. This was no small conflict.

Jer 50:23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

Hammers are used to crush that which they strike. Babylon had crushed everything that stood in her way during those years in which she reigned over other nations. That situation was to be turned around. Babylon was to be crushed by those whom God allowed to come upon her. She who had been a central point in the world political arena was to become more like the dust of the earth!

Jer 50:24 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD.

As a trapper lays a snare for a rabbit, the Lord had laid a snare for Babylon. She had been taken completely by surprise. She who had felt she was wiser and more powerful than any person or nation on earth would find herself at the mercy of the nations whom God had sent to show her just how wrong she was.

Jer 50:25 The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his

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**indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.**

Men are not to make the mistake of thinking the downfall of Babylon was altogether due to the wisdom and power of the Medes and Persians. God had added His sword to the battle. The sword of the Lord is able to overcome all of the opposition of the nations of men combined. With God on the side of the Medes and Persians, Babylon was without hope.

**Jer 50:26 Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.**

Babylon will have nothing of value left. Her land will be combed from one end to the other for anything worth plundering. Storehouses of every kind will be ransacked. Her homes will be left in piles of rubble. She will be brought down to the point that she will not again be a threat to anyone.

**Jer 50:27 Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.**

She had been proud of her livestock. This had extended to such a point that bulls were symbols of worship. These days were over. The time of their visitation was not to be a time of joy and fellowship. It was to be a time of payback for all the grief she had caused those upon whom she had trampled.

**Jer 50:28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the**

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vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.

Those who had been made captives by this powerful government would now have reason to flee and tell others of the wondrous things which had happened as God took vengeance for the damage done to His temple in Jerusalem.

Jer 50:29 Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.

Pride is hated by the Lord Jehovah. He especially found it in this city of Babylon. It had lifted itself up to such a peak that it felt it could look down upon the God of all creation. The activities she had carried out had caused immense difficulties for others. It was now time for her to be treated in the same manner she had treated her victims. God teaches that as we sow, so shall we reap. This was to be demonstrated to this harlot of the ages.

Jer 50:30 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD.

The young men who had been so important to her as warriors would no longer be able to serve in that capacity. They would have been left dead in her streets. Young and strong men are the backbone of nations who love to conquer others. The backbone of Babylon would be broken.

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**Jer 50:31 Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.**

Dear reader take this promise to heart. One of the most horrible statements that might be directed to any person or any nation is for the Lord to say, "I am against thee." God's people like to visit with fellow servants of God and discuss spiritual truths. It is quite different when it is God who is making the visit and has a message like the one above.

**Jer 50:32 And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.**

As we contemplate the identity of the one who is said here to be most proud, it strikes us that that title would be most aptly applied to the Devil. He is the father of such emotions. Still, He has many servants who have like characteristics. Babylon was in the top ranks of his children.

Babylon was destined to stumble and fall. The empire would have no one to call to for help in rising back up. The fall would be followed by a fire which would leave the land and the people denuded.

**Jer 50:33 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go.**

Why are we told that Israel and Judah were oppressed together? One was taken by the Assyrians. The other

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was taken by the Babylonians. The fact is that over a period of time Assyria was made a part of the Babylonian empire.

Jer 50:34 Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

The Redeemer here is the Lord of hosts, or the God of Heaven. It is He who will bring the scales back into balance and will see that His people are brought back to the promised land. It is He who will bring the disturbances spoken of above upon the heaving sea of Babylon.

Jer 50:35 A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men.

This sword which was to fall upon those of Chaldea, and especially upon those of the capital city of Babylon. It would humble her rulers and her self centered wise men, who were anything but wise.

Jer 50:36 A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed.

This sword is to fall upon their soothsayers or self proclaimed wise men. They will become foolish. The word “dote” here is related to the word “dotage.” Often men and women become feeble minded in their years of old age. They are then said to be in their dotage.

The sword would cut it's swath through the bold and mighty men and leave them in fear.

Jer 50:37 A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed.

The horses and chariots upon which they had placed such confidence would fail them. The warriors which had been selected from the various nations which had joined with them as professional soldiers would become as ineffective as women would be. They would be robbed of the treasures which they had accumulated at the expense of others.

Jer 50:38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.

This drought was probably a general lack of water across the land. Yet we have been reminded that Cyrus the Mede diverted the Euphrates river around Babylon and caused his army to pass through the dry channel and into that city.

Idolatry had been chosen over the God of creation. This was a mark of insanity.

Jer 50:39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

The city of Babylon itself was to become a home for scavenger birds and beasts. These animals do not usually live in the midst of cities such as Babylon had been in her



glory days. Instead of the noise of prancing horses and chariot wheels in the day, there would be the hooting of owls and the roar of lions in the night.

Jer 50:40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

There is good reason to believe the remains of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah lie in the bottom of the Dead Sea at the present time. Babylon was to become as difficult to find as those two condemned places. Baghdad is near the site of ancient Babylon, but the city of Babylon but a desolation.

Jer 50:41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

This appears to be a repetition for emphasis. The Medes had allied themselves with many lesser nations who had come from a wide territory. This army would come upon Babylon from the north.

Jer 50:42 They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.

The invaders of Babylonia would be well armed and absolutely merciless. They would be prepared in every way. They would be more than ready for the war.

Jer 50:43 The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail.

The once proud king of Babylon would find himself trembling with fear. He would be unable to meet the invaders. He would be as helpless as a woman would be in the time of childbirth.

Jer 50:44 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?

The invading forces would be as ferocious as a lion who had been driven from his den by the flooding of the Jordan river.

Jer 50:45 Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them.

The purposes of the Lord are not to be cancelled by such as the Chaldeans. God had determined the defeat of that empire. The weakest of the invading forces would be sufficient to drive them from their proud city of Babylon.

Jer 50:46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

When was the noise of the taking of Babylon to be heard among the nations? It would be first heard in the time of Nebuchadnezzar's defeat. It would later be felt as the wider spiritual Babylon would fall before the power of the Kingdom of Christ.

Chapter 51

This chapter is a continuation of the prediction of the destruction of Babylon which was begun in chapter 50. It is a long chapter of 64 verses. Some of the material may be found almost word for word in other passages, but the topic covered is so intensely important to the one attempting to see the importance of working with the Lord rather than against Him puts these 64 verses among the most vital in the Bible.

Babylon of old is typical of the spiritual Babylon which is to be defeated before this present world is burned and replaced by a new creation. The Bible student should compare the fifth chapter of Daniel and the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation to that which is presented in this one. GOD'S SIDE WILL WIN!!

Jer 51:1 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;

Ancient Babylon was considered to be one of the seven wonders of the world at the time of her glory. Reports vary as to just how glorious she was, but all of them agree that she was an awesome piece of human achievement. Her walls were said to have been built in a perfect square fifty miles in length on each of the four sides. They were wide enough that four chariots could race side by side on the top of them. There were twenty-five streets going in parallel in one direction, and another twenty-five crossing them at right angles. There were brass gates where each of the streets met the wall. Towers were spaced around the top of the walls and extended many feet above them. These served as watches for those assigned to warn the city of an enemy approach.

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In the midst of the city was a structure called a ziggurat which was dedicated to Bel and the other gods the people of Chaldea held to be sustainers and protectors of the city.

Babylon was situated at the point where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers joined. Ninevah had been built near the Tigris and Babylon was built in such manner that the Euphrates ran directly through the city. The palace of Nebuchadnezzar was located within the walls. We could go on and on with the details of this awesome wonder, but we have said enough to picture her supposed invincibility.

We must not miss the fact that ancient Babylon was a type of the spiritual Babylon of the end times of human history. The love of political power, the materialistic focus, and the multitude of manmade gods were all parallel to that which threatens to turn the present day world into a furnace of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. For a large portion of mankind, Jehovah has been lost in the back-ground as men strive for mastery over others.

**Jer 51:2 And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.**

These words were written before the destruction of the ancient city. They were predictions of the future and not records of past events. Jeremiah preached to a world which had decided upon evolutionary principles, even though the theory of Darwin would come many centuries later. War proved who was the fittest, and Babylon had won them all.

God, however, did not see Babylon as a wonder of the

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world. To Him she was largely chaff. He determined to thresh her and fan away that chaff. She was to meet a day of trouble in which the fanners would surround her and feed the chaff to the fire. A destroying wind would come against her.

Jer 51:3 Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host.

Babylon took great pride in her military prowess. This would be brought to nought when the enemy came upon the city. His archers would bend their bows and the archers would find a way to penetrate the breastplates of the defenders of the city. Her choice young men would be utterly lost.

Jer 51:4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets.

The streets of Babylon and the fields of the wicked nation would be littered with the bodies of their own warriors.

Jer 51:5 For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.

Israel perhaps had the idea that their bondage in that land would never end. If so, they were wrong. The Lord had not forgotten, nor forsaken the people of Judah. It was true that Judah had committed sins of many kinds

and of serious nature. She had been punished for those sins against her Lord. God would step in and come to her side.

Jer 51:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.

I like very much the words of Burton Coffman as he compared that which was said of spiritual Babylon in the book of Revelation with things which are said in this portion of the book of Jeremiah. He pointed out the following.

1. Both were to be utterly destroyed.
2. God's people were commanded to come out of both.
3. Both had a golden cup in their hand.
4. Both caused the nations to become drunken.
5. The judgment of both reaches all the way to heaven.
6. The doom of both is like a stone cast into a river.
7. They are both responsible for many who are to be slain.

The Lord calls for His people of Judah to flee quickly in order to avoid being cut off along with her in her iniquity. God is preparing vengeance upon Babylon for the manner in which she has disregarded Him and tortured the nations.

