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PLACE

The Books of Jeremiah  
and Lamentations

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE

## CLT Bible Study

### THE BOOKS JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

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# THE BOOKS OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS



## NOTES

### Section 1.1 Introduction to Jeremiah

#### A. The Life and Times of Jeremiah

Jeremiah was born about 646 B.C. in the Levitical city (see Joshua 21:18) of Anathoth [AN-a-thoth], which lay about three miles northeast of Jerusalem (modern Anata). He received his call to prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah (626 B.C.). He continued prophesying until around 580 B.C. - a ministry of over 40 years.

Great events took place during Jeremiah's lifetime. On the international scene, the empire of Assyria had reached its zenith and was beginning to decline as Jeremiah started to preach. With the help of the Medes and Cimmerians [sih-MER-ee-yanz], the Babylonians destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 612 B.C. The Assyrians, however, with the assistance of Pharaoh-necho of Egypt, made a last-ditch stand against the Babylonians at the Battle of Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh] in 605. When the battle was over, Egypt suffered a staggering defeat, and Assyria fell and rose no more.

Nebuchadnezzar [NEB-ukh-ad-nez-ar], the Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn] general at the Battle of Carchemish, succeeded his ailing father on the throne of Babylon and became the master of the known world of that day.

On the national scene, Josiah came to the throne of Judah in 639 B.C. Under the long reign of his grandfather, Manasseh (55 years), and the short reign (two years) of his father, Amon, idolatry and pagan worship had become rampant. The law of Moses was pushed aside and forgotten. Fertility cults, with their practice of sacred prostitution, were tolerated in the Temple precincts (2 Kings 23:7), and the awful practice of human sacrifice was perpetrated in Jerusalem. Religious decay was evident everywhere in Judah. It was in a deeply demoralized religious situation that Jeremiah stepped in 626 B.C. when he entered the prophetic office.

Josiah sought to reverse this trend. In the process of refurbishing the Temple, a copy of the Book of the Law was found and read in the ears of the king. Startled by the dire predictions of judgment pronounced on those who failed to keep the law, the king instituted sweeping religious reforms throughout the nation. The people of Judah seemed to conform outwardly to the requirements of the king, but apparently, the professional prophets, the priests, and many of the people were just waiting for a change of administration to go back to the old pagan practices that they had grown to love. That opportunity was given when Josiah was slain at the Battle of Megiddo (609) by Pharaoh-necho of Egypt (2 Kings 23:29).

The sons of Josiah who succeeded him encountered many difficulties. Jehoahaz was soon replaced by Jehoiakim. Pharaoh-necho made Jehoiakim swear allegiance to Egypt.



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But, after Egypt was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish (606), Jehoiakim was forced to come under the rule of Babylon.

In 598-597 B.C., Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon, where Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Jehoiakim died during the siege, and his son Jehoiachin took the throne.

Jehoiachin reigned for three months in Jerusalem and then surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was carried, along with a great number of his people, as a captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8). Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, on the throne in Jerusalem. He reigned for 11 years but was a weak and vacillating monarch. He finally succumbed to the pro-Egyptian party at his court and rebelled against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar returned (587-586 B.C.) and, this time, completely demolished the city of David. The Temple, the king's palace, and the walls of the city were reduced to rubble.

Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem during all the foregoing events. He sought to help the various kings who came to the throne of Judah during these turbulent years. They constantly refused his advice and counsel. He was present in the fall of Jerusalem and chose to remain in Judah with Gedaliah, the governor, after the fall of the city. A short time later, when Gedaliah was murdered, the remaining Jews compelled Jeremiah and Baruch, his secretary, to flee with them into Egypt.

### **B. The Personality of the Prophet**

People who have only casually read his book often think of Jeremiah as a poor, gloomy, despondent individual - a psychological misfit for his age. In this, they are totally wrong. On the contrary, Jeremiah is a great prophet of hope when seen in true perspective. In fact, he had a genius for hoping beyond that of the other prophets. But, to see this, one must understand the historical situation under which he labored, the message he was commissioned to deliver, and the personality traits of the prophet.

It is true that from the standpoint of temperament and disposition, no man was more ill-fitted for his task than Jeremiah. Only a God who knows all things would have selected this strange, sensitive, timid, introspective youth to be a prophet "to the nations." Gentle, kindhearted Jeremiah, who loved the simple things of life, was thrown into the middle of the national and international events of his day very much against his own personal inclinations and desires. His tender, affectionate nature was poorly equipped for the thoroughgoing denunciation of sin that his commission required.

It is not difficult to see how the requirements of his prophetic office could cause tension in the inner life of a person with this type of personality. Jeremiah's prophetic insight told him that his own nation was doomed. All that he loved was to be swept away. For years, he had nothing to prophesy but destruction and death. His dark sayings brought down upon his head the wrath of the priests, rulers, friends, and neighbors. He was the most hated person in Judah.



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This was almost more than tenderhearted Jeremiah could bear. He vowed time and again that he would not prophesy any more, but his devotion to God rendered him unable to refrain. As a result, his kind heart was torn to shreds.

One of the great values of the book is that Jeremiah permits us to see the struggle that went on within him. But this was hidden from the people. To them, he must have appeared inflexible and unreasonably stubborn. Because Jeremiah chose to tell us his thoughts and feelings, we know more about him than any other Old Testament prophet. We are able to see him develop from an immature youth into a spiritual giant.

From his own inner struggles, his brooding over Judah's fate, and from what seem to be his "low moments," he discovered *individual religion*. Out of the suffering and anguish of a man's soul, we see this truth burst forth: *Every individual can know God for oneself*. The Temple at Jerusalem, the elaborate sacrificial system, and all the trappings of national religion were no longer indispensable. The seat of true religion from now on was to be the human heart. Through Jeremiah's experiences with God, new trails were blazed, new truths came into focus, and new horizons appeared. He anticipated the Gospel age with its emphasis on inward religion. Subsequent religious movements moved in the direction that Jeremiah pointed out.

### C. The Composition of the Book

Right from the start, this book seems to have had a turbulent history. The first edition was destroyed by Jehoiakim (36:32), but an expanded second edition appeared a short time later (36:32). This took place in the fourth and fifth years of Jehoiakim's reign (605-604) and would mark the middle point of Jeremiah's career (25:3). It is not hard to see that there must have been a third edition, since the events recorded in chapters 21, 23-24, 27-29, 30-34, 37-44 show that they took place later than the fifth year of Jehoiakim.

The book is not in chronological order. Materials from widely different periods in Jeremiah's life lie side by side (chapters 36 and 37). Other materials are not dated, and it is hard to know where they fit into the historical events. To get an orderly picture of Jeremiah's life, one has to jump from one passage to another. This lack of orderliness is probably because Baruch wrote down Jeremiah's words under very trying circumstances, and the city's fall left him no time to rearrange and refine his work. It is a miracle of God's providence that we even have a Book of Jeremiah.

## Section 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS

### A. Historical Background

These five poems come out of the excruciating pain of those trouble-filled days following the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (586 B.C.), the capture of King Zedekiah, and the deportation of the people to Babylon. The torrent of emotion that flows through the book reveals the depths of despondency to which the people had fallen.



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It is poured out in a description of their evil plight mingled with a confession of their sin and accompanied by anguished cries of penitence.

### **B. Title and Place in the Canon**

The book has no title in the Hebrew Bible, but at some point, through the centuries, the rabbis began to refer to it as “lamentations” or “dirges” (Qinoth) [KI-noth], and it is listed this way in the Babylonian Talmud. The Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt] translators went a step further and claimed that Jeremiah wrote it. Subsequent translations, including the English versions, have given it the longer title, “The Lamentations of Jeremiah.”

In the Hebrew Scriptures today, Lamentations is not found among the Prophets but is listed in The Writings (Hagiographa). It is one of the Five Rolls (Megilloth) [me-GIL-lot] in that section of the Hebrew Bible. However, the Septuagint translators and Josephus listed it with the Prophets. Origen (A.D. 250), Augustine (A.D. 420), and Jerome (A.D. 405) all placed it with Jeremiah. Likewise, our English Bibles follow the arrangement found in the Septuagint and list Lamentations with Jeremiah.

### **C. Authorship and Date**

No one is named as the author of Lamentations in the Hebrew text, but a long line of tradition affirms that Jeremiah composed the book. The fact that the book was written in the spirit of Jeremiah and has many similarities to his prophecy cannot be denied. The Septuagint is the earliest written source that ascribes the poems to that prophet, but it is very explicit in attributing the book to him.

The dates of the two books are generally the same. The closing events recorded in the Book of Jeremiah would fall close to 580 B.C., but nothing in the Book of Lamentations would require a later date.

### **D. Structure**

Of the five poems that make up the book, the first four are dirges (laments), while the fifth is more in the form of a prayer. In the Hebrew, the first four are alphabetic acrostics (where the first letter of each line is a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet). Poems one, two, and four have 22 verses corresponding in number and order to the Hebrew alphabet. Verses in poems one and two have three lines each, with the first line following the acrostic form. Poem four is the same, except it has only two lines to the verse. Poem three has 66 lines, and each letter of the alphabet is repeated three times. Each line is thought of as a verse. The fifth poem has 22 verses of one line, but no acrostic arrangement is evident.

The metrical structure used here is known as the Qina (lament) rhythm. It is the meter most commonly used for chanting dirges over the dead or over national calamities in ancient times.



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### E. Purpose and Usage

These poems are dirges chanted by the Israeli congregation to express their sorrow over the loss of their national identity. They contemplate all the great subjects of public grief. Their purpose is to therapeutically express the deepest and most profound emotions of broken and ruined people. Opening, as they do, the doors of prayer, they point the way to repentance and faith and thus arouse hope that God will have mercy on his people.

The Jewish people have recognized the value of these poems, as seen in their usage. Lamentations is included in the Five Rolls, which are read on important anniversary days every year in Judaism. This little book is read on the ninth of Ab (near the end of July), a fast day observed to commemorate the destruction of the first and second Temples. Passages from this book are found in liturgies used by both the Roman Catholic and Protestant branches of the Christian Church.

Anathoth [AN-a-thoth]  
Cimmerians [sih-MER-ee-yanz]  
Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh]  
Nebuchadnezzar [NEB-ukh-ad-nez-ar]  
Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn]  
Qinoth [KI-noth]  
Megilloth [me-GIL-lot]  
Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt]

## CHAPTER 2. THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH



### NOTES

#### Section 2.1 The Preface (1:1-3)

These verses identify the book's contents as the work of Jeremiah (Yirmeyahu, "the Lord shoots or hurls"). They show that God is the Author (1:1) of the message since he initiated the prophet's career, and they name the kings in whose reign these things took place.

#### Section 2.2 Jeremiah's Induction Into Prophetic Office (1:4-19)

In Hebrew religion, a true spokesman of God was expected to come to that "special moment" when he was inducted into divine office.

##### A. Jeremiah's Call (1:4-7)

A divine-human confrontation takes place when Jeremiah is informed that he was to serve as God's spokesman: "I formed you... I knew you... I sanctified you... I ordained you a prophet unto the nations" (1:5). Jeremiah was human enough to shrink from a heartbreaking task, but there is no element of rebellion in his hesitation.

##### B. Jeremiah's Consecration (1:5, 9)

There are two sides to Jeremiah's consecration: sanctification and implementation. Jeremiah's experience can be described as the sanctification of a holy calling. He was set apart and exclusively devoted to a holy God for his purposes and service. This is the fundamental meaning of sanctification in the Old Testament. At the same time, Jeremiah's moral life was affected, too, for it is impossible for a person to belong to a holy God without that relationship being reflected in holy living. Thus, vocational sanctification and ethical sanctification are two sides of the same coin. God's plans for Jeremiah were implemented by the divine touch (1:9). Power is imparted to the young prophet to carry out his mission. Jeremiah does not go to his task alone.

##### C. Jeremiah's Commission (1:4-10)

Jeremiah is to serve as the mouthpiece of God (1:7). This is consistent with the word nabi (prophet), which means "to announce" or "one who speaks for another." Further, he is to deliver a message (1: 9-10), the content of which is known "as the word of the Lord."

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### D. Jeremiah's Confirmation (1:11-19)

God confirms his word to Jeremiah with two visions: a command and a promise. In the vision of the almond rod (1:11), God assures Jeremiah that he is wide awake and alertly watching over his word to execute it. The almond tree was the first to "wake up" in the spring and is symbolic of the alertness of God. The vision of the boiling pot (1:13) speaks of the judgments of God that will come pouring down upon Judah from the north. The Babylonians will attack Judah from this direction.

Jeremiah recoiled in horror at what he saw coming upon Judah. He shrank back in utter worry. But, the merciless command of God comes like a whiplash, "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say..." (1:17). The "ring of iron" in the voice of God jars the prophet back to the divine perspective. God's command, however, was quickly followed by God's consolation. Jeremiah is given a promise, "I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar..." (1:18-19). Courage and inspiration flowed back into the soul of the prophet. Fully initiated into the prophetic office, Jeremiah turned to his task in the power of the Spirit.

### Section 2.3 The Arraignment of the House of Jacob (2:1 - 10:25)

This section consists of several discourses uttered at different times in the earlier years of Jeremiah's ministry (the reign of Josiah and the first few years of Jehoiakim). They are grouped together here because they share a common theme: an indictment of the whole house of Israel.

