

The Book Of

JEREMIAH



BIBLE STUDY COURSE BY
RUSTY RUTHERFORD

JEREMIAH WARNS JUDAH GOD WILL NOT TOLERATE THEIR EVIL ANY LONGER

The storm of the Lord will come with his anger.

Like a windstorm, it will swirl down
on the heads of the wicked.

The anger of the Lord will not turn back
until he has done everything he intends to do.

In the last days you will see this clearly. **Jeremiah 23:19-20**

Written by
Richard “Rusty” David Rutherford

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Author's Preface



Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible and one of my favorites after Isaiah. It was also the favorite of my mentor, Dr. Jim De Loach. He reminded us constantly that the greatest attribute of God was his ~~checced~~, *his loving kindness*, as the King James Version puts it. But he also reminded us that God is holy and demands that his people live in holiness.

Jeremiah reflects this. Jeremiah preached what God wanted him to say. We can respect him as having unrelenting faithfulness to God no matter what situation he was placed in. Jeremiah had perhaps the most difficult life of all the prophets.

He preached that God was going to allow the Babylonians to destroy the city of Jerusalem and its temple. No one wanted to hear that. Jeremiah was constantly opposed by the false prophets that said a loving God would never destroy his city, his temple, and his people by sending them into the pagan land of Babylon, a city founded by Nimrod. **Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9**

Yet what Jeremiah understood more than them was that God demanded holiness from his people. This meant not acknowledging false gods and living consistent with God's law.

God had placed his holy place in his pleasant **Jeremiah 3:19** and good land **Exodus 3:8** flowing with milk and honey, giving them title to it. But he did not promise them

permanent occupation of the land unless they lived consistent with his covenantal principals.

God made a covenant with his people through Moses at Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments. Three times the people said: We will do all the Lord has said and this covenant was sealed in the blood Moses sprinkled on the people. **Exodus 24:3-8**

In this covenant the people promised that they would only worship the Lord their God. Yet the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam began to worship two Golden Calf idols, one at Bethel and one at Dan. Then King Ahab's wife Jezebel brought in Baal and Asherah. God destroyed this kingdom using the Assyrians.

In 701 BC the Assyrians invaded the Southern Kingdom of Judah and destroyed their 46 fortified cities. But the Judeans had also turned to worship Baal and Asherah. Why did the Judeans think God would tolerate this behavior? Why did God save the Jerusalem temple.

Jeremiah told them bluntly if the Judeans did not stop this practice, he would destroy them as he did the Assyrians. Good King Josiah who reigned during Jeremiah's boyhood and early prophethood believed this. But none of Josiah's three sons who followed him as kings of Judah did. They were evil and led the nation into exile in Babylon.

Despite his lack of support by these three kings, Jeremiah continued to preach God's word.

Introduction

Kings of Babylon

Nebuchadnezzar 605-562 BC

Cyrus 539-530 BC

Kings of Judah

Josiah 640-609 BC

Jehoahaz 609 BC

Jehoiakim 609-598 BC

Jehoiakin 598-597 BC

Zedekiah 597-586 BC

Jeremiah ministered to God's people for almost 40 years from 626-587 BC, during the reigns of five kings in Judah, beginning in 627 BC while King Josiah was reigning. During this same time, Daniel was ministering in Babylon 605-535 BC, as was Ezekiel 592-570 BC.

While a Jew normally became a priest at 30 years old, it seems Jeremiah was only 21 years old because God told him not to marry. **Jeremiah 16:2**. Jewish boys could marry at 20 years of age. Jeremiah also told God he was only a boy. **Jeremiah 1:6**

Jeremiah expected he would become a priest at 30 years old as his father was a priest. But like Ezekiel God called Jeremiah to become his prophet instead of being his priest. And like Ezekiel, Jeremiah had been trained as a priest and his language in his book reflects that.

He repeats words and some of his words reflect the liturgical language of the temple. His first years under good King Josiah—they were both the same age – were fruitful as the king was loyal to God, so loyal that the Book of Deuteronomy was found in the temple by Hilkiah, Josiah's High Priest, probably Jeremiah's father. **2 Kings 22:8**

Josiah attempted to reform the pagan practices of the people by tearing down pagan shrines and cleaning the temple. But the people retreated to performing their pagan practices, worshiping household idols of Baal and Asherah. Since the death of good King Hezekiah, for 57 years, the people had

two evil kings, Manasseh and Amon. God knew their hearts and chastised them through the prophet Jeremiah.

It was King Jehoiakim who became Jeremiah's greatest enemy during the 11 years of his reign from 609-597 BC. King Zedekiah reigned the next 11 years from 597-586 BC, and was not much better, but he at least talked to Jeremiah. King Jehoiakim attempted to kill Jeremiah.

When God asked Jeremiah to write down all of his prophecies and read them to the people, Jeremiah dictated his sermons to his scribe Baruch. Baruch read them in the temple. Then, at the request of the scribes, he read Jeremiah's prophecies to several of them. Then one of the scribes took the scroll to King Jehoiakim.

As the scribe was reading the scroll to the king, Jehoiakim took a pen knife and cut off several columns of the scroll and threw it into the brazier burning next to the throne. He did this until the entire scroll was consumed. Then he sent aides to kill Jeremiah and Baruch. Then God told Jeremiah to dictate another scroll to Baruch.

When Zedekiah was made a puppet king by the Babylonians without any of Jehoiakim's court officials, the temple priests, including the High Priest, and Zedekiah's new officials persecuted Jeremiah because he advocated surrendering the city to the Babylonians. In fact, Jeremiah gave the king God's offer to save the city and the temple by surrendering to the Babylonians. But Zedekiah refused to do so.

So in 586 BC, the Babylonians came and destroyed the city and the temple, deporting most of the people left. King Zedekiah attempted to escape but was caught. King Nebuchadnezzar executed all of Zedekiah's court officials and Zedekiah's sons. Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and took him in shackles to Babylon where he died.

I didn't mention Jehoiakim's young son Jehoiakin or Jeconiah who was only 21 years old. Jehoiakim died during the blockade of 598 BC, so his son took his place as king. But after Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city in 597 BC, he

took Jeconiah to Babylon together with his mother, the entire court, all the tradesmen, and all the wealthy landowners and put him in prison.