Jer 51:7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken:



the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

Jehovah had used Babylon to pour out His wrath upon many nations. She had caused drunken dreams to leave those nations as mad men. The motives of ancient Babylon have changed but little. Many nations today are searching for world domination and glorification from those they have used for their own advancement.

Jer 51:8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

Now we have a shock. The unthinkable is to become a reality. Babylon is not only to fall from her pinnacle; she is to be destroyed. She may attempt to find a remedy for her pain, but that will not be found.

Jer 51:9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.

Those who were a part of that evil city would have liked to find a cure for her fatal illness. They were fearful for their future. Those who had unwillingly become captives in the city would also fear for their lives when the conflict came. Those of Judah would need to flee as fast as possible and go back to the land from which they were taken.

Jer 51:10 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

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The punishment Judah had undergone while in the land of the Chaldeans had caused her to show righteous colors once more. When they returned to the land of Mount Zion they felt that they would declare the goodness of God and work in His service.

**Jer 51:11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.**

Jeremiah presented a picture of the beginning of the war between Babylon and the Medes who would attack them. Actually it was both the Medes and the Persians, plus other nations who joined them in the attack. The arrow and the shields were to be made ready. Babylon must be destroyed. It was to suffer this fate because it had damaged the temple in Jerusalem.

**Jer 51:12 Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.**

The “standard” was a banner or flag standing for the nation which had adopted it. The standard here sounds as though it is the standard of the Babylonians as they prepared for the attack. God had brought the Medes in to do His will in the destruction and sacking of the city.

**Jer 51:13 O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.**

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Since the Euphrates ran through the center of the city, it can be easily understood that she dwelt upon many waters. She had spoiled many lands, taken their treasures and put them into her own treasuries. She had reached the peak of her covetousness and would be relieved of those precious items which she had stolen from others.

Jer 51:14 The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee.

The Lord had made a vow that He would send men into the city of Babylon in such numbers that they would resemble a plague of locusts. These forces would accomplish what they set out to do and from them the world would hear a shout of victory as Babylon went down to defeat.

Jer 51:15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

The first verse of the Bible declares that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This verse says the same. However, this verse adds that it was through God’s omnipotence and omniscience that this was possible.

Jer 51:16 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

“And the Lord said.” When God speaks, all nature stands ready to obey His command. Lightning, thunder, wind, hail, rain and all the laws of nature are at His disposal. After thousands of years man is just beginning to accurately predict a day or so into the future whether it will rain or be dry.

Jer 51:17 Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

Compared with the knowledge of God, man is little higher than the brute world in his wisdom. One of the proofs of this is that man will make an image of metal, stone or wood, and kneel before it. They have no life nor breath in them. They have no thinking capacity whatsoever. Yet the Lord's own people had fallen into the trap of idolatry.

Jer 51:18 They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

Vanity is nothingness. When times of difficulty arise, no idol has any capacity for helping. Both the people who depend upon them as well as the idols themselves are destroyed.

Jer 51:19 The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.

God is here called the portion of Jacob. He is the Creator of all things. Israel is the rod of His inheritance

in that He has the desire to offer wonderful blessings to the descendants of that patriarch.

Jer 51:20 Thou art my battle ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;

Nations such as Ninevah and Chaldea need not think they can break God's people into pieces which will never be recombined. It will work in reverse. God's people will stand while other nations are broken and destroyed.

Jer 51:21 And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;

Horses, riders and chariots may successfully defeat the opposing armies of men. They will not succeed in breaking the will of the Lord. He will break them. Solomon was told not to depend upon horses and chariots.

Jer 51:22 With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;

Neither male nor female can stand against God. Nor can either old or young. Human prestige, position and power are doomed to defeat when they fight against the Creator.

Jer 51:23 I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.

God's hammer is capable of breaking apart everything about the city of Babylon and the entire land of the Chaldeans. Nothing will escape.

Jer 51:24 And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.

The Lord had used that land to chastise Judah, but that was a matter of allowing them to punish. They were still responsible for the sinful way in which they had taken His people from Judea and captivated them as servants for so many years.

Jer 51:25 Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.

Just as a volcano can erupt and destroy that upon which the hot lava has descended, so Babylon had treated those of Judah. Now the Lord was ready to turn her into a dead and burned out pile of rocks.

Jer 51:26 And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.

Instead of being a wonder of the world, Babylon would not even be suitable for a foundation stone for any building. She would become a barren reminder of what once threw fear into all around her.

Jer 51:27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations

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**against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers.**

The standard which would be set up in Chaldea would not be her own. Other nations would band together, particularly from the northern direction and move across the land like a plague of locusts.

**Jer 51:28 Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.**

When one included the Medes, Persians, and the other nations who banded together, the Chaldeans would more than meet their match, especially since Jehovah was one of her enemies.

**Jer 51:29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.**

Truly the land would physically tremble with the prancing of the invaders chariots and horses. Sorrow would descend upon Babylon and it would become uninhabited.

**Jer 51:30 The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken.**

All of those supposed brave and valiant warriors who had instilled terror into the hearts of those they attacked were now to be cringing in fear themselves. The surprise of the attack upon the city would leave no time for preparation. The battle was over almost before it began. The military had become as weak as an unarmed woman.

**Jer 51:31 One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end,**

We speak of “postmen” today. They are our mail carriers. The posts of that day ran on foot or rode an animal as they carried messages from place to place. They were running frantically and passing the messages from one to another about the enemies having broken into the city.

**Jer 51:32 And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.**

The passages through which the enemy had entered the city were now closed off by those invaders, leaving the entire city in panic, including the men of war.

**Jer 51:33 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.**

It is not uncommon for us to hear that one athletic team gave another a severe threshing. That was to happen to Babylon and her inhabitants. She



had reached the harvest time and her threshing had come due.

**Jer 51:34 Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out.**

This is the Lord speaking through the pen of Jeremiah. It seems strange for the Lord to say He was eaten, digested and excreted like feces by Nebuchadnezzar. He is infinitely more powerful than Nebuchadnezzar, or any other man who has ever lived. It is only because He permitted such treatment in order to teach Israel the lesson it must learn. There is but ONE GOD!

**Jer 51:35 The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say.**

The actions of the king of the Chaldeans and his nation had caused the Israelites to say that the Chaldeans were guilty of the blood of God's servants. The guilt was to be punished by Jehovah.

**Jer 51:36 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.**

Everyone who appears in court wishes to have the best possible lawyer. The Lord has said here that He will be the One who supports the case of Israel. In this

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confrontation, God is both the attorney and the Judge. He proceeds to give the sentence in detail.

Babylon had depended upon the water of the Euphrates and the springs associated with it to bring about their powerful place in world politics. God would leave her without these aids.

Jer 51:37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

In place of the wondrous glory she had enjoyed in the past, she would become deserted. She would be an example of the seriousness of defying the will of the Lord. Although Baghdad is near the site of ancient Babylon, the ruins of the ancient city can hardly be found.

Jer 51:38 They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps.

At one point in their history they were to roar and cast fear into all nations. Later, when God had punished them, they would resemble the cubs of lions who yelped for food which did not come.

Jer 51:39 In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD.

The Lord was about to use their feasting and reveling to bring them to a drunken state in order that the nation would fall into an everlasting sleep and never awake. She would lose all of the energy which she had ever possessed. No nation on earth would have to fear her ever again.

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As I write these words I find myself thinking of that horrible scene which I witnessed on the television screen of two airliners being hijacked by citizens of that very part of the world where Babylon existed. The pilots controls were taken over by those men and the planes were crashed into the two skyscrapers in New York known as the World Trade Center buildings. Over three thousand persons were killed in that attack. This sounds more like the work of the Babylon which is described in the book of Revelation than the one which terrified the world in the ancient times. However, God may pour out His vengeance upon this modern Babylon just as surely and savagely as He did upon the one ruled by Nebuchadnezzar.

**Jer 51:40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.**

Lambs that are being led to the slaughter have no means of defense. Male goats are completely dominant in the presence of sheep of any age. Babylon was to be utterly incapable of fighting back against God's wrath.

**Jer 51:41 How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!**

**Jer 51:42 The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.**

**Jer 51:43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.**

Sheshach is another name for Babylon. That city had been one of the wonders of the world. How was it possible that she would go from that high place to being

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a wilderness where no one dwelt? The waves of world progress would cover her and pass by without taking the time to pause and bow before her.

Jer 51:44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

Bel was another name for Baal. The confidence the Chaldeans had placed in that false god had caused the persecution of many nations. Those nations had been conquered and had been taken into captivity in that land. Even so, the walls of the supposedly secure city of Babylon would crumble someday into the dust around them.

Jer 51:45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

The Jews who had been made servants of the Chaldeans for seventy years would be set free. The anger of the Lord had been appeased and they were to be allowed to return to the land of Judea.

Jer 51:46 And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler.

The Jews were advised not to take any rumor which arose concerning their release too seriously. Word would be spread that such an event could occur. But a year later

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the real deliverance would come. They were not to lose patience just because the first rumor did not become a reality. They were to “watch and pray.”

**Jer 51:47 Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.**

Could anything be made more clear. The promise might seem to be impossible to bring to pass. Yet what seemed impossible would become actual! The idols worshiped in that land of the Babylonians would be demolished. The people who bowed before them would be strewn around them.

**Jer 51:48 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.**

The rest of the world would rejoice over the fall of the great harlot. The joy would arise over the fact that conquerors would come from the north and defeat her. Those who came from the north were the Medes, the Persians and smaller powers who allied themselves with them.

