Seminole
BAPTIST CHURCH

KINGDOM PROPHET

PART FOUR

Forty Daily Devotions
from Jeremiah 28-52
(Based on the NKJV)

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Introduction

Jeremiah tells us that "the word of the LORD came" to him sometime around 627 BC during "the thirteenth year" of Josiah's reign (1:2), and continued until "the eleventh year of Zedekiah" and "the carrying away of Jerusalem captive" (1:3) in 586 BC. This faithful preacher served as God's prophet through at least parts of the reign of five kings of Judah. He faithfully preached to his people for approximately 40 years and was an eyewitness to the final days of the crumbling nation of Judah and the glorious city of Jerusalem.

God chose Jeremiah to be the last prophet to give Judah its final warning before He cast them out of the land and allowed them to be taken into captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah, a faithful, God-fearing man, was called to tell Judah that, because of their unrepentant sin, their God had turned against them and was now prepared to remove them from the land at the hands of a pagan king.

Jeremiah prophesied and ministered during some of the darkest days in the lives of God's people. He was heartbroken at the spiritual and physical decline of the nation. Because of his pronouncement of judgment against the people, he was personally confronted with opposition, persecution, and isolation. For these reasons, among others, Jeremiah is remembered as "the weeping prophet."

In the Hebrew Bible, Jeremiah is the largest book of the prophets and is longer than all the 12 books of the Minor Prophets combined.

Very early in the book, we see the call of Jeremiah and God's promise to him: "I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (1:5). As you read this book, you will see that God did exactly what He said He would do and that Jeremiah literally spoke God's word to the nations of his world.

(For clarification sake, this devotional is sub-titled "Part Four" because the two devotionals on Isaiah were titled "Kingdom Prophet, Part One" and "Kingdom Prophet, Part Two," so our devotional on the first half of Jeremiah was titled "Kingdom Prophet, Part Three.")

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Jeremiah 28:1-17	11/08/25
2	Jeremiah 29:1-17	11/09/25
3	Jeremiah 29:18-32	11/10/25
4	Jeremiah 30:1-24	11/11/25
5	Jeremiah 31:1-20	11/12/25
6	Jeremiah 31:21-40	11/13/25
7	Jeremiah 32:1-22	11/14/25
8	Jeremiah 32:23-44	11/15/25
9	Jeremiah 33:1-13	11/16/25
10	Jeremiah 33:14-26	11/17/25
11	Jeremiah 34:1-22	11/18/25
12	Jeremiah 35:1-19	11/19/25
13	Jeremiah 36:1-19	11/20/25
14	Jeremiah 36:20-32	11/21/25
15	Jeremiah 37:1-21	11/22/25
16	Jeremiah 38:1-13	11/23/25
17	Jeremiah 38:14-28	11/24/25
18	Jeremiah 39:1-18	11/25/25
19	Jeremiah 40:1-16	11/26/25
20	Jeremiah 41:1-18	11/27/25

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Jeremiah 42:1-22	11/28/25
22	Jeremiah 43:1-13	11/29/25
23	Jeremiah 44:1-19	11/30/25
24	Jeremiah 44:20-45:5	12/01/25
25	Jeremiah 46:1-12	12/02/25
26	Jeremiah 46:13-28	12/03/25
27	Jeremiah 47:1-48:10	12/04/25
28	Jeremiah 48:11-28	12/05/25
29	Jeremiah 48:29-47	12/06/25
30	Jeremiah 49:1-19	12/07/25
31	Jeremiah 49:20-39	12/08/25
32	Jeremiah 50:1-13	12/09/25
33	Jeremiah 50:14-28	12/10/25
34	Jeremiah 50:29-46	12/11/25
35	Jeremiah 51:1-14	12/12/25
36	Jeremiah 51:15-32	12/13/25
37	Jeremiah 51:33-48	12/14/25
38	Jeremiah 51:49-64	12/15/25
39	Jeremiah 52:1-23	12/16/25
40	Jeremiah 52:24-34	12/17/25

Day 1: Jeremiah 28:1-17

"'As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent.'" (Jeremiah 28:9)

Hananiah

Hananiah was a man of Gibeon, which, like Jeremiah's hometown of Anathoth, was one of the cities allotted to the priests in the land of Benjamin (Joshua 21:17). Verse 1 tells us that this man was "the son of Azur the prophet" and he spoke to Jeremiah "in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and of all the people." In that message he stated that God had "broken the yoke of the king of Babylon" and that "within two full years" He would "bring back" to Jerusalem "all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar…took away…and carried to Babylon" (v. 2-3). He went on to prophesy that God said, "And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah…king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon" (v. 4). Jeremiah's love for Jerusalem and the people of Judah caused him to respond to Hananiah's message with an "Amen!" (v. 6) and an expression of his desire that what Hananiah was saying was true. However, Jeremiah knew God had told him something different and Hananiah was only preaching what the people wanted to hear. Jeremiah did not argue or confront Hananiah, but simply reminded him, and all that were listening, that God's law had clearly stated it was only if "the word of the prophet comes to pass" that "the prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent" (v. 9).

Prayer Emphasis: Read Deuteronomy 18:20 and note that God said, "the prophet who presumes to speak a word in (His) name" that He had "not commanded him to speak…shall die." Now **read** Jeremiah 28:17 and see what happened to Hananiah!

Day 2: Jeremiah 29:1-17

"Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to…all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon." (Jeremiah 29:1)

A Letter from Home

Jeremiah composed a letter to "the people" that had been "carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon" (v. 1). The opening words, "thus says the LORD of hosts" (v. 4), reveals that it was really a message *from* God that was given *through* Jeremiah and hand-delivered *by* "Elasah" and "Gemariah" (v. 3). You might say it was a "good news/bad news" letter. In one place it said, "I will bring you back from your captivity" (v.14) but only "after seventy years are completed at Babylon" (v. 10). God had much to say to His people in that letter about what they were to be doing while they were waiting to be returned to their homeland. Three very important things they were to be doing were: 1) *They were to maintain and protect the family unit.* Verses 5-6 instruct them to "build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters." 2) *They were to grow as a nation and a people.* God wanted His people to "be increased there, and not diminished" just as they had been while in their earlier bondage in Egypt. 3) *God wanted His people to be a witness and positive influence on the people of Babylon.* They were to "seek the peace" of Babylon and to "pray to the LORD for it" (v. 7).

Prayer Emphasis: Believe God can grow and use us wherever we are, no matter the circumstances. **Read** and claim the promise of Romans 8:28 today! **Send** someone an encouraging communication.

