

Name: _____

THE HARD WORD

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

**GROWTH GROUP STUDIES
AND PERSONAL READING GUIDE**

VOLUME II



ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

The Studies

These studies are a little bit different to those previously written for Christ Church Gladesville. They are designed to be completed by your group **after you have heard the passage preached on a Sunday**. Each study consists of roughly six open ended questions for your group to discuss. It may help to think about these questions as “discussion starters” rather than a set of questions to answer one after another. You should allow about 30 to 40 minutes for this discussion.

The studies do not aim to guide your group in detailed exegesis of each passage. Rather, they aim to:

- help your group to revisit the exegesis that was presented in the Sunday sermon,
- help your group address remaining questions that you have about the passage
- provide your group with ample opportunity to consider possible applications of the passage

It is recommended that each group member listens to the relevant sermon before the group meeting. Members may also wish to listen to the corresponding episode of the Sermon Seasonings podcast.

Personal Reading Guide

To get the most out of studying Jeremiah, we have created a personal reading guide. If you follow this nine week guide, you will read the whole book and will keep up with the sermons and studies. The NIV text of Jeremiah has been included in this booklet thanks to the gospel generosity of the publishers, Biblica Inc. Please make use of these pages to highlight important words and make notes on the text. There is also a page for you to write notes or reflection on each reading.

Family Question

A Family Question has been provided the end of each study. Use this question to read and to discuss the Bible passage with your family.

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**WEEK 5:
17TH TO 23RD MAY**



JEREMIAH 25

25 ¹ The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

² So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: ³ For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

⁴ And though the Lord has sent all his servants the prophets to you again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. ⁵ They said, “Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the Lord gave to you and your ancestors for ever and ever. ⁶ Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not arouse my anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.”

⁷ “But you did not listen to me,” declares the Lord, “and you have aroused my anger with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.”

⁸ Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words, ⁹ I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the Lord, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. ¹⁰ I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

¹² “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and will make it desolate forever. ¹³ I will bring on that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. ¹⁴ They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

¹⁵ This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup filled with

the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹⁶ When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them.”

¹⁷ So I took the cup from the Lord’s hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn, a curse—as they are today; ¹⁹ Pharaoh king of Egypt, his attendants, his officials and all his people, ²⁰ and all the foreign people there; all the kings of Uz; all the kings of the Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod); ²¹ Edom, Moab and Ammon; ²² all the kings of Tyre and Sidon; the kings of the coastlands across the sea; ²³ Dedan, Tema, Buz and all who are in distant places; ²⁴ all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign people who live in the wilderness; ²⁵ all the kings of Zimri, Elam and Media; ²⁶ and all the kings of the north, near and far, one after the other—all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. And after all of them, the king of Sheshak will drink it too.

²⁷ “Then tell them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you.’ ²⁸ But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: You must drink it! ²⁹ See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword on all who live on the earth, declares the Lord Almighty.’

³⁰ “Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them:

“The Lord will roar from on high;

he will thunder from his holy dwelling

and roar mightily against his land.

He will shout like those who tread the grapes,

shout against all who live on the earth.

³¹ The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth,

for the Lord will bring charges against the nations;

he will bring judgment on all mankind

and put the wicked to the sword,”

declares the Lord.

³² This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Look! Disaster is spreading

from nation to nation;

a mighty storm is rising

from the ends of the earth.”

³³ At that time those slain by the Lord will be everywhere—from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like dung lying on the ground.

³⁴ Weep and wail, you shepherds;

roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.

For your time to be slaughtered has come;

you will fall like the best of the rams.

³⁵ The shepherds will have nowhere to flee,

the leaders of the flock no place to escape.

³⁶ Hear the cry of the shepherds,

the wailing of the leaders of the flock,

for the Lord is destroying their pasture.

³⁷ The peaceful meadows will be laid waste

because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

³⁸ Like a lion he will leave his lair,

and their land will become desolate

because of the sword of the oppressor

and because of the Lord's fierce anger.

JEREMIAH 26

26 ¹ Early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came from the Lord: ² “This is what the Lord says: Stand in the courtyard of the Lord’s house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the Lord. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. ³ Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from their evil ways. Then I will relent and not inflict on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done. ⁴ Say to them, ‘This is what the Lord says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, ⁵ and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), ⁶ then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city a curse among all the nations of the earth.’”

⁷ The priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the Lord. ⁸ But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the Lord had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, “You must die! ⁹ Why do you prophesy in the Lord’s name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted?” And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.

¹⁰ When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went up from the royal palace to the house of the Lord and took their places at the entrance of the New Gate of the Lord’s house.

¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people, “This man should be sentenced to death because he has prophesied against this city. You have heard it with your own ears!”

¹² Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard. ¹³ Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the Lord your God. Then the Lord will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴ As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right. ¹⁵ Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.”

¹⁶ Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man should not be sentenced to death! He has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.”

¹⁷ Some of the elders of the land stepped forward and said to the entire assembly of people, ¹⁸ “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Zion will be plowed like a field,

Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,

the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.’”

¹⁹ “Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah fear the Lord and seek his favor? And did not the Lord relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves!”

²⁰ (Now Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim was another man who prophesied in the name of the Lord; he prophesied the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did.

²¹ When King Jehoiakim and all his officers and officials heard his words, the king was determined to put him to death. But Uriah heard of it and fled in fear to Egypt. ²² King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Akbor to Egypt, along with some other men. ²³ They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him struck down with a sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.)

²⁴ Furthermore, Ahikam son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, and so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

JEREMIAH 27

27 ¹ Early in the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² This is what the Lord said to me: “Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck. ³ Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. ⁴ Give them a message for their masters and say, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Tell this to your masters: ⁵ With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁶ Now I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. ⁷ All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.

⁸ ““If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague, declares the Lord, until I destroy it by his hand. ⁹ So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’ ¹⁰ They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish. ¹¹ But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the Lord.””

¹² I gave the same message to Zedekiah king of Judah. I said, “Bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people,

and you will live. ¹³ Why will you and your people die by the sword, famine and plague with which the Lord has threatened any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴ Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying lies to you. ¹⁵ ‘I have not sent them,’ declares the Lord. ‘They are prophesying lies in my name. Therefore, I will banish you and you will perish, both you and the prophets who prophesy to you.’”

¹⁶ Then I said to the priests and all these people, “This is what the Lord says: Do not listen to the prophets who say, ‘Very soon now the articles from the Lord’s house will be brought back from Babylon.’ They are prophesying lies to you. ¹⁷ Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this city become a ruin? ¹⁸ If they are prophets and have the word of the Lord, let them plead with the Lord Almighty that the articles remaining in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon. ¹⁹ For this is what the Lord Almighty says about the pillars, the bronze Sea, the movable stands and the other articles that are left in this city, ²⁰ which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— ²¹ yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says about the things that are left in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem: ²² ‘They will be taken to Babylon and there they will remain until the day I come for them,’ declares the Lord. ‘Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.’”

JEREMIAH 28

28 ¹ In the fifth month of that same year, the fourth year, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and all the people: ² “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³ Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the Lord’s house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon. ⁴ I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon,’ declares the Lord, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’”

⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord. ⁶ He said, “Amen! May the Lord do so! May the Lord fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the Lord’s house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. ⁷ Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: ⁸ From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹ But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.”

¹⁰ Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, ¹¹ and he said before all the people, “This is what the Lord says: ‘In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.’” At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

¹² After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ¹³ “Go and tell Hananiah, ‘This is what the Lord says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron. ¹⁴ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.’”

¹⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen, Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. ¹⁶ Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the Lord.’”

¹⁷ In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.

JEREMIAH 29

29 ¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) ³ He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

⁴ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” ⁸ Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹ They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

¹⁵ You may say, “The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,” ¹⁶ but this is what the Lord says about the king who sits on David’s throne and all the people who remain in this city, your fellow citizens who did not go with you into exile— ¹⁷ yes, this is what the Lord Almighty says: “I will send

the sword, famine and plague against them and I will make them like figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸ I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse and an object of horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them. ¹⁹ For they have not listened to my words,” declares the Lord, “words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either,” declares the Lord.

²⁰ Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²¹ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you in my name: “I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your very eyes. ²² Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: ‘May the Lord treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.’ ²³ For they have done outrageous things in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and in my name they have uttered lies—which I did not authorize. I know it and am a witness to it,” declares the Lord.

²⁴ Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite, ²⁵ “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You sent letters in your own name to all the people in Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah son of Maa-seiah, and to all the other priests. You said to Zephaniah, ²⁶ ‘The Lord has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada to be in charge of the house of the Lord; you should put any maniac who acts like a prophet into the stocks and neck-irons. ²⁷ So why have you not reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth, who poses as a prophet among you? ²⁸ He has sent this message to us in Babylon: It will be a long time. Therefore build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.’”

²⁹ Zephaniah the priest, however, read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet. ³⁰ Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ³¹ “Send this message to all the exiles: ‘This is what the Lord says about Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, even though I did not send him, and has persuaded you to trust in lies, ³² this is what the Lord says: I will surely punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. He will have no one left among this people, nor will he see the good things I will do for my people, declares the Lord, because he has preached rebellion against me.’”

Study Five | Jeremiah 27:1-29:32

THE BATTLE OF THE PROPHETS

Pick any of life and there are many people who set themselves up as the authority on that subject. How might you decide who to listen to?