**Jer 51:49 As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.**

Just as Babylon had caused the death of many of the people of the Lord, she would herself be slain by others from many nations.

The similarity of this statement to the fall of spiritual Babylon in the latter days must not be overlooked. One is a schoolmaster to help us understand the meaning of the other.

**Jer 51:50 Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.**

Many of God's people had met death at the edge of the sword. The message here is to those who had not already met death. They were to keep their memories of both their Lord and the city on Mount Zion in mind. This would allow them to summon the strength to survive the present distress.

**Jer 51:51 We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house.**

It is difficult to hear of our shortcomings. God had made it quite evident that Israel had sinned grievously. They had hung their heads in shame. They had finally come to understand how seriously they should have looked at their failure to live up to their part of the covenant which had been made that God would be their God, if they would be His people.

As it was, they had been removed from the promised land and help captive in Chaldea while those who were not the people of God had polluted the temple and other places of worship. They longed for a return to the land. They were ready to worship the Lord and Him only.

**Jer 51:52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon**

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her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan.

It would not be but a short time before God was going to demonstrate just how useless the worship of idols is. The entire land of Chaldea would groan in misery, especially that center of idolatrous worship called Babylon.

Jer 51:53 Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

There is a thought here which I have not encountered in any of the commentaries I have searched through. What can it mean when it is said that even if Babylon were to mount up to heaven, she would still be spoiled? One possibility is that Satan is the chief of sinners. He has been a spiritual opponent of Jehovah from the time of the Garden of Eden. Even if Satan were to throw his weight into the battle, Babylon would still meet her doom.

Jer 51:54 A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans:

Jer 51:55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered:

A hurricane or a tornado makes a terrifying noise when it strikes. The victims of the storm add their outcries to the noise of the hurricane. A storm much greater than a hurricane was in the future of the Chaldeans. The destruction which would be left in it's

wake would be unimaginable. The waves of terror which would sweep over the land would be like a roar of many who were dying.

Jer 51:56 Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompenses shall surely requite.

The spoiler was that group of nations who were to come out of the north to pounce upon the drunken city. The weapons of defense were going to be ineffective. The punishment would come. God would see that it did.

Jer 51:57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

One who drinks alcoholic beverages first becomes unable to make proper judgments. Then he reaches a stage in which he becomes drowsy and falls asleep. Babylon's rulers, her warriors and her wise men would all go to sleep, never to return to power in that age or in the one to come. Their sleep would be everlasting.

Jer 51:58 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

God made a promise. His promises always come true. Those seemingly unbreakable walls of Babylon would be

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broken. The gates of which she was so proud would be destroyed by fire. There would be nothing the people could do to stop the destruction. Though they labored until they were exhausted, the destruction would continue until it was completed.

**Jer 51:59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.**

Jeremiah had remained in Judah when the captives were taken. We have been reading from the visions he received from the Lord. Zedekiah had been named as a puppet king in Judah while it was controlled by the king of Babylon. Zedekiah had gone to Babylon for some reason of which we are not told. Some suggest that Nebuchadnezzar had become concerned over rumblings of insurrection from the Jews. Seraiah was a servant of Zedekiah and was making the journey with his master. Jeremiah, clearly at the command of Jehovah, requested that Seraiah deliver a message from God.

Seraiah was not a vocal person and Jeremiah did not depend upon him to recall the message from memory. The prophet wrote the message in a book and gave the book to Seraiah to deliver.

**Jer 51:60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon.**

The book contained a record of all the troubles which God was going to bring upon the city of Babylon. There is some question as to whether this book was a complete

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copy of the present book of Jeremiah, or whether it contained only a few pages telling of the punishment which would fall upon the capital city of Babylon.

Jer 51:61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;

Seraiah was told by Jeremiah that when he arrived in Babylon, he was to read the contents of the book which he had received.

Jer 51:62 Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

The last words which Seraiah was to read were those of this verse. God had spoken against Babylon, to cut it off, that none would remain in it, either of men or beasts. It was to become a desolation forever.

Jer 51:63 And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

When the reading was concluded, Seraiah was to tie a stone to the book and cast it into the Euphrates river. Of course the book would sink to the bottom of the river along with the stone. It would remain on the bottom.

Jer 51:64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will

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**bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.**

Seraiah was then to add this final comment. Just as the book had sunk to the bottom of the river, Babylon would sink and never rise again from the destruction which the Lord would bring upon her. We can well imagine the weariness those of Babylon would feel before finally sinking to rise no more.

The last sentence of this verse is proof that Jeremiah was the author of the book up to this point. But it also seems that the last chapter was not penned by this prophet. The claim is made that the last chapter fits more perfectly as an introduction to the book of Lamentations than it does as a close to the book of Jeremiah. The penman is unknown.

## Chapter 52

The works of the prophet Jeremiah have been lambasted by more Bible critics than perhaps any other book of the Bible. It has been claimed that since it does not follow chronological order it is too dissimilar to the rest of the Word of God. It is also claimed that since large portions are nearly identical to other passages such as those in 2 Kings it was taken from those passages and made to look like fulfilment.

The numbers of persons taken into captivity has been said to be illogical and the years of those exiles out of harmony. Admittedly, the book is difficult to follow. It does cover some of the same events as the record in 2 Kings. I do believe, however, that it serves a valuable purpose in presenting the prophecies given through Jeremiah, and the evidence that these prophecies were fulfilled.

**Jer 52:1 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.**

Zedekiah was the puppet king appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to oversee the land of Judea. The age of Zedekiah was extremely tender for him to sit in such a position. It is possible that Nebuchadnezzar saw this as an advantage in that he would not be as apt to rebel.

See 2 Kings 24:18-19.

*2 Kings 24:18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.*

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2 Kings 24:19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

Jer 52:2 And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

Zedekiah was an evil king, just as many of those ruling earlier had been.

Jer 52:3 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

There are two ways to look at the words “through the anger of the Lord.” The word through can also mean “during”, which would mean that Zedekiah ruled during the anger of Jehovah toward His people. After having ruled for some time Zedekiah decided to mount a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah advised him not to do so, but he failed to listen.

Jer 52:4 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.

Jer 52:5 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

This could hardly have been unexpected. Nebuchadnezzar was not the sort of ruler who took

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such activities without retaliation. He brought his army against Jerusalem and besieged it for over a year.

**Jer 52:6 And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.**

The besieging of a city involved cutting off all flow of traffic in and out of the city. This left the citizens who were left in Jerusalem with practically no food.

**Jer 52:7 Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.**

The men who would have normally defended the city fled by way of the gate by the king's garden. They still had to evade the Chaldeans who were on every side of the city. They did manage to get out into the open plain and could have envisioned a complete escape.

**Jer 52:8 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him.**

Such an escape was not to be. The Chaldeans saw them and gave chase. The army of Zedekiah was scattered, leaving him to face capture.

**Jer 52:9 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the**

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land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him.

There was to be no mercy for the rebel king. He was taken to Riblah where he faced the king of Babylon to answer for his indiscretion.

Jer 52:10 And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.

First Zedekiah's sons were killed as he watched. Then his leading men were also slain to assure him that he had no support.

Jer 52:11 Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

After forcing him to watch the death of his sons and his princes, Zedekiah's eyes were put out. We can be assured that no eyesalve was offered.

Jer 52:12 Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

After having disposed of the attempt at rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of his guard to the city of Jerusalem to do mop up work.

Jer 52:13 And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem,

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**and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire:**

Both the temple and the king's palace were burned. The houses of any of the princes or other influential men were burned also. The temple had stood for over four hundred years. It's demolition was a tragedy for all of the Jews who had prized it for those centuries.

**Jer 52:14 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about.**

Breaking down the walls of a city left it at the mercy of any powerful force who could move into it. Not only would this demolish the walls, it would do the same to the spirit of any who placed their confidence in the security provided by those walls.

**Jer 52:15 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.**

Nebuzaradan made a fairly clean sweep of the city. He took most of the poor who had been left behind by the Chaldeans earlier. He also took those who had risen up under the leadership of Zedekiah in the effort to oppose Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

**Jer 52:16 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen.**

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All that were left in the city were a few who could cultivate vineyards and fields. They would be incapable of causing future rebellion against the rule of the Chaldeans.

They then ransacked the temple, taking everything of value.

Jer 52:17 Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon.

Jer 52:18 The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

Jer 52:19 And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away.

Jer 52:20 The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

There was gold, silver and brass which was beyond the ability to weigh it.

Jer 52:21 And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow.

Jer 52:22 And a chapter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chapter was five cubits, with

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**network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like unto these.**

**Jer 52:23 And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about.**

The two great pillars on the porch of the temple were twenty-seven feet in height. Each had graven work across the top and down the side. All of this would have been composed of brass.

**Jer 52:24 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:**

**Jer 52:25 He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city.**

The most important of the priests were removed, along with the keepers of the temple door. Zedekiah's bodyguard was arrested, along with sixty men who were found in the city.

**Jer 52:26 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.**

**Jer 52:27 And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.**

These captives were taken to Riblah where they were presented to Nebuchadnezzar. The king had them killed there in Riblah. Judah had very little left.

**Jer 52:28 This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty:**

At this time three thousand and twenty-three Jews were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

**Jer 52:29 In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons:**

Eleven years later another eight hundred and thirty-two persons were removed to Chaldea.

**Jer 52:30 In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.**

Five years later, the captain of the guard took seven hundred forty-five more captive, making a total of four thousand and six hundred. It is believed by many Bible students that this number included only the men who were of an age that would allow them to lead a possible further rebellion.

**Jer 52:31 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach**

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king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison.