Day 3: Jeremiah 29:18-32

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab…and Zedekiah…who prophesy a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar…" (Jeremiah 29:21)

Ahab and Zedekiah

There were only a few people who were mentioned by name in Jeremiah's letter to the captives in Babylon. Two of those people were Ahab and Zedekiah. Jeremiah had to have been informed of their actions by the LORD, since there is no record of his receiving any kind of communication from them. The information he communicated to and about them was nothing less than a true, "Thus says the LORD" (v. 21). These men bore the names of two evil kings, Ahab, the seventh king of Israel, and Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. These men were prophesying "a lie" to the people and doing it, supposedly, under God's authority (v. 21). Because of that, God was going to allow them to be turned over to Nebuchadnezzar who would "slay them" before the eyes of the people (v. 21). The story of the death of these two false prophets would be kept alive by a common curse that the people would pronounce upon one another – that they should die like "Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire" (v. 22). Death by "roasting" or "burning" was a common punishment in Babylon. You can read the last half of Daniel chapter three to read about one such intended execution. God had Jeremiah reveal to his readers that Ahab and Zedekiah had done "disgraceful things," such as, committing "adultery with their neighbor's wives" (v. 23) while supposedly delivering messages inspired by God.

Prayer Emphasis: Note God's closing statement in verse 23: "Indeed I know, and am a witness." **Read** Psalms 33:13-15 and 139:1-3 and **realize** there is nothing we do that God does not hear or see.

Day 4: Jeremiah 30:1-24

"…it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:7b)

"Jacob's Trouble"

Jacob was the father of the 12 men who would be the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel. Since God was the one that changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32:28), He obviously reserved the right to refer to him by that name at this time. It is clear God was referring to the nation of Israel here when He spoke of "Jacob's trouble." God clearly revealed He was speaking to "Israel and Judah" as one nation and not as the two divided nations (v. 4). This time of "Jacob's trouble" was used in reference to Israel's current sufferings as well as to a time of future suffering – the time of tribulation that will begin immediately after the rapture of the church. The Hebrew word that is translated "trouble" here in the NKJV, and "distress" in some other versions, is found in several places in the Bible and translated in several ways. It is most often translated "trouble" or "distress," but is also translated "affliction," "adversity," "anguish," and even "tribulation." Notice the last part of our focus verse states "he (Jacob, aka Israel) shall be saved *out of* it (the trouble or tribulation) and not *from* it. When God's people sin and rebel against Him, they can surely expect Him to discipline them.

Prayer Emphasis: Accept God's discipline as a sign of His love and care for you. **Read** Hebrews 12:5-8 and Revelation 3:19 to learn more about why we should respectfully accept discipline as a sign of God's love for us. Job 5:17 says, "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects."

Day 5: Jeremiah 31:1-20

"The LORD has appeared of old to me saying:'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with kindness I have drawn you.'" (Jeremiah 31:3)

"An Everlasting Love"

Early in our reading, in Jeremiah 2:2-3, when God first began to reveal His case against His people, He reminded them of "the kindness of (their) youth" and "the love of (their) betrothal." He also reminded His people that, at that time, they "went after" (followed) Him "in the wilderness" and were "holiness" (wholly committed) to Him (2:2-3). However, they did not remain faithful to that first love for God and soon He was accusing them of harlotry. Now, He speaks to them of His love for them and calls it "an everlasting love" with which He had "drawn" them to Himself (v. 3). In other words, God was telling His people that even though their love for Him had lessened, His love for them had remained strong and constant. The word translated "everlasting" in our focus verse speaks of "continuous existence" and is translated "perpetual" in 22 places in the KJV. Because God's love was everlasting, *no one was outside of His reach*. He promised His people He would "bring them from the north country and gather them from the ends of the earth" (v. 8). Because God's love was everlasting, *no one was insignificant to Him*. He promised to love and restore "the blind and the lame" (v. 8) and others who might not have been considered important to people. Because God's love was an everlasting love, *He would provide for their every need* by causing them "to walk by the rivers of waters" (v. 9).

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for His "everlasting love" today! **Count** your blessings and **express** your gratitude to God for the many ways He has blessed you. **Share** a testimony of God's love and faithfulness with someone you encounter today.

Day 6: Jeremiah 31:21-40

"In those days they shall say no more: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.'" (Jeremiah 31:29)

"Sour Grapes"

Today's focus verse reveals much about the problems with Israel's relationship with God. Instead of speaking God's word to one another, they were quoting proverbs that were not found anywhere in God's word. The particular proverb quoted in verse 29 is one that was used to lay the blame for one's problems on others. In this case, God's people used it to lay the blame for their suffering and separation from God on their "fathers." God's response to this attempt to put the blame for their chastisement on others was to say: "But every one shall die for *his own iniquity*; every man who eats the sour grapes, *his* teeth shall be set on edge" (v. 30). We can always rest assured that the God who sees and knows all is well aware of where the blame lies! It is easy to blame others for our pitiful situations and circumstances, but God will no more allow our generation to do that than He did this generation of backslidden followers. Our service to God is between Him and us. We are responsible for our own actions, and we simply cannot use the actions of others to excuse our inconsistent service to the Lord.

Prayer Emphasis: We should **confess** the temptation to blame others for our lack of faithfulness and **claim** His promise: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more" (31:34).

Day 7: Jeremiah 32:1-22

"For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house." (Jeremiah 32:2)

Jeremiah in Prison

In the first chapter of Jeremiah, we read where Jeremiah began his ministry "in the thirteenth year" of Josiah's reign (1:2). Today we find him still ministering some 40 years later in the "tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah" (32:1). When you read that "the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison" (v. 2), you might assume it was the Babylonian's that put him in prison. However, when you read verse 3, you are clearly told that "Zedekiah king of Judah had *shut him up*" in the prison in an effort to *shut him up* and stop him from preaching. The reasons for Zedekiah's actions are explained when we are told Zedekiah took issue with the fact that Jeremiah was prophesying and telling people that God said, "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it" (v. 3), "and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon…then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him" (v. 4-5). The truth is that Jeremiah was put into prison for preaching the truth – which was exactly what the king did not want to hear!

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for all pastors, missionaries, and Bible teachers today who are at risk of criticism and criminal charges just for plainly stating what the Bible says. **Pray** for persecuted Christians everywhere and **pray** for our continued freedom to plainly preach the word of God in America.

Day 8: Jeremiah 32:23-44

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 'Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?'" (Jeremiah 32:26-27)

A Very Good Question

As though Jeremiah's job was not hard enough, there were still some who simply refused to believe that Jerusalem could actually fall to anyone. Its people had hidden safely within her strong, protective walls for many years and had waited out other enemies before. Jerusalem had a history of prevailing against stronger enemies than the Babylonians! So, some simply refused to believe the things that Jeremiah was prophesying could ever really happen to them. But, in verse 27, God asked an exceptionally good question of His doubting people: "Is there anything too hard for Me?" God explained that the Chaldeans would prevail against Jerusalem because He would "give" the city into their hands (v. 28) and He was going to use three weapons to bring the proud city to her knees. This is what God had to say about how the city of Jerusalem would fall: "It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by *the sword*, by *the famine*, and by *pestilence*" (v. 36). The sword represented those who would die on or around the walls while trying to defend the city against its attackers. The famine would result from the city being sealed off from its surrounding community and unable to bring fresh food and water within its walls. The pestilence would result from the unsanitary conditions that arose while under a time of siege.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe God sometimes uses common and natural things to accomplish His divine will. Watch for God's hand at work in your own life and listen to what He is trying to say to you.