#### A. The Infidelity of Israel (2:1 - 3:5)

##### 1. *Unfaithfulness to Covenant Vows (2:1-3)*

Memories of a better day come back to haunt Israel. God reminds her how devotedly she served him in the wilderness.

##### 2. *Ungratefulness for Great Deliverances (2:4-8)*

Jeremiah declares that a wretched spirit of ungratefulness fills the hearts of the people.

##### 3. *Unnaturalness in Religious Devotion (2:9-13)*

In light of all God's past actions on her behalf, it seemed unnatural for Israel to forsake the Lord and serve idols. Leaving a Fountain of living water and making for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water is unnatural and unreasonable (2:13).

##### 4. *Unable to Learn from History (2:14-19)*

God accuses Judah of being unable to learn from past experiences.

##### 5. *Unrestrained Sin Leaves One Deeply Stained (2:20-25)*

Several figures portray the pitiful plight of Jacob's house: a harlot, a vineyard, a deeply stained garment, a young she-camel, and a female donkey.



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6. *Unable to Care (2:26 - 3:5)*

Although Judah is caught in her sin like a common thief (2:26), and despite the fact that calamity has already struck, the people receive no correction (2:30).

**B. A Plaintive Call To Repentance (3:6 - 4:4)**

The previous section closed on a note of doom. In this section, there is a note of hope. The house of Jacob is invited to repent, with a hint that disaster can be averted. There is a plaintiveness in the call that reveals the hurt at the heart of God.

1. *The Payoff on Superficial Repentance (3:6-11)*

In comparing Judah with Israel, God points out that Judah is more guilty since she has been unable to learn from Israel's fate.

2. *The Promptness of God to Forgive the Repentant (3:12-13)*

God's proclamation to Israel (already in exile) is indicative of his willingness to forgive her backslidings. He requires, however, that she make a thorough confession of her backslidings and acknowledge her disobedience. The promptness and completeness of their confession will be answered by the promptness of God's forgiveness.

3. *The Plans of God for Those Who Repent (3:14-20)*

God's love for his people is further proclaimed in his plans for those who will repent. In fact, a whole new era is envisaged here: Israel will have new and better leaders; Judah and Israel will be reunited; and Jerusalem will be the seat of God's government of the world. God's present problem, however, is how to accomplish this when Judah and Israel are so disobedient and evil.

4. *The Pathway to Genuine Repentance (3:21 - 4:4)*

God's yearning, suffering, loving heart points out the pathway to genuine repentance.

a. *Confession (3:21-25)*. A short dialogue seems to take place between God and a penitent people. God is heard saying, "Return... and I will heal..." (3:22). Israel is heard saying, "We have sinned...we and our fathers..." (3:25). This teaches that when confession is sincere and complete, God begins his work of healing.

b. *Conversion (4:1)*. The important word here is "return." Included in the idea of conversion is the forsaking ("put your detestable idols out of my sight") of all that is evil and a turning that involves a change in both inner attitude and outer action.



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c. *Concession (4:2)*. In that day, Hebrew psychology was such that if a Hebrew could honestly say, "The Lord lives" (4:2), this would mean that he had conceded that the Lord was the only Living One - other gods were nothing, that is, had no existence. The prophet knew that if the nation would say these words in sincerity, the problem of idolatry could be solved very quickly.

d. *Complete renovation (4:3)*. The reform under Josiah was likely lying in the background of Jeremiah's mind as he wrote verses 3 and 4. The Josianic reform was a superficial effort at repentance. Jeremiah saw that surface religion would not do.

e. *Circumcision of the heart (4:4)*. Jeremiah says that radical "heart surgery" is the only remedy for the nation's sin. This passage should be studied in the light of Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 9:26, Romans 2:25-29, Galatians 5:6, and Colossians 2:11. From the time of Abraham (Genesis 17:10-12), circumcision must have had a high spiritual significance. It does so with Jeremiah. Circumcision of the heart refers to an inward work of God in the soul. It specifies that cleansing is needed, that is, the removal of impurity from people's moral faculties. It is a radical change that goes to the deep of one's moral nature. Nothing short of heart purity is stressed in this passage (Psalm 24:4; Matthew 5: 8).

### C. The Enemy from the North and from within (4:5 - 6:30)

Jeremiah perceives that the terrible fate that awaits his nation has a double aspect. There are actually two enemies: "One is an unidentified enemy from the north"; the other is Judah's "stubborn and rebellious heart." Each is to play its part in bringing about the downfall of the nation.

#### 1. *The Day of Reckoning (4:5-31)*

a. *The trumpet of alarm (4:5-13)*. What Jeremiah sees in prophetic vision fills him with consternation. He lifts his voice and sends forth a warning cry, "Sound the trumpet throughout the land!" He then describes the "evil from the north" as it moves down upon Judah (4:9).

b. *The plea for repentance (4:14-22)*. Moved by what he sees, Jeremiah pleads, "O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved" (4:14). He implores the people to repent, indicating, "your way and your doings have procured" this fate for you.

c. *The cosmic catastrophe (4:23-26)*. At the height of his agony, the prophet suddenly seems to see beyond the horrible destruction of Judah to the end of the world. Jeremiah finds himself alone in the universe - the consummation of all things has come! "I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty" (4:23).

d. *"The game is up" (4:27-31)*. The above moment passes, and Jeremiah is back with the weight of Judah's situation on his heart. Although there is a brief glimpse of the loving-kindness of the Lord in 4:27, it does not make the present plight of Judah any less real. Jeremiah sees Judah ruined and Jerusalem in her death throes. He is convinced that for his beloved people and nation, "the game is up."



NOTES

2. *The Blistering Indictment (5:1-31)*

Chapter 4 focused on “the enemy from the north,” while chapter 5 focused on “the enemy within.” Together, these chapters constitute a blistering indictment of Judah’s rebellious heart.

a. *The hopeless search (5:1-6)*. God sends Jeremiah on a search through Jerusalem to see if he can find one righteous person so that the city can be pardoned. Jeremiah’s search is among all classes, high and low, rich and poor, but all in vain.

b. *The provocative question (5:7-9)*. God now asks the people, “Why should I forgive you?” (5:7) Their disobedience is indicated by their rebellious and immoral lives; spiritual whoredom is compounded by physical adultery.

c. *The stern retribution (5:10-14)*. The divine command is now given to destroy the city and nation. The people had refused to believe that God would punish them. Now, they were to experience for themselves God’s retribution for sin.

d. *The devouring nation (5:15-18)*. The rod of punishment in the hand of God is a nation (apparently the enemy from the north) ... “from far ... a mighty nation”.

e. *The reasons for divine punishment (5:19-31)*. In their pain, the people will ask, “Why does the Lord do these things to us?” God is not slow to give his reasons:

- (1) a backsliding heart,
- (2) spiritual stupidity,
- (3) lack of reverence for God,
- (4) guiltiness of social injustice,
- (5) religious perversity.

The blistering indictment of Judah ends with a ringing cry, “What will you do in the end?”

3. *The Advancing Foe (6:1-30)*

a. *Preparation for the siege (6:1-8)*. Jeremiah’s description of the approach of the enemy and the punishment of rebellious Judah is intermixed with his own personal reactions to what he sees.

b. *Punishment will be thorough (6:9-15)*. No one will be spared divine punishment: all ages, all sexes, and every stratum of society will be involved.

c. *Prescription for deliverance (6:16-21)*. Torn by what he sees, Jeremiah cannot refrain from prescribing the remedy for Judah’s situation. “Ask for the old paths, where is the good way?” (6:16). But Judah replies, “We will not walk therein.”

d. *Painful lamentations (6:22-26)*. Jeremiah then sees again the devastation from the north country. The sound of the enemy’s coming is like the roaring of the sea. He hears the cries of lamentation rising from the lips of the people as overflowing scourge sweeps through.

NOTES

e. *Put to the test (6:27-30)*. Jeremiah is now appointed by God to serve as a tester (a skilled analyst) for the people of Judah, who are to be tested like minerals from the earth.

**D. The Temple Sermon (7:1 - 8:3)**

Chapter 7 has a definite break, as new information is given about the prophet. The sermon delivered here reveals that something tragically wrong with the Hebrew religion has occurred. To ascertain what happened as a result of this sermon, one should study chapter 26.

*1. The Delusions of a Hardened Conscience (7:1-15)*

Jeremiah is commissioned to preach a sermon at the Temple gate in the hearing of all the people. The occasion was probably a national festival.

The prophet informed the people that they had developed false notions concerning God and themselves. They were suffering from religious delusion. Apparently, the professional (false) prophets had led the people to believe that God would never let the Temple be violated - thus, the city was safe.

Jeremiah exposed their self-deception by declaring that the Temple would suffer the same fate as the sanctuary at Shiloh (1 Samuel 4:3). He insisted that to satisfy their own depraved desires, the people had attempted to make God over into their own image and reduce his moral precepts to superstitious delusions (7:8-11). As a result, God declares, "I will cast you out of my sight" - a clear prediction of exile (7:15).

*2. Forbidden to Intercede (7:16-20)*

Jeremiah was so moved by what he saw coming upon the people that he began interceding with God for the nation. He was sternly forbidden by God to pray for the people (7:16).

*3. Obedience Is Better than Sacrifice (7:21-28)*

Jeremiah now underscores God's moral demands as far more important than religious ceremony.

The sacrificial system had been a teaching agency to provide object lessons in holy living, but the people had prostituted its use and had failed to learn from it (7:26). Now Jeremiah is instructed to pass the verdict: "This is a nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction." (7:28) Only judgment and doom await her.

*4. The Irony of Sin's Rewards (7:29 - 8:3)*

Judah fancied herself smart and sophisticated, but in reality, she had become so shameless that she could profane the Lord's house without being conscience-stricken. Although the people did not know it, the place where they took such delight in making human sacrifices (the Valley of Hinnom) was to one day become their grave (7:22).



NOTES

### E. Miscellaneous Oracles (8:4 - 10:25)

The following undated oracles are of varying lengths and seem to have no sequence with those that precede or follow them. However, they do carry forward the general theme—the arraignment of the house of Jacob for judgment.

#### 1. *The Unnaturalness of Judah's Son (8:4-7)*

The stork and the swallow faithfully obey their natural instincts, fulfilling their destiny, but the people of God do not obey the laws of God.

#### 2. *The Fate of the Self-deceived (8:8-13)*

Although professing themselves to be wise, the people of Judah are fools. They have listened too long to the false prophets and priests who have not proclaimed the truth.

#### 3. *There Is No Escape (8:14-17)*

The coming calamity is so certain that the prophet speaks almost as though it were already accomplished. The fortified (walled) city really offers no defense (8:14). It will know the silence of death just like the undefended countryside.

#### 4. *The Wail of Despair (8:18 - 9:1)*

What the prophet saw was so terrifying and so inevitable that, when he tried to comfort himself concerning the fate of his beloved land, his heart fainted (8:18). Knowing the true state of things, the prophet cried, "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved." (8:20) In this unexplainable confusion (astonishment) and deep sorrow ("I am crushed, I mourn"), he raises the question: "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (8:22) The expected answer is "yes," since Gilead was known for its balm. "Why, then, is there no healing?"

There is but one answer. The people have not applied to the Physician nor sought a remedy. A realization of all this causes the shepherd heart of the prophet to wail, "Oh that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears!" (9:1)

#### 5. *The Grief of a Loving Heart (9:2-22)*

There is a close connection between the end of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9. Overcome with grief, Jeremiah longs to fly away to a lodging place in the wilderness (9:2), far from the maddening situation that confronts him. Since he cannot go away, he spends his grief in a series of laments. At times, these seem to be vindictive, but underneath, they express the sorrow of a loving heart.



NOTES

a. *The treacherous people (9:2-8)*. The treachery of the men of Judah takes many forms. There is spiritual as well as physical adultery. Lying is also prevalent so that none dare trust one's neighbor. The word "deceiver" (9:4) is the same word as "Jacob." The descendants are like their ancestors - each man (Jacob) is his brother.

b. *The coming desolation (9:9-11)*. Another reason for Jeremiah's grief stems from what he sees in a prophetic vision concerning the coming desolation of the land.

c. *The lack of understanding (9:12-16)*. His grief is further compounded because of the moral stupidity of the people. A wise person would not have been so lacking in understanding.

d. *Death's relentless harvest (9:17-22)*. Jeremiah is told to call for mourning women to take up a lament. However, hired mourners are not sufficient for this sorrow, and mothers are urged to teach their daughters and neighbors to lament.

6. *Wisdom - the False and the True (9:23-24)*

These two verses contrast genuine safety and false security between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God.

7. *The Punishment of the Uncircumcised (9:25-26)*

Jeremiah stresses the primacy of inward religion over outward conformity to religious practices (see 1 Corinthians 7:19). Since Judah has missed the deeper meaning of her religion's outward acts, she will be punished like the heathen.

8. *The Emptiness of Idols (10:1-16)*

Jeremiah seems to be addressing the house of Israel that is already in exile (10:1). The prophet pours his scorn on the idols of the heathen nations (10:3).

9. *Exile Is Near (10:17-22)*

These verses are an imaginary dialogue between the prophet and Jerusalem, the mother city. The prophet commands the inhabitants of the city to "Pick up your bundle from the ground" to begin the long journey to exile.

10. *A Plea for Correction and Retribution (10:23-25)*

This is one of Jeremiah's prayers. He recognizes his own frailty and that of all people. He prays for correction, but seeing his own human frailty in the light of God's majesty and holiness, he hastens to cry, "Correct me, LORD, but only with justice - not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing." (10:24). Justice alone would ruin him; mercy is his only hope.

