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| **KINGDOM PROPHET****PART THREE** |

Forty Daily Devotionals

from Jeremiah 1-27

(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” (1:4) in 586 BC. This faithful preacher served as God’s prophet through at least parts of the reign of at least five kings of Judah. He faithfully preached to his people for approximately 40 years and was an eye-witness 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 of the 12 books of the Minor Prophets combined.

(For clarification sake, this devotional is sub-titled “Part Three” because the two devotionals on Isaiah were titled “Kingdom Prophet, Part One” and Kingdom Prophet, Part Two.”)

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| **Daily Reading Schedule** |

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| **Day** | **Scripture Reading** | **Date** |  | **Day** | **Scripture Reading** | **Date** |
| 1 | Jeremiah 1:1-19 | 11/23/18 |  | 21 | Jeremiah 13:1-14 | 12/13/18 |
| 2 | Jeremiah 2:1-18 | 11/24/18 |  | 22 | Jeremiah 13:15-27 | 12/14/18 |
| 3 | Jeremiah 2:19-37 | 11/25/18 |  | 23 | Jeremiah 14:1-22 | 12/15/18 |
| 4 | Jeremiah 3:1-13 | 11/26/18 |  | 24 | Jeremiah 15:1-21 | 12/16/18 |
| 5 | Jeremiah 3:14-25 | 11/27/18 |  | 25 | Jeremiah 16:1-21 | 12/17/18 |
| 6 | Jeremiah 4:1-18 | 11/28/18 |  | 26 | Jeremiah 17:1-13 | 12/18/18 |
| 7 | Jeremiah 4:19-31 | 11/29/18 |  | 27 | Jeremiah 17:14-27 | 12/19/18 |
| 8 | Jeremiah 5:1-13 | 11/30/18 |  | 28 | Jeremiah 18:1-23 | 12/20/18 |
| 9 | Jeremiah 5:14-31 | 12/01/18 |  | 29 | Jeremiah 19:1-15 | 12/21/18 |
| 10 | Jeremiah 6:1-15 | 12/02/18 |  | 30 | Jeremiah 20:1-18 | 12/22/18 |
| 11 | Jeremiah 6:16-30 | 12/03/18 |  | 31 | Jeremiah 21:1-14 | 12/23/18 |
| 12 | Jeremiah 7:1-16 | 12/04/18 |  | 32 | Jeremiah 22:1-17 | 12/24/18 |
| 13 | Jeremiah 7:17-34 | 12/05/18 |  | 33 | Jeremiah 22:18-30 | 12/25/18 |
| 14 | Jeremiah 8:1-22 | 12/06/18 |  | 34 | Jeremiah 23:1-20 | 12/26/18 |
| 15 | Jeremiah 9:1-11 | 12/07/18 |  | 35 | Jeremiah 23:21-40 | 12/27/18 |
| 16 | Jeremiah 9:12-26 | 12/08/18 |  | 36 | Jeremiah 24:1-10 | 12/28/18 |
| 17 | Jeremiah 10:1-16 | 12/09/18 |  | 37 | Jeremiah 25:1-14 | 12/29/18 |
| 18 | Jeremiah 10:17-25 | 12/10/18 |  | 38 | Jeremiah 25:15-38 | 12/30/18 |
| 19 | Jeremiah 11:1-23 | 12/11/18 |  | 39 | Jeremiah 26:1-24 | 12/31/18 |
| 20 | Jeremiah 12:1-17 | 12/12/18 |  | 40 | Jeremiah 27:1-22 | 01/01/19 |

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| **Day 1: Jeremiah 1:1-19** |

*“‘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.’” (Jeremiah 1:5)*

***Jeremiah’s Call***

Jeremiah’s prophecy is unique in that it provides us with more of the personal history of its writer than any other Old Testament prophet. As I mentioned in the introduction, Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry spanned at least parts of the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. As a young man he saw Judah and Israel as it thrived under the leadership of good king Josiah. However, the last four kings under whom he lived and served were the last four kings of Judah, all who were unfaithful to the Lord. When God told Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I *knew* you” (v. 5), He used a word that meant more than just an intellectual knowledge. It was a very intimate word that was sometimes used in the Old Testament to represent a very intimate relationship between a man and a woman. For example, it is the word used in Genesis 4:1 where we are told, “Now Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain.” Before Jeremiah was even conceived, God “knew” him and chose him from among many to be His servant and spokesman. Our focus verse also tells us that, even before Jeremiah was born, God had “sanctified” (set apart) and “ordained” (appointed) him to play a very important role in His kingdom.

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to underestimate the power and knowledge of God or the potential that lies within the hearts and lives of our children. **Dedicate** your children to the Lord and **pray** for them on a daily basis.

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| **Day 2: Jeremiah 2:1-18** |

*“Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the LORD…” (Jeremiah 2:4-5a)*

***“The Word of the LORD”***

Ultimately, the “word of the LORD” that Jeremiah was called and commissioned to deliver to God’s people contained 13 messages of judgment against God’s people. The reason for God’s pronouncement of judgment is revealed early in Jeremiah’s message. In 2:5, Jeremiah was directed to say, “Thus says the LORD: ‘What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters?’” The first three verses of our reading reveal it had not always been this way with God’s people. God reminded them that He could clearly “remember…the kindness of (their) youth” and “the love of (their) betrothal” (meaning the love and devotion they showed at the beginning of their relationship with Him) (v. 2). In those days, they “went after” (followed) God and were “holiness to the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase” (vs. 2-3). Verses 6-7 state that *the people* did not remember the Lord or all of the mighty things He had done for them. The first part of verse 8 indicates that “*the priests*…those who handle the law did not *know*” God. (The word for “know” here is once again the Hebrew word mentioned in yesterday’s devotional – the one sometimes used to represent the most intimate of relationships.) Perhaps the people did not remember because the priests did nothing to remind them of all God had done for them. But, most importantly to note, the last part of verse 8 indicates that even “*the* *prophets*” had forsaken the true God to pursue idols and personal gain.

**Prayer Emphasis: Decide** now to remain faithful to God throughout all the days and phases of your life. Choose to **remember** all He has done for you and take the time to **recall** some of those wonderful things to someone you encounter along life’s way today.

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| **Day 3: Jeremiah 2:19-37** |

*“…‘And the fear of Me is not in you,’ says the LORD God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 2:19b*

***No Respect!***

As God continues His “Thus says the LORD” from verse 5, He reminded His people of their “own wickedness” and “backslidings” and told them they had “forsaken the LORD (their) God” (v. 19). In the final words of that same verse, God revealed the cause of their most recent moral failures when He said, “the fear of Me is not in you.” In other words, God was saying His people no longer had a reverential respect for Him. In yesterday’s verses we read where the ministerial failure of the priests and the prophets led to a time of *spiritual apostasy*. Today we read where the people’s spiritual apostasy led to a time of *spiritual adultery*. The “high hill” and the “green tree” mentioned in verse 20 are references to high places and groves where idols were erected and worshiped. God told His people they were worshiping idols on “*every* high hill and under *every* green tree.” As such, God told His people they were guilty of “playing the harlot” (v. 20). Again, He reminded them of better times, early in their walk with Him, when they were first “planted…a noble vine” from “seed of highest quality” (v. 21). But in the same breath, in the remainder of that same verse, God had to now say they had “turned” and had become like “the degenerate plant of an alien (foreign) vine.” The language of verse 22 is striking! It seems that even though Israel obviously tried to “clean up” for their high and holy day observances, God could still clearly see the “iniquity” that was within them.

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to clean only the outside of your life (the parts that people can see) while leaving the inside dirty. **Read Matthew 23:25-27** to see our Lord’s opinion of such actions.