Day 9: Jeremiah 33:1-13

"'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things…'" (Jeremiah 33:3)

An Invitation to Pray

There is no question that Jeremiah 33:3 is one of the most often quoted promises regarding prayer in the Bible. It is, no doubt, one of the most preached from texts of all time! But, what few people know is that this great encouraging word about prayer came to Jeremiah while he was in prison! Verse 1 reports "the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison," encouraging the incarcerated prophet to cry out to Him in order to see "great and mighty things" (v. 3) which were beyond his imagination and comprehension. One would think that, at the beginning of his ministry under King Josiah, one of the last things Jeremiah might have imagined was that he would find himself in prison for preaching the word of God. Nevertheless, in prison he was and in prison God encouraged him! It is not difficult to imagine how excited Jeremiah must have been to have God seek him out there and deliver to him one of the greatest promises in the Bible. The very thought of that moment in Jeremiah's life conjures up images of Paul and Silas "at midnight…praying and singing hymns to God" while in prison in Philippi (Acts 16:25). However trying and tiring they may be our trials and troubles are often used to take us to a level of faith that we might have never imagined to be obtainable.

Prayer Emphasis: Call out to God about some matter of significant importance in your life or the life of someone else and **make a note** of the date of your request. **Revisit** this devotional when God answers that prayer and join Jeremiah, Paul, and Silas in the singing of some praises to God!

Day 10: Jeremiah 33:14-26

"'In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'" (Jeremiah 33:16)

A New Name

Some people assume the title written in all caps in Jeremiah 33:16 was a name or title assigned to the Lord. That is a mistake. The name "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" given in that verse is not ascribed to a *person*, but to a *place*. Read the verse again, carefully. It states, "And this is the name by which *she* will be called." The reference to Judah in our focus verse clearly indicates God is going to rename His holy city after it has returned to Him and is restored to its rightful place in His presence and before the nations. While verse 15 is clearly speaking of the Messiah when it mentions "a Branch of righteousness," the title in verse 16 is one given to Jerusalem after the Messiah becomes its ruler. Under God's sovereign watch, Jerusalem will no longer be a city given to rebellion, idolatry, adultery, and such. It will thrive spiritually under its new King and will take on the character of King Jesus! This was something that would take place in the future for Judah and Israel that God is allowing to take place in the present for His believers and followers today. Our lives can, in this present time, "be transformed by the renewing of (our) mind" and we can be made fully capable of being a witness and testimony to the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Prayer Emphasis: Seek to be a living testimony of what God can do when He transforms a life by the power of His love and forgiveness! **Allow** God to do a magnificent work in your life by surrendering to His will.

Day 11: Jeremiah 34:1-22

"…'I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. And you shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be...delivered into his hand…'" (Jeremiah 34:2b-3a)

Zedekiah's Fruitless Rebellion

While we do not know many of the details about it, we are clearly told in the last part of 2 Kings 24:20 that "Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." We get some idea that at least part of that attempted rebellion was to send "ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people" (Ezekiel 17:15). God sent Jeremiah to Zedekiah, Judah's final king, to say that any effort to escape or avoid the fact that God was going to "give" Jerusalem "into the hand of the king of Babylon" would be completely and totally useless (v. 2). The only comforting word Jeremiah had for Zedekiah was, "You shall not die by the sword. You shall die in peace" (v. 4-5). After accepting his fate, "King Zedekiah…made a covenant with all the people" asking "that every man should set free his male and female slave – a Hebrew man or woman – that no one should keep a Jewish brother in bondage" (vs. 8-9). This seems like an "It's every man for himself" command that might come from the captain of a sinking ship! Initially the people seemed willing to obey the king's command, but "afterward they changed their minds and made the…slaves return" (v. 11). You only have to read the closing verses of today's chapter to see how God responded to this lack of compassion toward the people and compliance to His leadership. After the people forced their own slaves to return, God said, "I will give them into the hand of their enemies" (v. 20).

Prayer Emphasis: **Accept** God's will and **refuse** to try to override His plans by plans of your own making. **Realize** that the tough times are the best time to pay special attention to obedience!

Day 12: Jeremiah 35:1-19

"'Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.'" (Jeremiah 35:2)

"The Rechabites"

The story of the Rechabites found here in chapter 35 serves as a reminder that not all the Book of Jeremiah is written in chronological order. In fact, the events discussed here about these people took place somewhere between 11 and 20 years before the events recorded in chapter 34. However, the Holy Spirit could not have selected a better place for this story. Immediately after the story of the people of Judah being unwilling to honor God's law concerning the freeing of their slaves, God had Jeremiah direct King Jehoiakim to bring the Rechabites to Jerusalem and provide them quarters in one of the "chambers" in "the house of the LORD" and to "give them wine to drink" (v. 2). However, the Rechabites said, "We will drink no wine" for "our *father* commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever'" (v. 6). Their earthly *father* had also told them they were not to "build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard" but to "dwell in tents" (v. 7). So that was exactly what they had done and what they intended to continue doing. The placement of this story adds a great exclamation point the fact that the people of Judah had just refused to honor the commands of their own heavenly *Father* – God Himself!

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God honors faithfulness and rewards obedience. We must always **allow** God the right to simply say, "Because I said so!" in all the situations and circumstances in our lives.

Day 13: Jeremiah 36:1-19

"Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim…that this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 'Take a scroll…and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you…'" (Jeremiah 36:1-2)

The Scroll

Two points will help us better understand the Scriptures we read today. First, we read about *the scroll being written* (36:1-7). We are told it was "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim" (v.1) that God directed Jeremiah to write "all the words that I have spoken to you…from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day" (v. 2). God clearly expressed His desire that all people would "hear all the adversities which (He) purposed to bring upon them" so they might "turn from (their) evil way, that (He might) forgive their iniquity and their sin" (v. 3). Baruch assisted in the writing of this scroll, but only wrote "at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words…which He (God) had spoken to him" (v. 4). Second, we read about *the scroll being read* (vs. 8-10). An important date is given to us in verse 9. We are told "it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim…in the ninth month" (v. 9) that "Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD" (v. 10). Since it was "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim" that God instructed Jeremiah to write (v. 1), and then in the "fifth year of Jehoiakim" that Baruch began to read (v. 9), we can conclude it took Jeremiah about one year to write this book.

Prayer Emphasis: **Commit** now to serve God for the long run! **Realize** there is no quick and effortless way to accomplish great things for God. **Read** Luke 14:25-33 and **remember** Jesus wisely advised His followers to "count the cost" before attempting to follow Him.

Day 14: Jeremiah 36:20-32

"…the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth." (Jeremiah 36:23)

More About the Scroll

Today's Scripture reading continues the story about the scroll Jeremiah was instructed to write. The last part of yesterday's reading revealed that the news about Jeremiah's scroll soon came to some of the king's high-ranking officials. And, after hearing some of it read themselves, they advised Baruch and Jeremiah to "go and hide" and to "let no one know where they" were (v. 19). In the same month the scroll was publicly read in the house of the LORD, it was then read in the house of the king. It was after the king heard some of what the scroll had to say that we read about *the scroll being cut*. The king used "the scribe's knife" and cut any and all offensive pages from the scroll and "cast (them) into the fire," and continued doing so until "all the scroll was consumed in the fire" (v. 23). One can only imagine how Jeremiah and Baruch must have felt when the news of this action reached them at their hiding place. At the time Jeremiah was commanded to do this writing, he had already spent approximately 22 years in ministry. In one night, the record of 22 years of teaching and preaching, a record that's writing took almost a year, was destroyed in minutes by a tyrant. But then, we read about *the scroll re-written*. What did Jeremiah do? He "took another scroll" and He and Baruch wrote again – with some new verses being added by the Lord (v. 32)!