Read Jeremiah 27:1-22

Note: A Flashback

Last week, we looked at Jeremiah's words that he spoke late in the reign of King Zedekiah, during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Chapters 27 to 29 take us back in time to earlier in Zedekiah's rule. The time references in 27:1, 28:1 and 28:17 show us that these chapters cover a two month period, around 7 years before the fall of Jerusalem. At this time a group of people have been exiled to Babylon (this group included king Jehoiachin and Daniel) as part of Nebuchadnezzar's response to Judah's rebellion (2 Kings 24:1-17).

1. How would you summarise Jeremiah's message in this chapter?

2. What does this chapter show us about God?

Read Jeremiah 28:1-17

3. What is Hananiah's message to the people? How does it compare to what Jeremiah has said?

4. What test is suggested for how to tell if a prophet is really from God? How do both Hananiah and Jeremiah rate according to this test?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-32

5. How does Jeremiah both encourage and warn the exiles in Babylon?

6. There are many leaders of all religions, both past and present, who call for our attention. Why should someone listen to what Jesus has to say, rather than them? (For example, see Romans 1:1-4).

7. The New Testament takes false teaching very seriously. What are some false teachings that you have heard from the past and the present? How do you know that they are not from God?

Glossary:

Yoke: A wooden frame that was used to join two animals together.

FAMILY QUESTION:

Read Jeremiah 29:8-14

What does Jeremiah say that both encourages and warns the exiles in Babylon?

There are many religious teachers who want our attention. Why should we listen to what Jesus says, rather than them? (For an example, see Romans 1:1-4)

**WEEK 6:
24TH TO 30TH MAY**



JEREMIAH 30

30 ¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. ³ The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess,’ says the Lord.”

⁴ These are the words the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah: ⁵ “This is what the Lord says:

“Cries of fear are heard—
terror, not peace.

⁶ Ask and see:

Can a man bear children?

Then why do I see every strong man

with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor,

every face turned deathly pale?

⁷ How awful that day will be!

No other will be like it.

It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,

but he will be saved out of it.

⁸ “‘In that day,’ declares the Lord Almighty,

‘I will break the yoke off their necks

and will tear off their bonds;

no longer will foreigners enslave them.

⁹ Instead, they will serve the Lord their God

and David their king,

whom I will raise up for them.

¹⁰ “‘So do not be afraid, Jacob my servant;

do not be dismayed, Israel,’

declares the Lord.

‘I will surely save you out of a distant place,

your descendants from the land of their exile.

Jacob will again have peace and security,

and no one will make him afraid.

¹¹ I am with you and will save you,’
declares the Lord.

‘Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.

I will discipline you but only in due measure;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.’

¹² “This is what the Lord says:

“Your wound is incurable,
your injury beyond healing.

¹³ There is no one to plead your cause,
no remedy for your sore,
no healing for you.

¹⁴ All your allies have forgotten you;
they care nothing for you.

I have struck you as an enemy would
and punished you as would the cruel,
because your guilt is so great
and your sins so many.

¹⁵ Why do you cry out over your wound,
your pain that has no cure?

Because of your great guilt and many sins
I have done these things to you.

¹⁶ “‘But all who devour you will be devoured;
all your enemies will go into exile.

Those who plunder you will be plundered;
all who make spoil of you I will despoil.

¹⁷ But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds,’

declares the Lord,

‘because you are called an outcast,
Zion for whom no one cares.’

¹⁸ “This is what the Lord says:

“I will restore the fortunes of Jacob’s tents
and have compassion on his dwellings;

the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,
and the palace will stand in its proper place.

¹⁹ From them will come songs of thanksgiving
and the sound of rejoicing.

I will add to their numbers,
and they will not be decreased;

I will bring them honor,
and they will not be disdained.

²⁰ Their children will be as in days of old,
and their community will be established before
me;

I will punish all who oppress them.

²¹ Their leader will be one of their own;
their ruler will arise from among them.

I will bring him near and he will come close to
me—

for who is he who will devote himself
to be close to me?’

declares the Lord.

²² “So you will be my people,
and I will be your God.”

²³ See, the storm of the Lord
will burst out in wrath,
a driving wind swirling down
on the heads of the wicked.

²⁴ The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back
until he fully accomplishes
the purposes of his heart.

In days to come
you will understand this.

JEREMIAH 31

31 ¹ “At that time,” declares the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people.”

² This is what the Lord says:

“The people who survive the sword
will find favor in the wilderness;
I will come to give rest to Israel.”

³ The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying:

“I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

⁴ I will build you up again,
and you, Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt.

Again you will take up your timbrels
and go out to dance with the joyful.

⁵ Again you will plant vineyards
on the hills of Samaria;
the farmers will plant them
and enjoy their fruit.

⁶ There will be a day when watchmen cry out
on the hills of Ephraim,
‘Come, let us go up to Zion,
to the Lord our God.’”

⁷ This is what the Lord says:

“Sing with joy for Jacob;
shout for the foremost of the nations.
Make your praises heard, and say,
‘Lord, save your people,
the remnant of Israel.’

⁸ See, I will bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the ends of the earth.
Among them will be the blind and the lame,
expectant mothers and women in labor;
a great throng will return.

⁹ They will come with weeping;
they will pray as I bring them back.

I will lead them beside streams of water
on a level path where they will not stumble,
because I am Israel’s father,
and Ephraim is my firstborn son.

¹⁰ “Hear the word of the Lord, you nations;
proclaim it in distant coastlands:

‘He who scattered Israel will gather them
and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.’

¹¹ For the Lord will deliver Jacob
and redeem them from the hand of those
stronger than they.

¹² They will come and shout for joy on the heights
of Zion;

they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord—
the grain, the new wine and the olive oil,
the young of the flocks and herds.

They will be like a well-watered garden,
and they will sorrow no more.

¹³ Then young women will dance and be glad,
young men and old as well.

I will turn their mourning into gladness;
I will give them comfort and joy instead of
sorrow.

¹⁴ I will satisfy the priests with abundance,
and my people will be filled with my bounty,”
declares the Lord.

¹⁵ This is what the Lord says:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,
mourning and great weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

¹⁶ This is what the Lord says:

“Restrain your voice from weeping

and your eyes from tears,

for your work will be rewarded,”

declares the Lord.

“They will return from the land of the enemy.

¹⁷ So there is hope for your descendants,”

declares the Lord.

“Your children will return to their own land.

¹⁸ “I have surely heard Ephraim’s moaning:

‘You disciplined me like an unruly calf,

and I have been disciplined.

Restore me, and I will return,

because you are the Lord my God.

¹⁹ After I strayed,

I repented;

after I came to understand,

I beat my breast.

I was ashamed and humiliated

because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’

²⁰ Is not Ephraim my dear son,

the child in whom I delight?

Though I often speak against him,

I still remember him.

Therefore my heart yearns for him;

I have great compassion for him,”

declares the Lord.

²¹ “Set up road signs;

put up guideposts.

Take note of the highway,

the road that you take.

Return, Virgin Israel,

return to your towns.

²² How long will you wander,

unfaithful Daughter Israel?

The Lord will create a new thing on earth—

the woman will return to the man.”

²³ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: ‘The Lord bless you, you prosperous city, you sacred mountain.’

²⁴ People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks. ²⁵ I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.”

²⁶ At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant to me.

²⁷ “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the offspring of people and of animals. ²⁸ Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the Lord. ²⁹ “In those days people will no longer say,

‘The parents have eaten sour grapes,

and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

³⁰ Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.

³¹ “The days are coming,” declares the Lord,

“when I will make a new covenant

with the people of Israel

and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant

I made with their ancestors

when I took them by the hand

to lead them out of Egypt,

because they broke my covenant,

though I was a husband to them,”

declares the Lord.

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel

after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds

and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the Lord.

"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

³⁵ This is what the Lord says,
he who appoints the sun
to shine by day,
who decrees the moon and stars
to shine by night,
who stirs up the sea
so that its waves roar—
the Lord Almighty is his name:

³⁶ "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,"
declares the Lord,
"will Israel ever cease
being a nation before me."

³⁷ This is what the Lord says:
"Only if the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below be
searched out
will I reject all the descendants of Israel
because of all they have done,"
declares the Lord.

³⁸ "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when
this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of
Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ The measuring line
will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb
and then turn to Goah. ⁴⁰ The whole valley where
dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the
terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as
far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy
to the Lord. The city will never again be uprooted
or demolished."

JEREMIAH 32

32 ¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah.

³ Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, “Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. ⁴ Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape the Babylonians but will certainly be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. ⁵ He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him, declares the Lord. If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed.’”

⁶ Jeremiah said, “The word of the Lord came to me: ⁷ Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.’

⁸ “Then, just as the Lord had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.’

“I knew that this was the word of the Lord; ⁹ so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. ¹¹ I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy— ¹² and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard.

¹³ “In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: ¹⁴ ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. ¹⁵ For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.’

¹⁶ “After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord:

¹⁷ “Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸ You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents’ sins into the laps of their children after them. Great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, ¹⁹ great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to the ways of all mankind; you reward each person according to their conduct and as their deeds deserve. ²⁰ You performed signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. ²¹ You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. ²² You gave them this land you had sworn to give their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey. ²³ They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey you or follow your law; they did not do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster on them.

²⁴ “See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. ²⁵ And though the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians, you, Sovereign Lord, say to me, ‘Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed.’”