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| **Day 4: Jeremiah 3:1-13** |

*“…‘You have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me,’ says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 3:1)*

***Spiritual Adultery***

The first five verses of Jeremiah 3 contain the last words of the “Thus says the LORD” that began in the fifth verse of the second chapter. This closing section of Jeremiah’s first message compares Judah’s spiritual adultery to the Old Testament laws of divorce and remarriage. According to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, a divorced woman who had later married another man was not to be allowed to return to the first husband because she had been defiled. In this last part of Jeremiah’s message, God directed him to liken Judah to such a woman by telling them they had “played the harlot with many lovers” yet repeatedly tried to “return” to Him in between (v. 1). In verse 2 God asks, “Where have you not lain with men?” Do you get the sense here that God’s people had committed so many spiritual adulteries that it would be easier for them to tell God when they had not done so than to enumerate the many times when they had? When God stated they had “sat” waiting for men “by the road” (v. 2), He was comparing their actions to those of the prostitutes that would wait along the roadways to entice men to sin as they entered a city. Verse 3 includes a reminder to God’s people that one of the ways God said He would discipline His sinning people was through His withholding the much-needed rain (See Deuteronomy 28:15-24).

**Prayer Emphasis: Commit** to being faithful to God no matter what others may say or do. **Refuse** to become involved in any activity or venture that is not, first and foremost, for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom. **Live** *purposely* today and you will live *powerfully* today!

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| **Day 5: Jeremiah 3:14-25** |

*“‘…You shall call Me, “My Father,” and not turn away from Me.’” (Jeremiah 3:19b)*

***God’s Ultimate Desire***

God’s ultimate desire was to bless His people. That was true in the days of Jeremiah and it is still true today. In the days of rebellion and spiritual adultery in which Jeremiah was forced to prophesy, God still desired to “put” His sinful people “among the children” and to “give (them) a pleasant land” and a “beautiful heritage” before “the hosts of nations” (v. 19). Note that the only way God’s people could be restored to a right relationship with Him was for Him to “put” them there. Some translation read, “*set* you among my sons” or “*make* you my sons.” We have seen this Hebrew word already in our reading of Jeremiah where, in Jeremiah 2:15, God said that the enemies of God’s people had “made” their land waste. The message God was trying to convey to His people here was that it could only be by God’s divine grace and mercy that His people could be fully restored to Him. It was that way then, in the Old Testament times, and it remains the same in our New Testament times today. We are clearly taught in the New Testament that we are saved “by grace…through faith” and that our salvation “is the gift of God, not of works” of our own design or power (Ephesians 2:8-9). God longed for the day His people would call Him “Father” and never again “turn away” from Him (v. 19). That is the way it *could* have been, *should* have been, and *would* have been if only God’s people had repented and returned to Him!

**Prayer Emphasis: Believe** it is still God’s ultimate desire to bless His people today. **Live** a life that can be filled with the blessings of God that are a witness and testimony to the grace and goodness of God.

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| **Day 6: Jeremiah 4:1-18** |

*“…‘Return to Me; and if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be moved.’” (Jeremiah 4:1)*

***“Put Away Your Abominations”***

Yesterday’s devotional focused on a Hebrew word that is translated “put” in the NKJV and other translations while today’s focus verse and devotional sites a different word that is translated the same way in most English Bibles. Both are verbs, but one describes an action God *would* take and the other describes an action God’s people *should* take. Yesterday we read where God said He would “put” His people “among the children” (3:19) and today we read where, before God could, or would, do so, His people had to, first, “put away (their) abominations out of (His) sight” (4:1). Some translations use the word “remove” here to describe what God required His people to do if they wanted their relationship with Him to be fully restored. Others choose to say that here God told His people they were required to “throw away” their idols and to turn back to Him. The NIV reads, “Put your detestable idols out of My sight!” Up until this time, we have read in Jeremiah where God’s people wanted to have it both ways. They wanted to worship and serve idols when they felt like it and then “return” to worshiping God whenever they felt like doing so (see Jeremiah 3:1). God still refuses to be a “runner up” or “also ran” in the lives of His people. The New Testament clearly commands believers to, “Therefore put to death…fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is *idolatry*” (Colossians 3:5).

**Prayer Emphasis: Read** and **heed** the command in Ephesians 4:22-24 to “put off…the old man” and to “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” **Realize** you can *be* different because the power of God has *made* you different!

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| **Day 7: Jeremiah 4:19-31** |

*“‘For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.’” (Jeremiah 4:22)*

***“Silly Children”***

My NKJV Bible has a footnote at the word “silly” in this verse that offers the word “foolish” as another way to translate the Hebrew word used here. It is a word that is found only in the books of Ecclesiastes and Jeremiah and always refers to a “fool” or “foolish” person. Some translations render this word as “senseless” or “thoughtless,” and at least one translation uses the word “stupid” to help us get a better idea of what God was saying about His people in this time of their rebellion against Him and their constant attraction to idols. The word is used once again in Jeremiah where God again referred to His sinning people as “foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not” (5:21). Several translations use the old English word “sottish” here. This is a word that implies the actions of God’s people were as “foolish” or as “silly” as those of a “sot,” or drunkard. God’s people were indeed drunk, not with intoxicating beverage, but by intoxicating thinking! Today’s focus verse offers some good information by which we can better understand what God meant when He referred to His people as “foolish” and “silly children” who had not “known” Him (v. 22). The word translated “known” here is, again, the word that implies a very intimate kind of “knowing” (see Genesis 4:1). Because the people were not in an intimate, right relationship with God, God said, “they have no understanding” and they were “wise to do evil” while they had “no knowledge” of how to do good.

**Prayer Emphasis: Examine** your own life today. **Ask** yourself, “How would God describe my relationship with Him?” or “What kind of child does God consider me to be?”

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| **Day 8: Jeremiah 5:1-13** |

*“‘Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now and know; and seek in her open places if you can find a man, if there is anyone who executes judgment, who seeks the truth, and I will pardon her.’” (Jeremiah 5:1)*

***A Divine “Scavenger Hunt”***

Space is precious in these brief devotionals, but I could not help but to include every word from today’s stunning focus verse in the text! God sent Jeremiah on a divine scavenger hunt, instructing him to “run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem” seeking “*a* man,” or to find if “there (was) *anyone* who” was living according to His judgments and commands. One cannot help but notice how God speaks in the singular in this verse and is, therefore, literally sending Jeremiah out to discover whether or not there is even one person living in Jerusalem whose life was patterned after God’s word. God told Jeremiah “if” he could find “*a* man” or “any*one*” who sought “the truth,” He would “pardon” the entire city (v. 1). I wonder how many people in Jeremiah’s day remembered Abraham’s search for a few “righteous” people living within Sodom so that God would spare that city in which his nephew Lot lived (Genesis 18:23-33). It might have surprised them to realize Jeremiah’s search of Jerusalem, God’s capital city, was even less successful than that of evil, wicked Sodom!

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** yourself: “If God went up and down the streets and avenues of my city, where would He find me? **Strive** to live on Monday, and every other day, like it was Sunday! **Refuse** to behave one way around God’s people and then a different way when you are out in the world.