Prayer Emphasis: **Embrace** and **exhibit** a "never give up" mentality and **refuse** to allow anyone to discourage you from doing the things God has called you to do! **Be strong** in the Lord!

Day 15: Jeremiah 37:1-21

"And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal…and Zephaniah…to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 'Pray now to the LORD our God for us.'" (Jeremiah 37:3)

A Personal Prayer Request

Since Jehoiachin only reigned for three months before surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar's army, and he, and many of his family members and officials were taken away to Babylon (See 2 Kings 24:8-12), there is not much said about him in the Book of Jeremiah. After Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon, "Zedekiah the son of Josiah" was "made king in the land of Judah" by Nebuchadnezzar (v. 1). Of Zedekiah we are told that, "neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the LORD which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah" (v. 2). The fact that this king, and his people, obviously had no respect for God's word makes Zedekiah's request for Jeremiah to "pray…to the LORD our God" for them seem out of place (v. 3). Even though it is recorded that this king "did evil in the sight of the LORD" (2 Kings 24:19), he sure didn't mind referring to God as "*our* God" in times of trouble (v. 3). It seems that Zedekiah was one of those people that wanted to show no *respect* for God and His word, yet still *expect* God to move on his behalf. I am sure the world was filled with such people then and I am certain that it is now! God deserves better than to be placed in a box that is only opened in the case of an emergency.

Prayer Emphasis: Examine your personal prayer life. Do you spend time before God every day or do you simply call on Him when you need Him to bail you out of some desperate situation or provide for your material needs? **Choose** to spend time with God and His word on a daily basis.

Day 16: Jeremiah 38:1-13

"So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon…and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire." (Jeremiah 38:6)

In the Dungeon

We read in yesterday's Scripture that Jeremiah was "put…in prison" (37:15) and remained there for "many days" (37:16). It is apparent that Jeremiah was not completely isolated from people in this prison because, in the opening verses of today's reading we are told some of the king's officials "heard the words that Jeremiah" was speaking to the people in the prison court (v. 1). Jeremiah was preaching the same thing that we read about him preaching back in Jeremiah 21:3-10, and still announcing that those who chose to remain in Jerusalem would "die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence" (v. 2). These same officials "said to the king, 'Please, let this man be put to death'" (v. 4). Like Pilate in the New Testament, Zedekiah washed his hands of the matter (v. 5), and those who sought Jeremiah's life "took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon" (v. 6). In this dungeon was an old well that no longer held water but was filled with mud. It was so steep and deep that they had to "let Jeremiah down with ropes" and when he reached the bottom, he "sank in the mire" (v. 6). Since it was their desire to kill Jeremiah, it seems that these evil officials assumed Jeremiah would die in such a horrible place. And, if it had not been for the actions taken by Ebed-Melech on the prophet's behalf, he probably would not have survived this ordeal (v. 7).

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. Reports indicate that as many as 90,000 Christians died for their faith last year. That is one Christian every six minutes! **Pray**!

Day 17: Jeremiah 38:14-28

"Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD…" (Jeremiah 38:14)

A Secret Meeting

Before making any other comment, I want to suggest to you that the words Zedekiah spoke to Jeremiah in verse 26 of today's reading support the fact that Jeremiah, had he been left in that muddy prison, would probably have died. Verse 25 surely reveals that it was still the intention of Zedekiah's officials to see Jeremiah dead. In the first part of today's reading, we saw where "Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah…brought to him" and then said to him, "I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me" (v. 14). Jeremiah responded to Zedekiah's request for the truth by saying that he believed the king might have him put to death if he spoke the whole truth to him or the king would not listen even if he was told the truth (v. 15). The king did promise he would not kill Jeremiah or turn him over to those who so desperately wanted him dead (v. 16). However, search these verses repeatedly – over and over – and you will not find anywhere in this conversation where King Zedekiah told Jeremiah he would *listen to him*! Jeremiah's message to the king was the same as it had been from the beginning. If the king would surrender Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, then his life, as well as the lives of his family and many others, would be spared, and the city of Jerusalem would not be burned.

Prayer Emphasis: Be consistent! What Jeremiah said in private was no different from what he said in public. In other words, Jeremiah was the same person in the palace that he was in the pulpit! **Ask** God to give you the strength to be a consistent witness to those you encounter on a regular basis.

Day 18: Jeremiah 39:1-18

"And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem." (Jeremiah 39:8)

The Fall of Jerusalem

After a very long siege, everything Jeremiah had prophesied about Jerusalem's future finally came to pass when, "in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated" (v. 2). This became such an important day in Jewish history that it is repeated three other times in the Old Testament (2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4; and Ezekiel 24:1-2). The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy over Zedekiah and his family also came about just as he had said. Although "Zedekiah…and all the men of war…fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden" (v. 4), the "Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho" (v. 5). The king and all those who sought to escape with him were "brought up to Nebuchadnezzar," and he "pronounced judgment on" them (v. 5). "Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes" and "also killed all the nobles of Judah" (v. 6). He then "put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon" (v. 7). Eventually the Chaldeans "carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him" (v. 9).

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God always does what He says! **Remember**, the next big prophetic event on the world's horizon is the rapture! Are you ready to go if the trumpet were to sound today?

Day 19: Jeremiah 40:1-16

"'…I free you this day from the chains that were on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come…But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there.'" (Jeremiah 40:4)

A Very Important Decision

When you read the last half of today's focus verse, you might think you are reading a conversation between God and Jeremiah. Jeremiah is being promised *a place* of his own choosing. "The captain of the guard" (v. 1), under whose watch Jeremiah had fallen, was offering him freedom now that Jerusalem had finally been captured. But Jeremiah was offered more than just a place. He was also offered *protection.* His captor told him that he would "look after" him (v. 4). It seems from the story that Nebuzaradan's promise to Jeremiah also included a promise of *provision*. Even before Jeremiah's decision was made known to him, his former guard "gave him rations and a gift and let him go" (v.5). Verse 6 informs us of Jeremiah's decision. There we are told he "went" and "dwelt…among the people who were left in the land." Jeremiah's decision to stay in a destroyed city with his suffering people reminds us of the decision Moses made when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" (Hebrews 11:24-25). But, beyond that, Jeremiah's decision calls to mind the decision of our Lord when He chose to make "Himself of no reputation" and take "the form of a bondservant…coming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7) so that He could suffer and die for our sins.

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to help you make right decisions, even when the right decision is not the most pleasant one. **Seek** to defeat selfishness in your life. **Do** something unselfish for someone today.