²⁶ Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ “I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? ²⁸ Therefore this is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. ²⁹ The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people aroused my anger by burning incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

³⁰ “The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but arouse my anger with what their hands have made, declares the Lord. ³¹ From the day it was

built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight.

³² The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem. ³³ They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. ³⁴ They set up their vile images in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. ³⁵ They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

³⁶ “You are saying about this city, ‘By the sword, famine and plague it will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon’; but this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ³⁷ I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. ³⁸ They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹ I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. ⁴⁰ I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. ⁴¹ I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

⁴² “This is what the Lord says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. ⁴³ Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, ‘It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians.’ ⁴⁴ Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord.”

JEREMIAH 33

33 ¹ While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the Lord came to him a second time: ² “This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is his name: ³ ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’ ⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword ⁵ in the fight with the Babylonians: ‘They will be filled with the dead bodies of the people I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness.

⁶ “Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. ⁷ I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. ⁸ I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. ⁹ Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.’

¹⁰ “This is what the Lord says: ‘You say about this place, “It is a desolate waste, without people or animals.” Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more ¹¹ the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying,

“Give thanks to the Lord Almighty,
for the Lord is good;
his love endures forever.”

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,’ says the Lord.

¹² “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In this place, desolate and without people or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. ¹³ In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah,

flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,’ says the Lord.

¹⁴ “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

¹⁵ “‘In those days and at that time

I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;

he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:

The Lord Our Righteous Savior.’

¹⁷ For this is what the Lord says: ‘David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel, ¹⁸ nor will the Levitical priests ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices.’”

¹⁹ The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁰ “This is what the Lord says: ‘If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, ²¹ then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. ²² I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars in the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.’”

²³ The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁴ “Have you not noticed that these people are saying, ‘The Lord has rejected the two kingdoms he chose’? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. ²⁵ This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’”

JEREMIAH 34

34 ¹ While Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding towns, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. ³ You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and given into his hands. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon.

⁴ “Yet hear the Lord’s promise to you, Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the Lord says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; ⁵ you will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honor of your predecessors, the kings who ruled before you, so they will make a fire in your honor and lament, “Alas, master!” I myself make this promise, declares the Lord.”

⁶ Then Jeremiah the prophet told all this to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, ⁷ while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah that were still holding out—Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

⁸ The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves. ⁹ Everyone was to free their Hebrew slaves, both male and female; no one was to hold a fellow Hebrew in bondage. ¹⁰ So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. ¹¹ But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again.

¹² Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:

¹³ “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said, ¹⁴ ‘Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have served you six years, you must let them go free.’ Your ancestors, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me. ¹⁵ Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to your own people. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. ¹⁶ But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again.

¹⁷ “Therefore this is what the Lord says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the Lord—‘freedom’ to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸ Those who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. ¹⁹ The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, ²⁰ I will deliver into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals.

²¹ “I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. ²² I am going to give the order, declares the Lord, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there.”

A PROMISE TO HOLD ON TO

What images come to mind when you hear the word “restoration”?

Note: Promises of Restoration

Jeremiah chapters 30 to 34 contain promise after promise from God to his people for the future after judgement. These promises can be summed up in 30:3, “I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess.”

This promise of restoration is spelled out in this section. However, we will focus on the promise in Jeremiah 31 which is probably the most familiar to Bible readers due to its reference and quotation in several key parts of the New Testament.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

1. The word “Covenant” is loaded with meaning in the Bible. What is the importance of covenant in the Old Testament?

2. How is the covenant promised here both similar and different to the past covenants between God and his people?

(For information about other covenants in the Bible, see the covenants with Noah in Genesis 9, with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, 15 and 17, with Israel in Exodus 19-20 and Deuteronomy 28-29, and with David in 2 Samuel 7)

3. Think back through the Old Testament and the book of Jeremiah. How had God’s people responded to the covenant throughout that time?

4. What do you think verses 33 and 34 mean? What are the implications of this for God’s people?

**WEEK 7:
31ST MAY TO 6TH JUNE**



JEREMIAH 35-36

35 ¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: ² “Go to the Rekabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink.”

³ So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Rekabites. ⁴ I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. ⁵ Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the Rekabites and said to them, “Drink some wine.”

⁶ But they replied, “We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine.’ ⁷ Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.’ ⁸ We have obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine ⁹ or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. ¹⁰ We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us. ¹¹ But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, ‘Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies.’ So we have remained in Jerusalem.”

¹² Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: ¹³ “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?’ declares the Lord. ¹⁴ ‘Jehonadab son of Rekab ordered his descendants not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather’s command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. ¹⁵ Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, “Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors.” But you have not paid

attention or listened to me. ¹⁶ The descendants of Jehonadab son of Rekab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me.’

¹⁷ “Therefore this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.’”

¹⁸ Then Jeremiah said to the family of the Rekabites, “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jehonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.’ ¹⁹ Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me.’”

36 ¹ In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. ³ Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin.”

⁴ So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the Lord had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll. ⁵ Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I am restricted; I am not allowed to go to the Lord’s temple. ⁶ So you go to the house of the Lord on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll the words of the Lord that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns. ⁷ Perhaps they will bring their petition before the Lord and will each turn from their wicked ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced against this people by the Lord are great.”

⁸ Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do; at the Lord’s temple he read the words of the Lord from the scroll. ⁹ In the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, a time of fasting before the Lord was proclaimed for all the people in Jerusalem and those who had come from the towns

of Judah. ¹⁰ From the room of Gemariah son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple, Baruch read to all the people at the Lord's temple the words of Jeremiah from the scroll.

¹¹ When Micaiah son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the scroll, ¹² he went down to the secretary's room in the royal palace, where all the officials were sitting: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Akbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. ¹³ After Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read to the people from the scroll, ¹⁴ all the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cush, to say to Baruch, "Bring the scroll from which you have read to the people and come." So Baruch son of Neriah went to them with the scroll in his hand. ¹⁵ They said to him, "Sit down, please, and read it to us."

So Baruch read it to them. ¹⁶ When they heard all these words, they looked at each other in fear and said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king." ¹⁷ Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, how did you come to write all this? Did Jeremiah dictate it?"

¹⁸ "Yes," Baruch replied, "he dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them in ink on the scroll."

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

²⁰ After they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, they went to the king in the courtyard and reported everything to him. ²¹ The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. ²² It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning

in the firepot in front of him. ²³ Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. ²⁴ The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. ²⁵ Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. ²⁶ Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord had hidden them.

²⁷ After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁸ "Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up. ²⁹ Also tell Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'This is what the Lord says: You burned that scroll and said, "Why did you write on it that the king of Babylon would certainly come and destroy this land and wipe from it both man and beast?"' ³⁰ Therefore this is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. ³¹ I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened."

³² So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

JEREMIAH 37-38:28a

37 ¹ Zedekiah son of Josiah was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he reigned in place of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim. ² Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.

³ King Zedekiah, however, sent Jehukal son of Shelemiah with the priest Zephaniah son of Maa-seiah to Jeremiah the prophet with this message: "Please pray to the Lord our God for us."

⁴ Now Jeremiah was free to come and go among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. ⁵ Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt, and when the Babylonians who were besieging Jerusalem heard the report about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

⁶ Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet: ⁷ "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of me, 'Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. ⁸ Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.'

⁹ "This is what the Lord says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! ¹⁰ Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

¹¹ After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, ¹² Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. ¹³ But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

¹⁴ "That's not true!" Jeremiah said. "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. ¹⁵ They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.

¹⁶ Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dun-

geon, where he remained a long time. ¹⁷ Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the Lord?"

"Yes," Jeremiah replied, "you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon."

¹⁸ Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What crime have I committed against you or your attendants or this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹ Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, 'The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land'? ²⁰ But now, my lord the king, please listen. Let me bring my petition before you: Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, or I will die there."

²¹ King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given a loaf of bread from the street of the bakers each day until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

38 ¹ Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, ² "This is what the Lord says: 'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live.' ³ And this is what the Lord says: 'This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.'"

⁴ Then the officials said to the king, "This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin."

⁵ "He is in your hands," King Zedekiah answered. "The king can do nothing to oppose you."

⁶ So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

⁷ But Ebed-Melek, a Cushite, an official in the royal palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. While the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate, ⁸ Ebed-Melek went out of the

palace and said to him, ⁹ “My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no longer any bread in the city.”

¹⁰ Then the king commanded Ebed-Melek the Cushite, “Take thirty men from here with you and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.”

¹¹ So Ebed-Melek took the men with him and went to a room under the treasury in the palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from there and let them down with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. ¹² Ebed-Melek the Cushite said to Jeremiah, “Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes.” Jeremiah did so, ¹³ and they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

¹⁴ Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and had him brought to the third entrance to the temple of the Lord. “I am going to ask you something,” the king said to Jeremiah. “Do not hide anything from me.”

¹⁵ Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I give you an answer, will you not kill me? Even if I did give you counsel, you would not listen to me.”

¹⁶ But King Zedekiah swore this oath secretly to Jeremiah: “As surely as the Lord lives, who has given us breath, I will neither kill you nor hand you over to those who want to kill you.”

¹⁷ Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “This is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live. ¹⁸ But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from them.’”

¹⁹ King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me.”

²⁰ “They will not hand you over,” Jeremiah replied. “Obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared.

²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the Lord has revealed to me: ²² All the women left in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon. Those women will say to you:

“They misled you and overcame you—
those trusted friends of yours.