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| **Day 9: Jeremiah 5:14-31** |

*“‘An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so…’” (Jeremiah 5:30-31)*

***“An Astonishing and Horrible Thing”***

Before speaking the words found in our focus verse, God first told Jeremiah, “I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it (God’s Word) shall devour them” (v. 14). If you recall, at the time of his calling, Jeremiah said, “Ah, LORD God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth” (1:6). That is when God responded to Jeremiah’s reluctance with words like, “whatever I command you, you shall speak” (1:7). At that same time, Jeremiah said, “the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth’” (1:9). Jeremiah was now to learn that it was not his preaching that would “devour” God’s sinful people, but the power of that which he preached, the all-powerful Word of God! God had Jeremiah remind the people they had “eyes” that did not “see” and “ears” that did not “hear” (v. 21). They had become a “people (with) a defiant and rebellious heart” who had “revolted and departed” from the things God had commanded them (v. 23). The fact that God said: “They do not say *in their heart*, ‘Let us now fear the LORD our God’” (v. 24) implies they did say such things, but not *from the heart*! They may have had a problem with their “hearing,” but God could still hear loud and clear, and He heard the hypocrisy in the words of His “prophets,” “the priests,” and His “people” (v. 31).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Do you ever wonder how God might describe the actions of His people today? Is it possible that He might consider the way we live as “an astonishing and horrible thing”? **Seek** to be “the real deal” by striving to serve God with a genuine desire to honor Him and His Word.

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| **Day 10: Jeremiah 6:1-15** |

*“‘Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely.’” (Jeremiah 6:13)*

***“Everyone”***

God told Jeremiah to warn the people: “Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem” because “disaster…and great destruction” was coming from “the north,” namely Babylon (v. 1). It was God, Himself, who instructed the invading armies to “cut down trees, and build a mound against Jerusalem” so that the city could “be punished” because it was “full of oppression” (v. 6). Sin and oppression came forth from God’s own city like water gushing forth from “a fountain” and the sounds of “violence and plundering” were common to the ears of Jerusalem’s inhabitants as God’s people “continually” caused Him “grief and wounds” (v. 7). When it came to the wickedness of the people, God clearly said, “From the least of them (age and position) even to the greatest of them, *everyone* was given to covetousness…*everyone* deals falsely” (v. 13). God made it very clear He was not just talking about the *common* people, but He was also speaking about the *called* people, “from the prophet even to the priest” (v. 13). Verse 14 states that, even while God was directing Jeremiah to tell the people to flee from the city, the spiritual leaders, so-called, were still declaring “Peace, peace!” at a time when there was “no peace!”

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** God’s grace and mercy are not definite indicators that God is pleased with all that is going on among His people. **Pray** for America’s spiritual leaders and **ask** God to give them the courage to declare the truth and nothing but the truth!

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| **Day 11: Jeremiah 6:16-30** |

*“…‘Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people…’” (Jeremiah 6:19)*

***“Calamity”***

In this message to His people, God commanded His people to “stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it” and then told them that, by doing so, they would “find rest for (their) souls” (v. 16). The latter half of that verse records the people’s response to God’s plea for obedience. They said, “We will not walk in it.” Then, God commanded them to “listen to the sound of the trumpet” and they responded, “We will not listen” (v.17). In response to those two “we will” statements of the people, God delivered an “I will” statement by saying; “Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people…because they have not heeded My words” (v. 19). Verse 20 makes it clear that, although God’s people were no longer living righteously, they were still living religiously! They were still bringing expensive and exotic offerings to God, but their “burnt offerings” were “not acceptable” and the prayers that their “frankincense” and “sweet cane” symbolized were no longer “sweet” to God (v. 20). God was now preparing to bring “a people…from the north country” who would be “cruel” and “have no mercy” on His sinning people. The people who refused to listen to God would soon hear the sound of an oncoming, invading army who’s “voice” roared “like the sea” (vs. 22-23).

**Prayer Emphasis: Read** verse 19 once more and **note** the evidence that God’s people had not *heard* His words was found in the fact that they had not *heeded* His words. **Determine** to be an obedient, hearing believer who is committed to following the Lord’s commands!

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| **Day 12: Jeremiah 7:1-16** |

*“‘Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word…’” (Jeremiah 7:2)*

***Our Walk Should Match Our Worship!***

In the NKJV you will find five “I will” statements made by God in these first 16 verses of Jeremiah 7 (vs. 3, 7, 14-16). The first two “I will” statements reflect the positive way God would respond to His people if they would only “amend (their) ways” and live according to His commands (vs. 3 and 5). There were to be three evidences of the amended, or changed, ways that God demanded of them: 1) They would treat their neighbors and their needy fairly and in accordance to the word of God (vs. 5-6); 2) They were not to “shed innocent blood” and; 3) they were not to “walk after other gods” (v.6). We cannot help but notice that the right treatment of their neighbors was to be built on a right relationship with God! Verses 9-10 reveal that God’s people had become accustomed to treating one another in all kinds of detestable ways and then would “come and stand before (Him) in (His) house.” Just as we will later find Jesus doing in Matthew 21:12-13, God does here when He declared that such hypocritical living had turned His house into “a den of thieves” (v. 11). In verse 13 God said, “I spoke to you…and I called you, but you did not answer.” The eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were not to come without warning. God repeatedly urged His people to hear and heed His word. In this most recent effort, God told Jeremiah to “Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house” (the temple), and “proclaim” once again His word, delivering a clear message to those who came to the temple “to worship the LORD” (v. 2) after refusing to walk in His ways.

**Prayer Emphasis: Commit** to being the kind of Christian God commands you to be outside the church and you will soon find that you have a much more pleasant and beneficial time of worship within the church! **Refuse** to be one person on Sunday and an entirely different person other days.

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| **Day 13: Jeremiah 7:17-34** |

*“‘Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?’” (Jeremiah 7:17)*

***“Religious” vs. “Righteous”***

The closing verse of yesterday’s reading found God saying to Jeremiah, “Do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you” (7:16). God told Jeremiah to “stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim” a message to His people (v. 2). Now, in verse 17 of today’s reading, we see that while they were still making offerings and burning incense to God in the temple (6:20), God was watching the way they were living in the streets. He asked Jeremiah, “Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?” Even though the people still came to the temple to worship God on the Sabbath, they spent the remainder of their lives making “drink offerings to other gods” (v. 18). God stated that such duplicity in the lives of His people provoked Him “to anger” and He wondered how it did not “provoke them…to…shame” (v. 19). God reminded His people that, after He had brought them safely out of the land of Egypt to the Promised Land, He had not given them commands regarding “burnt offerings or sacrifices” (v. 22), but that they should “Obey (His) voice” and “walk in all the ways (He) had commanded” them (v. 23). Again, God was reminding His people that it is one thing to be *religious* and another thing entirely to be *righteous*!

**Prayer Emphasis: Live** every day with the realization that God is always aware of how we are living in His presence and among His people. **Realize** God loves the people of the world and wants to show His love to them through you. **Be** a shining light to someone that you encounter today!

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| **Day 14: Jeremiah 8:1-22** |

*“‘Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times…’” (Jeremiah 8:7)*

***“Bird-Brains”***

In verse 5, we see God had some questions about the sinful actions of His people. God wanted to know why His people chose to live in a state of “perpetual backsliding.” The physical, *external* evidences of their spiritual, *internal* problem were that they held “fast to deceit” and refused “to return” to Him (v. 5). God “listened and heard,” and what He heard was not good. His people “did not speak aright” and “no man repented of his wickedness” (v. 6a). In fact, the people were utterly clueless about their sinful ways and, in the last part of verse 6 each asked, “What have I done?” Yet God responded that “everyone (had) turned to his own course” in their selfish directions as a “horse rushes into battle” (v. 6b). God had Jeremiah mention four different kinds of birds to the people (the “stork,” “the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow”), and told him to remind the people that these birds instinctively knew when it was time for them to migrate and were wise enough to “observe the time of their coming” (v. 7). God concluded that same verse by saying, “But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.” Do you think the idea here is that God was telling His people they were less than “bird-brains” when it came to hearing and obeying His will? It is probably not by coincidence that God mentioned four different birds to His people because four is a number closely associated with God’s creation in the Bible. Perhaps the point God was trying to make was that every other part of creation obeys Him except His own people!