In 560 BC, the king of Babylon released King Jeconiah from prison. Jeconiah had descendants, one of whom was Zerubbabel. **1 Chronicles 3:15-19**. King Cyrus, the Persian king who conquered Babylon in 539 BC, made Zerubbabel Governor of Judah. He led the Judeans home to Jerusalem together with High Priest Joshua in 535 BC. **Ezra 2:2**. He rebuilt the temple and it was finished in 515 BC. **Ezra 3:8**

Then Zerubbabel, who the prophet Haggai thought was the Messiah, disappeared. **Haggai 2:23**. High Priest Joshua became the Governor.

In 586 BC, when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, Jeremiah was allowed to join the new Babylonian Governor, Gedaliah, a Judean Nebuchadnezzar trusted. However, Jeremiah joined a group of refugees escaping to Egypt after Gedaliah was murdered by a Judean rebel named Ishmael who had been bribed by the king of Ammon.

These rebels forced Jeremiah and Baruch to accompany them to Egypt where Jeremiah died.

Prophets contemporary with Jeremiah were Daniel, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, who was the grandson of Gedaliah. **Zephaniah 1:1**

PART I: God and Jeremiah Dialogue

When King Josiah was in the 13th year of his reign [627 BC], Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah the High Priest **2 Kings 22:8**, was called by God to be his prophet. Jeremiah was probably 21 years old and living in Anathoth, the city of priests, about three miles north of Jerusalem. He was training to be a priest and would be ordained when he was 30 years old. He was the same age as the then-current king of Judah, King Josiah.

God told Jeremiah: Before you were born, I set you apart as my prophet. Jeremiah said: Almighty Lord, I do not know how to speak for I am only a boy.

Don't say that, said God. You will go where I send you. You will say whatever I command you to say. I am with you and I will deliver you. Later on, Jeremiah would complain that God overpowered him. O Lord, you have deceived me and I was deceived. You overpowered me and won. **Jeremiah 20:7**

Then God gave Jeremiah his commission: God placed his hand on Jeremiah's mouth and said: Now I have put my words in your mouth. Today I have put you in charge of kingdoms and nations. You will uproot and tear down. You will destroy and overthrow. You will build and plant. Recall that God's angel touched Isaiah's mouth with a coal cleansing him from sin when he called him as his prophet. **Isaiah 6:6-7**

Then God gave Jeremiah his primary message for Judah. Disaster will be poured out from the north. They will attack all the walls around Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah. I will pass sentence on my people because of their wickedness. But you will be able to stand up to the whole land. I am with you and I will rescue you, says God.

PERICOPE I

The Lord Calls Jeremiah as His Prophet

1:1 These are the words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, the High Priest. **2 Kings 22:8**. He was one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ²The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah when King Josiah, son of Amon, was in his thirteenth year as king of Judah 627 BC. ³The LORD also spoke when Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king of Judah [11 years from 609-598 BC] Jehoiakin, son of Jehoiakim was king 3 months in 598-597 BC and during the 11 years that Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, was king of Judah 597-586 BC. The LORD continued to speak to Jeremiah until the people of Jerusalem were taken away into captivity in the fifth month of the year 586 BC.

Note: Not mentioned here is King Jehoahaz, another son of Josiah who was king for 3 months in 609 BC and Jehoiakin, son of Jehoiakim, who was king for 3 months in 598-597 BC.

The LORD Calls Jeremiah as His Prophet

⁴The LORD spoke his word to me:

⁵Before I formed you in the womb,
I knew you.
Before you were born,
I set you apart for my holy purpose.
I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.

⁶I, Jeremiah said: Almighty LORD, I do not know how to speak. I am only a boy.

⁷But the LORD said to me:

Don't say that you are only a boy. You will go wherever I send you. You will say whatever I command you to say. ⁸Don't be afraid of people. I am with you and I will rescue you, declares the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD stretched out his hand and touched my mouth. The LORD said to me:

Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰Today I have put you in charge of nations and kingdoms.

You will uproot and tear down.

You will destroy and overthrow.

You will build and plant.

¹¹Again the LORD spoke his word to me and asked: What do you see?

I answered: I see a branch of an almond tree.

¹²Then the LORD said to me: Right. I am watching to make sure that my words come true.

¹³Again the LORD spoke his word to me and asked: What do you see?

I answered: I see a boiling pot, and its top is tilted away from the north.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to me:

Disaster will be poured out from the north

on all those who live in the land.

¹⁵I am going to call every family and kingdom from the north,
declares the LORD.

They will come, and they will set up their thrones
at the entrance of Jerusalem's gates.

They will attack all the walls around the city
and all the cities of Judah

¹⁶I will pass sentence on my people because of all their wickedness.

They abandoned me,

burned incense to other gods,

and worshiped what their hands have made.

¹⁷Brace yourself, Jeremiah!

Stand up, and say to them whatever I tell you to say.

Don't be terrified in their presence,

or I will make you even more terrified in their presence.

¹⁸Today I have made you like a fortified city,
an iron pillar, and a bronze wall.
You will be able to stand up to the whole land.
You will be able to stand up to Judah's Kings,
its officials, its priests, and all the common people.

¹⁹They will fight you, but they will not defeat you.
I am with you, and I will rescue you, declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the 13th year of King Josiah 627 BC, God called Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah the High Priest, to become his prophet. King Josiah became Jeremiah's hero.

In Josiah's 18th year, five years after God called Jeremiah as his prophet, the High Priest Hilkiyah found the Book of Deuteronomy in the Temple. He gave the book to Shaphan who gave it to King Josiah. The king was so terrified of his nation's lack of reverence for God, he began a religious reform. **2 Kings 23:1-27; 2 Chronicles 34:14**

But the people only outwardly obeyed the king. They still kept their household idols and worshiped Baal and Asherah at the pagan worship sites on the high hills and in the groves.

Jeremiah was encouraged by the king's actions. But he knew, as well as the king, that the people were only half-heartedly obeying King Josiah for in his call by God, Jeremiah was told that God would punish Judah for its idolatry.

God told Jeremiah he would send a large army from the north who would attack Jerusalem. It would be a disaster. But Jeremiah must stand up to the people and warn them to repent and turn back to God. God would protect his prophet and make him like an iron pillar and a bronze wall.