Day 20: Jeremiah 41:1-18

"Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, that is, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war." (Jeremiah 41:3)

The Assassination of Gedaliah

In yesterday's chapter, we read where "Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land" (40:6). The Gedaliah to whom Jeremiah went was none other than the man that Ishmael came to under the cover of peace and then assassinated. In verse 2 of today's reading we are told that "Ishmael…and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah…with the sword, and killed him." But their killing did not stop there. These murderous assassins "also struck down all the Jews who were with him" at his peaceful banquet with his supposed friends (v. 3). The phrase "all the Jews" there in verse 3 does not mean they killed "all the Jews" in the land, but "all the Jews" that were with Gedaliah at the banquet. Jeremiah, obviously, was not one of "the Jews" in attendance at Gedaliah's banquet with Ishmael. Considering why that was the case leads us to look back at a verse we read yesterday. In verse 6 of yesterday's reading we saw where Jeremiah chose to go "to Gedaliah" and live under his newly formed government in Jerusalem, but he spent his time "*among the people who were left in the land*."

Prayer Emphasis: **Spend** some time today in prayer and **thank God** for some of the things that *didn't* happen! Jeremiah could thank God that he *wasn't* included in Gedaliah's banquet! In retrospect, I am sure we can all think of times that God prevented us from being in the wrong place at the wrong time!

Day 21: Jeremiah 42:1-22

"'If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you.'" (Jeremiah 42:10)

Two Big "Ifs"

A diverse group of the people left in Jerusalem, best described by the phrase, "from the least to the greatest" (v. 1), came to Jeremiah asking him to pray about something for them. They desired that "the LORD (their) God" would give them direction on "the way in which (they) should walk," and "the thing" that they "should do" (v. 3). Jeremiah responded, "I will pray," and "whatever the LORD answers…I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you" (v. 4). The people stated they would do "everything which the LORD" told them through Jeremiah, "whether it (was) pleasing or displeasing" (vs. 5-6). So, as promised, Jeremiah prayed. And "after ten days…the word of the LORD came to" him (v. 7). God's response to Jeremiah's prayer on behalf of the people included two particularly important "ifs." First, "if" they would "remain in (the) land" God would "build" them and "plant" them (v. 10). The second "if" is found in verse 13 where "if" they were to say to God, "We will not dwell in this land," but "will go to the land of Egypt" then things would be entirely different for them. Notice that each of the "ifs" was followed by a "then." In verse 10, "if" they obeyed God, "then" they would be firmly established in the land. In verse 13, "if" they did not obey God, "then" the consequences of their wrong choice would be quite devastating!

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** God blesses obedience and disciplines against disobedience. **Choose** prayerfully and carefully when deciding about your spiritual direction. **Accept** God's discipline when it is necessary and **believe** that God is always working with our best interest in mind!

Day 22: Jeremiah 43:1-13

"…All the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, 'You speak falsely! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.'" (Jeremiah 43:2)

"The Proud Men"

We read in yesterday's chapter where some of the people who wanted to flee Jerusalem and go to Egypt came to Jeremiah asking for his prayer and guidance in the matter. Like so many people still do today, they asked for prayer after having already decided on what they were going to do. When Jeremiah prayed, the Lord responded, "Do not go to Egypt!" (42:19). Now that Jeremiah was delivering that answer to the people, they were angry and said, "You speak falsely!", and argued, "The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.'" (43:2). If you look closely at verse 2, you will see the root of the problem for these so-called leaders of God's people. In that verse, after naming these men, God referred to their group as "all the proud men." Some translations use the word "arrogant" or "insolent" in place of "proud" here. In any case, that information helps us to better understand why anyone would refuse to heed God's warnings, even after asking others for prayer and counsel. Pride is a terrible thing, and it can lead to utter destruction in life. Proverbs 16:18 warns us, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." There is no doubt that the pride of these leaders was going to lead to the downfall of many of God's people.

Prayer Emphasis: Humble yourself before the Lord and **ask** Him to help you to resolve any problems you may have with pride. **Refuse** to make your own decisions and then seek God's approval later.

Day 23: Jeremiah 44:1-19

"The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt…saying, 'Thus says the LORD of host, the God of Israel…'" (Jeremiah 44:1-2)

They Could Run but they Could Not Hide!

We saw in yesterday's reading that the people rejected Jeremiah's God-given advice not to flee to Egypt, and, ultimately, they were taken there, and Jeremiah was taken with them (43:6). However, being in Egypt did not put Jeremiah out of the range of God's voice! Our focus verse discloses that, even in Egypt, "the word…came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt." One can only imagine how much God must have desired to speak words of comfort and hope to His suffering children. But, because God is a just God that must discipline His children when necessary, the message for the people there was no different than the message they heard from Him in Judah. God's word came to His people in Egypt, speaking of "their wickedness which they have committed," explaining that their wickedness was found in the fact that "they went to burn incense and to serve other gods" (v. 3). In verse 4, God reminded His people, "I have sent to you all My servants the prophets…saying, 'Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!'" But the people "did not listen" or "turn from their wickedness" (v. 5). God's only choice was to say, "I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape" (vs. 13-14).

Prayer Emphasis: **Refer** back to Jeremiah 14:12 and see where God first pronounced judgment by "the sword, the famine, and the pestilence" against His unfaithful people. **Learn** this valuable lesson: When it comes to God's judgment, we can run but we cannot hide!

Day 24: Jeremiah 44:20 - 45:5

"Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah…shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs." (Jeremiah 44:28)

A Lesson Learned

Verse 20 of today's reading states that "Jeremiah spoke to all the people" explaining to them that the very idols they refused to give up and discontinue worshiping were the reason for all their calamities. Jeremiah then mentioned "the evil of (their) doings" and "the abominations which (they had) committed," adding "therefore" (for these reasons) "your land is a desolation" and "as it is this day" (v. 22). God clearly explained their punishment by saying: "Because you have burned incense and because you have sinned against the LORD…this calamity has happened to you" (v. 23). Because of their choosing idols over Him, God said that He would "watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them" (v. 27). God did add, "Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah" and from those people all would soon learn "whose words" would stand – His or theirs (v. 28).

Prayer Emphasis: **Realize** that one of the best lessons we will ever learn is that God's words always stand. **Believe** that God says what He means and means what He says. **Listen** carefully and prayerfully to God's Spirit as you read your Bible and pray daily.

Day 25: Jeremiah 46:1-12

"The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the nations. Against Egypt. Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt…" (Jeremiah 46:1-2)

"A Prophet Against the Nations"

In the first chapter of this book, God came to Jeremiah, the son of a small-town priest named Hilkiah, and said to him: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you *a prophet to the nations*" (1:5). As overwhelming as that statement must have been to a young priest who was probably still in training, he now begins to see God doing exactly what He said He would do as he begins prophesying to Egypt and other nations. As scary as it might have sounded to Jeremiah, God commanded him to prophesy "*against* the nations," beginning with "Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt" (v. 2). From here in chapter 46, through chapter 51, we will see Jeremiah prophesying to Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedor, Hazor, and Babylon. Some translations use the word "Gentiles" here instead of "nations." The word is translated both ways in various places throughout the Old Testament. Imagine that! God using a young, priest-in-training to begin one of the first international ministries in the Bible! I am sure Jeremiah would have breathed out an "Amen!" if he could have been there to hear Paul say that God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that God has "chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27). **Ask** Him to do the same thing through you!