**Prayer Emphasis:**  **Look** again at verse 10 and be reminded that “everyone…from the prophet even to the priest” was guilty of rejecting God and disobeying His commandments. **Pray** for our nation’s spiritual leaders today and **ask** God to empower them to honestly declare the Word of God in these trying times.

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| **Day 15: Jeremiah 9:1-11** |

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

***The Weeping Prophet***

If you have ever heard a sermon about Jeremiah you have probably heard him referred to as “the weeping prophet.” That name was partially earned because of the words contained in today’s focus verse. That nickname is reinforced by Jeremiah’s later statements that his “eyes (would) weep bitterly and run down with tears” because of the plight of God’s people (13:17) and “let my eyes flow with tears night and day, and let them not cease” (14:17). Verse 2 clearly indicates Jeremiah was so discouraged and disheartened that he was ready to leave the ministry. He stated he wanted to open a “lodging place for travelers” so he could “leave” his people and “go from them!” The language in verse 3 indicates that the spiritual condition of God’s people had deteriorated to the point “their tongues” were likened to weapons (“bows”). They were saying wrong things (“lies”) and not saying right things (“they are not valiant for the truth”). People could no longer trust the words of those closest to them, like their “neighbor” or even their “brother” because “every brother” and “every neighbor” would “utterly supplant” and “walk with slanderers” (v. 4). Since lying was certainly not something that should come naturally to God’s people, we are told they “*taught* their tongue to speak lies” (v. 5).

**Prayer Emphasis: Note** verse 7 clearly reveals that God would “deal with” His sinning people in order to “refine them and try them” and verse 8 states that these self-trained liars were regularly found to have one thing coming from their “mouth” while having something entirely different “in his heart.”

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| **Day 16: Jeremiah 9:12-26** |

*“‘But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight.’” (Jeremiah 9:24)*

***Three Pronouncements***

God had Jeremiah deliver three important pronouncements to His people. The first pronouncement (vs. 17-21) told the women to prepare for a severe, extended time of mourning. The fact that God told them to “teach your daughters wailing” (v. 20) is a clear indication that this time of grieving and mourning would be passed on to the next generation. Since the Babylonian captivity was for 70 years, we can clearly see why God was preparing His people for a long time of sorrow and grief. In the second pronouncement (v. 22), God predicted the casualties resulting from the Babylonian invasion would be so many that “the carcasses of men (would) fall as refuse on the open field…and no one would gather them.” The third pronouncement (vs. 23-24) found some special instructions for “the wise man,” “the mighty man,” and “the rich man” who chose to “glory” in their “wisdom,” “might,” or “riches.” They were clearly advised to only “glory” in one thing, that being that they knew God. In other words, the only thing they were to focus on was the fact that they had a right relationship with God! Once again, the Hebrew word that is translated “knows” in verse 24 is the word that implies a personal, intimate kind of “knowing.” (See Jeremiah 1:5 and the Day One devotional.)

**Prayer Emphasis: Believe** that God “delights” to show His “lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness” to us (v. 24). **Thank** God for your salvation and the personal relationship you have with Him today!

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| **Day 17: Jeremiah 10:1-16** |

*“Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.” (Jeremiah 10:1)*

***“A Message to All”***

The first 16 verses of Jeremiah 10 are parenthetical. Before providing more details on the announced exile, Jeremiah wanted to spend some time talking about the God who was going to allow this judgment to come upon His people. Our focus verse indicates that this message was to be delivered to the “house of Israel” (v. 1), so this was not a message to the people of Judah only. While in captivity, God clearly wanted His people to “not learn of the way of the Gentiles” (v. 2). As a young child, I heard many visiting preachers use the words of Jeremiah 10:3-4 to describe a Christmas tree and to insinuate they were idols. However, what God was telling Jeremiah to warn the people about here was idols. Idols were lifeless, and therefore, powerless. They could not “speak” and had to “be carried” because they could not “go by themselves” (v. 5). In that same verse, God told His people they were not to “be afraid” of idols by reminding them that, “they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good.” But there is another “message to all” found in today’s Scripture reading. Verse 11 is the only verse in Jeremiah that is not written in Hebrew. It is actually written in Aramaic instead. Aramaic was the language of the land into which God’s people were to be exiled. As such, God wanted His people to deliver a clear message to their captors, and even told them how to do it in their own language!

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Ask** yourself, “How clearly am I communicating God’s message to the people in my world?” **Find** ways to mention God in your conversations with others and **speak** of Him often!

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| **Day 18: Jeremiah 10:17-25** |

*“‘Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitants of the fortress!’ For thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will throw out at this time the inhabitants of the land…’” (Jeremiah 10:17-18a)*

***A Swift and Sudden Departure***

After a brief discussion of lifeless and powerless idols, Jeremiah returned his attention and message to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the pending captivity of God’s people. The people were told to “gather up (their) wares” (v. 17) in preparation for their departure from the land. In fact, God described the sudden departure of His people from their homeland by saying, “I will *throw out* at this time the inhabitants of the land, and will distress them” (v. 18). The Hebrew word that is translated “throw out” here in the NKJV and other translations, is translated “sling out” in several others because this is the word that was actually used to describe what David did when he launched a stone from his sling and struck Goliath! This choice of words helps us better understand how sudden and fast this action was going to seem to God’s people. A major reason for the calamity that was to soon come upon God’s people was that “the shepherds” that God had called to lead His people had “become dull-hearted” and had not “sought the LORD” (v. 21). That same verse goes on to explain that, for those reasons, the spiritual leaders could “not prosper” and their flocks would “be scattered.” The devastation that would be brought upon God’s people by the enemy from the “north country” would leave “the cities of Judah desolate” (v. 22).

**Prayer Emphasis: Believe** God only disciplines His people when that is the only way He can get their attention. **Refuse** to become “dull-hearted” by maintaining a close, personal relationship with God.

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| **Day 19: Jeremiah 11:1-23** |

*“And the LORD said to me, ‘A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.’” (Jeremiah 11:9)*

***“Covenant…Conspiracy…Calamity”***

There are three key words to be noted in Jeremiah 11. The first is the word *covenant* (vs. 2, 3, 6, and 8). Much of what we read about in Jeremiah is left undated. However, the four references to “this covenant” in Jeremiah 11:1-8 lead many to believe that this message was delivered shortly after King Josiah’s discovery of the covenant in the temple and his attempts to reintroduce God’s people to the covenant. If that is the case, then that would mean Jeremiah had been preaching to God’s people about the coming judgment for about six years. A second key word in this chapter is the word *conspiracy* (v. 9). This conspiracy was wide-spread. Verse 9 states it was “found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” This “conspiracy” was a deliberate decision on the part of the people to turn “back to the iniquities of their forefathers” and to go “after other gods to serve them” (v. 10). Just as it is today, so it was in the days of Jeremiah and the rebellious people of Judah. Misery loved company! It wasn’t enough that a person wanted to disobey God’s covenant, they also wanted to take someone with them – to have some company along the way. No one wants to be alone in their rebellion – their dislike or hatred for others or their abandonment of faithful attendance – they want to enlist others to go along with them. A third key word is the word *calamity* (v. 11). There was to be a heavy price to pay for such rebellion and God ultimately “pronounced doom” upon His people (v. 17).

**Prayer Emphasis: Choose** to *inspire* others to pursue good and **refuse** to *conspire* with others who want to abandon righteousness and adopt rebelliousness. **Live** what you know to be true from God and His word!