Although the people, Judah's kings, its officials, its priests, and all the common people will fight you, they will not defeat you for I am with you and I will rescue you, says the Lord.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. If God set Jeremiah apart before he was born, how could Jeremiah object?
2. God touches Jeremiah's mouth. What does this mean? Is it the same thing God did to the prophet Isaiah? **Isaiah 6:6-7**. How did God commission Ezekiel? **HINT: Ezekiel 3:3**
3. God says Jeremiah will uproot and tear down but also will build and plant. What does this mean?
4. God gave Jeremiah the sign of an almond tree? What does this sign mean?
5. God gave Jeremiah the sign of a boiling pot tipped toward the south. What does this sign mean?
6. What reassurance does God give his new prophet?
7. How did Jeremiah's father, the High Priest Hilkiyah, react when Jeremiah told him what God had said?

EXTRA CREDIT

God called Jeremiah at age 21, the age of a Jewish male's accountability. At 20 he could be married. At 30 years old he could become a priest, if he was the son of priest. How appropriate was it for God to call Jeremiah at this important time in his life?

EXTRA, EXTRA CREDIT

Josiah was made king of Judah at 8 years old. **2 Kings 22:1; 2 Chronicles 34:1**. When he was 16 years old, he dedicated his life to serving God. When he was 20 years old, he began a religious revival in Judah. When he was 26 years old, the Book of Deuteronomy was found in the Temple.

Jeremiah's father Hilkiah, the High Priest, found the book. He gave it to the scribe Shaphan. Shaphan took the book to King Josiah. Shaphan read the book to the king. Then he ordered Hilkiah, Ahikam ben Shaphan, Abdon ben Micah, the scribe Shaphan, and the royal official Asaiah to go to the prophet Huldah and verify this book consisted of God's words. **2 Chronicles 34:14-22**

We will see both Shaphan and Ahikam, Shaphan's son, involved intimately in Jeremiah's life from then on. **Jeremiah 26:24**. God was doing a great work in Judah at the very beginning of Jeremiah's ministry. Who were Jeremiah's other friends? **HINT: Jeremiah 32:12; 38:7; 2 Kings 25:22; Jeremiah 36:12,25**

PERICOPE 2

God Tells Jeremiah What to Preach

2:1 The LORD spoke his word to me:

2 Go and announce to Jerusalem:

This is what the LORD says:

I remember the unfailing loyalty of your youth,
the love you had for me as a bride.

I remember how you followed me into the desert,
into a land that couldn't be farmed.

3 Israel was set apart for the LORD.

It was the best part of the harvest.

All who devoured it became guilty,
and disaster struck them, declares the LORD.

4 Listen to the LORD's word, descendants of Jacob,
all the families in the nation of Israel.

5 This is what the LORD says:

What did your ancestors find wrong with me
that they went so far away from me?

They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.

6 They didn't ask: Where is the LORD,
who brought us from Egypt?

He led us through the desert,
through a wasteland and its pits,
a land of drought and the shadow of death.
No one lives there or travels there.

⁷I brought them into a fertile land
to eat its fruit and its produce.
They came and made my land unclean
They made my property disgusting.

⁸The priests didn't ask: Where is the LORD?
Those who deal with my teachings didn't know me.
The rulers rebelled against me.

The prophets prophesied in the name of Baal
and followed statues that couldn't help them.

⁹That is why I am bringing charges against you,
declares the LORD,
and I am bringing charges against your grandchildren.

¹⁰Go over to the coasts of Cyprus, and see.
Send someone to Kedar, and observe closely.
See if there has ever been anything like this.

¹¹Has any nation ever exchanged gods?
Their gods aren't really gods.
Yet, my people have exchanged their glory
for something that doesn't help them.

¹²Be horrified over this, heaven.
Be terribly afraid, declares the LORD.

¹³ My people have done two things wrong.
They have abandoned me,
the fountain of life-giving water.
They have also dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that can't hold water.

¹⁴Are the people of Israel slaves?
Were they born into slavery?
Why, then, have they become someone's property?

¹⁵Young lions have roared very loudly at them.
Young lions have turned the land into a wasteland.
The cities have been burned down, and everyone has left.

¹⁶People from Noph and Tahpanhes
have cracked your skulls, Israel.

¹⁷You have brought this on yourself
by abandoning the LORD your God
when he led you on his way.

¹⁸You won't gain anything by going to Egypt
to drink water from the Nile River.
You won't gain anything by going to Assyria
to drink water from the Euphrates River.

¹⁹Your own wickedness will correct you,
and your unfaithful ways will punish you.

You should know and see how evil and bitter it is for you
if you abandon the LORD your God and do not fear me,
declares the Almighty LORD of Armies.

²⁰Long ago you broke off your yoke, tore off your chains,
and said that you wouldn't be a slave.
You lay down and acted like a prostitute
on every high hill and under every large tree.

²¹I planted you like a choice grapevine
from the very best seed.
Now you have turned against me
and have become a wild vine.

²²Even if you wash with detergent and use a lot of soap,
I would still see the stains from your wickedness,
declares the Almighty LORD.

²³ How can you say that you haven't dishonored yourselves
and haven't followed other gods—the Baals?
Look how you've behaved in the valley.
Acknowledge what you've done.

You are like a young camel that swiftly runs here and there.
²⁴ You are like a wild donkey that is used to the desert,
sniffing the wind while in heat.

All who look for you won't get tired.
They will find you during your monthly period.

²⁵ Don't run until your feet are bare
and your throats are dry.
But you say that it's useless.
You love foreign gods and follow them.

²⁶ As a thief feels ashamed when he's caught,
so the nation of Israel will feel ashamed.
Their kings, princes, priests,
and prophets will also feel ashamed.

²⁷ You call wood your father.
You call stone your mother.
You've turned your backs, not your faces, to me.
But when you're in trouble, you ask me to come and rescue you.

²⁸ Where are the gods that you made for yourselves?
Let them come and rescue you when you're in trouble.
You have as many gods as you have cities, Judah.

²⁹ Why do you complain about me?
All of you have rebelled against me,
declares the LORD.

³⁰ I have punished your children without results.
They didn't respond to correction.
You killed my prophets like a raging lion.

³¹ Consider the LORD's word, people of this generation.
Haven't I been a desert, a land of thick darkness, for Israel?
Why do my people say that they are free to wander around
and no longer come to me?

³² A young woman can't forget her jewelry or a bride her veils.
Yet, my people have forgotten me for countless days.

³³ You carefully planned ways to look for love.
You taught your ways to wicked women.

³⁴ You have the blood from poor and innocent people
on your clothes.
You didn't kill them for breaking into your home.