After Jehoiachin had been in captivity for thirty-seven years, Evilmerodach became king in place of his father Nebuchadnezzar. In his very first year he lifted up Jehoiachin from the prison and gave him his freedom. The reason for this kindness is not given.

Jer 52:32 And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon,

It was the practice sometimes of a king who had conquered other kings to set them in places of prestige near his own throne to show how many of them he had subdued. This added to his honor among his people.

Jer 52:33 And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.

Jehoiachin was allowed to shed his prison clothing and dress in honorable garments. He was given food regularly as long as he lived.

Jer 52:34 And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

This last verse is not merely repetition of the one previous. The food provided here was more than just bread enough to keep one alive. It would have come from the king's kitchen.

An Afterword

Since I have not worked through the Bible in order from Genesis to Revelation, this is the final book of this set of commentaries. I thank the Lord with all of my heart for allowing me the health of mind and body that has made the work possible. I pray that I have not abused that privilege and that a genuine contribution has been made toward the spiritual development of any who might read these volumes.

I could never have concluded the work without the patience and the encouragement which my wife Marie, and my mother Bertha Stancliff have given me. My wife continued the encouragement which my mother had offered for the first twenty-one years of my life.

There have been so many who have shared Bible classes with me that it is impossible to list all of them. Some have stood before me as instructors. Others have sat in classes as Bible students. I have always tried to listen to teachers and compare the thoughts they presented with the Holy Book itself. I trust that those who have sat in classes which I taught have made the same type of comparisons. The Word of God is perfect. No man is! Yet we can learn from the study which others have done.

I believe there is an eternal God in heaven. I want to stand in His presence and hear those words, "Well done. Enter into the joy of thy Lord." I want you to be with me.. Will you come?



**The Book Of
LAMENTATIONS**

Introduction To Lamentations

I. The General Background

The title of this book gives a major clue to the origin of the book. In 587 B.C. The Babylonian forces broke through the defenses of Israel's capital city of Jerusalem, torched the city and laid it in ruins. The Jewish people were devastated. Although they had defied the will of God repeatedly, even with the warnings of Jehovah through the prophet Jeremiah that their rebellion would lead to disaster, they had convinced themselves God would never allow such a disaster to level their beloved city. But it had!

This short five chapter book contains a river of emotional upheaval. These are what we sometimes call "dirges." They attempt to express the grief which is felt at the passing of a loved one. They are also referred to as "Songs." We usually think of songs as being expressions of joy or thanksgiving. These songs hardly fit into those categories. It is possible for songs to carry messages of sadness. These songs are of that nature. It is quite possible that the loss felt with the destruction of the city on Zion's hill could be declared in poetry or song more fully than the fifty-two chapters of the previous book of Jeremiah could do.

II. Is the book history or is it prophecy?

The place of the book of Lamentations within the canon of holy scripture has been disputed. Some

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collections have placed it with the prophetic books. Other lists have considered it to be bettered classified as a part of the hagiographa or writings, such as Esther, Ruth, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

Those who would place it in the writings claim to see obvious differences between the style of Lamentations and that of Jeremiah. Those who would place it among the prophets see the book as a fitting conclusion to the book of Jeremiah. The present writer feels that the classification placing it within the hagiographa or writings is a better fit.

It is well to point out that there has been almost no tendency among conservative scholars to deny the fact that it does belong within the inspired books of the Bible.

### **III. Authorship and Date of Writing**

It is certainly not a unanimous feeling that Jeremiah was the author of the book. One group sees the book of Lamentations as stating some degree of amazement that the city of Jerusalem would have come to such an end. Jeremiah had made it very plain that this was just what would happen if the Jews did not turn from their idolatrous ways.

Adam Clarke takes issue with those who would give credit to other authors. After presenting his own reasons for the authorship of Jeremiah, he makes a very deliberate statement that he doubt the number of converts to other authors is very high. We tend to agree with Clarke.

### **IV. The Unique Structure**

Lamentations consists of five chapters. There is a unity among the five.

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The emphasis in chapter one is on the sadness of the city of Jerusalem.

The emphasis in chapter two centers on the sadness of the people of Israel as a whole.

The emphasis in chapter three details the feelings of the prophet who had warned of just such a catastrophe.

Chapter four bewails the devastating power of sin.

Chapter five is a prayer for future hope.

These chapters are written in poetic form using a system of acrostics. In an acrostic each line begins with a different letter of the alphabet beginning with the first letter and moving down through that particular alphabetic arrangement. Although this does place some limitations on variety of expression, it does allow a greater emotional appeal.

V. The Use of this Book

The book of Lamentations is a cherished one in the later history of the Jewish people. They have used it as a means of keeping hope alive for the future. They admit that there was reason for them to be punished. They do not think the destruction of their beloved city marked the end of their relationship with Jehovah. They read from the book of Lamentations on particularly important occasions such as fasts in memory of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

I believe that both the Jew and the Gentile can agree on God's willingness to forgive those who love and obey Him. Paul declared that there is now no difference between the Jew and the Gentile in the sight of God. We may all become one in Jesus Christ. Let us learn the lesson God has taught through the Jewish nation. When men worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, He hears and approves. He blesses with an eternal blessing. It

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may not be as evident every moment of every day of our lives, but when time has fused with eternity, hope will become reality. There is a future far more wondrous than our own feeble minds can comprehend. Why disregard His pointing finger?

## Chapter 1

Jeremiah sits weeping over the piteous sight of the ruined city of Jerusalem. He had tried so desperately to bring her to repentance before the Lord carried out the threats which He had caused the prophet to picture for His wayward people. Now Jeremiah has come to the full realization of the wrath of God. It was a most sickening sight. It was sickening to Jeremiah. It is almost as much so for those who live and read about the tragedy today.

**Lam 1:1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!**

What a contrast! It was almost impossible to believe what had happened. But it had! In the days of her glory she had been blessed by God. Her streets had been filled with people worshipping, laughing, purchasing food and playing with their children. She was the chosen of the Lord!

What had brought about the change? It was her neglect to honor her spiritual husband. She had committed adultery by giving herself to Baal and other false gods who were only useless vanities. She had fallen from her position as great among the nations of the world. Now she found herself dependent upon others whom she had once surpassed.

My friends, there is another nation in much similar circumstances in the present world.. That nation is the United States of America. She was at one time a friend of God. She has now gone after the false gods of pleasure and power and wealth. If she does not learn from the lesson

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taught in these books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, she will face a like future.

Lam 1:2 She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

Israel had forsaken Him who loved her so dearly, and had offered herself to those who could not bless her with the tiniest fraction of what she had experienced while in the favor of Jehovah. What had she gained from her flirtations? Nothing. The balance sheet was most disgusting. Those whom she thought would fill her desire for spiritual adultery had become enemies. They hated and mocked her. Babylon and Egypt had far more interest in gobbling her up than in satisfying her desires.

Lam 1:3 Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits.

Here we have an honest confession. It was not because the Lord had not loved her that she forsook Him. He had been forced to punish her for her unfaithful ways. She had now been taken into captivity among the very people whom she had illegally adored.

The “straits” were the weaknesses she experienced when the blessings of God were withheld. Bullies will wait to attack until they see their victim is weak. Israel had been reduced to that condition.

Lam 1:4 The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are

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**desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.**

There were three great feasts which brought a multitude of people into the streets of Jerusalem when they took place. They were the feast of Passover, the feast of Tabernacles and the feast of Pentecost. Those streets which had heard the sound of merry hearts were now empty. Any priests who might have been left behind when the majority were taken captive were groaning at the sight before them. The young women were abused, and were probably at a loss to find suitable prospects for marriage. Bitterness is the correct word. Joy had turned to sorrow.

**Lam 1:5 Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.**

While once her foes had found her too strong to attack, they were now in control as a result of the punishment she was now suffering at the hand of God. Her children were the citizens of the city who had been taken to Babylon and Egypt. She had no way of preventing the misfortune which she had brought upon herself.

**Lam 1:6 And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.**

The buildings and other accomplishments in which she had taken great pride in the past were laid waste or burned. Those who once would have led her into battle

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were now running like scared deer before the hunter. There was no strength left with which to fight back.

Lam 1:7 Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.

In the past the Lord had promised Israel would be led to a land of great blessings. At present all she could recall were the horrors which had replaced those favors. It only added to the misery when the unbelievers laughed at her plight.

The sabbath was dear to the heart of God. It was a symbol of the rest which He had taken after the creation of the universe. The enemies of the Lord were now laughing at what they had regarded as a waste of one seventh of life.

Lam 1:8 Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

The joy the city had felt when faithful to God had turned to the peak of embarrassment. God described the condition through the lips of Jeremiah by saying her sins had been exposed to all as if she were a harlot with her skirt raised up and tied around her neck. The shame was so great she found it necessary to turn her back to those who peered at her.

Lam 1:9 Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came

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**down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.**

She had become absolutely disgusting. She had failed to look forward to the consequences of her unfaithful conduct. The use of the word “wonderfully” to describe her fall must be understood quite differently than we use the word at present. It was a source of amazement to note her condition as she was being chastised. Like a fallen woman, she was despised. Those who had been her companions in the past were seen no more. The strength of her adversaries was far too great to resist.

**Lam 1:10 The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.**

It was unlawful according to the law of Moses for a gentile to enter into the Most Holy. As a result of her misfortunes, Israel was now seeing these heathen people ransacking the temple of the treasures found there.

Some believe the “pleasant things” refers to the children of those who remained in the city. This is doubtful.

**Lam 1:11 All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile.**

Hunger was found on every side. The remaining Israelites came to the point that they were ready to

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trade the most precious possessions for food. The “I” who had become vile was not Jeremiah. It was the city of Jerusalem. It’s inhabitants were hungry and starving.