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| **Day 20: Jeremiah 12:1-17** |

*“…‘You are near in their mouth but far from their mind.’” (Jeremiah 12:2b)*

***Lip Service!***

Yesterday we saw that a part of the conspiracy against God was to worship “other gods” (v. 10). We also read where God’s people had “set up altars” to Baal on every street in the city (v. 13)! Seeing these actions led Jeremiah to ask God a few questions. In 12:1 he asked, “Why does the way of the wicked prosper?” and “Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?” In verse 2, Jeremiah told the people that God was “near in their mouth, but far from their mind.” This was a common observance that was also witnessed by Isaiah and Ezekiel. God told Isaiah, “these people draw near with their *mouths* and honor Me with their *lips,* but have removed their *hearts* far from Me” (Isaiah 29:13). In Ezekiel 33:31, God said of His people, “with their *mouth* they show much love, but their *hearts* pursue their own gain.” In each case, God’s sinning people still “talked the talk” without “walking the walk.” God often received such “lip-service” in Bible times and I am sure He still receives it from His people today. However, such was obviously not the case with Jeremiah. He said to God, “But You, O LORD, *know* me; You have seen me, and You have tested my heart toward You” (v. 3). Once again, the word that is translated “know” here is that word that describes a very intimate and personal relationship (see Genesis 4:1).

**Prayer Emphasis:** When we **compare** what we *say* with what we *do*, do we pass the test? Is God pleased with what and who we are for Him? **Commit** to being a genuine and faithful servant today. A quick look at Matthew 15:8 will reveal that Jesus accused the Pharisees of this same kind of hypocritical speaking.

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| **Day 21: Jeremiah 13:1-14** |

*“Thus the LORD said to me: ‘Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist’…So I got a sash according to the word of the LORD, and put it around my waist.” (Jeremiah 13:1-2)*

***“The Sash”***

It doesn’t take much to realize that the “sash” mentioned in today’s Scripture reading is to be the focus of the message God was delivering to Jeremiah so he could, in turn, deliver it to the people. Your translation may refer to this “sash” as a “girdle,” “belt,” “loincloth,” “waistband,” or even “underwear,” but all of these words represent a strip of cloth that was to be wrapped around the body and worn under the outer garment. In verse 1, we are specifically told Jeremiah was to get “a *linen* sash.” Linen was a material worn by the priests. Since Exodus 19:6 records that God told His people, “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” then we get an idea that this “linen sash” was to represent Israel’s entire walk and work as a holy, set-apart people for God. As such, they were to be God’s witnesses! Perhaps there is no greater witness to the world around us than our personal obedience to God and His word. Notice some of the specific language found in the first verses of today’s reading. In verse 1, God said “go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist.” In verse 2 Jeremiah said, “So I got a sash…and put it around my waist.” In verse 4, God told Jeremiah to “go to the Euphrates and hide (the sash) there in a hole in the rock.” Verse 5 finds Jeremiah saying, “So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.” In verses 6-7, God instructed Jeremiah to return to the Euphrates and “take from there the sash,” so Jeremiah said, “then I went…and I took the sash.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that Jeremiah’s obedience was both prompt and personal. **Live** “according to the word” (v. 2) and **watch** the witness that your own prompt and personal obedience to God can have on the world around you!

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| **Day 22: Jeremiah 13:15-27** |

*“‘Give glory to the LORD your God before He causes darkness…dense darkness.’” (Jeremiah 13:16)*

***“Dense Darkness”***

Our focus verse speaks of darkness twice. As the sin and rebellion of God’s people was growing more intense, so was the spiritual darkness in which they were walking. God emphasizes that point to us by describing the darkness as a “dense darkness” (v. 16). The Hebrew word that is translated “darkness” in our focus verse is a word that does not describe the absence of light, but rather, the obstruction of light. It is a word not found in the Bible until we come to Exodus 10, where we are told that, when God pronounced the plague of locusts upon Egypt, He said the locust would be, “*over* all the land of Egypt” until they “*covered* the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened” (Exodus 10:14-15). The sun was not taken away from the Egyptians but its light was “darkened” by the dark clouds of locusts that hovered over that sinful nation. This word is not found in the Bible again until we get to the Book of Job where it is used to describe how sickness had darkened Job’s view of life (Job 3:9) and then once more where it is used to describe how sin can darken the lives of people (Job 18:6). Such was the case here with the people to whom Jeremiah was called to preach. Here, in the only time this word is found in his writings, Jeremiah told the people they would still be “looking for (expecting) light” only to find the dark cloud of their sin had brought them “dense *darkness*” (v. 16).

**Prayer Emphasis: Read** Matthew 6:23 and see where Jesus described the spiritual darkness of the Jewish people in His day as a “great…darkness.” **Refuse** to allow anything to cloud your personal walk with God!

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| **Day 23: Jeremiah 14:1-22** |

*“The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts.” (Jeremiah 14:1)*

***“The Droughts”***

Yesterday we saw where the sins of God’s people were causing them to walk in *darkness*. Today we will read about how their sin also caused them to walk in *drought*. Anyone who knows anything about growing things knows that light and water are essential. God’s people, because of their own selfish choices, were being deprived of what they needed to continue growing as a nation. What cruel discipline and often discouragement could *not* do in Egypt, darkness and drought was now accomplishing in the Promised Land! Notice that, just as God’s people were still “looking for (expecting, anticipating) light” from God despite their sinful actions (13:16), they were also still expecting God to bless them with rain. We are told they “went to the cisterns” as if there was no problem but they “found no water” and “returned with their vessels empty” (14:3). This attitude reveals how little *attention* God’s people paid *to* the Law and how little *retention* they had *of* the Law! God clearly told His people that, if they chose to respect and obey His laws, He would “give (them) the rain for (their) land in its season.” In that same conversation God also warned them that, if they did not respect and obey His laws, He would “shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce” (Deuteronomy 11:14-17). Verse 10 of today’s reading reveals that Israel’s *heart* problems were exhibited in their *feet*. God said, “they have loved to wander; they have not restrained their feet.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Examine** your own walk today and see if anything in your heart is causing problems in your feet. We should do what Jeremiah urged the people of his day to do – to **confess** “our backslidings are many, we have sinned against You” (v. 7).

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| **Day 24: Jeremiah 15:1-21** |

*“…‘she has been ashamed and confounded…’” (Jeremiah 15:9)*

***“Ashamed and Confounded”***

In chapter 14, we read that after God sent “droughts” upon His people, “they were ashamed and confounded” (14:1, 3). In today’s chapter we are told that God, in order to discipline and correct His erring people, sent “four forms of destruction” upon them in order to “hand them over to trouble” (15:3-4). This “destruction,” just like the “droughts” before it, was to once again bring God’s people to a place where they were “ashamed and confounded” (v. 9). Whether your translation of the Bible reads, “disgraced and humiliated,” “ashamed and humiliated,” “shamed and disgraced,” or “ashamed and confounded,” as it does here in the NKJV, none of those phrases would describe the kind of place where God’s chosen people would desire to be! The word that is translated “ashamed” here is first found in Genesis 2:25 where Adam and Eve were described as being “naked” yet “not *ashamed*.” They were not “ashamed” in the Garden because of their innocence. However, these many years later, Israel’s *innocence* had been replaced by *iniquity,* and they stood now, “ashamed and confounded” before God because of their sin and rebellion. Earlier in her history, Israel had sung, “let me *not* be ashamed” (Psalm 25:2, 20) and “let me *never* be ashamed” (Psalm 31:1). Those were words which should have been taken more to heart!