Jeremiah's prayer for the destruction of his enemies seems unbecoming to our minds, but we must beware of reading twentieth-century morals into Jeremiah's day. He conceived his enemies to be the enemies of God, and he felt justified in praying for their destruction.

NOTES

## Section 2.4 Confessions and Predictions (11:1 - 20:18)

This section contains a miscellaneous collection of narratives and predictions and several dialogues between the prophet and God. The narratives shed light on Jeremiah's career, but the dialogues have special value in that they reveal the prophet's inner life. The material is not in chronological order. The prophet's dialogues with God are his prayers that arise from his heart in times of great crisis. They have long been called "the confessions of Jeremiah."

### A. Jeremiah And The Covenant (11:1 - 12:17)

#### 1. Judah's Violation of the Covenant (11:1-17)

The word that comes to Jeremiah from the Lord indicts the people of Judah for violating God's covenant with them at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-20).

#### 2. Confessions of Jeremiah (11:18 - 12:17)

a. *The plot at Anathoth* (11:18-23). God seems to have revealed to the prophet that his relatives and neighbors are planning to kill him. God immediately assures the prophet that his enemies will be punished, but Jeremiah looks death in the face for the first time, and his mind is greatly troubled.

b. *Jeremiah questions God* (12:1-4). He affirms his faith in the righteousness of God but admits he is puzzled that God permits the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer. How can God permit these things to go on?

c. *God questions Jeremiah* (12:5-6). God counters the prophet's questions with some of his own. "If you have raced with men on foot, and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?"

(12:5) The implication is that even more difficult things are coming. This is not much encouragement.

d. *The divine lament* (12:7-13). God shows that his sorrow parallels Jeremiah's sorrow (12:7). Several different figures are used to describe Israel:

- (1) God's heritage, but forsaken by him,
- (2) a lion roaring against her Maker,
- (3) a speckled bird about to be devoured by her fellows, and
- (4) a vineyard trampled and ruined by evil rulers.

e. *The divine plan* (12:14-17). God is interested in all people - even the enemies of Judah. If the Gentile nations would "learn the ways of my people," the ways of the Lord, they would be built up, but if not, they would be destroyed. This teaches the sovereignty of God over all nations. He holds the whole world in his hand!



NOTES

## B. Parables and Pronouncements (13:1-27)

### 1. *The Parable of the Waistcloth (13:1-11)*

It seems improbable (though not impossible) that Jeremiah made two 400-mile trips to the Euphrates River just to bury a dirty loincloth and dig it up again. It is perhaps best to take the incident as a parable. Its teaching: Any object is of value only when used for its intended purpose. A loincloth designed to be worn by a man is not useful when buried in the damp earth. Likewise, Judah is useless as a nation unless she fulfills God's purpose for her. Since she is not, Judah is as morally corrupt as the waistcloth was physically. Therefore, Judah is as useless to God as a rotten waistcloth is to a man and must be cast aside.

### 2. *The Parable of the Wine Jar (13:12-14)*

A peevish reply to an obvious statement concerning a wine jar becomes the occasion for a very quick and accurate thrust of divine truth. Drunkenness is often taken in the Bible as symbolic of the "wine of God's wrath," that is his judgments. This idea is here - and more. Judah will be as confused and bewildered as a drunken man when the day of judgment comes.

### 3. *Sinners, Be Not Proud (13:15-19)*

Jeremiah pleads with his countrymen to turn from their pride and give glory to God, lest darkness come upon them and they stumble as in the night (John 12:35). Probably fulfilled in 597 B.C. when Jehoiachin and the queen mother were carried into exile (2 Kings 24:14-16).

### 4. *The Deep-seated Nature of Sin (13:20-27)*

Jerusalem is addressed here as a shepherdess who has lost her flock (13:20). Great will be her shame when a former ally becomes a tyrannical ruler over her (13:21). Jerusalem's fate is due to the deep-seated nature of her sin.

## C. The Drought and its Moral Implications (14:1 - 15:9)

### 1. *The Ravages of the Drought (14:1-6)*

The horrors of the drought are depicted in graphic terms. Jeremiah believes that this natural calamity has come upon the people because of their sin.

### 2. *Frantic Prayers Are Evil (14:7-9)*

The people cry frantically to the Lord, but not with genuine repentance.

### 3. *The Verdict of God (14:10-12)*

God sees through the veneer of Judah's pretended religiosity. He would be less than God if he acceded to their frantic praying without genuine repentance and faith.

### 4. *The Root of the Trouble (14:13-16)*

Jeremiah attempts to excuse the people by saying that the false prophets have misled them. But the root of the trouble lies in the fact that the people prefer a lie to the truth.



NOTES

5. *Lamentation and Confession (14:17-22)*

The prophet's grief here is also an expression of the grief of God. The prophet laments over the civil strife, plunder, and death that seem to have come because of the drought.

6. *The Verdict Reaffirmed (15:1-4)*

Despite Jeremiah's affirmation of faith, God refuses his intercession "with a decisiveness that allows for no repetition" even if Moses and Samuel stood before God (15:1). Consequently, there is no hope. In Moses' and Samuel's days, the people truly repented, but that is not the case now.

7. *A Lamentation over Jerusalem (15:5-9)*

What Jeremiah sees causes him to break forth in renewed lamentation. The city is forsaken; there is no one to pity; even God is weary of giving them another chance (15:6).

**D. Confessions of Jeremiah (15:10-21)**

1. *The Conflict of a Soul (15:10-19)*

a. *Life tumbles in (15:10)*. Overwhelmed by the events that have taken place, the prophet is plunged into a period of great darkness of soul. He wrestles with the awful temptation to doubt God. The holiest men of all ages have suffered similar moments: Abraham, Job, Elijah, and Paul.

b. *God speaks to his need (15:11-14)*. The Hebrew is obscure here, but God seems to reply to his complaint with words of encouragement. But, Jeremiah does not seem to grasp the true importance of God's encouragement.

c. *The valley of the shadow (15:15-18)*. The dialogue between God and Jeremiah seems only to have deepened the gloom on the soul of the prophet. His mind seethes. In the agony of his soul, he cries out, searching for some shred of meaning to his predicament. In this, he reminds us of Job (Job 3:6-7).

d. *The voice of iron (15:19)*. God requires utter commitment, even though we do not understand all the ways he chooses to lead us.

2. *The Comfort of God (15:20-21)*

When the emotional storm passes, Jeremiah finds God's comfort surrounding him. Jeremiah has battled against "principalities and powers" and has won a signal victory! However, his days of hardship and suffering are by no means over.



NOTES

## E. Miscellaneous Materials (16:1 - 17:18)

These two chapters contain a mixture of personal accounts, prophetic indictments, and predictions, hope for the future, and two prayers. Some of these materials have only a casual relation to the others, but all of them fit appropriately under the theme of “confessions and predictions.”

### 1. *The Prophet's Personal Loss (16:1-9)*

Jeremiah, whose sensitive and affectionate nature craved the companionship of loved ones and friends, was denied the comforts of a home and family (16:2). His unusual behavior was a sign to all the people that the familiar “round of life” was soon to be completely disrupted.

### 2. *The Meaning of Judah's Fate (16:10-21)*

a. *The stubbornness of an evil heart (16:10-13, 16-18)*. The prophet is told that the people will ask him why God's punishment will be so severe. He is instructed to trace the doom of the nation to a disposition of mind in the people themselves. “Stubbornness of his evil heart” refers to a settled state of mind (disposition) that is completely opposed to the authority of God. These people have become shameless in their sinning and deliberate in their perverseness. This is why exile is so inevitable (16:13).

b. *The prediction of a new exodus (16:14-15)*. These hopeful verses break in here like a shaft of light amid the deepest gloom. They are seen as a prediction of a new exodus: not from Egypt, as was the first exodus, but from the “land of the north,” that is, from exile.

c. *A vindication of God's wrath (16:19-21)*. The prophet sees the day when the Gentiles will be converted. They will acknowledge the vanity of idols and will worship the one true God.

### 3. *The Nature of Judah's Sin (17:1-4)*

“A pen of iron” and “the point of a diamond” (17:1) are used here to emphasize the ingrained quality of Judah's sin. God has no way of dealing with a sinful disposition except to break it to pieces, as a potter breaks an earthen vessel. Out of the fragments, he may form a new creation.

### 4. *A Psalm of Contrasts (17:5-8)*

Reminiscent of Psalm 1, Jeremiah contrasts the fate of the individual who trusts in people (flesh) with the one who trusts in God.

### 5. *Sin is a Disease of the Heart (17:9-11)*

These verses seem to carry on the discussion started in verses 1-4. In order to understand them, one needs to recall the Hebrew custom of using physical organs to symbolize the activities of one's inner life. Here, the heart signifies the essential self, the “inner person,” while the mind, or kidneys (Hebrew), signify the emotions. Jeremiah says, “The heart of a person in essential being is deceitful, treacherous, and desperately wicked” (incurably sick). The passage clearly teaches that something is desperately wrong with the person's inner nature that only God can deal with.



NOTES

6. *Faith and Petition (17:12-18)*

a. A prayer of hope and praise (17:12-13). Although the Hebrew text is difficult, praise to God, faith, and hope are clearly expressed.

b. A prayer of petition (17:14-18). Jeremiah suddenly remembers his own miserable predicament and the taunts of his enemies. He defends himself before God and reminds God that his enemies are also God's enemies. He asks for protection and vindication (17:18).

**F. Symbolic Actions: Meaning and Results (17:19 - 20:18)**

Jeremiah now performs certain symbolic acts, which bring various reactions from the people. These actions carry a powerful message for both the king and the people. As a result, a storm of protest is gathering around the head of the unfortunate prophet.

1. *The Sacredness of the Sabbath (17:19-27)*

Jeremiah is instructed by God to go and stand at the gate of the city and deliver a sermon on Sabbath desecration. Apparently, the people had been profaning the Sabbath by carrying on their secular activities in a flagrant fashion. The nation which dishonors the Sabbath soon forgets the God who made the Sabbath.

2. *The Potter and the Clay (18:1-17)*

Jeremiah's trip to the potter's house is one of the best-known and often repeated incidents of his life. It contained a powerful message for Judah but was unheeded by the people of Jeremiah's time (18:12-13).

a. *The symbolism of the incident (18:1-6)*. God is the Potter; Israel is the clay, and the wheels represent the circumstances of life. God has a purpose for every person and every nation. The process of life is seen in the wheels. The sovereignty of God and the freedom of people are both depicted. God's purposes can be thwarted by people, but the rigors of judgment and the reshaping process cannot be avoided. Final rejection is also a possibility.

b. *God's method with people (18:7-12)*. These verses tell us that God deals with people on a moral basis rather than a strictly legal one. This makes it possible for God to forgive people when they repent.

c. *The moral stupidity of Judah (18:13-17)*. God now chides the people for the unnaturalness of their evil practices (18:13).

3. *A Plot and an Unworthy Prayer (18:18-23)*

The religious leaders of the nation—the priests, prophets, and wisdom teachers—were now convinced that Jeremiah's dire predictions were directed at them. If allowed to continue, they knew that Jeremiah's message would undercut their position with the people.



NOTES

With the hardening of their attitude, Jeremiah's hope for national reform disappears. He turns in bitterness of spirit to God in prayer. He reminds God of how he has interceded for these very people (18:20). He sees now that there is no hope of any change, and he prays for their utter destruction. In the light of the New Testament, this seems to be a very unworthy prayer, but one must remember that Jeremiah did not have the insight and understanding that has come to us through the revelation of God in Christ. We do not emulate him here.

4. *The Earthen Flask (19:1-13)*

In another symbolic action, Jeremiah is instructed to take an earthen flask to the Potsherd Gate in the wall of Jerusalem and break this flask in the presence of the leading men among the prophets and priests (19:1-2). The shattering of the flask symbolized the way God was going to shatter Judah because of her idolatrous practices.

5. *Jeremiah in the Stocks (19:14 - 20:6)*

From the Potsherd Gate, Jeremiah returned to the Temple court (19:14-15), where he apparently repeated his message (19:3-9) to all the people. His words created such a stir that Pashur [PASH-oor], the chief of the Temple police, arrested Jeremiah (20:1-2). After beating the prophet, they put him in the stocks, where he was exposed to the ridicule and jeers of his enemies. Jeremiah remained all night in this torturous position. The next day, when Pashur released him (20:3), Jeremiah seized the opportunity to supplement the message that he had given the day before. Pashur's name is changed to Magor-missabib [mag-or-MIS-ah-beeb] (20:3, "terror all around") because he has prophesied lies to the people. The prophet then reminds the people that the king of Babylon will come and take away the treasures of Jerusalem (20:4-5) and that Pashur will die in disgrace in Babylon among the very people he has deceived (20:6).

6. *Jeremiah's Anguish (20:7-18)*

This is Jeremiah's saddest and bitterest complaint. For a moment, the curtain is pulled aside, and the reader is given a glimpse of the prophet's inner feelings and the workings of his mind. In studying this passage, we must remember that Jeremiah did not have the advantage of the 2,500 years of divine revelation that we enjoy.

a. *Jeremiah's complaint (20:7-10)*. All that was human and finite cried out against the odds that faced him. Thus, tortured with a thousand pangs, he complained before God.

b. *An outburst of praise (20:11-13)*. Just at the breaking point, the tide changes (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jeremiah's thoughts shift to the greatness of God. Immediately, there is a difference. As he ponders the character of God, his spirits begin to rise. He bursts into a glorious song of confidence (20:13).

c. *Jeremiah curses the day of his birth (20:14-18)*. The drop here from the heights of ecstasy to the depths of despair has caused many scholars to feel that verses 14-18 do not immediately follow verses 11-13 but come from another occasion in Jeremiah's life. Be that as it may, as they stand now, the verses tell us that our emotions are tremendously affected by the direction we look.