Lam 1:12 Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

These are the words of the city itself. Does no one care about her situation? It would be hard to find a greater despair than that felt by this unfaithful city. Is God a God of love? Yes, but as it becomes necessary for a parent to correct a disobedient child, God’s love required that He prove the need to walk in His paths. He is not only a God of love and mercy. When those He loves laugh at His commandments, He will finally turn to wrath.

Lam 1:13 From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.

The city speaks as if it were a human. May I be personal for just a moment. At the time I was twelve years old I developed a case of rheumatic fever. Much of what is described in the verse above lies buried in memory. The elbows and knees caused me to wince at almost every movement. It was almost impossible to walk. For six months I was bedridden. When I did get out of bed I was weak. All of my friends were in school and I lay alone in my bedroom.

Jerusalem hurt all over. There was no way to turn in any attempt to escape her difficulties. She was weak



and very much alone. When the Lord backs off there is truly nothing left.

Lam 1:14 The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.

God had placed a heavy yoke upon her neck. The city had been utterly overcome by her enemies, with no way to overcome the burdens. The condition would remain so until a divine decision was made that the punishment was sufficient.

Lam 1:15 The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress.

The young and strong males had been either transported into captivity, or had been intimidated to the point where they could have no pride left. The young women who would normally have been bearing children were crushed. They had no hope.

Lam 1:16 For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.

It is no doubt safe to say that both Jeremiah and the city were weeping bitterly. He is not called the

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weeping prophet without there being good reason for that title.

**Lam 1:17 Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.**

The city held out her hands for someone to come to her aid. It was not there. God had withheld His support and those with whom she had practiced her spiritual adultery had lost interest except to plunder her. A woman in her menstrual period was ceremonially unclean. Israel was spiritually unclean. The unclean were avoided until a cleansing process was applied.

**Lam 1:18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.**

It was perfectly clear that Jehovah could not be blamed for the shame and suffering. He had sent the prophets one after another to steer His people away from the deadly dangers of idolatry. Those efforts had been in vain. The lesson had to be learned the hard way.

**Lam 1:19 I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.**

Those who had enjoyed her company in idolatrous worship in the past had turned out to be deceptive. Those

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who should have been leaders were dying of hunger. It took every bit of strength available just to stay alive. There was not even sufficient energy to accomplish survival. Death stalked the streets.

Lam 1:20 Behold, O LORD; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.

The confession is repeated over and over. Anyone with the slightest degree of conscience was aware of the source of the suffering. It was SIN. Both within the city and without there was the shadow of death. Sometimes it was the sword. Other times it was famine. Would the Lord ever relieve the problems? If He did not, he could not be blamed.

Lam 1:21 They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.

These last two verses tell us “Misery loves company.” If Israel was to suffer at the hands of the wicked, let the wicked meet the same fate. This was little consolation. All it did was to prove Israel knew they were just as evil as those who were persecuting them.

Lam 1:22 Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

“Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord. I will repay.” He also tells us to be certain that our sins will find us out. Israel need not worry that God’s scales of justice would weigh correctly. Her concern must be centered around persuading the Lord they were penitent. And as it turned out, they did learn their much needed lesson. Idolatry was not practiced among them after these disastrous days.

Chapter 2

Jehovah is a God of loving kindness. He created man in His own image and blesses him in the continuation of that image. It is only when man demonstrates that he is determined to depart and take upon himself the character of Satan that God gives him up. God creates man. He blesses man. He disciplines and applies corrective method with love and concern. Nevertheless, when man proves he has become an enemy of the Lord, we find another side to the divine character. He grudgingly accepts the enemy relationship and brings vengeance upon those who oppose Him.

That is the theme of this chapter. Note the words which occur over and over, "The Lord hath—" Also note that what the Lord has done is far from the kind of permissive father who spoils his children until all is destroyed. Both blessings and punishment are instruments in the hand of God which are intended to gather a family together in heaven which will love and obey His will.

Lam 2:1 How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!

God has used clouds for different purposes at different times in the history of mankind. A pillar of fire by night, and a cloud by day, guided Israel through the wilderness. Clouds may shield one from the blistering heat of a day in mid summer. But clouds are also a warning of hurricanes and tornados. That is the type of cloud the Lord had brought upon the city of Jerusalem and the disobedient people of Judah.

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The ark of the covenant was considered the throne of God on earth in the time of David. The Lord was so angry with His people that His presence had departed from the Most Holy Place of the temple. Israel had proven they did not wish to honor His will. He therefore removed His feet from the Holy Place.

**Lam 2:2 The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.**

It was not only the temple and the city of Jerusalem which had earned His wrath. The entire nation, both north and south were in disapproval. From the least to the greatest, He had thrown them from the heights of glory to the depths of despair. They had chosen pollution. He would see that they learned the seriousness of such pollution.

**Lam 2:3 He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about.**

Many species of animals show their power through their horns. Israel had been a powerful nation with respected horns. Now she has been dehorned and left helpless before her enemies.

The right hand is the one which the large majority of persons use in battle. God's right hand had been pulled back from the defense of His people. In doing this He

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had in effect used the power of the enemy to burn His disobedient nation like a wildfire in a wheat field.

Lam 2:4 He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire.

Rather than using His right hand to pour out blessings upon Judah, God was using that right hand to shake His fist at them. He was destroying all that they had held dear. His fury burned like a forest fire.

Lam 2:5 The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.

It is the epitome of folly to make God one's enemy. His vengeance was swallowing up everything. The walls of the city of Jerusalem, and the palaces which had been envied by all who passed by had come crumbling down and lay in the dust of the earth. Judah was left with nothing but tears.

Lam 2:6 And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.

In the gardens of those days small shelters were provided for shade and rest. God had removed the

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tabernacle where His worship was centered as easily as if it had been one of those shanties in a garden. The gatherings of large multitudes of people for the happy feasts were no longer seen. The sabbaths which offered rest on the seventh day of every week were a thing of the past. The ruler and the priests who had formerly guided Judah were despised rather than being exalted.

**Lam 2:7 The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast.**

The altar of sacrifice, as well as the holy place had been abandoned by Jehovah. There was a noise in the house of the Lord, but it was not the noise of praise. It was the noise of enemy warriors who were crying out in triumph over having penetrated the heart of Israel's former sanctuary.

Let me suggest that something similar is happening in the house of worship today. It is rapidly moving from a place of solemn assembly to an area where one cannot concentrate upon spiritual thoughts. The noise becomes so intense just before the services begin that it is well nigh impossible to quickly halt the confusion and bow down before the God of heaven. Even during the course of the worship itself there are many who come in late and allow spoiled children to cry and talk when a little discipline would bring the solemnity a worship service should enjoy.

**Lam 2:8 The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from**

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destroying; therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together.

That which was happening to Judah was the result of the Lord having drawn a line and saying, “NO MORE!” He had allowed the Babylonian army to destroy both the wall of the city of Jerusalem and the city within that wall.

Lam 2:9 Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.

One disaster after another are listed. The gates of Jerusalem lay flat on the ground. The rulers have been taken to Babylon. In that place the law of Moses was not recognized. This does not mean the law of Moses had been repealed. It lasted until the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. However, it was ignored in Babylon of the Gentiles. God was no longer revealing hope and guidance for the future through the prophets. Jeremiah seems to have been an isolated case, and what he was predicting was not pleasant.

Lam 2:10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

The elders of the city were dumbfounded. They clothed themselves in sackcloth and covered themselves with dust. The young women who would normally have walked in pride with a springy step keep their eyes glued downward.

Lam 2:11 Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.

Jeremiah himself cannot express the fullness of his grief. The eyes, the heart and the liver are usually connected with the deepest emotions felt by humans. The prophet can imagine no greater despair than he feels as he surveys the damage to the land.

Lam 2:12 They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom.

From the babes in arms to the children who would have played in the streets in days past, hunger ruled. They cry out for nourishment. Since there is none, the babes breathe their last breath at the empty breast of their mothers.

Lam 2:13 What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?

Jeremiah feels that he knows of no situation in history which equals the troubles which have fallen upon those who once received showers of blessing. Instead, they now swim in a sea of troubles. There is no source of healing. God's ear has turned away.

Lam 2:14 Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

Lying prophets are deadly poison. They speak that which they think the people wish to hear; not what the Lord has revealed. They do not warn when men sin. They allow them to go merrily on their way to the fires of hell. If they had told the truth and the people had heeded that truth the captivity could have been avoided. Now the hammer had dropped. It was too late.

Lam 2:15 All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?

Those who had been amazed at the glory of Israel in days gone by, and who had envied her place of prestige, were now laughing and shaking their heads in glee at the ugliness which had replaced the former beauty. Jerusalem had been recognized as the flower of the world. She had turned into a cesspool.

Lam 2:16 All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it.

Those nations who had despised Israel in the past had waited long for just such a time as had come. They gloried in her fall. They thought it was their own superior power

and wisdom which had cast the city down to defeat. This was not true. The change had come because Jehovah had removed His protecting arm from around the shoulders of His wayward people.

Lam 2:17 The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.

God had made a number of promises to Israel in those days of old. A good number of them were conditional in nature. As long as they honored His Word, He would honor His promise. When they rebelled against His commandments, they could expect just the sort of thing which was happening in the days in which they were living.

The power of Israel was overwhelming when God upheld their arm. Now they had become hornless. The power was gone. Their enemies were able to subdue them.

Lam 2:18 Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.