**Prayer Emphasis: Avoid** spiritual *calamity* by practicing spiritual *commitment*. **Live** with a song in your heart and **keep** it there by allowing God’s Word to be active in your life!

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| **Day 25: Jeremiah 16:1-21** |

*“The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.’” (Jeremiah 16:1-2)*

***Three Restrictions***

In the first part of today’s chapter, we find God placing at least three restrictions on the personal life of His prophet. *The first restriction prohibited Jeremiah from* *marriage*. As you read in our focus verses, Jeremiah was told to “not take a wife” or to “have sons and daughters” at that time. Marriage and family was a concept that was highly valued to an Israelite, and children were considered to be one of the greatest blessings that God could possibly bestow on a person. Because of the coming judgment upon Israel and Judah, many people, including children would “die gruesome deaths” (v. 4). That same verse stated that so many people would die that there would not be time for them to “be lamented” or for them to even “be buried,” leaving dead bodies to lay around “like refuse” that would soon become “meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth.” *The second restriction prohibited Jeremiah from mourning.*  God said to Jeremiah, “Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan” the dead (v. 5). Funeral meals were served in Jewish society “to comfort” and offer “the cup of consolation” to those who had lost loved ones (v. 7). God asked Jeremiah to avoid such gatherings in order to show that there would be no comfort for the people after the coming invasion and devastation. *The third restriction prohibited Jeremiah from merriment.* He was told to “not go into the house of feasting” (v. 8). By obeying this command, Jeremiah was clearly telling his fellow Israelites that sorrowful times were coming.

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that, much like God’s people during the time of Jeremiah, we are living in the last days and that God has clearly told us so! **React** accordingly and **share** the truth of Christ and salvation to those who desperately need to hear and heed it!

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| **Day 26: Jeremiah 17:1-13** |

*“‘Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.’” (Jeremiah 17:7)*

***The “Blessed” Person***

In Jeremiah’s day, God’s people were so engrossed in sin that it was as if their sin was “engraved on the tablet of their heart” with “a pen of iron” or “with the point of a diamond” (v. 1). To help get their attention, God said He would “give as plunder (their) wealth” and “all (their) treasures” (v. 3). God went on to say to His sinning people: “I will cause you to serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which shall burn forever” (v. 4). He then pronounced curses upon the person “who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength.” To do so was representative of the fact that their heart had departed “from the LORD” (v. 5). However, God had an entirely different message for those who chose to place their trust in Him. He said, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD” (v. 7). Like the person described in Psalm 1:3, the person who placed their hope and trust in God would “be like a tree planted by the waters” that would “be green” and “fruitful.” That person would “not be anxious” nor “cease from yielding fruit” (v. 8). There may not be a place in the Bible where the ways of those who trust in man and those who trust in God are more clearly compared (vs. 5-8).

**Prayer Emphasis: Examine** your own heart today to see what is written there. **Fill** your heart with God’s word and **enjoy** the difference that a right relationship with God can make in your life.

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| **Day 27: Jeremiah 17:14-27** |

*“Indeed they say to me, ‘Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!’” (Jeremiah 17:15)*

***The Grace and Mercy of God***

It seems that Jeremiah and the people of Judah and Jerusalem were tired. Jeremiah was tired *from* his preaching and the people were tired *of* his preaching! They basically said to Jeremiah, “If God is going to bring all of this against us, then let it come now!” In other words, they were telling Jeremiah they were tired of hearing about the coming judgment of God and were ready to see if it was indeed coming. In turn, Jeremiah prayed to God as follows: “Bring on them the day of doom, and destroy them with double destruction” (v. 18). But, instead of sending the requested “double destruction,” God basically commanded Jeremiah to double-up on his preaching. God told His preacher to, “Go and stand in the gate…by which the kings of Judah come in and…go out” (v. 19). We are not told exactly which of the gates to the city this was, but it might have been “the East Gate” where Ezekiel said that “the princes of the people” gathered (Ezekiel 11:1). But verse 19 did not find God commanding Jeremiah to preach only in this one gate but “in all the gates of Jerusalem.” In all of the gates Jeremiah was to preach, “Hear the word of the LORD” to “all the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (v. 20) as they entered through the gates of the city. Though Jeremiah was ready to give up on the people – God was ready to reach out to them one more time!

**Prayer Emphasis: Thank** God for His wonderful grace and mercy today. **Remember** that grace means that we get what we do not deserve and mercy means we do not get what we do deserve! **Read** 2 Peter 3:9 and be reminded that God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

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| **Day 28: Jeremiah 18:1-23** |

*“‘Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.’” (Jeremiah 18:2)*

***“The Potter’s House”***

Jeremiah 18 is probably one of the best-known chapters in this book, if not in the entire Bible. Verse 1 of today’s reading speaks of “the word which came *to* Jeremiah *from* the LORD.” That word directed Jeremiah to leave where he was and to “go down to the potter’s house” because it was “there” that God would “cause him to hear (His) words” (v. 2). It was immediately after receiving this command that Jeremiah said, “Then I went down to the potter’s house” where he saw the potter “making something at the wheel” (v. 3). As Jeremiah watched, “the vessel” that the potter “made of clay was marred (ruined) in the hand of the potter.” As the prophet continued to watch, he observed as the potter “made it again into another vessel” (v. 4). Before Jeremiah ever went down to the potter’s house, God had told him that, if he would do so, then He would cause him “to hear” His words. Have you ever wondered what Jeremiah might have missed if he had chosen *not* to obey God’s directive to visit the potter? Or, have you ever wondered how different things might have been if the prophet had decided to go on his own time and according to his own schedule rather than going when God told him to go? God clearly told Jeremiah that He wanted him to announce to the “house of Israel” that they were in His hands just as surely as the clay was “in the potter’s hand” (v. 6) and that, if they repented of their sinful ways He could make them whole again and restore their usefulness.

**Prayer Emphasis: Surrender** to God’s will for your life and **allow** Him to make you what He wants you to be for His glory. **Review** and **obey** God’s command found in verse 11: “**Return** now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.”

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| **Day 29: Jeremiah 19:1-15** |

*“‘And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you.’” (Jeremiah 19:2)*

***“The Potsherd Gate”***

Most translations call the gate to which Jeremiah was directed to go in our focus verse “the Potsherd Gate” (v. 2). Some translations refer to it as the “East Gate.” Since this gate was on the eastern side of Jerusalem, it was probably clearly identifiable by both names. One common language translation refers to this gate as “the gate called broken pots” while another reads, “the gate where the broken pieces of pottery are.” A potsherd was simply a broken piece of ceramic material, or pottery. When such an item became broken, valueless, and unusable, it was thrown out of the city via this particular gate. It was with such a piece of broken pottery that Job scraped his painful sores “while he sat in the midst of the ashes” (Job 2:8). It doesn’t take much to understand that this gate was the gate that led the inhabitants of Jerusalem to their “city dump.” Jeremiah was directed by God to “go and get a potters earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests” (v. 1) to this gate with him. There he was to deliver a message to the leaders of the city declaring that God would make them like those broken pieces of pottery if they did not repent and return to Him. It was in one of my earliest readings of the Bible that I noticed that God sent Jeremiah to this gate with a clay pot and a promise to give him a message once he arrived there. Note the closing words of God’s command in our focus verse: “Proclaim there the words that *I will* tell you.” In other words, “Go *now* and I will tell you what to say *when you get there*!”

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to demand explanations from God. **Act** on what He says and **believe** He will reveal the next step to you after you have fully obeyed the first.