Day 26: Jeremiah 46:13-28

"The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come and strike the land of Egypt." (Jeremiah 46:13)

Judgment on Egypt

In the first half of chapter 46 we read about God's pronounced judgment against Egypt, primarily in the battle at "Carchemish" where the Babylonians would utterly defeat the Egyptians (v. 2). Verses 3-5 tell the story of the well-armed army of Egypt that would be quickly routed by the Babylonians, to the point that their "mighty ones" would be "beaten down" so much that they would flee from their enemy and "not look back." In verse 11 God said that Egypt's army would be broken to the point that they "shall not be cured." Verses 13-17 describe Babylon's soon-to-come attack on Egypt, stating that "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come and strike the land of Egypt" (v. 13). As you read these chapters, remember this was not history that Jeremiah was writing, but prophecy! All of the events described in these chapters are future events of which God was telling Jeremiah to forewarn the nations. If you remember how God's own people reacted to Jeremiah's God-given prophecies, then you can only imagine how the Gentile "nations" might have received them. This might have been a suitable time for Jeremiah to remember some of the first words of advice that God gave him: "Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you" (1:8).

Prayer Emphasis: Never forget that the whole world is God's creation and He rules over all nations. **Allow** that all-powerful God to rule and reign in your own heart today. **Raise** a white flag of surrender to Him and yield to His will for your life today.

Day 27: Jeremiah 47:1 - 48:10

"The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh attacked Gaza." (Jeremiah 47:1)

A Prophecy Against the Philistines

Jeremiah's second prophetic message of judgment against the Gentile nations was addressed to the Philistines. If we remember anything at all about the Philistines, it is that they were a perpetual problem to the Israelites throughout the Bible story, beginning with the water wars in Isaac's days (Genesis 26) to the settlement of the Promised Land (Judges 3:1-3). In the referenced verses in Judges 3, we are told that Philistine was one of "the nations which the LORD left" (in the Promised Land), "that He might test Israel by them." As heathen and godless as these people might have appeared to be, they did an incredibly good job of fulfilling God's plan for their lives – the testing of Israel. Now it was time for the Philistines to be tested as God's judgment was soon to be poured out upon them. Again, Jeremiah is not writing history here, but prophecy! Notice our focus verse states that this message of judgment against the Philistines "came to Jeremiah the prophet…*before* Pharaoh attacked Gaza." The Babylonian army was not to be used only against Judah and Egypt, but many of the nations would be punished by their brutal power. God said that they would come upon their enemies like "an overflowing flood" causing the "men" to "cry, and all the inhabitants of the land (to) wail" (47:2). The once-brave Philistine men would soon find themselves fleeing from the oncoming Babylonian army and not even looking "back for their children" (47:3).

Prayer Emphasis: **Refuse** to think that God's judgment is limited only to believers. **Realize** that God exacts His judgment against all nations and it is only a matter of time before that judgment comes!

Day 28: Jeremiah 48:11-28

"'The calamity of Moab is near at hand, and his affliction comes quickly.'" (Jeremiah 48:16)

"The Calamity of Moab"

We read part of the prophecy against Moab yesterday. In those verses we read statements like: "No more praise of Moab" (v. 2) and "Moab is destroyed" (v. 4). We also read about "continual weeping" and "a cry of destruction" (v. 5). God had Jeremiah announce to this country that, "because (they) trusted in (their) works and (their) treasures" they would "be taken" and "go forth into captivity" (v. 7). Then, "the plunderer" would "come against every city" and "no one shall escape" (v. 8). Today's verses begin with the statement: "Moab has been at ease from his youth" (v. 11). By that, God meant that their national history had been one of mostly peaceful times. The thought that Moab had "settled on his dregs" (v. 11) brought the ancient art of winemaking to the minds of the people of Jeremiah's times. When making wine, first the grapes were crushed by stomping, and then the juice from the grapes was poured into large bottles for fermentation. During that process, the "dregs," or the sediment from the crushed grapes, would settle to the bottom of the bottle. After some time, the newly fermented wine was poured, or "emptied from vessel to vessel" (v. 11) to carefully remove the dregs. If not for this time of pouring back and forth, the wine would become too sweet and thick to be of use. As such, God was saying that Moab had become pretty much useless to anyone because they had never experienced adversity.

Prayer Emphasis: **Accept** the "stirring" that trouble brings into our lives as one of the ways God purifies us and makes us more useful in His service. **Trust** Him to always do what is best for your life.

Day 29: Jeremiah 48:29-47

"Joy and gladness are taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab; I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses; no one will tread with joyous shouting – not joyous shouting." (Jeremiah 48:33)

"The Pride of Moab"

Jeremiah was not the first prophet to speak of "the pride of Moab" (v. 29). Isaiah preached about 60-70 years before Jeremiah, and he said, "We have heard of *the pride of Moab* – He is very proud" (Isaiah 16:6). It is possible that Jeremiah is intentionally quoting Isaiah here, but it is more likely that God is simply repeating through Jeremiah a prophetic word that He had earlier delivered through Isaiah. Years of peaceful living had lulled the people of Moab into a sense of false security that would ultimately lead to its downfall. In verse 32, God warned them of a "plunderer" (invading foreign nation) that would come and rob them of their "summer fruit and (their) vintage." Some translations use the words "destroyer" or "spoiler" in place of the word "plunderer" in that verse. The Hebrew employed here is not found in the Bible until we reach the Book of Judges. In some translations this word is translated "robbers" in Job 12:6 and in the fifth verse of Obadiah. Because of the harsh judgment that God had Jeremiah pronounce upon the sinful nations, including Israel and Judah, this word used to announce soon-coming "plunderers," "spoilers," "destroyers," and "robbers" is found in more verses in Jeremiah than in all of the other books of the Bible combined! Because of God's judgment on Moab, "joy and gladness" would soon depart their once peaceful country (v. 33).

Prayer Emphasis: **Realize** that, because of God's grace and mercy, His judgment is often *delayed* or *deferred*, but seldom *defused*. **Turn** to Numbers 32:23 and **underscore** the closing phrase, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Day 30: Jeremiah 49:1-19

"Against the Ammonites. Thus says the LORD: 'Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir? Why then does Milcom inherit Gad, and his people dwell in its cities?'" (Jeremiah 49:1)

Judgment on Ammon and Edom

The countries of Ammon and Edom were located to the north and south of Moab. Ammon was a long-time enemy of God's people, and most recently, the "king of the Ammonites…sent Ishmael" to "murder" Gedaliah, the Babylonian appointed governor over the cities of Judah (40:14). This nation's most recent offense against Israel was that they had assumed possession of the lands of the Northern tribes (Israel) after they were taken into captivity in 722 BC and claimed them for their own. God asked several questions of the Ammonites before He pronounced judgment on them, with the first being found in verse 1: "Why then does Milcom inherit Gad, and his people dwell in its cities?" Milcom was the king of Ammon, and he had wrongfully taken possession of the land that had been vacated by the now-captive Israelites. Edom also had a long history of conflict with God's people. They too were guilty of taking possession of land that rightfully belonged to God's people. Ezekiel addressed this issue in his prophecy when he quoted God as saying: "Edom…gave My land to themselves as a possession" (Ezekiel 36:5).