Was there anything which could be done to bring on better days? Jeremiah would give them the answer. It might not be one they would easily accept, but it was the only solution to their plight. They must pray with all the diligence they could muster. They must pray, and pray, and pray. The tears of repentance must flow on and on

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until God responded, in whatever way He knew to be best.

**Lam 2:19 Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.**

The prayers must be made both day and night. For the sake of their starving children they must lift up holy hands and plead for mercy. Note that filthy hands were not enough. The lives of those who prayed for help must match the intensity of the prayers which rose from their hearts.

**Lam 2:20 Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?**

They must cry out for God to reflect upon who it was that He was placing under such suffering. This was not the Gentile world. It was those who had fleshly descent from Abraham. They were intended to be blessed, and to be a blessing. What they were experiencing was just the opposite. The situation had become so serious that mothers were eating their own infants when the infants should have been feeding from the breasts of that mother. Nave's Topical Bible defines the "span" as being nine or ten inches.

God had predicted long before that this would happen. (See Leviticus 26:29 and Deuteronomy 28:53-57.)

*Lev 26:29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.*

*Deut 28:53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:*

*Deut 28:54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:*

*Deut 28:55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.*

*Deut 28:56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,*

*Deut 28:57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.*

**Lam 2:21 The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied.**

Those who had been so blessed when they kept the Word of the Lord were dying in the streets of the city of Jerusalem. God's cursings are as severe as His blessings are bountiful.

**Lam 2:22 Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the**

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LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

The grief of the prophet is beyond words. He had tried valiantly to care for the people of the Lord. He had treated them as a parent would treat a precious child. Those very ones whom he had cherished were being devoured by those who hated them.

Chapter 3

The sixty-six verses of this chapter may possibly cause some to see it as a hurdle, and pass over it lightly to arrive at the shorter ones and close out the book. If so, that would be a mistake. Some of the richest material in the whole of Jeremiah and Lamentations is found right before us.

Whereas each of the previous chapters was but twenty-two verses in length, this one is triple that number. It carries a triple acrostic where the others are single. The first three verses of each chapter begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus the entire Hebrew alphabet is used three times by the time we reach the sixty-sixth and last verse.

The author of the book desires that those who read it understand the relationship between the Lord and the sinner. All men sin. Some sin much more than others. Some are outside the fold of God. Others claim to be His followers. On many occasions those who sin less suffer along with those who have shaken their fists in the face of Jehovah. The call is for all to see the need for correction and lift up both their hands and their hearts to plead for forgiveness and hope.

Lam 3:1 I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.

Who is this "I" in verse one? Some are convinced it is Jeremiah the prophet. Others are just as firmly convinced that he is a representative of the entire suffering nation of Israel. He now begins to realize that the suffering is necessary if God is to carry out His plans for a faithful family in eternity. Parts of the chapter sound like the nation as a whole. Other parts seem to picture Jeremiah

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himself. Therefore we shall consider both viewpoints as we move forward.

The present commentator believes Jeremiah to have been the author of Lamentations, but that much of what was written applied to the wayword nation as a whole.

**Lam 3:2 He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.**

God is light! He desires that all men love the light. Why then does He allow men to walk in the darkness? It is because they have freedom of choice and have loved the darkness more than the light. They must see the horrible end of that ridiculous choice. Unless they are corrected while time is on their side, they will find ever greater grief when there is no more time. Would we not rather walk for a short time in the darkness in order to gain an appreciation for the light?

**Lam 3:3 Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.**

The writer is the man who has begun to comprehend the need for spiritual dedication to God's truth. It seems that it applies more accurately to the idolators in Israel that it does to the prophet who has fearlessly condemned their idolatry. Yet, Jeremiah cannot completely escape from his own guilt. He is also a sinner; surely not to the degree that most the others of the nation are guilty, but he suffers as a result of being a part of Israel. He is ready to admit the need for all to develop a greater love for light than has been true in the past.

Day after day the rod of God's wrath falls on the back of the sinner. It is a necessary means of turning men from sin.

**Lam 3:4 My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.**

It is not easy to bear the consequences of our foolish choices. Man was placed in the Garden of Eden where the tree of life was available. If he had not sinned, he would still have that life. A part of dying is watching the body wrinkle and weaken. The eyes grow dim. The ears, the bones, the muscles and the mind all become less efficient.

Israel had defied Jehovah. As a result she had experienced a very vivid example of the end toward which she was headed. Would she take heed?

**Lam 3:5 He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.**

The people had watched as the Babylonians built ramps to allow entry into the city of Jerusalem. They had found the meaning of bitterness and hard labor with little reward.

**Lam 3:6 He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.**

Those who had wished to live in the darkness of sin had been allowed to do that. It seemed almost as if they had been buried in the darkness of the grave with the long dead.

**Lam 3:7 He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.**

Slaves were often chained to prevent escape from their bondage. Israel had found herself carrying the load of such chains. She could not free herself from them.

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Prisoners find their cell a most uncomfortable place. They also find the labor which is forced upon them when they leave the cells to be equally miserable. The sinner will find the chains with which Satan has handcuffed him or her most detestable.

Lam 3:8 Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.

But surely if the sinner calls out to the Lord for escape, He will hear that prayer. Does God no longer care? Oh yes, God never ceases to care. At the same time, He knows how necessary it is that men taste the horrors of hell for a season than to be completely buried in them without an end.

Lam 3:9 He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.

Hewn stones make up prison walls. Crooked paths never arrive at one's desired destination. Israel had found themselves unable to break down the walls which fenced them in while they were allowed to learn the most serious lessons men ever learn. They were also unable to reach any goals which would have been reachable in the past, but were now almost unthinkable.

Lam 3:10 He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places.

The bear and the lion were known for lying in wait where they could leap out upon their prey. Every direction the captives looked they looked fear in the face. An enemy was always waiting to pounce upon them and take them for servants.

Lam 3:11 He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate.

The ways spoken of here were those misguided ways which the people had followed as they directed their own steps instead of allowing the Lord to lead them in the light.

Like the bear or the lion, God had made it necessary to alter their footsteps. He had shredded their plans. He had left them groaning in the absence of His blessings.

Lam 3:12 He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.

Since they had made God their foe, He was demonstrating to them what that really meant. He had strung his bow and aimed his arrow right at their heart.

Lam 3:13 He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins.

The quiver was the container in which the arrows were kept. God had not just aimed his arrow in Israel's direction. He had cause it to sink deep into the emotional depths of those who had let sin take over their souls.

Lam 3:14 I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day.

Now this sounds more like Jeremiah in person. As he called out for repentance on the part of those to whom he preached. They despised him for telling them they deserved that which they were suffering. Songs are not always cheerful. The song these bitter people were

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voicing was a means of telling Jeremiah they hated him for chastising them.

**Lam 3:15 He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.**

It is not easy to present the truth to people who need correction. They become bitter and this results in bitterness on the part of the one attempting to correct them. Jeremiah was apparently disgusted with the lack of penitence and somewhat confused over having to do the disagreeable task.

**Lam 3:16 He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes.**

None of us like to bite down on food and find that a stone was in the midst of it. Teeth can be broken when this happens. Jeremiah was finding it necessary to bite off that which became nearly unbearable. Sitting in ashes was one of the ways of demonstrating grief and sorrow. Any man of God who has met sarcasm from those to whom he preached the truth will sympathize with the plight of this one who spoke the Word of the Lord to those who did not wish to hear it.

**Lam 3:17 And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.**

Prosperity causes the one who is prosperous to find peace and comfort unless that one is always greedy for more. Jeremiah had been exposed to such disturbance that he had forgotten what peace and prosperity were like.

**Lam 3:18 And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:**

His first impression was that God had removed both strength and hope from him. There appeared to be no optimism with regard to his own future or that of the nation of Israel. All was gloom and doom.

**Lam 3:19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.**

**Lam 3:20 My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.**

He had determined that the misery surrounding him was not to bring defeat. Rather than causing him to give up and deny the Lord, he would humble himself and admit that Jehovah had reasons for that which He was permitting to take place.

**Lam 3:21 This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.**

**Lam 3:22 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.**

When he thought the situation over more deeply, he realized that neither he nor the nation of Israel had received more suffering than was deserved. It was only because of the grace and mercy of God that they had not been completely destroyed. Perhaps there was an end to the agony after all. Although prayer had not seemed to have been heard, it must be true that the Lord would hear and answer when the time was right.

**Lam 3:23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.**

God's mercy and compassion are there whether of not we are aware of it. They may not have been evident

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yesterday, but when today arrives, yesterday's bitterness may be changed to a new beginning. It all depends upon what God knows about the inner workings of our hearts.

Lam 3:24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

There is hope for the one who is willing to accept the chastening of the Lord. It will not be unbearable, even though it may seem to be at times. If it were dependent upon any other, all hope might be extinguished. Since it is the Lord with whom we interact, we have no reason to faint.

Lam 3:25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

Lam 3:26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

In His own time God will cause His blessings to again fall upon those who do not give up. Murmuring and complaining will only postpone those blessings. We must wait for Him to act, and the waiting must be done quietly and patiently.

Lam 3:27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

This verse has much to say about the entire meaning of the book of Lamentations. Heavy burdens at the proper time can make a great difference in the time to follow. The child who is punished for misbehavior when young is far more apt to develop a mature personality when he is grown. So it was with God's people. They were exposed

to a yoke in the day of Jeremiah in order that when the Son of God appeared centuries later, there would be a remnant to receive him.

Lam 3:28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.

At present all Israel could do was bear the burden, pray and wait in hope.

Lam 3:29 He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.

To put the mouth in the dust is to humble one's self before the God of heaven. We sometimes speak of a person biting the dust. That often means he died. However, one may bite the dust without perishing.