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| **Day 30: Jeremiah 20:1-18** |

*“Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin…by the house of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 20:2)*

***“Pashhur”***

There are at least five different men named Pashhur in the Old Testament and three of them are found in the Book of Jeremiah, with two of them being mentioned very closely together. For the record, this Pashhur is not the same man mentioned in Jeremiah 21:1. The Hebrew name “Pashhur” means “freedom,” but freedom was not what this man brought to Jeremiah! We are told that, after hearing Jeremiah’s message at the Potsherd Gate, “Pashhur struck Jeremiah…and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin” (v. 2). Earlier we read where some of the people decided to “devise plans against Jeremiah,” to “attack him with the tongue,” and to “not give heed to any of his words” (18:18), but that plan appeared to only involve a slander campaign and a boycott of any activities recommended by Jeremiah. This action of Pashhur represents the first of several personal attacks on Jeremiah that we will read about in his prophecy. The word that is translated “struck” in verse 2 in the NKJV is translated “had Jeremiah the prophet beaten” in the NIV. Verses 3-4 reveal that “on the next day” when they “brought Jeremiah out of the stocks,” he immediately returned to his preaching!

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to allow opposition to silence your message for Christ. **Compare** this story to that of the apostles in Acts 5:17-29 and you will see that very little had changed from Jeremiah’s day to the days of the apostles and the early church.

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| **Day 31: Jeremiah 21:1-14** |

*“The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur, the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah…” (Jeremiah 21:1)*

***Some Very Personal Messages – “Zedekiah”***

As we read in yesterday’s Scripture, and as I mentioned in that devotional, the attacks against Jeremiah had become violent and personal. As such, God directed Jeremiah to deliver some very personal messages to some specific people. The first of those people was King Zedekiah. When we get to chapter 23 of Jeremiah, we will see several mentions of “the shepherds” (23:1-2). These “shepherds” were not priests or prophets, as some might imagine, but kings. Those who served as kings over God’s people were given more than *civil* responsibilities. They also were given *spiritual* responsibilities. The mention of several kings by name will begin to make our dating of the events recorded in Jeremiah much simpler. Because of the names of the various kings mentioned in this and the next few chapters, we know that the events described in this section of the prophecy had to occur sometime between 609 BC and 586 BC. King Zedekiah had sent messengers to Jeremiah asking him to “please inquire of the LORD” asking Him to “deal with (them) according to all His wonderful works” so that their enemies might simply abandon their attack on Jerusalem and “go away” (v. 2). God’s personal message back to Zedekiah can be stated no more clearly than it is in the word. God responded: “I Myself will fight against you,” “I will strike the inhabitants of this city,” and “I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah…into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (vs. 5-7).

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God to make His word fresh and personal to you. **Realize** that we, like the people in Jeremiah’s day, have two choices: “the way of life” and “the way of death” (v. 8). **Choose** wisely!

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| **Day 32: Jeremiah 22:1-17** |

*“Thus says the LORD: ‘Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word… Execute judgment and righteousness…’” (Jeremiah 22:1 & 3)*

***More Personal Messages – “Shallum” and “Jehoiakim”***

Shallum was another name for King Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah. The mention of this king allowed us to set the timing of the events recorded in chapters 21-23 to be between 609 BC and 586 BC. You can read more about the life and reign of Jehoahaz in 2 Kings 23:31-34. His story is brief because his reign was brief. He “reigned three months in Jerusalem” (2 Kings 23:31) before an attacking “Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there” (2 Kings 23:34). Jeremiah had clearly prophesied of those events when he said of Jehoahaz, “He shall not return here anymore, but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive” (vs. 11-12). Verses 13-17 of today’s reading contain a personal message to King Jehoiakim. This covetous, selfish king used his people to build a palace for himself, forcing them to serve “without wages” (v. 13). God had Jeremiah say to this king, “Your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness” (v. 17). In tomorrow’s verses we will see where God had Jeremiah to prophesy to this evil king that, upon his death, Jehoiakim would “be buried with the burial of a donkey, dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (v. 19).

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that God sees our every action and is well aware of the motivations of our hearts. **Live** every day – every moment of every day – with the full awareness that God is watching!

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| **Day 33: Jeremiah 22:18-30** |

*“‘Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol – a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know?’” (Jeremiah 22:28)*

***Another Personal – “Jehoiachin”***

Jehoiachin was a man with three names. Beside Jehoachin, he was also known as Jeconiah, and then sometimes just Coniah. According to 2 Chronicles 36:9, this man, like the man who was two kings before him, had a very short reign. In the aforementioned verse we are told that this man “reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days” and that “he did evil in the sight of the LORD.” God’s message to Jehoiachin was pointed and plain. Of this evil king God said, if he “were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck (him) off” (v. 24). The signet ring was used to impress a writer’s signature on the seal of documents to authenticate its contents. What God basically told Jehoiachin was that he was not making the kind of impression on the world around him that would authenticate that he was truly His child and that He would remove him if he did not repent. God went on to tell Jehoiachin, “I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear – the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans” (v. 25). God wanted Jehoiachin’s fate to be clear. He then said, “So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die” (v. 26). A message simply cannot get more personal or powerful than that!

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** God to give you the grace to make the kind of *impression* that is an *expression* of Him and one that will authenticate *His* message to them through *your* personal life and witness. **Strive** to be the kind of “vessel” in which God can have “pleasure” (v. 28).

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| **Day 34: Jeremiah 23:1-20** |

*“‘Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” (Jeremiah 23:1)*

***“The Shepherds”***

Most often when we read about “shepherds” in the Bible, we think of actual, literal shepherds who tended flocks of literal sheep, or we think about spiritual leaders who tended the flock of God. However, the two “the shepherds” statements found in verses 1-2 of today’s reading, and the “shepherds” statement found in verse 4, all refer to political leaders. According to 2 Samuel 5:2, when David was made king, the people encouraged him in his calling, saying, “The LORD said to you, ‘You shall *shepherd* My people Israel, *and* be a *ruler* over Israel.’” God’s word is clear here that David was not only called and anointed to be a *sovereign*, but also a *shepherd*. In 1 Chronicles 17:6, God refers to “the judges (leaders) of Israel” and said that He had “commanded (them) to *shepherd* (His) people.” During the reign of Ahab, perhaps the most notoriously evil king ever in the history of Israel, God sent a message through one of His prophets saying, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no *shepherd*” (2 Chronicles 18:16). In the New Testament, Paul wrote about “governing authorities” that were “appointed by God” (Romans 13:1). He went on to say that such civil, political leaders were to not be “a terror to good works, but to evil” (Romans 13:3). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit led Paul to refer to those who served in these civil, governmental, political positions as “God’s minister” (Romans 13:4). The word used there to describe these political leaders is the same word that is used to describe the “ministers” and “deacons” in the church!

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** for our political leaders, asking God to touch their hearts and minds for good and godliness! **Read** 1Timothy 2:1-2 and **obey** its command to pray “for kings and all who are in authority.”

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| **Day 35: Jeremiah 23:21-40** |

*“‘Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,’ says the LORD, ‘who steal My words every one from his neighbor.’” (Jeremiah 23:30)*

***“The Prophets”***

After God had Jeremiah speak a stern message of warning against the political leaders of his day, He then led His preacher to speak a stern message to the spiritual leaders who dwelt among His people. You should be able to find the words, “these prophets,” “the prophets,” or “the prophet” around six times in today’s Bible reading. Most often, these spiritual leaders (so-called) are referred to as “the prophets” (vs. 26, 30, and 31). “These prophets” to whom God was referring were men He had “not sent” and to whom He had “not spoken,” but “yet they prophesied” (v. 21). God went on to say that, “If they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings” (v. 22). God said that “the prophets” would “prophesy lies” (vs. 25 and 26) rather than seek a true message from Him. In verse 29, God asked, “Is not My word like a fire…and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?” In the vernacular of our day that question would read something like, “Won’t My word get the job done?” Because “the prophets” were only preaching messages that the people wanted to hear, God said, “Behold, I am against the prophets…who use their tongues” and say “He says” when they are speaking messages that I have not spoken to them (v. 31). They claimed that their messages were “The oracle (word or prophecy) of the LORD!” when they were everything but that (v. 34).