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God takes all sins against His people personally – as if they were done against Him! **Refuse** to become involved in any conversation or action that is harmful to any brother of sister in Christ! Kindly **excuse yourself** from gossip and critical conversations about others.

Day 31: Jeremiah 49:20-39

"'Damascus has grown feeble; she turns to flee, and fear has seized her. Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in labor.'" (Jeremiah 49:24)

Judgment Against Other Cities and Nations

"Damascus, Hamath, and Arpad" are three major cities in Syria who had "heard" the "bad news" of God's pronounced judgments on the enemies of His people and the reports of the advancing Babylonian army, and became "fainthearted" (v. 23). The word that is translated "trouble" in verse 23 in the NKJV is translated "sorrow" or "anxiety" in other translations. Some versions of the Bible use the word "anxiety" to translate this word in verses like Proverbs 12:25: "*Anxiety* in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad." As the people of Damascus, and other cities and nations, heard of the judgment that was coming upon their neighbors, there was obviously no "good word" to gladden their hearts. About Damascus, God said, "Her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off" in the day when the Babylonians marched against them (v. 26). The last part of verse 26 attributes the statements made therein to "the LORD of hosts." That often-used title for God is found over 200 times in the Bible. "LORD" is translated from the Hebrew "Jehovah" and "hosts" from a Hebrew word that literally means "armies." It is a title for God that has come to mean that God is the Supreme Ruler over all the "hosts" of people, in heaven and on earth, whether Christian or not. He certainly had the Babylonian king and army at His disposal at this particular time in history!

Prayer Emphasis: Surrender all power and authority in your own life to the one, true God who controls the universe! Hold nothing back! **Give** Him your undivided loyalty and service!

Day 32: Jeremiah 50:1-13

"The word that the LORD spoke against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet." (Jeremiah 50:1)

Judgment Against Babylon

What might have sounded like *good* news to the nations that the Chaldeans of Babylon were attacking and destroying, was certainly *bad* news for Babylon! The judgment God was now going to send against the Babylonians was something God wanted Jeremiah to "declare among the nations...say 'Babylon is taken'" (v. 2). God clearly had Jeremiah to prophecy: "Out of the north a nation comes against her, which shall make her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein" (v. 3). After sowing nothing but pain and sorrow to the nations surrounding them, the Babylonians were now going to taste some of their own medicine. Now would be a good time to review the Bible's three laws of sowing and reaping. First, *we always reap what we sow*. The Bible clearly states: "Whatever" we sow, "*that* (we) will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Second, *we always reap more than we sow*. Speaking of sinful Israel, Hosea said: "They sow *the wind*, and reap *the whirlwind*" (Hosea 8:7). Third, *we always reap later than we sow*. Ecclesiastes 11:1 states: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." What is the "it" that will come back to us in "many days"? Whatever the "it" is that we have sown!

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to accept the "so far, so good" lifestyle of those who think that God is overlooking their selfish, sinful ways! **Choose** to live a life that is pleasing to God and live every day as if He is right there with you in every circumstance and situation – because He is!

Day 33: Jeremiah 50:14-28

"'Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around…Take vengeance on her. As she has done, so do to her.'" (Jeremiah 50:14a & 15b)

Harvest Time for Babylon

The closing verse of yesterday's reading found Jeremiah being told to say: "Because of the wrath of the LORD she (Babylon) shall not be inhabited, but she shall be wholly desolate" and "everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues" (50:13). How could this prophecy ever become a reality? Babylon was the most fierce, mightiest nation on the earth at that time! However, God directed an unidentified "assembly of great nations from the north country" to "array themselves against her" (v. 9). To these nations God said: "Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around, all you who bend the bow; shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she has sinned against the LORD" (v. 14). God was not bashful about claiming the responsibility for Babylon's woes. He had Jeremiah clearly announce: "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land'" (v. 18). This once great city's "foundations" would fall and "her walls" would be "thrown down" and her great army that had once besieged other cities would now be besieged "all around" (v. 15) by her vengeful enemies. What explanation could there be for such a reversal of conditions? God said, "As she has done, so do to her" (v. 15).

Prayer Emphasis: **Remember** the words of Jesus: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Jesus certainly believed that the Bible taught that we reap what we sow! **Remember** to **live out** the "Golden Rule" as you walk through life today!

Day 34: Jeremiah 50:29-46

"'Call together the archers against Babylon. All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around; let none of them escape. Repay her according to her work; according to all she has done, do to her; for she has been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.'" (Jeremiah 50:29)

More About Sowing and Reaping

Perhaps no other Old Testament book provides a greater foundation for the New Testament's teachings on sowing and reaping than this Book of Jeremiah! Compare Jeremiah 9:21 and 11:22 with the words of verse 30 of today's reading, and you will see that Babylon, at a much later time, would reap some of the exact things that they had done earlier to others! According to today's focus verse, an army would come "against Babylon" and "encamp against it all around" so that "none of them (could) escape." These actions clearly describe the actions earlier taken by the Babylonian armies as they encircled a city, completely cutting it off from the outside world, and then encamped around it, waiting for it to eventually weaken and die from within. God said to Babylon: "For your day has come, the time that I will punish you" (v. 31). Her "most proud" would "stumble and fall" and God said, "I will kindle a fire in his cities" (v. 32). The last thing that an attacking army would do would be to destroy their enemy's city by fire. God was certainly rewarding Babylon "according to her work; according to all she has done" (v. 29).

Prayer Emphasis: **Note** the last phrase in today's focus verse and remember God teaches that what we do for or against His people is also done for or against Him! **Read** and then live Matthew 25:31-40 today! Remember that what we *sow today* we will *see* on some *tomorrow*!

Day 35: Jeremiah 51:1-14

"'…the LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes…'" (Jeremiah 51:11)

"A Destroying Wind"

When Jeremiah first began to prophesy against Judah and Jerusalem, he stated that the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon would "come up like clouds" with "his chariots like a whirlwind" (4:13). Now God is announcing that an enemy will be raised "up against Babylon" that will be like "a destroying wind" (v. 1). God described the day in which He would cause all this evil to come upon Babylon as a "day of doom" in which her enemies would "be against her all around" (v. 2). There would be nowhere to turn for this once seemingly unstoppable people and now their enemies would "utterly destroy all her army" (v. 3). If there was a "*Babylonian Herald*," its headlines would read, "Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; He shall recompense her" (v. 6). Perhaps another headline might read: "Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed" (v. 8). News of Babylon's fall would travel far and fast. Even the people in Jerusalem would hear of her fate and cry out, "Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God" (v. 10). The king "of the Medes" in verse 11 is more than likely the one described in Daniel 5:31! With the help of this new army, God would unleash "His plan…against Babylon to destroy it" (v. 11).

Prayer Emphasis: Today we have read a prophecy in which we find the fulfillment of another prophecy! **Believe** that God always keeps His word and His promises to His people! **Stop** *looking* for the *signs* and **start**t *listening* for the *shout*! **Read** 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and **live** like you believe Jesus could come today!