Your feet are sunk in the mud;

your friends have deserted you.’

²³ “All your wives and children will be brought out to the Babylonians. You yourself will not escape from their hands but will be captured by the king of Babylon; and this city will be burned down.”

²⁴ Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Do not let anyone know about this conversation, or you may die. ²⁵ If the officials hear that I talked with you, and they come to you and say, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; do not hide it from us or we will kill you,’ ²⁶ then tell them, ‘I was pleading with the king not to send me back to Jonathan’s house to die there.’”

²⁷ All the officials did come to Jeremiah and question him, and he told them everything the king had ordered him to say. So they said no more to him, for no one had heard his conversation with the king.

²⁸ And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

JEREMIAH 38:28b-40:16

This is how Jerusalem was taken:

39 ¹ In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. ² And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. ³ Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon. ⁴ When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah.

⁵ But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. ⁶ There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. ⁷ Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

⁸ The Babylonians set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city, along with those who had gone over to him, and the rest of the people. ¹⁰ But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people, who owned nothing; and at that time he gave them vineyards and fields.

¹¹ Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard: ¹² "Take him and look after him; don't harm him but do for him whatever he asks." ¹³ So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, Nebushazban a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officers of the king of Babylon ¹⁴ sent and had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him back to his home. So he remained among his own people.

¹⁵ While Jeremiah had been confined in the court-

yard of the guard, the word of the Lord came to him: ¹⁶ "Go and tell Ebed-Melek the Cushite, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am about to fulfill my words against this city—words concerning disaster, not prosperity. At that time they will be fulfilled before your eyes. ¹⁷ But I will rescue you on that day, declares the Lord; you will not be given into the hands of those you fear. ¹⁸ I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in me, declares the Lord.'"

40 ¹ The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had released him at Ramah. He had found Jeremiah bound in chains among all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried into exile to Babylon. ² When the commander of the guard found Jeremiah, he said to him, "The Lord your God decreed this disaster for this place. ³ And now the Lord has brought it about; he has done just as he said he would. All this happened because you people sinned against the Lord and did not obey him. ⁴ But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don't come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please." ⁵ However, before Jeremiah turned to go, Nebuzaradan added, "Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the towns of Judah, and live with him among the people, or go anywhere else you please."

Then the commander gave him provisions and a present and let him go. ⁶ So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people who were left behind in the land.

⁷ When all the army officers and their men who were still in the open country heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor over the land and had put him in charge of the men, women and children who were the poorest in the land and who had not been carried into exile to Babylon, ⁸ they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maakathite, and their men. ⁹ Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath to

reassure them and their men. "Do not be afraid to serve the Babylonians," he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. ¹⁰ I myself will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to us, but you are to harvest the wine, summer fruit and olive oil, and put them in your storage jars, and live in the towns you have taken over."

¹¹ When all the Jews in Moab, Ammon, Edom and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, as governor over them, ¹² they all came back to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, from all the countries where they had been scattered. And they harvested an abundance of wine and summer fruit.

¹³ Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers still in the open country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah ¹⁴ and said to him, "Don't you know that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to take your life?" But Gedaliah son of Ahikam did not believe them.

¹⁵ Then Johanan son of Kareah said privately to Gedaliah in Mizpah, "Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he take your life and cause all the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered and the remnant of Judah to perish?"

¹⁶ But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, "Don't do such a thing! What you are saying about Ishmael is not true."

JEREMIAH 41-42

41 ¹ In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood and had been one of the king's officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. While they were eating together there, ² Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. ³ Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Babylonian soldiers who were there.

⁴ The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, ⁵ eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the Lord. ⁶ Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam." ⁷ When they went into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. ⁸ But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley, olive oil and honey, hidden in a field." So he let them alone and did not kill them with the others. ⁹ Now the cistern where he threw all the bodies of the men he had killed along with Gedaliah was the one King Asa had made as part of his defense against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the dead.

¹⁰ Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah—the king's daughters along with all the others who were left there, over whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

¹¹ When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, ¹² they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the great pool in Gibeon. ¹³ When all the people Ishmael had with him saw Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him, they were glad. ¹⁴ All the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. ¹⁵ But Ishmael son of

Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to the Ammonites.

¹⁶ Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the people of Mizpah who had survived, whom Johanan had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam—the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had recovered from Gibeon. ¹⁷ And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt ¹⁸ to escape the Babylonians. They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

42 ¹ Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshai, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached ² Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the Lord your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left. ³ Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

⁴ "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the Lord your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the Lord says and will keep nothing back from you."

⁵ Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the Lord be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the Lord your God sends you to tell us. ⁶ Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the Lord our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the Lord our God."

⁷ Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. ⁸ So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest. ⁹ He said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says: ¹⁰ 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I have relented concerning the disaster I have inflicted on you.

¹¹ Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the Lord, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. ¹² I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on

you and restore you to your land.’

¹³ “However, if you say, ‘We will not stay in this land,’ and so disobey the Lord your God, ¹⁴ and if you say, ‘No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,’ ¹⁵ then hear the word of the Lord, you remnant of Judah. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there, ¹⁶ then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die. ¹⁷ Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.’ ¹⁸ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.’

¹⁹ “Remnant of Judah, the Lord has told you, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Be sure of this: I warn you today ²⁰ that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the Lord your God and said, ‘Pray to the Lord our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.’ ²¹ I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the Lord your God in all he sent me to tell you. ²² So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle.”

JEREMIAH 43-44

43 ¹ When Jeremiah had finished telling the people all the words of the Lord their God—everything the Lord had sent him to tell them— ² Azariah son of Hoshai and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, “You are lying! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, ‘You must not go to Egypt to settle there.’” ³ But Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians, so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon.”

⁴ So Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers and all the people disobeyed the Lord’s command to stay in the land of Judah. ⁵ Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered. ⁶ They also led away all those whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan—the men, the women, the children and the king’s daughters. And they took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah along with them. ⁷ So they entered Egypt in disobedience to the Lord and went as far as Tahpanhes.

⁸ In Tahpanhes the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ⁹ “While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh’s palace in Tahpanhes. ¹⁰ Then say to them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here; he will spread his royal canopy above them. ¹¹ He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. ¹² He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn their temples and take their gods captive. As a shepherd picks his garment clean of lice, so he will pick Egypt clean and depart. ¹³ There in the temple of the sun in Egypt he will demolish the sacred pillars and will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.’”

44 ¹ This word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in Lower Egypt—in Migdol, Tahpanhes and Memphis—and in Upper Egypt: ² “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You saw the great disaster I brought on Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. Today they lie de-

serted and in ruins ³ because of the evil they have done. They aroused my anger by burning incense to and worshiping other gods that neither they nor you nor your ancestors ever knew. ⁴ Again and again I sent my servants the prophets, who said, ‘Do not do this detestable thing that I hate!’ ⁵ But they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods. ⁶ Therefore, my fierce anger was poured out; it raged against the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem and made them the desolate ruins they are today.

⁷ “Now this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Why bring such great disaster on yourselves by cutting off from Judah the men and women, the children and infants, and so leave yourselves without a remnant? ⁸ Why arouse my anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves and make yourselves a curse and an object of reproach among all the nations on earth. ⁹ Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your ancestors and by the kings and queens of Judah and the wickedness committed by you and your wives in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰ To this day they have not humbled themselves or shown reverence, nor have they followed my law and the decrees I set before you and your ancestors.

¹¹ “Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy all Judah. ¹² I will take away the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt to settle there. They will all perish in Egypt; they will fall by the sword or die from famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine. They will become a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach. ¹³ I will punish those who live in Egypt with the sword, famine and plague, as I punished Jerusalem. ¹⁴ None of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, to which they long to return and live; none will return except a few fugitives.”

¹⁵ Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present—a large assembly—and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah, ¹⁶ “We will not listen to

the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord! ¹⁷ We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. ¹⁸ But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine.”

¹⁹ The women added, “When we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did not our husbands know that we were making cakes impressed with her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?”

²⁰ Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, ²¹ “Did not the Lord remember and call to mind the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land?

²² When the Lord could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things you did, your land became a curse and a desolate waste without inhabitants, as it is today. ²³ Because you have burned incense and have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed him or followed his law or his decrees or his stipulations, this disaster has come upon you, as you now see.”

²⁴ Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women, “Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah in Egypt. ²⁵ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives have done what you said you would do when you promised, ‘We will certainly carry out the vows we made to burn incense and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.’

“Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows! ²⁶ But hear the word of the Lord, all you Jews living in Egypt: ‘I swear by my great name,’ says the Lord, ‘that no one from Judah living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my name or swear, “As surely as the Sovereign Lord lives.”’ ²⁷ For I am watching over them for harm, not for good; the Jews in Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed. ²⁸ Those who escape the sword and return to the land of Judah from Egypt will be very few. Then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs.

²⁹ “‘This will be the sign to you that I will punish you in this place,’ declares the Lord, ‘so that you will know that my threats of harm against you will surely stand.’ ³⁰ This is what the Lord says: ‘I am going to deliver Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies who want to kill him, just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the enemy who wanted to kill him.’”

JUDGEMENT FALLS

Hollywood has made many disaster movies over the years such as Titanic, Deep Impact, The Day after Tomorrow, Sharknado and so on. What are some common features of these types of movies?