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** for pastors who preach the word of God! **Ask** God to use His preached word “like a fire” to melt the hearts of the rebellious and “like a hammer” to build the faith of His followers!

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| **Day 36: Jeremiah 24:1-10** |

*“The LORD showed me…two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD…” (Jeremiah 24:1)*

***“Two Baskets of Figs”***

In Deuteronomy 26, God spoke to His people, instructing them to bring “some of the first of all the produce of the ground” and offer it to Him. He told them to “put it in a basket” and give the offering to the priest who would “take the basket out of (their) hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 26:1-4). I mentioned that to you because there are two opinions about what the phrase, “the LORD showed me” in Jeremiah 24:1 actually means. Some think that the word “showed” in our focus verse is a definite indication that Jeremiah was receiving a vision from the LORD and that God had a message for His people in that vision. Others think Jeremiah was literally speaking of “two baskets of figs” that had been brought to the LORD as an offering of the first produce of the land and that God was now pointing them out to him. In either case, the “baskets of figs” became representative of the hearts of God’s people. In Malachi 1:6-9, God said one of the indications that His people had lost their “honor” and “reverence” for Him was they offered “defiled food on (His) altar.” In Jeremiah’s message on these “two baskets of figs” we see “one basket had very good figs, like the figs that are *first ripe;* and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten” because “they were so bad” (vs. 1-2). When you carefully read the remainder of this chapter, you will see that the “good figs” represented the hearts of those who had remained faithful to God while the “bad figs” represented those who had abandoned Him.

**Prayer Emphasis: Ask** yourself, “Which basket of figs best reflects the state of my heart?”

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| **Day 37: Jeremiah 25:1-14** |

*“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jeremiah 25:11)*

***Why Seventy Years?***

There are several interesting things about the information provided in today’s Bible reading. One of them is the fact that God referred to “Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon” as “My servant” (v. 9). In that same verse, God said He would “bring” Nebuchadnezzar and his allies “against” the land of His own people and allow them to “utterly destroy them.” God then said that His own people would be forced to “serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (v. 11). Then, after the “seventy years (were) completed,” God said He would then “punish the king of Babylon” (v. 12). The question is often asked, “Why seventy years?” In Leviticus 25:3-4, God clearly told His people: “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land…you shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.” God followed that simple command with a solemn warning that He would “scatter” His people “among the nations” and that their “land (would) be desolate and (their) cities waste” so that the land could “enjoy its sabbaths” while His people dwelt in their “enemies land.” This forced series of Sabbath years would be “for the time” the land “did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it” (Leviticus 26:33-35). Second Chronicles 36:20-21 clearly explains that the seventy years in Babylon would “fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths…to fulfill seventy years.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to ever take God’s word lightly or to think God does not mean exactly what He says. The “seventy years” in Babylon were a direct fulfillment of God’s earlier warning to His people!

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| **Day 38: Jeremiah 25:15-38** |

*“For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: ‘Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.’” (Jeremiah 25:15)*

***The “Wine Cup of Fury”***

The “wine cup of fury” referenced in our focus verse is the solemn message of pending doom that Jeremiah had been trying to deliver to His people. God now clearly commissions Jeremiah to take this message to “all the nations” in order that they might “drink it” (v. 15). Jeremiah obediently “took the cup from the LORD’s hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent” him (v. 17). As Jeremiah begins to list those “nations” by name, we cannot help but notice this message of judgment was first to be delivered to “Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes” (v. 18). In the New Testament, Peter reminds us that “judgment” will “begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17). In other words, God disciplines His own household first. Such was to be the case with the people in Jeremiah’s time. Verses 19-26 then lists the names of some of the “nations” that were to suffer the wrath of the LORD’s “wine cup of fury.” The list begins with “Egypt” (v. 19) and continues through various kings and nations until it ends with “the king of Sheshach” (v. 26) who would experience God’s wrath “after” the other nations (v. 26). Most scholars agree this reference to “the king of Sheshach” is a veiled reference to none other than the king of Babylon with “Sheshach” basically being a cryptogram for “Babylon.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** The code used in Jeremiah’s message was called an “atbash.” It used the letters from the last part of the Hebrew alphabet to replace the letters from the first part. As such “a” would be changed to “z” and “b” to “y.” Using this code, in Hebrew, “Sheshach” spelled out “Babylon”!

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| **Day 39: Jeremiah 26:1-24** |

*“‘…truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.’” (Jeremiah 26:15)*

***“Speak”***

Beginning at today’s chapter, Jeremiah starts to clearly describe the response of the people to his message. As you will see, both the *man* and his *message* were utterly rejected. God told Jeremiah to “stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all” the people who “come to worship” (v. 2). In that same verse God told Jeremiah that, when he delivered God’s message, he was not to “diminish a word.” If the people would only “listen and turn from (their) evil way,” God would be willing to “relent concerning the calamity” which He had planned to “bring on them because of the evil of their doings” (v. 3). Jeremiah was reminded to “say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD’” (v. 4). God wanted the people to know that this message was coming from Him and not from Jeremiah! But, instead of *repenting*, the people *rebelled* against Jeremiah, saying to him, “You will surely die” (v. 8). Verse 11 indicates that the religious leaders (“the priests and the prophets”) went to the civil leaders saying, “This man deserves to die!” In the face of this grave threat Jeremiah simply continued with his message, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard. Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you” (vs. 12-13). It was clear that Jeremiah would rather die, and be put out of commission, rather than to not obey his commission from God! In response to the threats of the people, Jeremiah said, “As for me, here I am…do with me as seems good and proper to you” (v. 14).

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to “diminish” (“omit,” “hold back,” or “leave out”) any part of God’s message! **Speak** the message to someone that you encounter today! **Share** the wealth with those around you!

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| **Day 40: Jeremiah 27:1-22** |

*“‘Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, ‘You shall not serve the king of Babylon.’’” (Jeremiah 27:9)*

***A Very Sad “Association”***

Although today’s Bible reading mentions “the *beginning* of the reign of Jehoiakim” (v. 1), Jerusalem and Judah are now very near the *end* of their existence as they knew it. Four times in today’s chapter God says to His people, “Do not listen” (vs. 9, 14, 16, and 17) to the words of their prophets who refused to accept God’s message of the pending punishment that was very soon to come upon His people. Four times God followed up His warning against those prophets by saying, “They prophesy a lie” to you, and they even do it “in My name” (vs. 14-15). One of the lies that these prophets were speaking was, “You shall not serve the king of Babylon” (v. 14). These same so-called prophets were also giving false assurance to the people, stating that things were only going to get better! That is exactly what they were trying to do when they falsely prophesied to the people, saying, “The vessels of the LORD’s house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon” (v. 16). The morals and messages of these prophets had sunk to such a low estate that God ultimately lumped them into a group that included, “diviners…dreamers…soothsayers” and “sorcerers” (v. 9).

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** for all of God’s preachers today and **ask** God to give them the courage to speak His word in its entirety! Thank you for reading with us and do not hesitate to contact us at 850-562-8069 or at gary@seminolebc.com if we can minister to you in any way!