NOTES

The prophet is again engaged with the hopelessness of his situation (20:14). A pall of intense gloom engulfs his spirit. In a manner reminiscent of Job, he curses the day of his birth (20:14, 15; Job 3:1). The passage must be taken rhetorically rather than literally. No particular person is meant. When rightly understood, the passage points once more to the curse of Israel's betrayal of her heritage.

We see in detail the battle of faith going on in the heart of a poor, finite being. The Bible nowhere teaches that life with God is a placid journey. On the contrary, it teaches that people of God of all ages have had, at times, the fiercest kind of temptations, frustrations, inner struggles, periods of deep questioning, and battles of faith. They have had to stand, as it were, at the doors of their souls with a drawn sword and fight off the demonic forces that sought to destroy them. Even the Master had his moments of fierce struggle (Matthew 26:37-44; Mark 15:34; Luke 4:1-13).

### Section 2.5 A Forecast of The End (21:1 - 29:32)

It is obvious that a new section of the book begins here. The transition is abrupt and without explanation. The material is not in chronological order and covers a wide range of subject matter. The one dominant note is the end of Judah and the Davidic dynasty. The kings, the religious leaders, the Gentile nations, and the Jewish captives, even now in Babylon, all have a part in the prophetic drama. The whole section is actually a forecast of the end of Hebrew national life.

#### A. Beginning of the Final Siege (21:1-10)

Without announcement, the reader is suddenly carried to the final siege of Jerusalem (588 B.C.; 37:3-38:28). The Babylonians have appeared outside the walls of the city. In distress of mind, Zedekiah sends a trusted servant to Jeremiah to obtain some word of hope from the Lord (21:2). But alas, Jeremiah's word from God is one of doom. Jeremiah now places before the people one of two choices (21:8): to desert to the enemy means life; to resist means death (21:10).

#### B. The Fortunes of the House Of David (21:11 - 23:8)

The messages here are addressed to the various kings of the Davidic dynasty who ruled during Jeremiah's lifetime. They do not logically follow 21:1-10.

##### 1. A Message to the Royal House (21:11 - 22:9)

Jeremiah addresses the whole house of David concerning the tasks and duties of all good kings. Davidic kings are urged to dispense justice promptly and daily ("in the morning"), not spasmodically or at the whim of officials. The weak and the helpless are to be delivered from the hand of the oppressor by the king (22:3). God warns that his fury will be visited on those who fail to rule with equity and justice.



NOTES

2. *The Fate of Shallum (22:10-12)*

This is the first of a series of oracles against specific kings. Shallum [SHAL-uhm] (or Jehoahaz) became king after Josiah's death at Megiddo but was removed by Pharaoh-necho after ruling for three months (2 Kings 23:30-34). The fate of Shallum was a warning of the end of the royal house.

3. *The Oracle against Jehoiakim (22:13-23)*

Jeremiah reserves his bitterest denunciations for Jehoiakim (22:18). He was the most ruthless and wicked of all the kings who ruled during Jeremiah's lifetime. God's word is that Jehoiakim's life will end in shame and disgrace. His death will be symbolic of the end of Judah and the Davidic dynasty.

4. *Oracles against Jehoiachin (22:24-30)*

There are two short oracles here concerning Jehoiachin (called Coniah in 22:24, 28 and Jeconiah in 28:4). The first predicts his captivity, which took place in 597 B.C. when he and his family were carried to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10). The second deals with a question raised by the people after he had gone into captivity, "Why will he and his children (the royal family) be hurled out?" (22:28)

5. *The Messianic King (23:1-8)*

In a general statement about the kings of Judah, which apparently included Zedekiah, Jeremiah exposed them all as evil "pastors" (shepherds) who had scattered God's sheep. He continues on, however, and gives us a glimpse "beyond judgment." He seems to take for granted that God's redemptive purpose in judgment will be accomplished, and a new day will dawn on the nation.

The accomplishment of God's purpose will comprise at least three things:

- (1) the return of a remnant (23:3);
- (2) the return will be thought of as a "new exodus" (23:8);
- (3) the coming of an ideal King, "I will raise to David a righteous Branch." 23:5). This new King of David's line represents all the unfulfilled longings of people for an ideal ruler. The Church has always seen the figure of Christ in this passage, the Messianic King.

**C. Oracles Against False Prophets (23:9-40)**

Having dealt with the political leaders, Jeremiah now turns his attention to the nation's religious leaders.

1. *The Pain of Jeremiah (23:9-10)*

As the prophet surveys the moral condition of his land, he breaks out in an uncontrollable lament, "My heart is broken within me." (23:9)



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2. *The Profaneness of the Prophets (23:11-15)*

The prophets in Jerusalem were guilty of the vilest kind of sins; "They commit adultery, and live a lie." (23:14) - yet they proclaim the word of the Lord with great bravado.

3. *The Proclamation of Error (23:16-22)*

The reason the prophets preach false doctrine is that:

- a. they gain their ideas from the wrong source, their own hearts (23:16);
- b. they proclaim what the people want to hear (23:17);
- c. they are not willing to listen to the counsel of the Lord (23:18, 22);
- d. they have gone forth without a commission or a message.

They would have known the true word if they had been willing to listen.

4. *The Provocation of God (23:23-32)*

The stupidity of these false prophets provokes God. They do not know how to obtain the word of the Lord; they steal their sermons from their neighbors and give a secondhand message (23:30). God's wrath is against all such.

5. *The Perversion of a Divine Word (23:33-40)*

The false prophets are sternly reprimanded for their perversion of the term "the burden of the Lord" (23:33), which had a sacred meaning up to then. *The burden is derived from a Hebrew word that means to "lift up," but in time came to mean something that was borne or carried, hence, "a burden."* A message from God was something a prophet took up and cried forth. In so doing, it was laid upon the consciences of the people. It came to be thought of as a "burden," an "utterance" of the Lord.

**D. The Parable of The Figs (24:1-10)**

Jehoiachin and 10,000 of the choice families of Judah had been deported to Babylon in the tragedy of 597 B.C. In contemplating the situation of the exiles in Babylon (also chapter 29 should be read in conjunction with this chapter) and the plight of the people remaining in Jerusalem, God speaks to Jeremiah through two baskets of figs (24:2). One, the basket of good figs, represents the exiles in Babylon. The other, the basket of bad figs, represents the present inhabitants of Jerusalem. God's ways are not people's ways; no matter how humanly shrewd they are, people are "bad figs" when they blind themselves to eternal truths and rely on human wisdom rather than the word of God.



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### E. A Preview of the End (25:1-38)

In this chapter, the reader is suddenly shifted backward from the reign of Zedekiah to the fourth year of Jehoiakim (from 588 B.C. back to 605-604). This year, the whole of the Near East was in a process of great change. The Battle of Carchemish had been fought shortly before (606 B.C.), and this engagement was one of the most decisive events in the history of the ancient world.

Jeremiah had a keen insight into international events, and some scholars think that the Battle of Carchemish brought many things into focus for Jeremiah. Carchemish lighted up the whole line of God's purposes with his people for Jeremiah. The fate of Judah was discernible in the light of these happenings. These events influenced his prophetic activities for the rest of his life.

After a brief summary of his prophetic career, Jeremiah gives a preview of Judah's end, the Babylonian empire's breakup, and the final judgment of all nations.

#### 1. *Recollection (25:1-7)*

No preview of the future is adequate without a glance at the past. At the midpoint of his career, Jeremiah reminds the people that he had served as God's spokesman for 23 years.

#### 2. *Resolution (25:8-14)*

Conditioned on Judah's response to him in the past, God communicates to Jeremiah what he has resolved to do concerning Judah and the neighboring nations. Jeremiah points out that the destiny of Babylon and Judah is under the control of the living God.

#### 3. *Retribution (25:15-29)*

Jeremiah sees even further into the events of the future. He sees beyond Judah's punishment to the day when all nations will be brought to judgment.

#### 4. *Retribution Reinforced (25: 30-38)*

The judgment scenes pictured above are now drawn out and deepened to provide a preview of the end of the age and of the final judgment. The Lord is pictured as a lion (25:31, 38), as one who treads out the grapes (25:30), and as a Judge of nations (25:31). A universal judgment is pictured here.

### F. Opposition To Predictions of Doom (26:1 - 29:32)

Incidents and oracles from different periods of Jeremiah's ministry are brought together here under one theme because they reveal the reactions of various individuals and groups to the prophet's preaching. He insisted that Judah and the neighboring nations must submit, at least for a time, to the rulership of the king of Babylon. In Jerusalem, the king, the people, the professional prophets, and the priests resented this bitterly.



NOTES

1. *The Sermon in the Temple Court (26:1-6)*

The events here shift the reader back to the first year (608 B.C.) of Jehoiakim's reign (chapter 25 was the fourth year). At this time, the whole of the Near East was seething with unrest. Jeremiah saw that Judah was standing at the crossroads. The prophet now steps into the public light as a statesman of intrepid courage and political insight.

God commanded Jeremiah to stand in the Temple court and give a message to all the people of Judah. Jeremiah obeyed and made plain God's offer of pardon on the condition of genuine repentance (26:3), but he also made it plain that if they did not repent, the Temple and the city would be destroyed.

Apparently, this is the same occasion and the same sermon that is referred to in chapter 7. The people and their religious leaders violently opposed Jeremiah's prediction that the Temple would be destroyed. The professional prophets and the priests had been telling the people that God would never let the Temple be destroyed; hence, the city and the nation were safe. Jeremiah had undercut the most popular religious dogma of his day with one stroke. The prophet's life was in jeopardy. The reaction was immediate and strong.

2. *Jeremiah's Arrest and Acquittal (26:7-19)*

Jeremiah was seized by a mob (led by the religious leaders) and condemned on the spot (26:8). The princes of the king's court, however, rescued him from the mob and insisted that he be given a proper hearing.

3. *The Arrest and Execution of Urijah (26:20-24)*

This incident has no connection with Jeremiah's trial and acquittal. It is introduced at this point to show the grave danger Jeremiah faced.

4. *The Yoke of Babylon Remains (27:1 - 28:17)*

Despite the bitter opposition of Jerusalem's religious and political leaders, Jeremiah held firmly to the position that his pronouncements were of God and that Babylon would continue to be the overlord of Judah and the surrounding nations.

a. *On foreign kings (27:1-11)*. Envoys from five neighboring nations appeared in Jerusalem seeking to enlist Zedekiah's help in a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar. While discussions were going on, God gave Jeremiah a message for the kings to these nations. The gist of it is that Israel's God is the Creator of the earth and sovereign Lord of all nations. For the time being, he has given all nations into the hand of Babylon. There is no appeal from this decision. To reject his plan is to court disaster. Despite their frantic efforts, the yoke of Babylon remains!

b. *On Zedekiah, king of Judah (27:12-15)*. The same message is given to Zedekiah, who is under tremendous pressure from the princes of Judah and the professional prophets to revolt against Babylon. Jeremiah insists that in this case, submission to Nebuchadnezzar is, in reality, submission to God. It is a choice between obeying God or trusting the people's wisdom.



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c. *On priests and people (27:16-22)*. The priests and professional prophets had deceived the people into thinking that the vessels taken from the Temple in 597 B.C. would shortly be returned. Jeremiah warned the people that this was a lie.

d. *On false prophets (28:1-17)*. Hananiah, as a representative of the professional prophets, suddenly challenged Jeremiah one day in the house of the Lord. Jeremiah proclaimed to the people that the wooden bars broken by Hananiah would be replaced with iron ones. He also prophesied Hananiah's death, which took place as predicted (28:16-17).

5. *Letters to People in Exile (29:1-32)*

Word had reached Jeremiah in Jerusalem of the restlessness of the exiles in Babylon (captives who had been taken to Babylon in previous deportations – 29:1-3). Much of their trouble came from false prophets among them who prophesied that they would soon be free (29:8-9). Jeremiah took advantage of emissaries going to Babylon for Zedekiah, the king, to send some letters to the Jews in exile (29:3).

a. *A general letter (29:1-23)*. He instructed the exiles to settle down for a long stay in Babylon, to build and plant, to take wives and bear children, for 70 years were to pass before a return would be made (29:10). He further detailed God's plans for them and encouraged them to be true to the faith of their fathers. He closed the letter with a blistering indictment of two very evil prophets living among them. He revealed their sins and pronounced their fate (29:21-23).

b. *Letter concerning Shemaiah [she-MAI-uh] (29:24-32)*. Jeremiah was accused of being crazy by a prophet in Babylon (29:26). Jeremiah learned of Shemaiah's accusations and replied in no uncertain terms. He declared him a false prophet, warned the exiles not to believe his lies (29:31), and predicted his fate (29:32).

**Section 2.6 The Books of Consolation (30:1 - 33:26)**

These four chapters are the only consistently hopeful part of the entire book. There is a strong hope for the restoration of the nation. One must remember, however, that the near and the far are blended here in that strange way, which is characteristic of Hebrew prophecy. Since Jeremiah's predictions concerning the national and international situation have proved correct over a period of 40 years, there is no reason to reject his insights for the future.