Note: The time periods of chapters 36 to 39

It is important to notice that the events of these chapters take place in two different time periods. Chapter 36 is set during the fourth year of Jehoiakim, while chapters 37 to 39 take place later during the reign of Zedekiah.

Read Jeremiah 36

1. What is God's word to his people in this chapter? What stands out to you about the different people's responses to his word?

2. How does God react in verses 27 to 31 to Jehoiakim's actions?

Read Jeremiah 37-38

Note: Two accounts of the same events

It has been noted by commentators that there are several similarities between chapters 36 and 37. This leads them to conclude that these chapters are describing the same series of events. This may be true, but it is also possible that Jeremiah went through a repeated cycle of arrests and imprisonments. See pages 378-81 of *The Message of Jeremiah* for more details.

3. What different attitudes do you see to God's word in these chapters?

Read Jeremiah 39

4. What words would you use to describe the fall of Jerusalem and King Zedekiah?

5. Think back over chapters 36 to 39. How has God looked after those who trusted in him?

6. What do we learn about God's word from these chapters? How might this apply to us today?

7. Read Romans 5:1-11. What does God promise to all who trust in Jesus? How might this impact your daily life?

FAMILY QUESTION:

Read Jeremiah 39:11-18

What did God promise to do for Jeremiah and Ebed-Melech?

Read Romans 5:6-11

What does God promise to those who trust in Jesus?

**WEEK 8:
7TH TO 13TH JUNE**



JEREMIAH 45-46

45 ¹ When Baruch son of Neriah wrote on a scroll the words Jeremiah the prophet dictated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, Jeremiah said this to Baruch: ² “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: ³ You said, ‘Woe to me! The Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am worn out with groaning and find no rest.’ ⁴ But the Lord has told me to say to you, ‘This is what the Lord says: I will overthrow what I have built and uproot what I have planted, throughout the earth. ⁵ Should you then seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the Lord, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.’”

46 ¹ This is the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations:

² Concerning Egypt:

This is the message against the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:

³ “Prepare your shields, both large and small,
and march out for battle!

⁴ Harness the horses,
mount the steeds!

Take your positions
with helmets on!

Polish your spears,
put on your armor!

⁵ What do I see?
They are terrified,
they are retreating,
their warriors are defeated.

They flee in haste
without looking back,
and there is terror on every side,”
declares the Lord.

⁶ “The swift cannot flee
nor the strong escape.

In the north by the River Euphrates
they stumble and fall.

⁷ “Who is this that rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters?

⁸ Egypt rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters.

She says, ‘I will rise and cover the earth;
I will destroy cities and their people.’

⁹ Charge, you horses!

Drive furiously, you charioteers!

March on, you warriors—men of Cush and Put
who carry shields,

men of Lydia who draw the bow.

¹⁰ But that day belongs to the Lord, the Lord
Almighty—

a day of vengeance, for vengeance on his foes.

The sword will devour till it is satisfied,
till it has quenched its thirst with blood.

For the Lord, the Lord Almighty, will offer sacrifice
in the land of the north by the River Euphrates.

¹¹ “Go up to Gilead and get balm,
Virgin Daughter Egypt.

But you try many medicines in vain;
there is no healing for you.

¹² The nations will hear of your shame;
your cries will fill the earth.

One warrior will stumble over another;
both will fall down together.”

¹³ This is the message the Lord spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to attack Egypt:

¹⁴ “Announce this in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol;
proclaim it also in Memphis and Tahpanhes:
‘Take your positions and get ready,
for the sword devours those around you.’

¹⁵ Why will your warriors be laid low?
They cannot stand, for the Lord will push them down.

¹⁶ They will stumble repeatedly;
they will fall over each other.
They will say, ‘Get up, let us go back
to our own people and our native lands,
away from the sword of the oppressor.’

¹⁷ There they will exclaim,
‘Pharaoh king of Egypt is only a loud noise;
he has missed his opportunity.’

¹⁸ “As surely as I live,” declares the King,
whose name is the Lord Almighty,
“one will come who is like Tabor among the mountains,
like Carmel by the sea.

¹⁹ Pack your belongings for exile,
you who live in Egypt,
for Memphis will be laid waste
and lie in ruins without inhabitant.

²⁰ “Egypt is a beautiful heifer,
but a gadfly is coming
against her from the north.

²¹ The mercenaries in her ranks
are like fattened calves.
They too will turn and flee together,
they will not stand their ground,
for the day of disaster is coming upon them,
the time for them to be punished.

²² Egypt will hiss like a fleeing serpent
as the enemy advances in force;
they will come against her with axes,
like men who cut down trees.

²³ They will chop down her forest,”
declares the Lord,
“dense though it be.
They are more numerous than locusts,
they cannot be counted.

²⁴ Daughter Egypt will be put to shame,
given into the hands of the people of the north.”

²⁵ The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “I am about to bring punishment on Amon god of Thebes, on Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods and her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh. ²⁶ I will give them into the hands of those who want to kill them—Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his officers. Later, however, Egypt will be inhabited as in times past,” declares the Lord.

²⁷ “Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant;
do not be dismayed, Israel.
I will surely save you out of a distant place,
your descendants from the land of their exile.
Jacob will again have peace and security,
and no one will make him afraid.

²⁸ Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant,
for I am with you,” declares the Lord.
“Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only in due measure;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.”

JEREMIAH 47-48

47 ¹ This is the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza:

² This is what the Lord says:

“See how the waters are rising in the north;
they will become an overflowing torrent.

They will overflow the land and everything in it,
the towns and those who live in them.

The people will cry out;
all who dwell in the land will wail

³ at the sound of the hooves of galloping steeds,
at the noise of enemy chariots
and the rumble of their wheels.

Parents will not turn to help their children;
their hands will hang limp.

⁴ For the day has come
to destroy all the Philistines
and to remove all survivors
who could help Tyre and Sidon.

The Lord is about to destroy the Philistines,
the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor.

⁵ Gaza will shave her head in mourning;
Ashkelon will be silenced.

You remnant on the plain,
how long will you cut yourselves?

⁶ “Alas, sword of the Lord,
how long till you rest?

Return to your sheath;
cease and be still.’

⁷ But how can it rest
when the Lord has commanded it,
when he has ordered it
to attack Ashkelon and the coast?”

48 ¹ Concerning Moab:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel,
says:

“Woe to Nebo, for it will be ruined.

Kiriathaim will be disgraced and captured;
the stronghold will be disgraced and shattered.

² Moab will be praised no more;
in Heshbon people will plot her downfall:
‘Come, let us put an end to that nation.’

You, the people of Madmen, will also be silenced;
the sword will pursue you.

³ Cries of anguish arise from Horonaim,
cries of great havoc and destruction.

⁴ Moab will be broken;
her little ones will cry out.

⁵ They go up the hill to Luhith,
weeping bitterly as they go;
on the road down to Horonaim
anguished cries over the destruction are heard.

⁶ Flee! Run for your lives;
become like a bush in the desert.

⁷ Since you trust in your deeds and riches,
you too will be taken captive,
and Chemosh will go into exile,
together with his priests and officials.

⁸ The destroyer will come against every town,
and not a town will escape.

The valley will be ruined
and the plateau destroyed,
because the Lord has spoken.

⁹ Put salt on Moab,
for she will be laid waste;
her towns will become desolate,

with no one to live in them.

¹⁰ “A curse on anyone who is lax in doing the Lord’s work!

A curse on anyone who keeps their sword from bloodshed!

¹¹ “Moab has been at rest from youth,

like wine left on its dregs,

not poured from one jar to another—

she has not gone into exile.

So she tastes as she did,

and her aroma is unchanged.

¹² But days are coming,”

declares the Lord,

“when I will send men who pour from pitchers,

and they will pour her out;

they will empty her pitchers

and smash her jars.

¹³ Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh,

as Israel was ashamed

when they trusted in Bethel.

¹⁴ “How can you say, ‘We are warriors,

men valiant in battle’?

¹⁵ Moab will be destroyed and her towns invaded;

her finest young men will go down in the slaughter,”

declares the King, whose name is the Lord Almighty.

¹⁶ “The fall of Moab is at hand;

her calamity will come quickly.

¹⁷ Mourn for her, all who live around her,

all who know her fame;

say, ‘How broken is the mighty scepter,

how broken the glorious staff!’

¹⁸ “Come down from your glory

and sit on the parched ground,

you inhabitants of Daughter Dibon,

for the one who destroys Moab

will come up against you

and ruin your fortified cities.

¹⁹ Stand by the road and watch,

you who live in Aroer.

Ask the man fleeing and the woman escaping,

ask them, ‘What has happened?’

²⁰ Moab is disgraced, for she is shattered.

Wail and cry out!

Announce by the Arnon

that Moab is destroyed.

²¹ Judgment has come to the plateau—

to Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath,

²² to Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,

²³ to Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,

²⁴ to Kerioth and Bozrah—

to all the towns of Moab, far and near.

²⁵ Moab’s horn is cut off;

her arm is broken,”

declares the Lord.