³⁵ In spite of all this you say: I'm innocent.
God will turn his anger from me,
because I haven't sinned.

³⁶ You change your mind so easily.
You will be put to shame by Egypt
as you were put to shame by Assyria.

³⁷ You will also leave this place with your hands over your head,
because the LORD has rejected those you trust.
You will not be helped by them.

3:1 A saying: If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him and marries another man,
her first husband shouldn't go back to her again.
The land would become thoroughly polluted.

You have acted like a prostitute who has many lovers.
And now you want to come back to me,
declares the LORD.

²Look at the bare hills, and see.
You have had sex with men in every place.
You sat by the roadside waiting for them
like a nomad in the desert.

You have polluted the land
with your prostitution and wickedness.

³So the rain has been withheld
and there have been no spring showers.
Yet, you have the shameless look of a prostitute,
and you refuse to blush.

⁴But now you are calling to me.
You say: Father! You have been my companion
ever since I was young.

⁵He won't hold a grudge forever.
He won't always be angry.
You have said and done all the evil things that you could.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God now gives Jeremiah a thumb nail sketch of his history with Israel from his point of view. He sees the 40 years of Israel's wandering the wilderness as a time of faithful relationship— *the loyalty of their youth*.

But that ended sharply when they entered Canaan. They quickly adopted the Canaanite gods and goddesses. The priests, the prophets, and the people abandoned the Lord. They exchanged their glorious Lord for no-gods.

God refers to the Assyrian invasions of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah characterizing the Assyrians as young lions.

Assyria decimated Israel depopulating the land by deporting the people to Assyria from 743-722 BC. Assyria then captured all the fortified cities of Judah but God saved Jerusalem because of King Hezekiah's prayers in 701 BC.

God says he planted Israel as a choice grapevine but now they have turned into a wild vine – completely polluted from sin and wickedness. God asks: Have I been a desert, a land of thick darkness, for Israel?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God says Israel will leave this place with their hands over their heads? **Jeremiah 2:17**. What does he mean?
2. When God says: You call wood your father and stone your mother, he reverses the Canaanite gods. **Jeremiah 2:27**. Male Baals were stone pillars while female Asherahs were wood poles or evergreen trees. Why does God do this?
3. God compares himself to living water and the worthless Canaanite gods to broken cisterns. **Jeremiah 2:13**. Explain this image.
4. God ridicules the Judeans looking for help from Egypt against the superpower of the north, Assyria. **Jeremiah 2:18**. Who else could Judah look to?
5. God asks: Haven't I been a desert, a land of thick darkness, for Israel? **Jeremiah 2:31**. What does he mean?
6. God constantly emphasizes he alone is in charge of water in Israel? Why is that? **Jeremiah 3:3**. How does Israel get its water?
7. God says: You killed my prophets like a roaring lion. **Jeremiah 2:30**. What prophets did Israel kill?

EXTRA CREDIT

God told Isaiah after he commissioned him as his prophet that people would not listen to him. **Isaiah 6:9-10**. Did he tell Jeremiah the same thing? HINT: **Jeremiah 2:18-19**

PART 2: Jeremiah's Earliest Sermons

Sermon 1 Pericope 3
The Lord Offers to Forgive the Northern Kingdom
Jeremiah 3:6-4:2

Sermon 2 Pericope 4
The Lord Brings Destruction on Judah from the North
Jeremiah 4:3-31

Sermon 3 Pericope 5
Judah Has Completely Rejected the Lord
Jeremiah 5:1-31

Sermon 4 Pericope 6
The Lord Has Rejected Judah
Jeremiah 6:1-30

Sermon 5 Pericope 7
Jeremiah's Temple Sermon
Jeremiah 7:1-15

Sermon 6 Pericope 8
God Condemns Jerusalem to the Valley of Ben Hinnom
Jeremiah 7:15-8:17

Sermon 7 Pericope 9
God's Judgment on False Religion
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Sermon 8 Pericope 10
God Ridicules Judah's Idolatry
Jeremiah 10:1-29

Sermon 9 Pericope 11
Judah Has Disregarded the Lord's Servant
Jeremiah 11:1-17

Sermon 10 Pericope 13
Jeremiah Performs a Sign-Act with a Linen Belt
Jeremiah 12:7 -13:27

Sermon 11 Pericope 18
The Lord Will Bring More Disasters on Judah
Jeremiah 17:9-18

Sermon 12 Pericope 19
The Blessing That Comes from Honoring Sabbath
Jeremiah 17:19-27

Sermon 13 Pericope 20
The People of Judah Are Like Clay to a Potter
Jeremiah 18:1-17

Sermon 14 Pericope 22
Israel Will Be Smashed Like a Clay Jar [2nd Sign Act]
Jeremiah 19:1-15

What are the timeless messages of Jeremiah's sermons?

God made a covenant at Mount Sinai with his chosen people. He gave them Ten Commandments. **Exodus 20:1-18**. After that, Moses conducted a covenant ceremony.

First, Moses read the people the Book of the Lord's Covenant. Then the people said: We will do everything the Lord has said. **Exodus 24:7**. Moses took blood and sprinkled it on the people. **Exodus 24:8**

Then Moses, Aaron and his sons, and 70 of Israel's leaders went up the mountain and they ate and drank a covenant meal with God. They saw the God of Israel. **Exodus 24:9-11**

But then the people broke this covenant by worshiping idols –primarily the Baals and Asherahs of Canaan. They even added the god of the Ammonites Molech who demanded the sacrifice by fire of their children.

God will not allow this. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, he describes the penalties for breaking this covenant. Jeremiah preached the chosen people must repent or God would send them out of the Promised Land. This was his continual message.

But Jeremiah also preached that if the people repented God would forgive them and bring them back to the Promised Land.

These were the same messages Isaiah had preached 150 years before.

PERICOPE 3 [Sermon I]

The LORD Offers to Forgive Israel, the Northern Kingdom

3:6 When Josiah was King, the LORD asked me: Judah, did you see what unfaithful Israel did? She went up every high mountain and under every large tree and she acted like a prostitute there. ⁷I thought that after she had done all this that she would come back to me. But she didn't come back, and you, her treacherous sister Judah saw her. ⁸Judah saw that I sent unfaithful Israel away because of her adultery and that I gave Israel her divorce papers. But, treacherous Judah, her sister, wasn't afraid. You also acted like a prostitute. ⁹Because you weren't concerned about acting like a prostitute, you polluted the land and committed adultery with standing stones and wood pillars. ¹⁰Even after all this, you Israel's treacherous sister Judah didn't wholeheartedly come back to me. You were deceitful, declares the LORD.