**A. The Preface (30:1-3)**

These verses explain the origin of the book and the perspective from which it is written. Hope for a better day is the underlying motif.



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## B. From Tragedy to Triumph (30:4 - 31:1)

What follows speaks of pain and trouble, but the ultimate theme is always joy. God's people will finally triumph through the valley of sorrow.

### 1. *The Time of Jacob's Trouble (30:4-7)*

The salvation of the people of God is plainly set forth, but it is to be preceded by a time of great trouble.

### 2. *The Yoke Is Broken from Jacob (30:8-11)*

A shaft of light breaks through the gloom, "I will break the yoke off their necks." (30:8)

### 3. *Zion's Wounds Are Healed (30:12-22)*

For the moment, however, Jeremiah returns to Judah's present plight. He describes her wound as incurable (30:12). No human help is available (30:13). Healing, however, will be performed when punishment has accomplished its purpose.

### 4. *God's Purposes Relentlessly Executed (30:23 - 31:1)*

Here, the power (energy, perhaps Spirit) of God is likened to a whirlwind (30:23; a relentless tempest), which goes forth to execute his purposes (30:24). He will not slacken his pace until evil is thoroughly punished, and all the families of Israel acknowledge his lordship.

## C. Restoration Assured (31:2-40)

The Lord seeks to assure his people that their restoration is certain by several different things.

### 1. *By God's Everlasting Love (31:2-6)*

All through the centuries the loving-kindness of God (faithfulness) has guided Israel, now with affliction and now with kindness, here by scattering and there by gathering.

### 2. *By a Joyful Homecoming (31:7-14)*

Jeremiah's description of this joyful scene tells us that his native disposition was not one of gloom and despondency. Had circumstances been different, he would have enjoyed the sunnier side of life.

### 3. *Comfort for Rachel (31:15-22)*

Ramah seems to have been the gathering place for the deportation of exiles to Babylon (see 40:1). Rachel, sometimes thought of as the maternal ancestor of the northern tribes, is pictured at Ramah in uncontrollable grief at the departure of her children into captivity.

### 4. *By Restoration of Judah (31:23-26)*

The land of Judah and her cities are pointedly mentioned as being re-inhabited. Peace, harmony, rest, and comfort will prevail when Judah returns to her homeland.



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5. *By the Reestablishment of a United Kingdom (31:27-30)*

God will bless a returned Israel and Judah, and they will be one again. God's policy of punishment will have changed into one of building and planting.

6. *By the Institution of a New Covenant (31:31-34)*

The idea of a "new covenant" was born from Jeremiah's long years of experience in the prophetic office. His keen insight into Judah's religious life, supplemented by light gained from his own inner struggles, caused him to see that "nationalized religion" was obsolete and inadequate. His prophetic insight told him that the city and the Temple would soon be destroyed, and the people would languish in exile for many long years. It became clear to Jeremiah that the religion of Israel was facing a "turning point" in its history.

*These are perhaps the four most important verses in the Book of Jeremiah* because they forecast so much of what has happened in the field of religion since his day. Paul picked up Jeremiah's idea and made a clear distinction between the old covenant and the new (1 Corinthians 3:6, 14-16). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins and ends his exposition of the ministry of Jesus by quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jesus himself instituted the Lord's Supper by saying, "This is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many" (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24). Individual religion can trace its beginnings to Jeremiah. He was the chief link between the old order and the new in Israel.

7. *By the Perpetuity of the Nation (31:35-37)*

Israel is guaranteed an existence as long as the sun and moon shall last (31:35).

8. *By the Rebuilding of Jerusalem (31:38-40)*

God further confirms his word to Israel by saying that Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Although Jerusalem has been captured and put to the torch many times through the centuries, it has always been rebuilt and still exists today. This cannot be said of Nineveh or Babylon.

**D. Restoration Dramatized (32:1-44)**

God led Jeremiah to reinforce his promise of restoration through a short drama. At this point, one should read chapters 37-38 along with chapter 32.

1. *The Prelude (32:1-8)*

Jeremiah was imprisoned in the prison court because he predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would take Jerusalem. The court was part of the king's palace and was used for keeping political prisoners. Apparently, outside people could view what went on in the court.

On a certain day, the Lord told Jeremiah that his cousin Hanameel [HAN-uh-mel] was coming to see him about purchasing a field that he had the right to redeem and that he should purchase it. Sometimes later, Hanameel appeared at the prison with his offer.



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2. *Act I: Faith in Action (32:9-15)*

Jeremiah proceeded to buy the property. It was an act of faith on his part, for the field he purchased was even then in the hands of the Babylonians. Apart from the hope of restoration of the nation, this act would have been meaningless.

3. *Act II: Put to the Test (32:16-25)*

Jeremiah's dramatic act was followed by a severe test of faith. What he had done before many witnesses suddenly seemed so utterly incredible that he had to take himself to prayer (32:16). The Bible nowhere indicates that genuine faith has no questions to ask. God has never been displeased with sincere, honest doubt, nor does he fail to help his perplexed children.

4. *Act III: The Faithfulness of God (32:26-44)*

The answer to Jeremiah's perplexity is fourfold.

- a. God declared that he, not the Chaldean (Nebuchadnezzar), was the Lord of history.
- b. He reemphasized the certainty of judgment on Judah (32:28-36).
- c. The way of redemption lies through tragedy, but redemption is certain (32:37).
- d. Jeremiah's act of faith was declared authentic (32:43-44). Once again, God proved his faithfulness. The prophet's mind was set at ease.

**E. Further Assurances of Restoration (33:1-26)**

The oracles of chapter 33 continue the theme of judgment and restoration.

1. *The Divine Invitation (33:1-3)*

God invites Jeremiah to call upon him in time of need.

2. *Afflicted Jerusalem Is Healed (33:4-13)*

Verse 6 contains God's method of restoring the afflicted city.

- a. Destruction is the gateway to restoration. Death is the gateway to life. "Old Israel" must die in order for "New Israel" (the Church) to arise.
- b. Moral cleansing is the gateway to spiritual wholeness. But moral cleansing comes first.
- c. Spiritual health is the gateway to material wellbeing. Afflicted Jerusalem will be healed on God's terms and through eternal principles.

3. *Davidic Kings and Levitical Priests (33:14-26)*

The lofty language of this final section brings the Book of Consolation (chapters 30-33) to a splendid climax. These prophecies have never been fulfilled in a narrow nationalistic sense. Perhaps they were never meant to be, for the new order could never be like the old, any more than the butterfly could be like the larva from which it comes. However, in a spiritual and wider sense, the prophecy has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the root and offspring of David.



NOTES

## Section 2.7 Counsel for Kings (34:1 - 36:32)

In this section, you will find a group of incidents from Jeremiah's life and sayings that relate primarily to the kings of Judah and secondarily to the people. In an instance or two, the people are addressed, but even here, it is hoped that the king's ear will be reached. The material comes from different periods in the prophet's life and is not arranged in chronological order.

### A. Counsel for Kings (34:1-7)

The account here took place in the early stages of the siege of Jerusalem before matters became too critical.

### B. Counsel Concerning Slaves (34:8-22)

At a very dark point during the siege of Jerusalem, Zedekiah and the people sought to gain the favor of God by freeing their Hebrew slaves. Shortly after a covenant to this effect was ratified in the Temple (34:10, 19), the Babylonian armies lifted the siege and went away. The leaders of the city quickly repudiated their vows, and the freed slaves were re-enslaved and put to work. In no uncertain terms, Jeremiah denounced both the king and the people for breaking their vows.

### C. Counsel Gained From the Rechabites (35:1-19)

Jeremiah did not hesitate to use various methods to present God's truth to people. In one instance, he used a whole tribe of Rechabites. Jeremiah seized the opportunity to point out the Rechabites' faithfulness to their dead ancestor's command and the people of Judah's unfaithfulness to the commandments of the living God (35:13).

### D. Counsel Preserved in a Book (36:1-19)

This section is important because it sheds light on the origin of the Book of Jeremiah and provides details as to how at least one biblical book came to be written. No other Old Testament book gives us such a detailed description of its production.

#### 1. God's Words Written down (36:1-8)

God instructed Jeremiah to write down in a book all the prophecies that he had given him up to that time (from the thirteenth year of Josiah to the fourth year of Jehoiakim).

#### 2. Baruch Reads God's Word in the Temple (36:9-10)

Baruch appeared in the Temple area and read from Jeremiah's prophecies God's plans for the nation. The reading brought an immediate reaction.

#### 3. Baruch Reads to the Princes (36:11-19)

A committee of Jehoiakim's princes sent for Baruch and requested that God's word be read to them.



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**E. The Counsel Book Destroyed (36:20-26)**

Jehoiakim was in his “winter house,” and a fire was burning in the open when the princes told him about Jeremiah’s words (36:22). Sullen anger gripped the king as he heard the counsel given to him as an officer read the scroll in his presence. As Jehudi [jeh-HOOD-eye] (36:23) read three or four leaves (columns), Jehoiakim, in bitter contempt, would cut them off with his penknife and throw them into the fire. This continued until all were destroyed.

**F. The Counsel Book Rewritten (36:27-32)**

Sometime later, in his place of hiding, Jeremiah was instructed by the Lord to prepare another scroll and write all the former words in the first scroll (36:27-28). Other words were also added (36:32).

**Section 2.8 The Fall of Jerusalem (37:1 - 40:6)**

These chapters deal with those last sad events just before the fall of Jerusalem.

**A. The Fatal Flaw In The City’s Defenses (37:1-2)**

Jeremiah was sure that the security of the nation depended on Zedekiah keeping the vows he made to Nebuchadnezzar when the latter made him king of Judah.

**B. Hopes With No Foundation (37:3-10)**

An Egyptian army under Pharaoh-hophra crossed into Palestine to help the besieged city of Jerusalem (37:5). The Babylonians shifted their forces to meet this new threat. God’s word through the prophet was stern and unyielding: “The Babylonians will return and attack this city: they will capture it and burn it down” (37:8). The only true foundation of hope was obedience to God.

**C. Jeremiah Arrested And Imprisoned (37:11-15)**

While the siege was lifted, Jeremiah decided to visit his home in Anathoth, a few miles north of Jerusalem. However, he did not reach Anathoth. He was arrested at the north gate and charged with deserting to the Chaldeans.

**D. A Secret Conference (37:16-21)**

Jeremiah remained in this very foul prison for many days. While he was there, the Babylonians renewed the siege of Jerusalem with greater ferocity than ever. The prophet pleaded that he not be sent back to Jonathan’s house.

**E. A Cistern Episode (38:1-13)**

The princes were highly displeased at Jeremiah’s being transferred to the court of the guard (38:4). Consequently, a short time later, Jeremiah was accused of high treason. The weak and indecisive king was no match for the princes, and Jeremiah was cast into a nearby cistern. There was no water in the cistern but plenty of mud, and “Jeremiah sank down into the mud” (38:6).



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But the princes had not reckoned with one of the king's eunuchs, Ebed-melech [EB-ed-mel-ek], an Ethiopian. When he discovered what had happened, he begged the king for permission to rescue Jeremiah, and it was granted. A short time later, Jeremiah stood safe and free in the court of the guard.

**F. A Final Interview (38:14-28)**

Shortly after Jeremiah's rescue from the cistern, Zedekiah sought another interview with him. It turned out to be his final interview with that unfortunate monarch.

**G. The City Falls (39:1-10)**

After 18 months of siege, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem. The king fled by night from the city. The Babylonians, however, overtook him in the plains of Jericho and transported him to the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Syria. Harsh judgment was measured out to the rebellious king.

One month later (52:12), the city of Jerusalem was put to the torch. The Temple was destroyed, and the walls of the city were broken down. The best of the people were prepared for deportation to Babylon. None but the poorest of the people were left to occupy the devastated countryside.

**H. Jeremiah Gains His Freedom (39:11-14)**

Nebuzar-adan [NEB-uz-ah-rah-dan], field marshal of the armies of Babylon, had been instructed by his master to look well to the needs of Jeremiah. The prophet was freed from the court of the guard and committed to the care of Gedaliah [ged-uh-LIE-uh], who took him to his own home in the city of Jerusalem.

**I. The Rewards of Faith (39:15-18)**

While still in the court of the guard, Jeremiah was given a message from the Lord for Ebed-melech.

**J. Jeremiah Makes His Choice (40:1-6)**

Jeremiah seems to have lived for a month in Gedaliah's home in Jerusalem. Finally, when the city was ready for the torch, all the captives were moved to Ramah for deportation to Babylon. Since no final decision had been made concerning Jeremiah by the Babylonian authorities, the officer in charge had no other choice but to take him along with the other captives to Ramah. It was here that Nebuzar-adan found him again and quickly and apologetically stripped him of his chains (40:4). The great captain then gave him his choice of going to Babylon or remaining with Gedaliah, the new governor of Judah, in Mizpah. Jeremiah chose the latter (40:6). He dwelt there among the people.

**Section 2.9 In the Wake of Ruin (40:7 - 44:30)**

This section traces the fortunes of Jeremiah and the Jews who remained in Judah, from the departure of the captives for Babylon until Jeremiah gave his final prophecy in the land of Egypt.