²⁶ “Make her drunk,
for she has defied the Lord.
Let Moab wallow in her vomit;
let her be an object of ridicule.
²⁷ Was not Israel the object of your ridicule?
Was she caught among thieves,
that you shake your head in scorn
whenever you speak of her?
²⁸ Abandon your towns and dwell among the
rocks,
you who live in Moab.
Be like a dove that makes its nest
at the mouth of a cave.
²⁹ “We have heard of Moab’s pride—
how great is her arrogance!—
of her insolence, her pride, her conceit
and the haughtiness of her heart.
³⁰ I know her insolence but it is futile,”
declares the Lord,
“and her boasts accomplish nothing.
³¹ Therefore I wail over Moab,
for all Moab I cry out,
I moan for the people of Kir Hareseth.
³² I weep for you, as Jazer weeps,
you vines of Sibmah.
Your branches spread as far as the sea;
they reached as far as Jazer.
The destroyer has fallen
on your ripened fruit and grapes.

³³ Joy and gladness are gone
from the orchards and fields of Moab.
I have stopped the flow of wine from the presses;
no one treads them with shouts of joy.
Although there are shouts,
they are not shouts of joy.
³⁴ “The sound of their cry rises
from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz,
from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath Shelishi-
yah,
for even the waters of Nimrim are dried up.
³⁵ In Moab I will put an end
to those who make offerings on the high places
and burn incense to their gods,”
declares the Lord.
³⁶ “So my heart laments for Moab like the music
of a pipe;
it laments like a pipe for the people of Kir Ha-
reseth.
The wealth they acquired is gone.
³⁷ Every head is shaved
and every beard cut off;
every hand is slashed
and every waist is covered with sackcloth.
³⁸ On all the roofs in Moab
and in the public squares
there is nothing but mourning,
for I have broken Moab
like a jar that no one wants,”
declares the Lord.

³⁹ “How shattered she is! How they wail!
How Moab turns her back in shame!
Moab has become an object of ridicule,
an object of horror to all those around her.”

⁴⁰ This is what the Lord says:
“Look! An eagle is swooping down,
spreading its wings over Moab.

⁴¹ Kerioth will be captured
and the strongholds taken.
In that day the hearts of Moab’s warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor.

⁴² Moab will be destroyed as a nation
because she defied the Lord.

⁴³ Terror and pit and snare await you,
you people of Moab,”

declares the Lord.

⁴⁴ “Whoever flees from the terror
will fall into a pit,
whoever climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a snare;
for I will bring on Moab
the year of her punishment,”
declares the Lord.

⁴⁵ “In the shadow of Heshbon
the fugitives stand helpless,
for a fire has gone out from Heshbon,
a blaze from the midst of Sihon;
it burns the foreheads of Moab,
the skulls of the noisy boasters.

⁴⁶ Woe to you, Moab!
The people of Chemosh are destroyed;
your sons are taken into exile
and your daughters into captivity.

⁴⁷ “Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab
in days to come,”
declares the Lord.

Here ends the judgment on Moab.

JEREMIAH 49

49 ¹ Concerning the Ammonites:

This is what the Lord says:

“Has Israel no sons?

Has Israel no heir?

Why then has Molek taken possession of Gad?

Why do his people live in its towns?

² But the days are coming,”

declares the Lord,

“when I will sound the battle cry

against Rabbah of the Ammonites;

it will become a mound of ruins,

and its surrounding villages will be set on fire.

Then Israel will drive out

those who drove her out,”

says the Lord.

³ “Wail, Heshbon, for Ai is destroyed!

Cry out, you inhabitants of Rabbah!

Put on sackcloth and mourn;

rush here and there inside the walls,

for Molek will go into exile,

together with his priests and officials.

⁴ Why do you boast of your valleys,

boast of your valleys so fruitful?

Unfaithful Daughter Ammon,

you trust in your riches and say,

‘Who will attack me?’

⁵ I will bring terror on you

from all those around you,”

declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.

“Every one of you will be driven away,

and no one will gather the fugitives.

⁶ “Yet afterward, I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites,”

declares the Lord.

⁷ Concerning Edom:

This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Is there no longer wisdom in Teman?

Has counsel perished from the prudent?

Has their wisdom decayed?

⁸ Turn and flee, hide in deep caves,

you who live in Dedan,

for I will bring disaster on Esau

at the time when I punish him.

⁹ If grape pickers came to you,

would they not leave a few grapes?

If thieves came during the night,

would they not steal only as much as they wanted?

¹⁰ But I will strip Esau bare;

I will uncover his hiding places,

so that he cannot conceal himself.

His armed men are destroyed,

also his allies and neighbors,

so there is no one to say,

¹¹ ‘Leave your fatherless children; I will keep them alive.

Your widows too can depend on me.’”

¹² This is what the Lord says: “If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it. ¹³ I swear by myself,” declares the Lord, “that Bozrah will become a ruin and a curse, an object of horror and reproach; and all its towns will be in ruins forever.”

¹⁴ I have heard a message from the Lord;
an envoy was sent to the nations to say,
“Assemble yourselves to attack it!
Rise up for battle!”

¹⁵ “Now I will make you small among the nations,
despised by mankind.

¹⁶ The terror you inspire
and the pride of your heart have deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks,
who occupy the heights of the hill.
Though you build your nest as high as the eagle’s,
from there I will bring you down,”
declares the Lord.

¹⁷ “Edom will become an object of horror;
all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff
because of all its wounds.

¹⁸ As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown,
along with their neighboring towns,”
says the Lord,
“so no one will live there;
no people will dwell in it.

¹⁹ “Like a lion coming up from Jordan’s thickets
to a rich pastureland,
I will chase Edom from its land in an instant.
Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this?
Who is like me and who can challenge me?
And what shepherd can stand against me?”

²⁰ Therefore, hear what the Lord has planned
against Edom,
what he has purposed against those who live in
Teman:
The young of the flock will be dragged away;
their pasture will be appalled at their fate.

²¹ At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble;
their cry will resound to the Red Sea.

²² Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down,
spreading its wings over Bozrah.
In that day the hearts of Edom’s warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor.

²³ Concerning Damascus:
“Hamath and Arpad are dismayed,
for they have heard bad news.
They are disheartened,
troubled like the restless sea.

²⁴ Damascus has become feeble,
she has turned to flee
and panic has gripped her;
anguish and pain have seized her,
pain like that of a woman in labor.

²⁵ Why has the city of renown not been abandoned,
the town in which I delight?

²⁶ Surely, her young men will fall in the streets;
all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,”
declares the Lord Almighty.

²⁷ “I will set fire to the walls of Damascus;
it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.”

²⁸ Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor,
which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked:
This is what the Lord says:
“Arise, and attack Kedar
and destroy the people of the East.

²⁹ Their tents and their flocks will be taken;
their shelters will be carried off
with all their goods and camels.

People will shout to them,
'Terror on every side!'

³⁰ "Flee quickly away!
Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor,"
declares the Lord.

"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has plotted
against you;
he has devised a plan against you.

³¹ "Arise and attack a nation at ease,
which lives in confidence,"

declares the Lord,
"a nation that has neither gates nor bars;
its people live far from danger.

³² Their camels will become plunder,
and their large herds will be spoils of war.

I will scatter to the winds those who are in distant
places

and will bring disaster on them from every
side,"

declares the Lord.

³³ "Hazor will become a haunt of jackals,
a desolate place forever.

No one will live there;
no people will dwell in it."

³⁴ This is the word of the Lord that came to Jer-
emiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in the
reign of Zedekiah king of Judah:

³⁵ This is what the Lord Almighty says:
"See, I will break the bow of Elam,
the mainstay of their might.

³⁶ I will bring against Elam the four winds
from the four quarters of heaven;
I will scatter them to the four winds,
and there will not be a nation
where Elam's exiles do not go.

³⁷ I will shatter Elam before their foes,
before those who want to kill them;
I will bring disaster on them,
even my fierce anger,"
declares the Lord.

"I will pursue them with the sword
until I have made an end of them.

³⁸ I will set my throne in Elam
and destroy her king and officials,"
declares the Lord.

³⁹ "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam
in days to come,"
declares the Lord.

JEREMIAH 50

50 ¹ This is the word the Lord spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians:

² “Announce and proclaim among the nations,
lift up a banner and proclaim it;
keep nothing back, but say,

‘Babylon will be captured;
Bel will be put to shame,
Marduk filled with terror.

Her images will be put to shame
and her idols filled with terror.’

³ A nation from the north will attack her
and lay waste her land.

No one will live in it;
both people and animals will flee away.

⁴ “In those days, at that time,”
declares the Lord,
“the people of Israel and the people of Judah
together
will go in tears to seek the Lord their God.

⁵ They will ask the way to Zion
and turn their faces toward it.

They will come and bind themselves to the Lord
in an everlasting covenant
that will not be forgotten.

⁶ “My people have been lost sheep;
their shepherds have led them astray
and caused them to roam on the mountains.

They wandered over mountain and hill
and forgot their own resting place.

⁷ Whoever found them devoured them;
their enemies said, ‘We are not guilty,
for they sinned against the Lord, their verdant
pasture,

the Lord, the hope of their ancestors.’

⁸ “Flee out of Babylon;
leave the land of the Babylonians,
and be like the goats that lead the flock.

⁹ For I will stir up and bring against Babylon
an alliance of great nations from the land of the
north.

They will take up their positions against her,
and from the north she will be captured.

Their arrows will be like skilled warriors
who do not return empty-handed.

¹⁰ So Babylonia will be plundered;
all who plunder her will have their fill,”
declares the Lord.