¹¹Then the LORD said to me: Unfaithful Israel was less guilty than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these things to the Northern Kingdom:

Come back, unfaithful Israel.

It is the LORD speaking.

I will no longer frown on you

because I'm merciful, declares the LORD.

I will no longer be angry with you.

¹³Admit that you've done wrong.

You have rebelled against the LORD your God.

You have given yourself to strangers under every large tree.

You have not obeyed me, declares the LORD.

¹⁴Come back, you rebellious people, declares the LORD. I'm your husband. I will take you, one from every city and two from every family, and bring you to Zion. ¹⁵I will give you shepherds after my own heart. They will be shepherds who feed you with knowledge and insight. ¹⁶In those days you will be fertile and your population will increase in the land, declares the LORD. People will no longer talk about the ark of the LORD's covenant. It will no longer come to

mind. They won't remember it, miss it, or make another one. ¹⁷At that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD. All nations will gather in Jerusalem because the name of the LORD will be found there. They will no longer follow their own stubborn, evil ways. ¹⁸In those days the nation of Judah will live with the nation of Israel. They will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave their ancestors as their own property.

¹⁹I wanted to treat you like children
and give you a pleasant land,
the most beautiful property among the nations.
I thought that you would call me Father
and wouldn't turn away from me.

²⁰But like a wife who betrays her husband,
so you, nation of Israel, betrayed me, declares the LORD.

²¹The sound of crying is heard on the hills.
It is the crying and the pleading of the people of Israel.
They have become crooked
and have forgotten the LORD their God.

²²Come back, you rebellious people,
and I will forgive you for being unfaithful.

[The people replied:]

Here we are!
We have come to you because you are the LORD our God.

²³Truly, the noise from the hills, from the mountains,
is the noise of false worship.
Truly, the LORD our God will rescue us.

²⁴Ever since we were young,
the shameful worship of Baal
has taken everything our ancestors worked for,
their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters.

²⁵We must lie down in our shame
and be covered by our disgrace.
Ever since we were young, we and our ancestors have sinned
against the LORD our God.
We haven't obeyed the LORD our God.

4:1 The LORD declares:

If you come back, Israel,
if you come back to me,
if you take your disgusting idols out of my sight
and you don't wander away from me,
²if you take the oath: As the LORD lives ...
in an honest, fair, and right way,
then the nations will be blessed,
and they will be honored by me.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God begins by comparing Judah to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, often called Samaria after its capital or Ephraim after its largest tribe. God punished the people with their capital in Samaria by sending the Assyrians to depopulate the country. In 722 BC, it became an Assyria province.

Israel had divorced itself from God right from the time of King Solomon's death in 930 or 925 BC when King Jeroboam took ten tribes and formed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He placed a Golden Calf idol in Bethel and another one in Dan, far to the north. In the capital of Samaria, King Ahab built a temple to Baal.

This Northern Kingdom became prosperous under King Omri despite their paganism. Then God sent the Assyrians when Judah's King Ahaz offered to become the Assyrian king's vassal if the king would protect him from Israel and Aram [Syria] who were attacking him. From 735 BC to 722 BC, Assyria deported most of the Israelites from the Northern Kingdom of Israel to other parts of the Assyrian Empire.

God says Israel is less guilty than Judah because Judah saw what God did to Israel by sending the Assyrians. They should have known God would punish Judah if they succumbed to idol worship.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God calls Israel unfaithful but Judah is called treacherous. What is the difference between their relationship with God?
2. God says unfaithful Israel was less guilty than treacherous Judah. **Jeremiah 3:11**. Why is this true?
3. The Israelites made an oath by beginning: *As the Lord lives ...* **Jeremiah 4:2**. This oath appears for the first time in **Judges 8:19**. What do these words mean?
4. After the Book of Deuteronomy was rediscovered in Judah, why was Josiah's attempted reformation of religion unsuccessful?
5. God says that a time will come when people will no longer talk about the ark of the covenant. It will no longer come to mind. **Jeremiah 3:16**. When will that be? What does the ark of the covenant symbolize?
6. Why is there the sound of crying on the hills?
7. The Lord says he is a husband to Israel. What does that imply?

PERICOPE 4 [Sermon 2]

The LORD Will Bring Destruction on Judah from the North

4:3 This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem:

Plow your unplowed fields,
and don't plant among thorns.

⁴ Be circumcised by the LORD,
and get rid of the foreskins of your hearts,
people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. **Deuteronomy 10:16**

If you don't, my fury will flare up like a fire.
It will burn, and no one will be able to put it out,
because of the evil you do.

⁵ Report this message in Judah.
Make it heard in Jerusalem.
Say: Blow the ram's horn throughout the land.
Shout loudly and say: Gather together.
Go into the fortified cities.

⁶ Raise the flag to signal people to go to Zion Jerusalem.
Take cover.
Don't just stand there.
I'm bringing disaster and widespread destruction
from the north.

⁷ A lion has come out of its lair.
A destroyer of nations has set out.
He has left his place to destroy your land.
Your cities will be ruined and no one will live in them.

⁸ So put on sackcloth, mourn, and cry
because the LORD's burning anger hasn't turned away from us.

⁹When that day comes, declares the LORD,
the king and the leaders will lose their courage.
The priests will be stunned.
The prophets will be amazed and astonished

¹⁰I said: Almighty LORD,
you certainly have deceived these people and Jerusalem.
You said that everything would go well for them,
but a sword is held at their throats.

[God continued:]

¹¹At that time it will be said to these people and to Jerusalem:
A hot wind from the heights will blow in the desert
on the tracks of my people.
It will not be a wind that winnows or cleanses.

¹²It will be a stronger wind than that.
It will come from me.
Now, I will pass sentence on them.

¹³The enemy comes up like clouds.
His chariots are like a raging wind.
His horses are faster than eagles.
How horrible it will be for us,
We will be destroyed.

¹⁴Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart
so that you may be rescued.
Don't continue making evil plans.

¹⁵ A message is heard from Dan,
and a report of disaster comes from the mountains of Ephraim.

¹⁶ Warn the nations about these things.
Bring them to the attention of Jerusalem.
Hostile troops are coming from a distant country.
They are shouting battle cries against the cities of Judah.