NOTES

### A. The Governorship of Gedaliah (40:7 - 41:3)

After the fall of Jerusalem, Palestine became a province of the Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah, a member of a prominent Jewish family, as governor of Judah (26:24; 2 Kings 22:12, 14; 22:3, 10). Gedaliah seems to have shared Jeremiah's faith and perspective on the national and international situation.

#### 1. *Gedaliah's Attempt at Reorganization (40:7-12)*

When it became known that Gedaliah had been appointed governor of Judah, the people who had fled to the neighboring countries at the approach of the Babylonian armies began to return to Judah. The guerilla chieftains ("captains of the forces" who had operated in the mountain fastnesses of Judah during the Babylonian occupation) also established contact with Gedaliah. Gedaliah sought to restore the confidence and alleviate the fears of all those who remained in the land.

#### 2. *Gedaliah's Life Is Threatened (40:13-16)*

Ishmael, son of Nethaniah [neth-an-EYE-uh], was among the guerilla chieftains. He was a member of the royal family but was an ill-tempered, vengeful man who resented Gedaliah bitterly. He and Baalis, king of the Ammonites, laid plans to murder Gedaliah. Johanan (40:15), another chieftain, informed Gedaliah of the plot against his life and offered to secretly slay Ishmael. Refusing to believe that his life was in danger, Gedaliah would not permit him to carry out his proposal.

#### 3. *Gedaliah's Assassination (41:1-3)*

Gedaliah invited Ishmael and his men to eat with him. While the meal was in progress, Ishmael slew his host and all the Jews who were with him. The deed was so shameful that it was almost impossible to believe, for it broke the "hospitality code" of the Near East, which required a person to honor the host in whose home he had broken bread.

### B. Ishmael's Atrocities (41:4-18)

#### 1. *The Massacre of 70 Pilgrims (41:4-9)*

The murder of Gedaliah had been so stealthily executed that no one knew that the crime had been committed. On the second day, the crazed and bloodthirsty Ishmael struck again. He lured 80 pilgrims from the highway into Mizpah and murdered all but 10 of them. No intelligible motive can be discerned for the crime.

#### 2. *The Capture of Mizpah (41:10)*

Still raging, Ishmael herded the people of Mizpah together like cattle and hurried them away toward the land of Ammon. As a result of this senseless slaughter, the political and economic life of Judah was to be in a state of disruption for many days to come.



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3. *Ishmael's Defeat (41:11-18)*

When Ishmael's dastardly deed became known, Johanan, son of Kareah (41:11), and the other chieftains took their warriors and set out to avenge Gedaliah's death and recover the people of Mizpah.

An encounter at Gibeon ended in the recovery of the people of Mizpah, but Ishmael and eight of his men escaped to the land of Ammon (41:15).

Successful in their raid on Ishmael, Johanan and the chieftains were at a loss as to what to do next. The Babylonians could be expected to avenge the death of Gedaliah, and they would not be careful as to whom they punished. Not knowing what else to do, Johanan and "the remnant of Judah" moved southward and camped near Bethlehem, debating whether or not to go to Egypt.

**C. The Flight to Egypt (42:1 - 43:7)**

Jeremiah returns to the narrative while the people are camped near Bethlehem. The prophet has not been mentioned since he went to dwell at Mizpah (40:6). Apparently, he and Baruch were living in Mizah during the incidents related in 40:7 - 41:18. Also, the two must have been among the captives carried away by Ishmael. Rescued with the other captives by Johanan and his army, they continued with the group on their journey.

1. *Jeremiah's Counsel Sought (42:1-6)*

The leaders and the people were uncertain about what course they should pursue. They wanted to remain in Judah, but it appeared that the safest thing to do was to flee to Egypt. The leaders and the people approached Jeremiah and asked for him to inquire of the Lord for them. In great humility, they promised to do whatever the Lord said. Jeremiah agreed to inquire of the Lord for them.

2. *Jeremiah's Response (42:7-22)*

It was 10 days before God made known his will to Jeremiah.

3. *Jeremiah Defied by the People (43:1-3)*

By the time Jeremiah had finished speaking, it was evident that both the leaders and the people were determined not to obey God. Through clenched teeth, they rejected Jeremiah's word, peevishly claiming that Baruch, the son of Neriah, had influenced Jeremiah's thinking.

4. *On to Egypt (43:4-7)*

Once they had made up their minds, Johanan and the people prepared to move on to Egypt. Jeremiah and Baruch were compelled to go along with the others.

**D. Jeremiah in Egypt (43:8 - 44:30)**

Jeremiah's prophetic powers did not desert him in Egypt. In his two final discourses here, the same intensity and directness characterize his preaching throughout the 40 years of his ministry.



NOTES

**1. Nebuchadnezzar's Coming Predicted (43:8-13)**

This message was delivered shortly after the arrival of the Jews in Tahpanhes [tah-PAN-hees]. Jeremiah buried some large stones in the brickwork in front of Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes.

He predicted, meanwhile, that Nebuchadnezzar would set his throne upon those very stones, smite the land of Egypt, and carry away their gods.

**2. A Prophet to the End (44:1-30)**

This is Jeremiah's final discourse. The last glimpse the reader has of the old prophet proclaiming the word of God.

a. *Egyptian Jews denounced* (44:1-14). The occasion for this sermon seems to have been a religious festival in which "a great multitude" of Jews had burned incense to the Queen of Heaven (the goddess of a fertility cult known as the "Great Mother"). It appears that Jeremiah's righteous soul was desperately tried by what his eyes beheld of the utter corruption of his people.

b. *The reply of the Jews* (44:15-19). In a haughty and defiant manner, the people answered the aged prophet. They admitted that they had vowed to the Queen of Heaven (44:17), but so had their fathers, kings, and princes before them.

c. *Jeremiah's final word* (44:20-30). Although broken in health and in heart, the old prophet's last address was much like his first. His final trumpet blast gave forth no uncertain sound. He insisted that the people had misread the character of God; they had things precisely in reverse. Their punishment was certain. Furthermore, they must know that in carrying out their vows, they were making their choice of gods! Since they had chosen the Queen of Heaven, the living God would see to it that they performed no more religious service in his name (44:26).

**Section 2.10 God's Message To Baruch (45:1-5)**

From a chronological standpoint, this excerpt from the life of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, would have fitted much better after 36:8. If it had been placed there, however, it would have interrupted the carefully arranged order of that passage. Its present position is to be preferred.

All indications point toward the fact that Baruch experienced a "shattering process" that led him through the valley of personal despair to a surrender of self to God's purposes. Self-renunciation led to a reorganization of life around a new center with new perspectives. It is clear that Baruch found personal victory over his problem, for he was faithful to God and Jeremiah to the very end.

**Section 2.11 Oracles Against Foreign Nations (46:1 - 51:64)**

Jeremiah believed that the God of Israel created the world and humankind. He was thus the sovereign Lord of all nations. It was only natural that he would give some attention to the nations surrounding Judah.



NOTES

At the midpoint of his career (chapter 25), Jeremiah was commanded to take the wine cup of God's fury and cause all nations to drink of it. These oracles represent that cup.

**A. Preface (46:1)**

Verse 1 serves as a heading for all the oracles in this section.

**B. Oracle Against Egypt (46:2-28)**

1. *Egypt and God at Carchemish (46:2-12)*

Verse 2 informs the reader that the oracle is about Pharaoh-necho's defeat at the Battle of Carchemish (606 B.C.; see Introduction). Keenly aware of international politics, Jeremiah sensed the importance of this battle in the history of the Near East.

2. *The Aftermath of Carchemish (46:13-26)*

This poem was written sometime after the preceding one. Jeremiah evaluates Egypt's military position after the Battle of Carchemish in this oracle.

3. *The Salvation of Israel (46:27-28)*

The prophet could not think of Egypt's defeat without reflecting on Israel's salvation. Although he speaks of Israel's punishment, it will be just and fair. The restoration of the nation is certain.

**C. Oracles Against the Philistines (47:1-7)**

The date that this occurs and the identity of the foe from the north is difficult to ascertain. But, regardless of who it is and when it happened, the Philistines must drink the cup of God's wrath just like the Egyptians. Sin cannot go unpunished, for all nations must obey God's moral law.

**D. Oracle Against Moab (48:1-47)**

Jeremiah seems to have gathered up into a new whole the utterances concerning Moab made by earlier prophets as far back as Balaam. He reaffirms these predictions in his own fashion, adding to them more ideas.

1. *The Consequences of Misplaced Trust (48:1-10)*

The prophecy describes the destruction that is coming upon Moab from the God of Israel.

2. *The Calamity of Undisciplined Living (48:11-17)*

Moab was famous for its vineyards; there is a play here on wine and the wine jar.

3. *Disaster Strikes (48:18-28)*

This is a description of the deadly work of "the spoiler of Moab" (48:18).

4. *A Lament for Proud Moab that has Fallen (48:29-39)*

Jeremiah piles word upon word to describe the arrogance and haughty pride of this nation (48:29). The desolation that is coming is so horrible that the tender heart of Jeremiah breaks forth in lamentation for the people of Moab (48:31).



NOTES

5. *There is no escape from Judgment (48:40-47)*

In the prophet's vision, the conqueror of Moab is likened to an eagle (48:40) for swiftness and wingspread. The hearts of Moab's mightiest warriors will be terror-stricken, and there will be no place to hide from the dread conqueror when he comes. Josephus destroyed Moab, Ammon, and the neighboring peoples in 582-581 B.C.

**E. Oracle Against Ammon (49:1-6)**

The Ammonites are denounced here because they have been crooked and treacherous in their dealing with Israel.

**F. Oracle Against Edom (49:7-22)**

Edom (Genesis 25:30) was Israel's traditional enemy. Although closely tied by blood, a feud had raged between them since the days of Esau and Jacob (Genesis 27:41).

1. *The Announcement of Edom's Coming Doom (49:7-13)*

God chides Edom concerning the vaunted wisdom of the men of Terman (49:7; Job 2:11; Amos 1:12). He implies that mankind's mightiest wisdom is useless in the face of God's judgments.

2. *The Occasion of Edom's Doom (49:14-16)*

Edom's pride and overconfidence became the occasion for her downfall.

3. *The Fall of Edom (49:17-22)*

God's judgment on Edom will be so thorough that the people who pass by will "hiss" (whistle) in astonishment (49:17). Edom's destruction will remind people of Sodom and Gomorrah (49:18).

**G. Oracle Against Damascus (49:23-27)**

The oracle describes the consternation that takes place in Hamath and Arpad (daughter cities of Damascus) when the tidings of the fall of Damascus reach them (49:23).

**H. Oracle Against Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)**

These two peoples represent the Arabian tribes residing in the desert to the east of Palestine. Kedar (Genesis 25:15) seems to have been a nomadic tribe of the family of Ishmael, noted for their skill with the bow (Isaiah 21:16-17). Although there are several Hazors in the Old Testament, the Hazor here seems to represent a seminomadic people, very much like the people of Kedar.

**I. Oracle Against Elam (49:34-39)**

This country has a long history that dates back to the earliest times (see Ezekiel 32:24; Ezra 4:9; Acts 2:9). The Elamites will fare no better from the hand of the Lord than the other nations mentioned here.

**J. Oracle Against Babylon (50:1 - 51:64)**

In light of 25:12, 26, it is fitting that Jeremiah's prophecies against foreign nations should conclude with an oracle against Babylon.



NOTES

Also, it is not surprising that it is the longest of the oracles and one that is filled with a great deal of emotion.

The material in these chapters is put together in a rather unusual fashion. The oracle is made up of a series of poems. Between some of the poems, there are prose sections. This makes it difficult to arrange the material in logical order. The dominant theme is the overthrow of Babylon and the early restoration of Israel. There is no progression in the theme but a recurrence of the same note again and again.

1. *Babylon's Doom and Israel's Restoration (50:1 - 51:58)*

Verse 1 serves as a title for the two chapters, identifies the oracle as the word of the Lord, and proclaims Jeremiah as the prophet through whom it is given.

2. *Jeremiah's Words to Seraiah (51:59-64)*

Learning that Seraiah, the son of Neriah (evidently a brother of Baruch), was to make a trip to Babylon (51:59), Jeremiah enlisted his help in carrying out his own special project.

**Section 2.12 Historical Appendix (52:1-34)**

This chapter mainly reproduces 2 Kings 24:18 - 25:30 but with a few significant variations. The main variation is an account (52:28-30) of three deportations of captives to Babylon, which are not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and may indicate that there were several more deportations than scholars had previously supposed.

After describing the fall of Jerusalem (52:4), the capture of Zedekiah (52:9), the deportation of the people to Babylon (52:15), and the disposal of the Temple vessels (52:17), the chapter ends with a hopeful note concerning Jehoiachin. In the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, Jehoiachin is taken from prison and assigned a seat above the seats of the other captive kings in Babylon. Thus, the history of a very dark period has a cheerful ending.

Although many have wondered why this historical material was added here when most of it could be found in 2 Kings, it is generally conceded that it was placed here to show that Jeremiah's prophecies concerning Jerusalem were most certainly fulfilled. In this manner, history itself could vindicate one of the most maligned and misunderstood of the Old Testament prophets. Also, Jehoiachin's good fortune raised expectations of a brighter day "beyond judgment," an expectation that Jeremiah has voiced again and again in the more hopeful moments of his life.