Lam 3:30 He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

This was the example provided by Jesus Christ. He was sinless; yet He was smitten for our transgressions. Later He was enthroned at the right hand of the Father in heaven. The same pattern may be necessary for all true servants of God. The reproach which is borne may lead to later glory.

Lam 3:31 For the Lord will not cast off for ever:

There will be difficulties for all who draw the breath of life. Those difficulties will come to an end one day if the person bearing them learns to place his future in the hand of God. If that is the case there is no obstacle too large to overcome.

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**Lam 3:32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.**

What! Does God cause such grief? Yes, He does, because He knows it is necessary for the well being of we creatures who are supposed to be growing up to the fullness of the stature of the divine model. As the Lord sees the justification for it He will extend mercy and compassion to those who will respond to it in the right manner.

**Lam 3:33 For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.**

It does not give God satisfaction to see His people suffering. The sceptic may ask why He allows it. Is He not able to prevent it? We have no way of answering this question. It seems that it has to do with freedom of choice. It may be that in order to have good, there must be the possibility of evil. The presence of evil is a theological wilderness to impenetrable for the minds of limited humans.

**Lam 3:34 To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.**

**Lam 3:35 To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,**

God is not going to take away the essence of man in order to combat evil. The right of man is to stand before the face of God and say, "I will." or "I will not."

**Lam 3:36 To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.**

God could undermine the intentions of evil men by simply striking them dead when they pit their own will against His. He does not approve of that procedure. That removes any possibility of the person repenting and serving faithfully in the future.

**Lam 3:37 Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?**

No human is capable of overpowering His own Creator. That is not the determining factor in man's disobedience. Man is allowed to do that which is opposed to God's will for some other reason than that God cannot prevent it.

**Lam 3:38 Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?**

We must not expect God to bless men regardless of the pattern of their lives. The evil which is spoken of in this verse is the suffering which comes about because men choose the way of death rather than the way of life. God is good. There is no evil in Him, but when men sin He could not be good if He did not make the attempt to turn them from that sin.

**Lam 3:39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?**

Since God finds it necessary to purify men's souls through chastisement, Israel and all others must be grateful for His guidance, even if it is a bitter medicine to swallow.

**Lam 3:40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.**

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Now Jeremiah speaks for the entire nation, including himself. He uses the words “us” and “we.” To whatever degree the people have departed from righteous ways, they must identify those departures. They must turn around in their tracks and beg for forgiveness.

Lam 3:41 Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

It is not enough to lift the hands toward heaven in prayer to solve the problems. The hearts which have been fixed on that which is sinful must be cleansed and offered up along with the prayers.

Lam 3:42 We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.

Will the Lord remove the chastisement as soon as the person or persons repent? Not necessarily. He knows just how much medicine must be taken before the sickness will be healed. He is the Great Physician. We can only follow His prescription.

Lam 3:43 Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.

The days of punishment had gone on and on. There were steps along the way. First God declared his anger. Then he placed painful experiences in the pathway to turn men back. It even went so far as to see many slain. It was as if He had no pity. That was only the case with respect to those who were beyond help. Those who could be saved would be.

Lam 3:44 Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.

The cloud which led Israel in the wilderness was a revelation of His help. The cloud this time was an indication that His ear was stopped to their pleas until they turned from their immorality and idolatry.

Lam 3:45 Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.

Where once Israel had been admired as standing tall among the neighboring nations, she now had sunk to the level of a garbage dump. It was not the Lord who had been the cause of this decline. It was their own unwillingness to live up to the expectations which He had set up for them. If they would remedy the way of life which they had chosen, God would lift them back up to a position of esteem in the sight of their neighbors.

Lam 3:46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

Any such gossip would have been completely out of order when Israel respected God and His will. When they decided to turn from God's commandments they found themselves the butt of degrading remarks. The respect which had been shown by the neighboring nations had melted away.

Lam 3:47 Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.

Does the reader become wearied with the repetition of the sorrows which have come upon Judah? If there are songs which express joy and glee in verse after verse and song after song, why should the same not be true with respect to lamentation over their desolation from both man and God?

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**Lam 3:48 Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.**

This clearly sounds like the feelings of Jeremiah after he had tried with all his heart to turn the people from their pride and seen practically no difference in their way of life. He could not contain his grief over what was happening to them when he compared it with what could have been the case if they had obeyed Jehovah.

**Lam 3:49 Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission.**

**Lam 3:50 Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.**

The flow of tears was continuous. It was not the fault of Jeremiah that these horrors were falling upon them. He had followed the command of God and had warned them with all the energy he possessed. It was their fault, but that did not relieve the sorrow he felt for their sorry circumstances.

**Lam 3:51 Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.**

That which the prophet saw could hardly keep from affecting his heart. The feminine is used to denote the helplessness of the people. They were no more able to resist the grief which rolled in upon them in waves than a delicate woman would be when attacked by armed soldiers.

**Lam 3:52 Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.**

Jeremiah himself had been treated miserably. There was no excuse for that treatment. The enemies of the Jews

hated him because he was a Jew. The Jews hated him for telling them the truth about their foolish conduct.

**Lam 3:53 They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.**

These are not symbolic words we have here. Jeremiah was actually thrown into such a place. It was then sealed in order that he not escape. (Compare Jeremiah 38:6ff.)

*Jer 38:4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.*

*Jer 38:5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you.*

*Jer 38:6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.*

**Lam 3:54 Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.**

**Lam 3:55 I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon.**

**Lam 3:56 Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry.**

The prophet prayed to God for help. He deserved such help. God heard his call and came to his aid. If Jeremiah had not proven his devotion to God, this would not have happened.

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All of us find ourselves in a low dungeon which seems to be too deep and miry to escape. God will hear our prayer if we have made Him our ally and not our enemy.

Lam 3:57 Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

And God did hear this good man. He answered the call with the comforting words, "Fear not." Do you not think Jeremiah was thankful that he had remained true through the previous perilous times?

Lam 3:58 O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.

These are strange words. To whom does the Lord plead? Is He not the Most High? The pleading must merely mean that God intervened in the depths of that dungeon and arranged for Jeremiah to be liberated.

Lam 3:59 O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause.

The prophet appealed to God to see justice done. He was not fearful in placing the case before the Supreme Judge. He need not worry that he would be declared guilty when he was innocent of the charges his enemies would heap upon his head.

Lam 3:60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.

Lam 3:61 Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, and all their imaginations against me;

Lam 3:62 The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day.

Jeremiah knew very well that God was aware of the mistreatment he had suffered. His future would be safe when the Lord was the Judge. Israel hated him for laying their sins open before their faces. God would be an honest evaluator of his actions.

Lam 3:63 Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their musick.

These foes never gave up in their efforts to muffle his accusations. Night and day they had schemed to rid themselves of his scalding words. This was absolutely unjustified.

Lam 3:64 Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.

If Jeremiah was a type of the Saviour, it does not show in these last three verses of chapter three. Christ prayed for the conversion of His enemies. He turned the other cheek when they slapped Him and insulted Him. Few of us could have done better than did Jeremiah. He only asked for his persecutors to be accurately judged by the One who knows the hearts of all men.

Lam 3:65 Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.

Lam 3:66 Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.

It was not necessary that Jeremiah pray for sorrow of heart, curses or destruction at the hand of God. All he had to do was lay the case before Jehovah. It would be handled to perfection.

Chapter 4

The reader would do well to brace himself before entering into the study of this grisly chapter. Your commentator has seen and read of scenes which left him nauseated very near to the point of vomiting. This present picture is about as horrifying as any of them. We are getting a first hand view of the conditions in Jerusalem during and just after the Babylonian invasion. The contrast between what once was, and what then was, is incredible.

Lam 4:1 How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street.

Gold is as beautiful as any metal when it is polished and made into decoration. Jerusalem and the temple were known to display such gold in large amounts. The next verse indicates that this is introduced to tell how the glory of the priests, prophets and nobility of Israel had been reduced to that which was no more than litter in the streets.

Lam 4:2 The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

Those glorified leaders of the nation were brought down to worthlessness. As clay pitchers are to precious gems, these once honored persons were being broken and ruined.

Lam 4:3 Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the

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**daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.**

Certain dumb animals such as whales have the desire and ability to nurse their young. God's nation was more like the young of the ostrich which lays it's eggs and then abandons them. The leaders of Israel were rendered incapable of guiding the nation. The citizens were left in hideous hunger and fear.

**Lam 4:4 The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.**

The lack of food was so severe that mothers had no milk for their babes. The older children were dying of starvation with no indication that conditions would improve. None could help them.

**Lam 4:5 They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.**

Those who had lived in the midst of prosperity in the past had been caused to search through the garbage heaps, and then found not even enough to stay alive.

**Lam 4:6 For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.**

Sodom was punished for the sin of sodomy. She was burned to cinders very quickly. Israel was apparently



guilty of a greater sin than Sodom. She experienced a lingering deadly hunger that left her wishing death would come soon.

Israel had attempted to get aid from Egypt. That was unsuccessful. Egypt made a half hearted try to offer such aid, but was turned back.

**Lam 4:7 Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire:**

The word which is translated as “Nazarites” here is not restricted to a sect called the Nazarenes. It can include any who have dedicated themselves to a life of separation from sin. These had been recognized as attractive. Their health had been very noticeable. But watch the next verse.

**Lam 4:8 Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.**

The complexion which had been so impressive had become dark. Disease and hunger had reduced these persons to living corpses. Their arms and legs were mere skin and bones. They had changed so much they were unrecognizable.

**Lam 4:9 They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.**

Having never experienced death by either the sword, or by hunger, it is impossible for the rest of us to make an accurate comparison in the suffering involved. However,

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from an outsider's view it does seem preferable to die quickly than to see and feel death coming for weeks before it arrives.