¹¹ “Because you rejoice and are glad,
you who pillage my inheritance,
because you frolic like a heifer threshing grain
and neigh like stallions,

¹² your mother will be greatly ashamed;
she who gave you birth will be disgraced.
She will be the least of the nations—
a wilderness, a dry land, a desert.

¹³ Because of the Lord’s anger she will not be
inhabited
but will be completely desolate.

All who pass Babylon will be appalled;
they will scoff because of all her wounds.

¹⁴ “Take up your positions around Babylon,
all you who draw the bow.

Shoot at her! Spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the Lord.

¹⁵ Shout against her on every side!
She surrenders, her towers fall,

her walls are torn down.
Since this is the vengeance of the Lord,
take vengeance on her;
do to her as she has done to others.

¹⁶ Cut off from Babylon the sower,
and the reaper with his sickle at harvest.
Because of the sword of the oppressor
let everyone return to their own people,
let everyone flee to their own land.

¹⁷ "Israel is a scattered flock
that lions have chased away.
The first to devour them
was the king of Assyria;
the last to crush their bones
was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon."

¹⁸ Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the
God of Israel, says:
"I will punish the king of Babylon and his land
as I punished the king of Assyria.

¹⁹ But I will bring Israel back to their own pasture,
and they will graze on Carmel and Bashan;
their appetite will be satisfied
on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.

²⁰ In those days, at that time,"
declares the Lord,
"search will be made for Israel's guilt,
but there will be none,
and for the sins of Judah,
but none will be found,
for I will forgive the remnant I spare.

²¹ "Attack the land of Merathaim
and those who live in Pekod.
Pursue, kill and completely destroy them,"
declares the Lord.
"Do everything I have commanded you.

²² The noise of battle is in the land,
the noise of great destruction!

²³ How broken and shattered
is the hammer of the whole earth!
How desolate is Babylon
among the nations!

²⁴ I set a trap for you, Babylon,
and you were caught before you knew it;
you were found and captured
because you opposed the Lord.

²⁵ The Lord has opened his arsenal
and brought out the weapons of his wrath,
for the Sovereign Lord Almighty has work to do
in the land of the Babylonians.

²⁶ Come against her from afar.
Break open her granaries;
pile her up like heaps of grain.
Completely destroy her
and leave her no remnant.

²⁷ Kill all her young bulls;
let them go down to the slaughter!
Woe to them! For their day has come,
the time for them to be punished.

²⁸ Listen to the fugitives and refugees from Bab-
ylon
declaring in Zion
how the Lord our God has taken vengeance,
vengeance for his temple.

²⁹ "Summon archers against Babylon,
all those who draw the bow.
Encamp all around her;
let no one escape.
Repay her for her deeds;
do to her as she has done.
For she has defied the Lord,

the Holy One of Israel.
³⁰ Therefore, her young men will fall in the streets;
all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,”
declares the Lord.
³¹ “See, I am against you, you arrogant one,”
declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty,
“for your day has come,
the time for you to be punished.
³² The arrogant one will stumble and fall
and no one will help her up;
I will kindle a fire in her towns
that will consume all who are around her.”
³³ This is what the Lord Almighty says:
“The people of Israel are oppressed,
and the people of Judah as well.
All their captors hold them fast,
refusing to let them go.
³⁴ Yet their Redeemer is strong;
the Lord Almighty is his name.
He will vigorously defend their cause
so that he may bring rest to their land,
but unrest to those who live in Babylon.
³⁵ “A sword against the Babylonians!”
declares the Lord—
“against those who live in Babylon
and against her officials and wise men!
³⁶ A sword against her false prophets!
They will become fools.
A sword against her warriors!

They will be filled with terror.
³⁷ A sword against her horses and chariots
and all the foreigners in her ranks!
They will become weaklings.
A sword against her treasures!
They will be plundered.
³⁸ A drought on her waters!
They will dry up.
For it is a land of idols,
idols that will go mad with terror.
³⁹ “So desert creatures and hyenas will live there,
and there the owl will dwell.
It will never again be inhabited
or lived in from generation to generation.
⁴⁰ As I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah
along with their neighboring towns,”
declares the Lord,
“so no one will live there;
no people will dwell in it.
⁴¹ “Look! An army is coming from the north;
a great nation and many kings
are being stirred up from the ends of the earth.
⁴² They are armed with bows and spears;
they are cruel and without mercy.
They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride on their horses;
they come like men in battle formation
to attack you, Daughter Babylon.

⁴³ The king of Babylon has heard reports about them,

and his hands hang limp.

Anguish has gripped him,

pain like that of a woman in labor.

⁴⁴ Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets

to a rich pastureland,

I will chase Babylon from its land in an instant.

Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this?

Who is like me and who can challenge me?

And what shepherd can stand against me?"

⁴⁵ Therefore, hear what the Lord has planned against Babylon,

what he has purposed against the land of the Babylonians:

The young of the flock will be dragged away;

their pasture will be appalled at their fate.

⁴⁶ At the sound of Babylon's capture the earth will tremble;

its cry will resound among the nations.

JEREMIAH 51

51 ¹ This is what the Lord says:

“See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer
against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai.

² I will send foreigners to Babylon
to winnow her and to devastate her land;
they will oppose her on every side
in the day of her disaster.

³ Let not the archer string his bow,
nor let him put on his armor.

Do not spare her young men;
completely destroy her army.

⁴ They will fall down slain in Babylon,
fatally wounded in her streets.

⁵ For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken
by their God, the Lord Almighty,
though their land is full of guilt
before the Holy One of Israel.

⁶ “Flee from Babylon!
Run for your lives!
Do not be destroyed because of her sins.

It is time for the Lord’s vengeance;
he will repay her what she deserves.

⁷ Babylon was a gold cup in the Lord’s hand;
she made the whole earth drunk.

The nations drank her wine;
therefore they have now gone mad.

⁸ Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.
Wail over her!

Get balm for her pain;
perhaps she can be healed.

⁹ “We would have healed Babylon,
but she cannot be healed;

let us leave her and each go to our own land,
for her judgment reaches to the skies,
it rises as high as the heavens.’

¹⁰ “The Lord has vindicated us;
come, let us tell in Zion
what the Lord our God has done.’

¹¹ “Sharpen the arrows,
take up the shields!

The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes,
because his purpose is to destroy Babylon.

The Lord will take vengeance,
vengeance for his temple.

¹² Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon!
Reinforce the guard,

station the watchmen,
prepare an ambush!

The Lord will carry out his purpose,
his decree against the people of Babylon.

¹³ You who live by many waters
and are rich in treasures,
your end has come,
the time for you to be destroyed.

¹⁴ The Lord Almighty has sworn by himself:
I will surely fill you with troops, as with a
swarm of locusts,
and they will shout in triumph over you.

¹⁵ “He made the earth by his power;
he founded the world by his wisdom
and stretched out the heavens by his under-
standing.

¹⁶ When he thunders, the waters in the heavens
roar;
he makes clouds rise from the ends of the
earth.

He sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.
¹⁷ “Everyone is senseless and without knowledge;
every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.
The images he makes are a fraud;
they have no breath in them.
¹⁸ They are worthless, the objects of mockery;
when their judgment comes, they will perish.
¹⁹ He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these,
for he is the Maker of all things,
including the people of his inheritance—
the Lord Almighty is his name.
²⁰ “You are my war club,
my weapon for battle—
with you I shatter nations,
with you I destroy kingdoms,
²¹ with you I shatter horse and rider,
with you I shatter chariot and driver,
²² with you I shatter man and woman,
with you I shatter old man and youth,
with you I shatter young man and young woman,
²³ with you I shatter shepherd and flock,
with you I shatter farmer and oxen,
with you I shatter governors and officials.
²⁴ “Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all
who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have
done in Zion,” declares the Lord.
²⁵ “I am against you, you destroying mountain,
you who destroy the whole earth,”
declares the Lord.
“I will stretch out my hand against you,
roll you off the cliffs,
and make you a burned-out mountain.
²⁶ No rock will be taken from you for a corner-
stone,
nor any stone for a foundation,

for you will be desolate forever,”
declares the Lord.
²⁷ “Lift up a banner in the land!
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare the nations for battle against her;
summon against her these kingdoms:
Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a commander against her;
send up horses like a swarm of locusts.
²⁸ Prepare the nations for battle against her—
the kings of the Medes,
their governors and all their officials,
and all the countries they rule.
²⁹ The land trembles and writhes,
for the Lord’s purposes against Babylon stand—
to lay waste the land of Babylon
so that no one will live there.
³⁰ Babylon’s warriors have stopped fighting;
they remain in their strongholds.
Their strength is exhausted;
they have become weaklings.
Her dwellings are set on fire;
the bars of her gates are broken.
³¹ One courier follows another
and messenger follows messenger
to announce to the king of Babylon
that his entire city is captured,
³² the river crossings seized,
the marshes set on fire,
and the soldiers terrified.”
³³ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel,
says:
“Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor
at the time it is trampled;
the time to harvest her will soon come.”

³⁴ “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us,

he has thrown us into confusion,

he has made us an empty jar.

Like a serpent he has swallowed us

and filled his stomach with our delicacies,

and then has spewed us out.

³⁵ May the violence done to our flesh be on Babylon,”

say the inhabitants of Zion.

“May our blood be on those who live in Babylonia,”

says Jerusalem.