**NOTES**

Pashur [PASH-oor]  
Magor-missabib [mag-or-MIS-ah-beeb]  
Shallum [SHAL-uhm]  
Shemaiah [she-MAI-uh]  
Hanameel [HAN-uh-mel]  
Jehudi [jeh-HOOD-eye]  
Ebed-melech [EB-ed-mel-ek]  
Nebuzar-adan [NEB-uz-ah-rah-dan]  
Gedaliah [ged-uh-LIE-uh]  
Nethaniah [neth-an-EYE-uh]  
Tahpanhes [tah-PAN-hees]

## CHAPTER 3. THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS



### NOTES

#### Section 3.1 The Song of A Mourning City (1:1-22)

##### A. The City's Plight (1:1-7)

This song of deep sorrow begins with a description of the captive city of Jerusalem personified as a woman bereft of her husband and children. The loneliness of widowhood is especially noted.

##### B. The City's Perversity (1:8-11)

Jerusalem's trouble lay in the fact that her sinning was not a surface thing. Her uncleanness could be traced to an inner perversity. Jerusalem's basic problem was an evil heart.

##### C. The City's Plea (1:12-19)

The accumulated weight of her tragic condition has become too great to bear. She begs for compassion, "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" She confesses that her punishment is from the Lord (1:12-14).

##### D. The City's Prayer (1:20-22)

Betrayed, broken, and punished, Zion now lifts her voice in prayer, "O Lord, how distressed I am." (1:20). Since she is repentant, she expresses the faith that somehow God will also vindicate her before her enemies (1:21-22).

#### Section 3.2 The Song of A Broken People (2:1-22)

This poem continues the general theme of chapter 1, a lamentation over the city of Jerusalem. However, it seems to broaden its scope to include the people of Israel and Judah in particular. It continues the theological assumption that the people's punishment directly results from their disobedience to God and is wholly deserved.

##### A. The People's Antagonist (2:1-10)

The detailed account of the awful affliction of Zion indicates that the writer was an eyewitness to the catastrophe that he describes. The astonishing thing about the poem is that the Lord is seen as the people's real Antagonist (2:1). But God's actions are seen as a vindication of his righteousness. As the moral Governor of the universe, he cannot permit sin to go unpunished. It vividly illustrates Hebrews 10:31, "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

##### B. The People's Anguish (2:11-16)

As the prophet describes the physical destruction of the city and nation, the tide of emotion rises in his soul. Suddenly, he breaks forth in loud cries: "My eyes fail...my heart is poured out..." (2:11), all Oriental expressions of extreme anguish.



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**C. The People's Answer (2:17-22)**

As he searches for a solution, the prophet reminds the people that they live in a world governed by moral law, and the calamity that has come upon them is a result of their disobedience to the commandments given at Sinai (2:17). But, since God is holy, he not only punishes sin with great severity; He forgives all who repent with broken and contrite hearts. The answer then to their predicament is to be found in sincere and earnest prayer.

**Section 3.3 The Song of a Suffering Prophet (3:1-66)**

The poem is written from the standpoint of an individual, but this does not preclude its use as a communal lament. The writer identifies himself with the community in its affliction. He is organically related to them and seeks to lead them into the same religious apprehension of their affliction as he has so that they may share his faith.

**A. A Cry of Desperation (3:1-18)**

The poet identifies himself as an individual who has experienced all the suffering that the nation has undergone in his own life. As their representative before God, he has borne their griefs and sorrows.

**B. A Confession of Faith (3:19-39)**

The prophet has poured out his complaint before the Lord. His strength is gone, his heart is broken, he lies spent and helpless. Humble and quiet, he waits. Then, in the stillness comes a change. He begins to call to mind (3:21) the mercies, the steadfast love, and the faithfulness of God. He begins to make his confession of faith: The mercies of God never cease (3:22). His compassions do not fail. He is eminently worthy of our trust. In an ecstasy of joy, the prophet cries, "Great is your faithfulness." (3:23). He confesses further that God's way is the best way (3:25), and the person who humbles oneself before God will be lifted up. Suffering has a moral purpose. God will make all things work for our good (3: 26-27). He is touched by the feelings of our infirmities but does not take delight in people's afflictions (3:33). Mourning unduly over one's afflictions is wrong (3:39).

**C. A Plea for Repentance (3:40-47)**

After seeing God's greatness and goodness, the prophet includes all the people when he says, "Let us examine our ways...and let us return to the Lord" (3:40). In verses 42-47, the prophet puts into the mouths of the people the kind of words they ought to say. These words of confession and lamentation recognize what rebellion against God has done to these people.

**D. The Pain of Intercession (3:48-54)**

As the prophet contemplates what sin and rebellion have done to his people, he breaks out into a prayer of intercession, "Streams of tears flow from my eyes" (3:48). Time passes, and he does not cease to pray. Intercession involves taking on oneself as it were the sin and guilt of the ones prayed for. True intercession may even cost the life of the intercessor.



NOTES

### **E. A Song of Confidence (3:55-66)**

As the prophet looks back upon his cistern episode and compares it to the present moment, his faith begins to rise. He soon breaks forth into a song of confidence, "I called upon your name... You heard my plea" (3:55-56).

### **Section 3.4 The Song of a Ruined Kingdom (4:1-22)**

This poem is a song of contrasts. It compares the former glory of the kingdom of Judah, as represented by Jerusalem, to its present wretched condition. Although other things are emphasized, the sin of Judah is the most prominent theme in the chapter.

#### **A. The Degrading Power of Sin (4:1-12)**

The poet sings a dirge over the unbelievable change that has come to this once proud nation and its capital, "How the gold has lost its luster" (4:1).

#### **B. The Demoralizing Power of Sin (4:13-16)**

The responsibility for the ruin of Judah is laid squarely on the religious leaders of the nation. It is in the lives of the corrupt priests and false prophets (4:13) that we see the demoralizing effects of sin.

#### **C. The Deceiving Power of Sin (4:17-20)**

This section is an acknowledgment that the nation had put its confidence in the wrong place.

#### **D. The Destructive Power of Sin (4:21-22)**

Despite being a kinsman of Judah, Edom rejoiced with fiendish glee when Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. She herself had "played it smart." She had collaborated with the enemy, betrayed her neighbors, and withheld her help from the needy. But at the height of her exultation, a voice was heard pronouncing her doom.

### **Section 3.5 The Prayer of A Penitent Nation (5:1-22)**

There is no alphabetic acrostic in this closing poem. However, there are 22 verses, which indicates that these five poems belong together. This chapter is more of a prayer than a song of lamentation.

#### **A. The Final Appeal (5:1-6)**

The people make their final appeal by calling God to remembrance (5:1). They believe that if they can get the attention of God, help will soon be forthcoming. The enumeration of their sufferings (5:2-6) is given to appeal to God's compassion. Thus, Judah makes her final appeal with strong crying and tears. There seems to be no resentment against God, only penitence and shame. The appeal is made with the faith that he will also forgive, although God has punished.



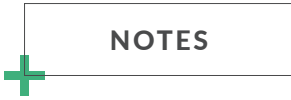
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**B. The Complete Confession (5:7-18)**

The poet confesses that there is a moral reason for the nation's plight; "Our fathers sinned...we bear their punishment" (5:7). He goes ahead to rehearse all they have suffered: their women have been ravished, their princes and elders dishonored, the joy of living has disappeared, national sovereignty and statehood is gone. But, the climax of the passage is reached when the poet confesses for his own generation, "Woe to us, for we have sinned!" (5:16) All the blame does not rest on the fathers. It is always a good sign when people quit confessing the sins of others and acknowledge their own guilt. Judah's confession is now complete.

**C. The Only Hope (5:19-22)**

With their confession complete, hope begins to rise in the hearts of the people. Loosed from a preoccupation with themselves, thoughts of the greatness of God begin to fill their minds. They cry in exultation, "You, O Lord, reign forever; your throne (his moral governorship over people) endures from generation to generation" (5:19). All else will disappear, but God remains! Verses 21-22 must be read in the light of 5:19. Although stated awkwardly even in Hebrew, these verses throb with ill-concealed hope and unutterable longing. They really mean that the people are casting themselves without reserve on the mercies of God!



## The Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations Study Questions

### Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

#### Section 1.1 Introduction to Jeremiah

1. What is true about Jeremiah's birth?
  - A. He was born about 646 B.C.
  - B. He was born in the Levitical city of Anathoth.
  - C. His hometown was about 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem.
  - D. all of these are true
  
2. Jeremiah received his call to prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah (626 B.C.).
  - A. true
  - B. false
  
3. Jeremiah's ministry continued for over 60 years.
  - A. true
  - B. false
  
4. What is true of the international scene early in Jeremiah's ministry?
  - A. Assyria had reached its zenith and was declining.
  - B. With the help of the Medes and Cimmerians, the Babylonians destroyed Nineveh.
  - C. At the Battle of Carchemish, Assyria and Egypt were defeated.
  - D. all of these are true
  
5. What is not true of the setting prior to the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry?
  - A. He was married and referred affectionately to his wife as "the prophetess."
  - B. Josiah came to the throne of Judah in 639 B.C.
  - C. Under the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, idolatry and pagan worship became rampant.
  - D. Fertility cults, with their practice of sacred prostitution, were tolerated in the Temple precincts.
  
6. Josiah perpetuated the religious trends of his father and grandfather.
  - A. true
  - B. false
  
7. The sons of Josiah who succeeded him encountered many difficulties.
  - A. true
  - B. false
  
8. Jeremiah is a great prophet of hope.
  - A. true
  - B. false



NOTES

9. Jeremiah's tender, affectionate nature equipped him well for the thoroughgoing denunciation of sin that his commission required.

- A. true
- B. false

10. Because Jeremiah chose to tell us his thoughts and feelings, we know more about him than any other Old Testament prophet.

- A. true
- B. false

11. What is not true of the composition of the Book of Jeremiah?

- A. Right from the start, this book seems to have had a turbulent history.
- B. The first edition of the book was printed and distributed by Jehoiakim.
- C. An expanded second edition of the book appeared about the middle of his ministry.
- D. There must have been a third edition of the book.

### Section 1.2 Introduction to Lamentations

12. What is not true of the historical background of the Book of Lamentations?

- A. There are five poems that come out of the excruciating pain of those trouble-filled days following the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.
- B. King Zedekiah had been captured.
- C. Jeremiah rejoiced to be a refugee in Egypt.
- D. Many people had been deported to Babylon.

13. What is not true of the title of the Book of Lamentations?

- A. In the Hebrew Bible, the book has no title.
- B. Most English versions have given the book a longer title, "The Prayers of Jeremiah."
- C. Through the centuries, rabbis began to refer to the book as "lamentations" or "dirges" (Qinoth).
- D. In the Hebrew Scriptures today, the book is not found among The Prophets but is in The Writings.

14. The Book of Lamentations is written in the spirit of Jeremiah.

- A. true
- B. false

15. What is true of the structure of the Book of Lamentations?

- A. Five poems make up the book.
- B. There are 4 dirges in the book.
- C. There are 4 alphabetic acrostics in the book.
- D. all of these are true



**NOTES**

16. What is not true of the purpose of the Book of Lamentations?

- A. It was chanted by the congregation of Israel to express their sorrow over the loss of their national identity.
- B. It therapeutically expresses the deepest and most profound emotions of broken and ruined people.
- C. It is included in the Apocalypse, which is read on important anniversary days every year in Judaism.
- D. Passages from this book are found in liturgies used by both the Roman Catholics and Protestants.

## **Chapter 2. THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH**

### **Section 2.1 The Preface (1:1-3)**

17. What is true of the Preface of the Book of Jeremiah?

- A. It serves to identify the contents of the book as the work of Jeremiah.
- B. It shows that God is the Author (1:1) of the message since he initiated the prophet's career.
- C. It names the kings in whose reign these things took place.
- D. all of these are true

### **Section 2.2 Jeremiah's Induction into Prophetic Office (1:4-19)**

18. In Hebrew religion, a true spokesman of God was expected to come to that "special moment" when he was inducted into divine office.

- A. true
- B. false

19. What is true of Jeremiah's call?

- A. It was a divine-human confrontation.
- B. God told Jeremiah: "I formed you... I knew you... I sanctified you..."
- C. Jeremiah was human enough to shrink from a heartbreaking task, but there is no element of rebellion in his hesitation.
- D. all of these are true

20. There were 3 sides to Jeremiah's consecration: repentance, sanctification and implementation.

- A. true
- B. false

21. What is true of Jeremiah's confirmation?

- A. God confirmed his word to Jeremiah with two visions.
- B. Jeremiah learned about the alertness of God.
- C. Jeremiah learned about God's plan to judge Judah.
- D. all of these are true

NOTES

**Section 2.3 The Arraignment of the House of Jacob (2:1 - 10:25)**

22. What is true of the infidelity of Israel?

- A. Unfaithfulness to Covenant Vows
- B. Ungratefulness for Great Deliverances
- C. Unnaturalness in Religious Devotion
- D. all of these are true

23. What is not true of the infidelity of Israel?

- A. Unable to Learn from History
- B. Unrestrained Sin Leaves One Deeply Stained
- C. They would enjoy prosperity for many more years before God's judgment.
- D. Unable to Care

24. What is true of the pathway to genuine repentance in Chapters 3 and 4?

- A. When confession is sincere and complete, God begins his work of healing.
- B. The forsaking of all that is evil is required, including both inner attitude and outer action.
- C. Conceding that the Lord is the only Living One is required.
- D. all of these are true

**Section 2.4 Confessions and Predictions (11:1 - 20:18)**

25. In Chapter 11, the Lord indicts the people of Judah for violating God's covenant with them at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-20).