¹⁷ They surround them like men guarding a field,
because Judah has rebelled against me, declares the LORD.

¹⁸ You brought this on yourself.
This is your punishment.
It is bitter.
It breaks your heart.

[I cried:]

¹⁹ My anguish, my anguish!
I writhe in pain.
My heart is beating wildly!
My heart is pounding!
I can't keep quiet
because I hear a ram's horn sounding the alarm for war.

²⁰ One disaster follows another.
The whole land is ruined.
My tents are suddenly destroyed.
Their curtains are torn in an instant.

²¹ How long must I see the battle flag
and hear the sound of rams' horns?

[God continued:]

²² My people are fools.
They don't know me.
They are stupid people.
They don't understand.

They are experts in doing wrong,
and they don't know how to do good.

[I said:]

²³ I see the earth. It's formless and empty.
I see the sky. Its lights are gone.

²⁴ I see the mountains. They are shaking,
and the hills are swaying.

²⁵ I see that there are no people,
and every bird has flown away.

²⁶ I see that the fertile land has become a desert,
and all its cities are torn down
because of the LORD and his burning anger.

²⁷ This is what the LORD says:

The whole earth will be ruined,
although I will not destroy it completely.

²⁸ The earth will mourn, and the sky will grow black.
I have spoken, and I have planned it.
I won't change my plans and I won't turn back.

²⁹ All the people in the city will flee
at the sound of riders and archers.
They will go off into the thickets
and climb among the rocks.

The entire city will be abandoned,
and no one will live in it.

³⁰ You are going to be destroyed!
What are you going to do?
Why do you dress in red and put on gold jewelry?
Why do you wear eye shadow?
You are making yourself beautiful for nothing.
Your lovers reject you; they want to kill you.

³I hear a woman in labor.
I hear the woman cry with anguish
as she gives birth to her first child.
My people Zion are gasping for breath.
They are stretching out their hands, saying:
How horrible it is for us!
We're defenseless in the presence of murderers!

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In this sermon, the prophet dramatizing the coming of the foe from the north on Judah. A ram's horn is blown to warn the city "the destroyer" is coming.

The prophet advises the people to put on sackcloth, mourn and cry to the Lord as they repent of their wickedness. Jeremiah advises the people to wash the evil from their heart.

From Dan in the far north of Israel word comes of disaster arriving. The mountains of Ephraim further south confirm this word. Now there are battle cries across the cities of Judah.

The prophet imagines his dismay.

One disaster happens after another. Judah is destroyed. The earth is now formless and empty. Even the lights in the sky are gone. The mountains are shaking and all the birds are gone. The land is a desert because of the Lord's anger.

The people of Zion are gasping for breath. They say: We are helpless.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What does it mean to plow your unplowed fields and don't plant among thorns. **Jeremiah 4:3**

2. In **Deuteronomy 10:14**, Moses tells Israel to circumcise their heart. Later he says: God will circumcise your hearts. **Deuteronomy 30:6**. What does Jeremiah say in **Jeremiah 4:4** and why? What does the circumcision of the heart mean?
3. Jeremiah says God has deceived the people. **Jeremiah 4:10**. How has God deceived the people?
4. In this sermon, Jeremiah describes his emotions as the destroyer comes to Judah. **Jeremiah 4:19-21**. What is his purpose in doing so?
5. Jeremiah says the people should wash the evil from their heart so they will be rescued. **Jeremiah 4:14**. How are they to do this?
6. Jeremiah says the city will be abandoned. This is the just the opposite of what is done. The people will stay within the walls of the city and the destroyer will lay siege to the city. Why does Jeremiah say the people will abandon the city. **Jeremiah 4:29**
7. Jeremiah says the people say they are defenseless. **Jeremiah 4:31**. But are they? Isn't there something they can do?

PERICOPE 5 [Sermon 3]

Judah Has Completely Rejected the LORD

5:1 [God says:] Walk around the streets of Jerusalem.
Look around, and think about these things.

Search the city squares.
See if you can find anyone
who does what is right and seeks the truth.
Then I will forgive Jerusalem.

² People say: As the LORD lives ...
Yet, they lie when they take this oath.

[I said:]

³ LORD, your eyes look for the truth.
You strike these people, but they don't feel it.
You crush them, but they refuse to be corrected.
They are more stubborn than rocks.
They refuse to turn back.

⁴ I thought: These are poor, foolish people.
They don't know the way of the LORD
and the justice that God demands.

⁵ Let me go to important people and speak to them.
They know the way of the LORD
and the justice that God demands.

But they, too, had broken off their yokes
and torn off their chains.

⁶ That is why a lion from the forest will attack them.
A wolf from the wilderness will destroy them.
A leopard will lie in ambush outside their cities.

All who leave the cities will be torn to pieces,
because they rebel so often
and they become more and more unfaithful.

[God said:]

⁷ Why should I forgive you?
Your children abandoned me.
They took godless oaths.

They committed adultery,
even though I satisfied their needs.
They traveled in crowds
to the houses of prostitutes.

⁸ They are like well-fed stallions
that are wild with desire.
They neigh for their neighbors' wives.

⁹ I will punish them for these things,
declares the LORD.
I will punish this nation.

¹⁰ Go among Jerusalem's rows of grapevines
and destroy them,
but don't destroy all of them.
Cut off the branches
because they don't belong to the LORD.

¹¹ The nations of Israel and Judah are unfaithful to me,
declares the LORD.

¹² They lie about the LORD and say:
He doesn't exist.
Nothing bad will happen to us.
We won't experience war or famine.

¹³ The prophets are nothing but windbags.
The LORD hasn't spoken through them,
so let what they say happen to them.

¹⁴ This is what the LORD God of Armies says:

Because you've talked like this,
I'm going to put my words in your mouth Jeremiah like a fire.
These people will be like wood.
My words will burn them up.

¹⁵ Nation of Israel, I'm going to bring a nation from far away
to attack you, declares the LORD.

It is a nation that has lasted a long time.
It is an ancient nation.
You don't know the language of this nation.
You can't understand what its people say.

¹⁶ Their arrow quivers are like open graves.
They are all mighty warriors.

¹⁷ They will devour your harvest and your food.
They will devour your sons and your daughters.
They will devour your flocks and your cattle.
They will devour your grapevines and your fig trees.
With their swords they will destroy
the fortified cities you trust.

¹⁸ Yet, even in those days, declares the LORD,
I won't destroy all of you.