³⁶ Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“See, I will defend your cause

and avenge you;

I will dry up her sea

and make her springs dry.

³⁷ Babylon will be a heap of ruins,

a haunt of jackals,

an object of horror and scorn,

a place where no one lives.

³⁸ Her people all roar like young lions,

they growl like lion cubs.

³⁹ But while they are aroused,

I will set out a feast for them

and make them drunk,

so that they shout with laughter—

then sleep forever and not awake,”

declares the Lord.

⁴⁰ “I will bring them down

like lambs to the slaughter,

like rams and goats.

⁴¹ “How Sheshak will be captured,

the boast of the whole earth seized!

How desolate Babylon will be

among the nations!

⁴² The sea will rise over Babylon;

its roaring waves will cover her.

⁴³ Her towns will be desolate,

a dry and desert land,

a land where no one lives,

through which no one travels.

⁴⁴ I will punish Bel in Babylon

and make him spew out what he has swallowed.

The nations will no longer stream to him.

And the wall of Babylon will fall.

⁴⁵ “Come out of her, my people!

Run for your lives!

Run from the fierce anger of the Lord.

⁴⁶ Do not lose heart or be afraid

when rumors are heard in the land;

one rumor comes this year, another the next,

rumors of violence in the land

and of ruler against ruler.

⁴⁷ For the time will surely come

when I will punish the idols of Babylon;

her whole land will be disgraced

and her slain will all lie fallen within her.

⁴⁸ Then heaven and earth and all that is in them

will shout for joy over Babylon,

for out of the north

destroyers will attack her;”

declares the Lord.

⁴⁹ “Babylon must fall because of Israel’s slain,

just as the slain in all the earth

have fallen because of Babylon.

⁵⁰ You who have escaped the sword,

leave and do not linger!

Remember the Lord in a distant land,

and call to mind Jerusalem.”

⁵¹ “We are disgraced,
for we have been insulted
and shame covers our faces,
because foreigners have entered
the holy places of the Lord’s house.”
⁵² “But days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will punish her idols,
and throughout her land
the wounded will groan.

⁵³ Even if Babylon ascends to the heavens
and fortifies her lofty stronghold,
I will send destroyers against her,”
declares the Lord.

⁵⁴ “The sound of a cry comes from Babylon,
the sound of great destruction
from the land of the Babylonians.

⁵⁵ The Lord will destroy Babylon;
he will silence her noisy din.
Waves of enemies will rage like great waters;
the roar of their voices will resound.

⁵⁶ A destroyer will come against Babylon;
her warriors will be captured,
and their bows will be broken.

For the Lord is a God of retribution;
he will repay in full.

⁵⁷ I will make her officials and wise men drunk,
her governors, officers and warriors as well;
they will sleep forever and not awake,”

declares the King, whose name is the Lord
Almighty.

⁵⁸ This is what the Lord Almighty says:
“Babylon’s thick wall will be leveled
and her high gates set on fire;
the peoples exhaust themselves for nothing,
the nations’ labor is only fuel for the flames.”

⁵⁹ This is the message Jeremiah the prophet gave
to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the
son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with
Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his
reign. ⁶⁰ Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all
the disasters that would come upon Babylon—all
that had been recorded concerning Babylon. ⁶¹ He
said to Seraiah, “When you get to Babylon, see
that you read all these words aloud. ⁶² Then say,
‘Lord, you have said you will destroy this place,
so that neither people nor animals will live in it; it
will be desolate forever.’ ⁶³ When you finish read-
ing this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into
the Euphrates. ⁶⁴ Then say, ‘So will Babylon sink
to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring
on her. And her people will fall.’”

The words of Jeremiah end here.

Study Eight | Jeremiah 50-51

THE END OF THE WORLD

Imagine that you have just moved to new country (or maybe you actually have moved to Australia from another country).

What things might you and your family do as you start your life in a new country?

Note: Predictions of Judgement on the Nations

Jeremiah chapters 46 to 51 contain predictions of God's judgement on the foreign nations around Judah. These predictions are not dated (though 49:34 dates the oracle against Elam as being from early in Zedekiah's reign). It would be fair to assume that these different predictions are from various times of Jeremiah's ministry and have been collected together. In these predictions, Nebuchadnezzar would be God's agent of judgement on the nations, just as he was for God's judgement on Judah. Despite this, chapters 50 and 51 show us that Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon would not escape God's judgement for their wickedness.

Read Jeremiah 50:1-20 and 51:45-64

1. What do these verses tell us about the future of Babylon?
2. What do they tell us about the future of God's people?
3. What things in this passage are you unsure about?
4. How do God's sovereignty and human sinfulness relate in these chapters?

5. How are the promises in these chapters fulfilled in:

- The return from exile in 539 BC?

- The gospel of Jesus?

Read Revelation 18:1-8

6. How does the book of Revelation draw upon and develop Jeremiah's themes of Babylon, the people of God and judgement?

7. What implications do these chapters have for our Christian living and how we view the day when Christ returns in judgement?

Glossary:

Bel and Marduk: Marduk is the chief god among those worshipped by the Babylonians. Bel is a title for Marduk. In Jeremiah 50:2, the two lines refer to the same god using parallelism, which is common in Hebrew poetry .

FAMILY QUESTION:

Read Jeremiah 50:18-20 and 1 John 1:8-9

God forgives our sins when we ask him. What does this encourage you to do?

Do you ask him?

**WEEK 9:
14TH TO 20TH JUNE**



JEREMIAH 52

52 ¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ² He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as Jehoiakim had done. ³ It was because of the Lord's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

⁴ So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. They encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. ⁵ The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

⁶ By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. ⁷ Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah, ⁸ but the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, ⁹ and he was captured.

He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. ¹⁰ There at Riblah the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; he also killed all the officials of Judah. ¹¹ Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon, where he put him in prison till the day of his death.

¹² On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ¹³ He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. ¹⁴ The whole Babylonian army, under the

commander of the imperial guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile some of the poorest people and those who remained in the city, along with the rest of the craftsmen and those who had deserted to the king of Babylon. ¹⁶ But Nebuzaradan left behind the rest of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

¹⁷ The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the Lord and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸ They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. ¹⁹ The commander of the imperial guard took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for drink offerings—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

²⁰ The bronze from the two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the movable stands, which King Solomon had made for the temple of the Lord, was more than could be weighed. ²¹ Each pillar was eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference; each was four fingers thick, and hollow. ²² The bronze capital on top of one pillar was five cubits high and was decorated with a network and pomegranates of bronze all around. The other pillar, with its pomegranates, was similar. ²³ There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; the total number of pomegranates above the surrounding network was a hundred.

²⁴ The commander of the guard took as prisoners Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three doorkeepers. ²⁵ Of those still in the city, he took the officer in charge of the fighting men, and seven royal advisers. He also took the secretary who was chief officer in charge of conscripting the people of the land, sixty of whom were found in the city. ²⁶ Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷ There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.

²⁸ This is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:

in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews;

29 in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year,

832 people from Jerusalem;

30 in his twenty-third year,

745 Jews taken into exile by Nebuzaradan the commander of the imperial guard.

There were 4,600 people in all.

³¹ In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Awel-Marduk became king of Babylon, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah and freed him from prison. ³² He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³ So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. ³⁴ Day by day the king of Babylon gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived, till the day of his death.

Study Nine | Jeremiah 52

FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED

Have you ever kept a diary? What do you think would be the benefits of being able to look back over the events of your life?

Note: The Final Chapter of Jeremiah

The collection of Jeremiah's words ended in 51:64. This final chapter was added by the editors of the book and is an almost word-for-word repetition of 2 Kings 24-25. This additional chapter closes off the book by showing how Jeremiah's words were fulfilled in the history of God's people

Read Jeremiah 52

1. How would you break this chapter into sections?
2. What details do we learn about the destruction of Jerusalem, the fate of Judah's king and the fate of the people?
3. Verses 17 to 24 provide a detailed list of the valuable items that were taken from the temple. What do you think is the theological significance of this? (See also Isaiah 39 and Ezekiel 10)
4. Think back over the book of Jeremiah and the things that God has said. Which parts of God's word have been fulfilled by the end of the book? Which parts remain unfulfilled?
5. What confidence could the exiles have that these unfulfilled promises would also come true?

6. By the time of the exile, all of the sons and grandsons of Josiah have been killed, except for Jehoiachin. What do you think is the significance of Jehoiachin being kept alive?

Note: A Glimmer of Hope

King Jehoiachin was the last remaining descendant of David and the eventual ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:11-12). The release of King Jehoiachin and the continuation of David's family line is a glimmer of hope for God's people. In a sense, this was the foretaste of the whole nation's release from captivity in exile. In a similar way, Jesus' resurrection is a foretaste of what Christians will experience when we are raised and freed from captivity to sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

7. God has fulfilled his promises in the past. What things has God promised us? As you wait, which of these things are you particularly looking forward to? Pray about them in your group.

FAMILY QUESTION:

Read Jeremiah 52:27b-34

God kept his promise that he would punish the people of Judah with exile. But he also kept them safe in Babylon so that they would eventually be able to return to the land after 70 years.

What are some things that God has promised us?

While we wait for these promises to come true, which of these things are you especially excited about?

Pray about them with your family.

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“I have put my words in your mouth.
See, today I appoint you over nations and
kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy
and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

JEREMIAH 1:9-10