The fruits of the field are, of course, the crops which would normally have been harvested, but did not exist..

Lam 4:10 The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

We have discussed this condition in our comments on chapter two of this book. Enough is enough! To sodden is to boil.

Lam 4:11 The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.

The fire kindled in Jerusalem was worse than that which burnt up Sodom. This fire was of a different nature. It had the ability to burn the very foundations of the city of God. Humans burn garbage. God does the same. Jerusalem had been changed from being the apple of God's eye to being the smoking ashes from burnt garbage.

Lam 4:12 The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.

Throughout the earth Jerusalem was recognized as a gem of the Lord so precious that none could ever think of defeating it in battle. Her gates and walls were guarded by the watchful eye and the mighty arm of Jehovah. Other

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cities might be besieged successfully, but certainly not Jerusalem.

**Lam 4:13 For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her,**

Her invulnerability might have lasted had she not allowed her priests and prophets to become pride filled and so independent they felt they did not need to reach up for the hand of God. They had not led the people. Instead, they had shed their blood. A people are doomed when their leadership ignores the will of the Lord. This was especially true of a people who had been so favored for centuries.

**Lam 4:14 They have wandered as blind men in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments.**

Those who should have been leading the people were wandering blindly. They had departed so far from God's guidance that they had the blood of their victims on their garments. When this happened the law of Moses directed that such persons could not be touched without polluting those who touched them.

**Lam 4:15 They cried unto them, Depart ye; it is unclean; depart, depart, touch not: when they fled away and wandered, they said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn there.**

The people had been deprived of the aid of those who should have been a source of security. They had

found themselves scattered among the heathen, with no prospect of going back to the ruined city.

**Lam 4:16 The anger of the LORD hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favoured not the elders.**

Those who had been separated from the city and taken into captivity had lost all respect for the priests and the elders. This might well be expected when the leaders wandered blindly without heeding God's directions.

**Lam 4:17 As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.**

Others had looked in vain for help from among the various nations. The help had not come. Without God's help they could not save themselves. The case was hopeless.

**Lam 4:18 They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come.**

The invaders were watching like hawks for any trace of the Israelites left in the city. They were being hunted like animals.

We who have lived during the years of the persecution of the Jews by Adolph Hitler can allow our minds to make a comparison between the condition of the Jews in Palestine, and that of those consigned to burning furnaces in Germany.



**Lam 4:19 Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness.**

They even found it impossible to flee successfully from the Babylonian forces. They had surrounded the city. Any who did manage to pass through the guards were caught in the surrounding territory.

**Lam 4:20 The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.**

King Zedekiah had been taken by the enemy. They had hoped that even if they were removed to the territory of Babylonia, they might be governed by him. This was not to be. He had been forced to watch his children killed before his eyes. They his eyes had been gouged out of their sockets leaving the king blind.

**Lam 4:21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked.**

The envy of Edom had lasted from the time of Esau, the brother of Jacob. Edom was now rejoicing in the sad plight of the descendants of Jacob. Jeremiah warned that Edom had better enjoy herself at the present. The time was ahead when the Edomites would find themselves drinking from the same bitter cup of God's wrath as had been poured out upon Jacob. The sins of Edom had been somewhat hidden until this time. When their time came,

those sins would be bared before all men. Gloating would then be impossible.

**Lam 4:22 The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.**

This is just a faint hint of relief for Israel. Her agonies would someday come to an end. In contrast, the Edomites would drink from the same bitter cup of divine wrath. They had rejoiced at the great misfortune of their kindred through Jacob.

## *Chapter 5*

There is very little new in this last chapter of Lamentations. It includes a brief review of a number of those things mentioned in the first four. It does close with a passionate prayer that the Lord might help the people to turn back to Him and cause them to regain at least a little of what they had lost.

It has twenty-two verses just as chapters one, two and four have, but the verses do not follow the acrostic pattern in which each verse begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Jeremiah may have felt it was out of order to bind the final prayer into such a rigid pattern.

**Lam 5:1 Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach.**

It seemed that the Lord was so far away during all the misery which had been laid upon Israel that a most earnest plea must be used to persuade Him to ever again have the least compassion for that people. God knew very well what had happened to them. He had allowed it to happen that they might learn the most basic truth of all. He is to be loved and obeyed with all of the heart, soul and mind. He knew of the reproach which had come upon them because as their True God He had suffered defamation of character through their demonstrated weakness. Could Israel's God not protect His nation?

**Lam 5:2 Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.**

The inheritance was the land of Canaan. God had aided them in driving out the wicked inhabitants of the land in order that they could claim it for a means of

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service to Him and a source of blessing for themselves. Now those who were not Israelites had taken possession of that which had been so dear to them. The houses they had built on that land were now being used by those who were not of related to them through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Lam 5:3 We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.

The children had been left without providers. The mothers had lost their husbands and were in all practical respects widows. Some of the men had been killed. Others had been carried off as captives.

Lam 5:4 We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us.

They were not even allowed to drink fresh water or cut wood to cook their food and warm their homes without paying for those necessities of life.

Lam 5:5 Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest.

The neck was often used to carry yokes with heavy loads. They had been forced to do grievous manual labor far beyond the normal hours one might be expected to work. They were exhausted.

Lam 5:6 We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.

In order to have a limited ration of food, it had been necessary to offer their bodies for whatever tasks the

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Egyptians and Assyrians laid out for them. The fact that Egypt was on the west and Assyria was on the east tells us they were surrounded by those who controlled their lives every hour of the day.

**Lam 5:7 Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities.**

These people who had been so proud were no more than slaves. This had come about because of the sins of their forefathers. Is this justice? We will let God be the judge of that. What we do know is that the children of a drunken father usually bear burdens which would not have been theirs if the father had been responsible.

**Lam 5:8 Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth deliver us out of their hand.**

Those who at one time would have been their servants were now in control. There was no one available to reverse the tragedy. If only the LORD might open His ear to their prayer!

**Lam 5:9 We gat our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness.**

To venture out in an attempt to get food danger faced them at every step. There were swords in the hands of those who had invaded the land. In addition there were wild beasts prowling who could snuff out a life at any time.

**Lam 5:10 Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine.**

Starvation causes a change in the complexion. The skin turns dark and the limbs begin to look more like sticks than like arms and legs.

**Lam 5:11 They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah.**

Mount Zion was the site of the temple before it was ransacked. At the time of the prophet's prayer the Israelite women were being sexually assaulted at the whim of the controlling soldiers. Throughout the land of Judah this same atrocity was being practiced. No woman was safe, particularly if she was found outside on the street.

**Lam 5:12 Princes are hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honoured.**

Those who had been admired as the nobility of the Israelites were deliberately used as examples of the hate which the Arabs had for the helpless sons of Jacob. Hooks were fastened to walls and these men were hung up on the hooks while still alive. After a lengthy time of horrible pain they gave up the ghost. Those who had been respected for their wisdom in administering justice at the gates of the cities were detested.

**Lam 5:13 They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood.**

The virile young men who would have been working the fields were forced to grind wheat which was the work normally done by women. Children were made to carry loads which were beyond their ability to lift. They fell under the weight of the load.

**Lam 5:14 The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their musick.**

The gates of Jerusalem which had once been a center of justice and also a gathering place for entertainment by the youths were deserted. The only thing which might be heard would have been sobs of sorrow.

**Lam 5:15 The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.**

Merry laughter was a thing of the past. Dancing feet had been displaced by knees resting in ashes of remorse.

**Lam 5:16 The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!**

Israel had stood as the envy of that part of the world. She had been blessed beyond any other nation of the time. She was queen! But now look what had happened. She was sitting in sackcloth and ashes and begging those who had overcome her for bread and water.

We see a change in depth of sorrow right here. Just previously, the prayer had been that her forefathers had sinned and they were bearing the consequences of those sins. Is this not a change. WE HAVE SINNED. That is much more likely to catch the ear of the Lord than the earlier statement.

**Lam 5:17 For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim.**

As a result of all the discouragements Israel has faced, they have become disheartened. They cannot see hope in

the future. It may be that this is speaking about literal blindness. However, it is more likely that the reference is to an inability to foresee what disaster may befall next.

**Lam 5:18 Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.**

Mount Zion was the elevation where the temple had stood. The condition as the prayer was being offered was so different that wild animals prowled over the area. What a horrid sight this was for the once proud citizens of Israel!

**Lam 5:19 Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.**

Jeremiah admits that Jehovah is eternal. He has always ruled, and always will rule. Though human kings and nations may come and go, God exists before, during and after time.

**Lam 5:20 Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?**

Jeremiah pleads with the Lord not to punish His people without end. Has the discipline not lasted long enough? Is there any hope left?

**Lam 5:21 Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.**

God does not answer the prophet directly. Still He has provided an answer when He sees the time is right. After the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, they were allowed to return to the land. But above and beyond that,

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the appearance of the Christian age has made it possible for both Jew and Gentile to become one in the present Kingdom of God. The eternal is infinitely better than the temporal. The New Jerusalem of heaven will shelter those who follow in the footsteps of the “Father of the faithful” and endure unto the end.

Lam 5:22 But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us.

This statement is partly correct and partly incorrect. Yes, the Lord was very filled with wrath toward those who had forsaken Him for those which were not gods, and were fashioned with men’s hands. No, God had not utterly and forever rejected the Jews. We have been instructed to preach the good news of Jesus Christ unto every creature on earth. That includes the Jews!

Give God your broken heart, so marred by sin. He will create anew; make whole again!

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