¹⁹ They will ask:
Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?

Answer them:

You have abandoned me
and served foreign gods in your land.

So you will serve foreigners
in a land that isn't yours.

²⁰ Tell this to the descendants of Jacob,
and make this heard in Judah:

²¹ Hear this, you stupid and senseless people!
You have eyes, but you cannot see.
You have ears, but you cannot hear.

²² Don't you fear me? asks the LORD
Don't you tremble in my presence?
I made the sand a boundary for the sea,
a permanent barrier that it cannot cross.

Although the waves toss continuously, they can't break through.
Although they roar, they can't cross it.

²³ But these people are stubborn and rebellious.
They have turned aside and wandered away from me.

²⁴ They don't say to themselves:
We should fear the LORD our God.

He sends rain at the right time,
the autumn rain and the spring rain.
He makes sure that we have harvest seasons.

²⁵ Your wickedness has turned these things away.
Your sins have kept good things away from you.

²⁶ Wicked people are found among my people.
They lie in ambush like bird catchers.
They set traps and catch people.

²⁷ Like cages filled with birds,
their houses are filled with deceit.
That is why they become powerful and rich.

²⁸ They grow big and fat.
Their evil deeds have no limits.

They have no respect for the rights of others.
They have no respect for the rights of orphans.
But they still prosper.
They don't defend the rights of the poor.

²⁹ I will punish them for these things,
declares the LORD.
I will punish this nation.

³⁰ Something horrible and disgusting
is happening in the land:

³¹ Prophets prophesy lies.
Priests rule under the prophets' directions,
and my people love this.
But what will you do in the end?

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This third sermon seems to say there are no righteous people left in Jerusalem. Jeremiah says he will go to the important people. Surely one of them is righteous. But no.

This is why the Lord will send the destroyer from the north. However, God says he will not destroy everyone. Why not?

God says he will put his words in Jeremiah's mouth like fire. His words will severely affect the people. But again, God says he will not destroy everyone.

Amazingly the people ask: Why has the Lord done this to us? God answers: Are you that blind? Aren't you stubborn and rebellious?

The people's prophets prophesy lies. The priests don't object to what they say. Neither do the people.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God says: Search the city and find one person who does right and I will forgive the entire city. Is God saying there isn't one righteous person in Jerusalem? Doesn't God always have a righteous remnant?
2. God says he will not destroy everyone although everyone is wicked. Why won't he destroy everyone? **Jeremiah 5:10**
3. Describe how a prophet can be a windbag? **Jeremiah 5:13**
4. Why don't even important people know the way of the Lord? **Jeremiah 5:5**
5. How can a prophet's words be like fire? **Jeremiah 5:14**
6. What is God explaining when he says he made sand a boundary for the sea? **Jeremiah 5:22**
7. At the end of this sermon God asks a question: But what will you do in the end? **Jeremiah 5:31**. What is God asking?

PERICOPE 6 [Sermon 4]

The LORD Has Rejected Judah

6:1 God says:

Take cover, people of Benjamin!
Run away from Jerusalem.

Blow the ram's horn in Tekoa.
Raise the flag over Beth Hakkerem,
because disaster and widespread destruction
are coming from the north.

² My people Zion are like lovely pastures.

³ With their flocks, shepherds will come to them,
pitch their tents all around them,
and each of them will tend his own flock.

⁴ The shepherds say: Prepare yourselves for war against Zion.
Let's attack at noon!

[The people cried:]

How horrible it will be for us.
The day is passing,
and the shadows of evening are growing longer.

[The shepherds say:]

⁵ Let's attack at night and destroy its palaces.

⁶ This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Cut down its trees.
Build up dirt mounds to attack Jerusalem.
This city must be punished.
There is nothing but oppression in it.

⁷As a well keeps its water fresh,
so Jerusalem keeps its evil fresh.
Violence and destruction can be heard in it.
I see that it is sick and wounded.

⁸Pay attention to my warning, Jerusalem,
or I will turn away from you.
I will make your land desolate,
a land where no one will live.

⁹This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Thoroughly pick through the faithful few of Israel
like someone picks through a grapevine.
Like someone picking grapes, pass your hand over its branches again.

¹⁰Whom can I speak to?
Whom can I give a warning to?
Who will listen?
Their ears are plugged,
and they aren't able to pay attention.

When the LORD speaks his word to them,
they show contempt for it and object to it.

¹¹ I am filled with the anger of the LORD.
I am tired of holding it in.

Pour it out on the children in the street
and on the gangs of young men.
A man and his wife will be taken away
as well as very old people.

¹²Their households, their fields, and their wives
will be turned over to others.
I will use my power against those who live in the land,
declares the LORD.

¹³ All of them, from the least important to the most important,
are eager to make money dishonestly.
All of them, from prophets to priests, act deceitfully.

¹⁴ They treat my people's wounds
as though they were not serious saying:
Everything is alright! Everything is alright!
But it's not alright.

¹⁵ Are they ashamed when they do disgusting things?
No, they're not ashamed.
They don't even know how to blush.

So they will die with those who die.
They will be brought down when I punish them,
says the LORD.

¹⁶ This is what the LORD says:

Stand at the crossroads and look.
Ask which paths are the old, reliable paths.
Ask which way leads to blessings.
Live that way, and find a resting place for yourselves.
But you said that you wouldn't live that way.

¹⁷ I posted watchmen over you.
Pay attention to the sound of the ram's horn.
But you said that you wouldn't pay attention.

¹⁸ Listen, you nations,
and learn, you witnesses,
what will happen to them.

¹⁹ Listen, earth.
I'm going to bring disaster on these people.
It is the result of their own plots,

because they won't pay attention to my words.
They reject my teachings.

²⁰ Incense that comes from Sheba is no good to me.
Sugar cane that comes from a distant land is no good to me.
I won't accept your burnt offerings.
I'm not pleased with your sacrifices.

²¹ This is what the LORD says:

I'm going to lay stumbling blocks in front of these people.
Parents and children will stumble over them.
Neighbors and their friends will die.

²² This is what the LORD says:

An army is going to come from the north.
A great nation is preparing itself
in the distant parts of the earth.

²³ Its people take hold of bows and spears.
They are cruel and have no compassion.
They sound like the roaring sea.

They ride on horses.
They march like soldiers ready for battle
against my people Zion.