Day 36: Jeremiah 51:15-32

"'And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight,' says the LORD." (Jeremiah 51:24)

"The Kings of the Medes"

If some of the verses found in today's reading looked or sounded familiar to you it is because Jeremiah 51:15-19 is an almost verbatim a repeat of what we read earlier in 10:12-16! Here God is talking to Babylon, but in chapter 10 He was talking to His own people in Judah. God, as Creator, is the physical father of all men – and He, therefore, reserves the right to discipline all people. In this case, He has now chosen to discipline Babylon. Babylon had been God's "battle-ax and weapons of war" (v. 20). The list of "with you" statements in verses 20-23 make up a list of the ways God used that evil nation to carry out His wrath against His own sinful people. But now, in the end, Babylon is on the other end of the stick and God's wrath is now turned on her. The wrath of God would be thorough. He stated that He would "repay Babylon and *all* the inhabitants of Chaldea for *all* the evil they (had) done" (v. 24). As a righteous judge, God would see to it that *everyone* would be punished for *everything* they had done. By the time God was finished with Babylon, it would be like "a burnt mountain" that would be of no use to anyone and would, therefore, "be desolate forever" (vs.25-26). The "kings of the Medes" are mentioned again in verse 28 and would be used to help fulfill the "purpose of the LORD…against Babylon" (vs. 28-29).

Prayer Emphasis: Live every day knowing that God will bring all our works before us at the judgment. **Rejoice** in the fact that, on that day, it will be our *service* that He judges and not our *sins.* **Thank God** for the knowledge that our sins were judged on His cross and that the penalty for them was paid there in full.

Day 37: Jeremiah 51:33-48

"'The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor when it is time to thresh her; yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.'" (Jeremiah 51:33)

"The Time of Her Harvest"

When people saw the threshing floors being prepared, they knew that the time to harvest would soon come. The idea conveyed here is that all who observed the events taking place against Babylon would know that she was only reaping what she had sown. The sowing was optional, but the reaping was inevitable. Verse 34 records the thoughts of the people of Judah. They believed that "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon" had "devoured" and "crushed" them, leaving them like "an empty vessel." Judah's prayer was, "Let the violence done to me and my flesh be upon Babylon" (v. 35). Very early in this book we read where God said to Judah, "I will yet bring charges against you" (2:9). At that time God acted like a prosecuting attorney and laid out a case against His own people. Here He speaks like Judah's defense attorney when He tells Judah, "I will plead your case and take vengeance for you" (v. 36). By the time God was finished with Babylon, it would "become a heap, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment and a hissing, without an inhabitant" (v. 37). "Her cities" would be "a desolation," and she would become "a land where no one dwells" (v. 43) and "the heavens and the earth" would "sing joyously over Babylon" after the "plunderers (had) come to her from the north" (v. 48).

Prayer Emphasis: **Trust** God to defend your cause. **Believe** He will come to your aid and help you in your times of trouble if you only ask Him to do so.

Day 38: Jeremiah 51:49-64

"'The sound of a cry comes from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans, because the LORD is plundering Babylon and silencing her loud voice…'" (Jeremiah 51:54-55)

"Great Destruction"

At the beginning of their covenant relationship, God promised Abraham, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (Genesis 12:2-3). The full weight of that promise was now falling upon Babylon. Soon the entire world would hear "the sound of a cry" coming from Babylon because of the "great destruction" that had befallen her (v. 54). In the midst of all this, God tells His captive people to, "Get away! Do not stand still!" They were to "remember the LORD" and to "let Jerusalem come" to their minds (v. 50). In other words, God was now telling His people it was time to think about going home! Just as Babylon had done to Judah, now her own "mighty men" would be "taken" into captivity (v. 56). The entire world would soon know that "the LORD is the God of recompense, He will surely repay" (v. 56). God went on to say, "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates…burned with fire" (v. 58). The pride of Babylon had been her massive, double walls and secure gates. Those walls were surrounded by a wide, deep moat. If any city had reason to believe they could sleep soundly at night, it would have been Babylon. But soon they would learn that there is no wall high enough, and no moat deep or wide enough, to prevent God from getting through to them.

Prayer Emphasis: **Realize** that struggling against the Lord, and His will, is to "labor in vain" (v. 58). It is always best to **surrender** to God on His terms and to **avoid** ever having to experience His discipline.

Day 39: Jeremiah 52:1-23

"And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls of Jerusalem all around." (Jeremiah 52:14)

The Beginning of the End

The story found in Jeremiah 52 is almost identical to the one found in 2 Kings 24:18-25:30. In the first verse of today's reading, the only other "Jeremiah" whose name is recorded in this book is mentioned. "Jeremiah of Libnah" was the father of "Hamutal" who was the wife of King Josiah and the mother of Jehoahaz and Zedekiah (2 Kings 23:31 and 24:18). Zedekiah had the dubious honor of being the last king of Judah. A summary of his life is found in verse 2 of our text: "He also did evil in the sight of the LORD." It was under his watch, "in the ninth year of his reign…that Nebuchadnezzar…and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around" (v. 4). That siege lasted almost two years – "until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah" (v. 5). Eventually "the city wall was broken through" and King Zedekiah and some of his men tried to flee but were eventually captured (v. 7) just as Jeremiah had prophesied (see 38:14-23). Then "King Nebuchadnezzar," just as Jeremiah had earlier prophesied (see 22:7), "burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem…all the houses of the great, he burned with fire" (vs. 12-13). Another fulfillment of prophecy is found in the list of the furnishings of the temple (vs. 17-23) that were taken to Babylon (see 27:19-22).

Prayer Emphasis: **Remember** that the wheels of justice sometimes grind slowly but God's word is always proven true in the end. **Live** every day in a way that will lead others to say that you did what was "right" in the sight of the Lord.

Day 40: Jeremiah 52:24-34

"…Judah was carried away captive from its own land." (Jeremiah 52:27b)

In Conclusion

Although their ministries were separated by approximately 70 years, Isaiah and Jeremiah were both called to carry messages of condemnation and chastisement to God's people. The tone of Isaiah's messages often portrayed a man who was harsh and severe, while Jeremiah's tone represented that of a man who was truly heartbroken over the sins, and forthcoming judgment, of his people. One writer once said, "Isaiah dipped his pen in fire" while "Jeremiah dipped his in tears." The Book of Jeremiah is so filled with prophecies of judgment that we often forget it also contained prophecies of better days – days of repentance, restoration, and ultimately the return of God's people to Judah and Jerusalem. A letter that Jeremiah sent "from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive" included the prophecy, "after seventy years are completed at Babylon" God would "visit" His people and "perform (His) good word toward (them), and cause (them) to return" to Jerusalem (29:1 & 10). In Jeremiah 30 we read where Jeremiah prophesied: "The days are coming, says the LORD, that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah" (30:3). As the sun began to set on Jeremiah's life and ministry, the faithful prophet began to see the sun rising again on the horizon, clearly revealing the hope of Israel's bright future.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that better days are ahead for us! We may not ever see current day Jerusalem, but we will someday see and reside in New Jerusalem! Thank you for reading with us! If we can be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to contact us at 850-562-8069 or gary@seminolebc.com.