- A. true
- B. false

26. The Parable of the Waistcloth illustrates that Judah is useless as a nation unless she fulfills God's purpose for her.

- A. true
- B. false

27. The Parable of the Wine Jar illustrates that Judah will be as confused and bewildered as a drunken man when the day of judgment comes.

- A. true
- B. false

28. What is not true of the drought in Chapters 14 and 15?

- A. Jeremiah believes that this natural calamity has come upon the people because of their sin.
- B. Jeremiah attempts to excuse the people by saying that the false prophets have misled them.
- C. The people cry frantically to the Lord with genuine repentance.
- D. The prophet laments over the civil strife, plunder, and death.



NOTES

29. What is not true of the confessions of Jeremiah in Chapter 15?

- A. Overwhelmed by the events that have taken place, the prophet is plunged into a period of great darkness of soul.
- B. He wrestles with the awful temptation to doubt God.
- C. He is immediately comforted by God, and his days of hardship and suffering end.
- D. God speaks to his needs.

30. In Chapter 17, God instructed Jeremiah to stand at the gate of the city and deliver a sermon on tithing.

- A. true
- B. false

31. Jeremiah's trip to the potter's house is one of the least known incidents of his life.

- A. true
- B. false

32. Another symbolic action of Jeremiah was to take an earthen flask to the Potsherd Gate in the wall of Jerusalem and display its beauty to the leading men among the prophets and priests.

- A. true
- B. false

### Section 2.5 A Forecast of the End (21:1 - 29:32)

33. What is true of the forecast of the end in Chapters 21 - 29?

- A. The one dominant note is the end of Judah and the Davidic dynasty.
- B. The kings, the religious leaders, the Gentile nations, and the Jewish captives, even now in Babylon, all have a part in the prophetic drama.
- C. The whole section is actually a forecast of the end of Hebrew national life.
- D. all of these are true

34. What is true about the Messianic King in Chapter 23?

- A. God's redemptive purpose in judgment will be accomplished, and a new day will dawn on the nation.
- B. God will raise a righteous branch from David.
- C. A new King of David's line represents all the unfulfilled longings of people for an ideal ruler.
- D. all of these are true

35. What is not true of the parable of the figs in Chapter 24?

- A. The basket of good figs represents the exiles in Babylon.
- B. The "good figs" were deported to Babylon.
- C. The basket of bad figs represents the present inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- D. People are "bad figs" when they blind themselves to eternal truths and rely on human wisdom rather than the word of God.



NOTES

36. Jeremiah insisted that Judah and the neighboring nations must submit, at least for a time, to the rulership of the king of Babylon.

- A. true
- B. false

37. Despite the bitter opposition of Jerusalem's religious and political leaders, Jeremiah held firmly to the position that his pronouncements were of God.

- A. true
- B. false

### Section 2.6 The Books of Consolation (30:1 - 33:26)

38. These four chapters are the only consistently hopeful part of the entire book.

- A. true
- B. false

39. In Chapter 31, the Lord tried to assure his people that their restoration was certain.

- A. true
- B. false

40. What is true about the drama on restoration in Chapter 32?

- A. God led Jeremiah to reinforce his promise of restoration by the use of a short drama.
- B. One should read chapters 37-38 along with chapter 32.
- C. Jeremiah was imprisoned in the prison court for predicting that Nebuchadnezzar would take Jerusalem.
- D. all of these are true

41. What is not true about the drama on restoration in Chapter 32?

- A. *Act I demonstrates: Faith in Action*
- B. *In Act II: Faith is put to the Test*
- C. *In Act III: The Faithfulness of God is Shown*
- D. *In Act IV: The Unfaithful Are Shamed*

### Section 2.7 Counsel for Kings (34:1 - 36:32)

42. What is not true of Jeremiah's counsel in Chapters 34 - 36?

- A. Jeremiah denounced both the king and the people for breaking their vows to free their Hebrew slaves.
- B. Jeremiah pointed out the Rechabites' faithfulness to their dead ancestor's command.
- C. King Jehoiakim joyfully received Jeremiah's counsel.
- D. Jeremiah preserved his counsel in a book.



NOTES

43. When Jeremiah was instructed by the Lord to prepare another scroll, he was faithful not to add other words to it.

- A. true
- B. false

**Section 2.8 The Fall of Jerusalem (37:1 - 40:6)**

44. These chapters deal with the last joyful events just before the fall of Jerusalem.

- A. true
- B. false

45. Jeremiah was sure that the security of the nation depended on Zedekiah keeping the vows he made to Nebuchadnezzar when Nebuchadnezzar made him king of Judah.

- A. true
- B. false

46. Jeremiah was accused of high treason and was cast into a nearby cistern.

- A. true
- B. false

47. What is true about the fall of Jerusalem in Chapter 39?

- A. After 18 months of siege, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem.
- B. The king fled by night from the city.
- C. The Babylonians overtook the king in the plains of Jericho.
- D. all of these are true

48. Which field marshal of the armies of Babylon cared for Jeremiah's needs in Chapter 39?

- A. Gedaliah
- B. Riblah
- C. Nebuzar-adan
- D. Nebuchadnezzar

49. According to Chapter 40, Jeremiah seems to have lived for a month in the home of which ruler in Jerusalem?

- A. Gedaliah
- B. Riblah
- C. Nebuzar-adan
- D. Nebuchadnezzar



NOTES

**Section 2.9 In the Wake of Ruin (40:7 - 44:30)**

50. After the fall of Jerusalem, Palestine became a province of the Assyrian empire.

- A. true
- B. false

51. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Riblah, a member of a prominent Jewish family, to be governor of Judah.

- A. True
- B. False

52. Chapter 41 relates the atrocities of Gedaliah.

- A. True
- B. False

53. Jeremiah and Baruch were compelled to go along with the others to Egypt.

- A. true
- B. false

54. Jeremiah buried some large stones in the brickwork in front of Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes and predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would set his throne upon those very stones.

- A. true
- B. false

55. What is not true of Jeremiah's final discourse in Chapter 44?

- A. The old prophet's last address was much like his first.
- B. He denounced the Egyptian Jews.
- C. He thanked the Pharaoh for being a good host.
- D. The Jews admitted that they had made vows to the Queen of Heaven.

**Section 2.10 GOD'S MESSAGE TO BARUCH (45:1-5)**

56. From a chronological standpoint, the excerpt from the life of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, would have fitted much better after 36:8.

- A. true
- B. false

57. Evidently, Baruch experienced a "shattering process" that led him through the valley of personal despair, causing him to run from God's purposes.

- A. True
- B. False



NOTES

**Section 2.11 ORACLES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS (46:1 - 51:64)**

58. Jeremiah believed that the God of Israel created the world and humankind.

- A. True
- B. False

59. What is not true of Jeremiah's oracle against Egypt in Chapter 46?

- A. It was about Pharaoh-necho's defeat at the Battle of Carchemish (606 B.C.).
- B. In this oracle, Jeremiah evaluates Egypt's military position after the Battle of Carchemish.
- C. Jeremiah minimized the importance of the Battle of Carchemish in the history of the Near East.
- D. The prophet could not think of the defeat of Egypt without reflecting on the salvation of Israel.

60. What is true of the oracle against the Philistines in Chapter 47?

- A. The date that this occurs and the identity of the foe from the north is difficult to ascertain.
- B. The Philistines must drink the cup of God's wrath just like the Egyptians.
- C. Sin cannot go unpunished, for all nations must obey God's moral law.
- D. all of these are true

61. What is not true of Jeremiah's oracle against Moab in Chapter 48?

- A. The prophecy starts out with a description of the destruction that is coming upon Moab from their gods.
- B. The Calamity of Undisciplined Living is presented.
- C. The description of the deadly work of "The Spoiler of Moab" is presented.
- D. There is a Lament for Proud Moab That Has Fallen.

62. In Chapter 49, the Ammonites are denounced for being crooked and treacherous in their dealings with Israel.

- A. true
- B. false

63. What is true of the oracle against Edom in Chapter 49?

- A. There is an announcement about Edom's coming doom.
- B. Edom's pride and overconfidence became the occasion for her downfall.
- C. God's judgment on Edom will be so thorough that the people who pass by will "hiss" (whistle) in astonishment.
- D. all of these are true

64. Which of the following is not one of the oracles presented in Jeremiah, Chapter 49?

- A. Oracle against Damascus
- B. Oracle against Kedar and Hazar
- C. Oracle against Elam
- D. Oracle against Babylon

NOTES

### Chapter 3. THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

#### Section 3.1 The Song of a Mourning City (1:1-22)

65. What is true of the song of a mourning city in Chapter 1?

- A. This is a song of deep sorrow.
- B. This begins with a description of the captive city of Jerusalem personified as a woman bereft of her husband and children.
- C. Jerusalem's trouble lay in the fact that her sinning was not a surface thing.
- D. all of these are true

66. What is not true of the song of a mourning city in Chapter 1?

- A. Her uncleanness could be traced to an inner perversity.
- B. Jerusalem's basic problem was an evil heart.
- C. She refuses to confess that her punishment is from the Lord.
- D. The accumulated weight of her tragic condition has become too great to bear.

#### Section 3.2 The Song of a Broken People (2:1-22)

67. What is not true of the song of a broken people in Chapter 2?

- A. This poem continues the general theme of chapter 1.
- B. This is a lamentation over the city of Samaria.
- C. The Lord is seen as the people's real Antagonist.
- D. God's actions are seen as a vindication of his righteousness.

68. What is true of the song of a broken people in Chapter 2?

- A. The song seems to broaden its scope to include the people of Israel and Judah in particular.
- B. The song continues the theological assumption that the people's punishment directly results from their disobedience to God.
- C. It affirms that as the moral Governor of the universe, God cannot permit sin to go unpunished.
- D. all of these are true

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**Section 3.3 The Song of a Suffering Prophet (3:1-66)**

69. What is true of the song of a suffering prophet in Chapter 3?

- A. The poet identifies himself as an individual who has experienced all the suffering the nation has undergone in his life.
- B. As their representative before God, the prophet has borne their griefs and carried their sorrows.
- C. The prophet's words of confession and lamentation recognize what rebellion against God has done to this people.
- D. all of these are true

70. What is not true of the song of a suffering prophet in Chapter 3?

- A. The prophet has poured out his complaint before the Lord.
- B. The prophet is humble and quiet as he waits.
- C. The prophet fails to find hope that God will show mercy.
- D. The prophet's strength is gone, his heart is broken, he lies spent and helpless.

**Section 3.4 The Song of a Ruined Kingdom (4:1-22)**

71. The Song of a Ruined Kingdom is a song of contrasts.

- A. True
- B. False

72. What is true of the song of a ruined kingdom in Chapter 4?

- A. It compares the former glory of the kingdom of Judah, as represented by Jerusalem, to its present wretched condition.
- B. The sin of Judah is the most prominent theme.
- C. The poet sings a dirge over the unbelievable change that has come to this once proud nation and its capital.
- D. all of these are true

73. What is not true of the song of a ruined kingdom in Chapter 4?

- A. The responsibility for the ruin of Judah is laid squarely on the farmers of the nation.
- B. We see in the lives of the corrupt priests and false prophets the demoralizing effects of sin.
- C. We find an acknowledgment that the nation had put its confidence in the wrong place.
- D. Despite the fact that she was a kinsman of Judah, Edom rejoiced with fiendish glee when Jerusalem fell.



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### Section 3.5 The Prayer of a Penitent Nation (5:1-22)

74. What is not true of the prayer of a penitent nation in Chapter 5?

- A. In this closing poem, there is an alphabetic acrostic.
- B. This chapter is more of a prayer than a song of lamentation.
- C. The poet confesses that there is a moral reason for the nation's plight.
- D. There is an enumeration of their sufferings to appeal to God's compassion.

75. What is true of the prayer of a penitent nation in Chapter 5?

- A. The people make their final appeal by calling God to remembrance.
- B. The people believe that if they can get the attention of God, help will soon be forthcoming.
- C. Judah makes her final appeal with strong crying and tears.
- D. all of these are true

### Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Examine the authorship of the Book of Jeremiah.
2. Examine the authorship of the Book of Lamentations.
3. Examine the kings mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah with those in the 2 Chronicles.
4. Examine the use of Hebrew poetry in the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.
5. Examine the use of symbolism in the Book of Jeremiah.
6. Compare the theme of suffering in the Books of Job and Jeremiah.

Allow God to examine your concept of salvation as you study the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations!



NOTES

**Pronunciation Guide**

Anathoth [AN-a-thoth]  
Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh]  
Chaldean [Kal-dee-uhn]  
Cimmerians [sih-MER-ee-yanz]  
Ebed-melech [EB-ed-mel-ek]  
Gedaliah [ged-uh-LIE-uh]  
Hanameel [HAN-uh-mel]  
Jehudi [jeh-HOOD-eye]  
Magor-missabib [mag-or-MIS-ah-beeb]  
Megilloth [me-GIL-lot]  
Nebuchadnezzar [NEB-ukh-ad-nez-ar]  
Nebuzar-adan [NEB-uz-ah-rah-dan]  
Nethaniah [neth-an-EYE-uh]  
Pashur [PASH-oor]  
Qinoth [KI-noth]  
Septuagint [SEP-twuh-gunt]  
Shallum [SHAL-uhm]  
Shemaiah [she-MAI-uh]  
Tahpanhes [tah-PAN-hees]