[The people said:]

²⁴ We have heard the news about them.
Our hands hang limp.
We are gripped by anguish and pain
like a woman giving birth to a child.

²⁵ Don't go into the field or walk on the road.
The enemy has a sword.
Terror is all around.

[God says:]

²⁶ Wear sackcloth, and roll around in ashes, my people.
Mourn as if you have lost your only child, and cry bitterly.
The destroyer will suddenly attack us.

²⁷ Jeremiah, I have put you in charge of testing
and refining my people.
You will know how to test their ways.

²⁸ They are all vicious rebels.
They go around slandering.
They are all like bronze and iron.
They corrupt themselves.

²⁹ The bellows of the blast furnace blow fiercely
to make the fire melt away the lead.
It is useless to go on refining
because the impurities can't be removed.

³⁰ People will call them useless silver
because the LORD has rejected them.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Because the Judeans have rejected their God, **YHWH** is going to bring the Babylonians from the north to attack them. The Babylonians will not only attack Jerusalem but they will also attack all the fortified cities of Judah.

But God is especially angry at the violence and destruction that occurs in his Holy City. When God's prophets speak God's word to the people in Jerusalem, the people show contempt for it and refuse to obey his warnings. False prophets contradict the true prophet's warnings.

YHWH advises his chosen people to go back to the old reliable paths of Moses' teachings. Then they will find rest in **YHWH**. But they refuse.

Instead, they attempt to pacify YHWH with burnt offerings rather than repentant hearts.

As a result, God will send armies from the north, a people who have no compassion and are cruel, but not as cruel as the Assyrians, although they will kill many people. God has sent Jeremiah to the Judeans, one of his most capable prophets.

However the people are as valueless as useless silver filled with so many impurities that they can't be removed. As a result, God has completely rejected Judah.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Does God really want to destroy Judah? Why?
2. Why do the people in Jerusalem make God more angry than even the people in the fortified cities?
3. How will God make the Promised Land desolate?
4. Why will God allow men's wives to be turned over to the Babylonians? What will this accomplish. **Jeremiah 6:12**
5. What are the old, reliable paths God wants his people to return to?
6. What does God want the nations to learn from his treatment of Judah?
7. How many times does the expression: "Terror is all around" appear in the Book of Jeremiah? What is its significance? HINT: **Jeremiah 20:3**. In the KJV, the expression is "Fear is on every side".

EXTRA CREDIT

How can Judah's impurities be removed? **Jeremiah 6:29**

PERICOPE 7 [Sermon 5]

JEREMIAH'S TEMPLE SERMON

7:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ² Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and announce from there this message: Listen to the LORD's word, all you people of Judah who go through these gates to worship the LORD. ³ This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Change the way you live and act and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust the words of this saying: This is the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple! It's a lie.

⁵ Suppose you really change the way you live and act and you really treat each other fairly. ⁶ Suppose you do not oppress foreigners, orphans, and widows, or kill anyone in this place. And suppose you do not follow other gods that lead you to your own destruction. ⁷ Then I, the Lord, will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave permanently to your ancestors long ago.

⁸ You are trusting the words of a saying. It's a lie that cannot help you. ⁹ You steal, murder, commit adultery, lie when you take oaths, burn incense as an offering to Baal, and run after other gods that you do not know. ¹⁰ Then you stand in my presence in the house that is called by my name. You think that you're safe to do all these disgusting things. ¹¹ The house that is called by my name has become a gathering place for thieves. I have seen what you are doing, declares the LORD.

¹² But go to my place that was at Shiloh, where I first made a dwelling place for my name. See what I did to Shiloh because of the evil done by my people Israel. ¹³ You have done the same things the people did at Shiloh, declares the LORD. Although I spoke to you again and again, you did not listen. When I called you, you did not answer. ¹⁴ So what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that is called by my name. This is the place I gave to you and to your ancestors, the place where you feel so safe, ¹⁵ I will force you out of my sight as I forced out all your relatives, all of Ephraim's descendants.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is Jeremiah's first Temple Sermon. He tells the people not to put their trust in a saying: 'This is the temple. This is the temple. This is the temple. It's a lie.

Then God gives the people the reasons he will allow them to continue to live in his Promised Land.

He reminds them of what he allowed to happen to the first worship place in the Holy Land. After Joshua first led the chosen people into Canaan, after they had conquered Jericho and Ai, they went to Shechem. There they enacted the first Covenant Ceremony in the Promised Land by having all of the tribes stand before Mount Gerizim and recite the blessings in **Deuteronomy 28:1-14** and the other six tribes stand in front of Mount Ebal and recite the curses from **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**. **Deuteronomy 11:29**. They faced the Levitical priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant. **Joshua 8:30-35**

Each year after that, the Israelites met at Shechem to repeat this ceremony. The Wilderness Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant was kept at Shiloh, a short distance away.

But years later, the Israelites foolishly carried the Ark of the Covenant into battle as a totem. There the Philistines captured it. **1 Samuel 4:11**. Then the Israelites removed the Wilderness Tabernacle from Shiloh. It seems to have been removed to Nob where the priests later lived and later to Gihon. **1 Kings 1:33**

The Philistines later gave back the Ark of the Covenant and it was placed at Kiriath Jearim at Abinadab's house on the hill. **1 Samuel 7:1**. Later, after he was made king of all Israel, David brought the Ark to Jerusalem and placed it in a new tent. **2 Samuel 6:12**

God allowed his Wilderness Tabernacle at Shiloh to be removed because of the idolatry of his people. Now God calls the counterfeit worship at the temple at Jerusalem *a gathering place for thieves*. Six hundred years later

Jesus of Nazareth would call the Jerusalem temple a similar name. **Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why is the proverb quoted by the people: *This is the Lord's temple* a lie? What do the people think the proverb means?
2. What did the Lord do before at Shiloh? What does he now threaten to do at Jerusalem? Why does he threaten to do this?

PERICOPE 8 [Sermon 6]

God Condemns the People of Jerusalem to Live in the Valley of Ben Hinnom

7:16 [God says:] Jeremiah, don't pray for these people. Don't cry or pray for them. Don't plead with me, because I will not listen to you. ¹⁷Don't you see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸Children gather wood, fathers light fires, and women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven. They pour out wine offerings to other gods in order to make me furious. ¹⁹They aren't really provoking me, declares the LORD. But they are harming themselves to their own shame.

²⁰This is what the Almighty LORD says: My anger and fury will be poured out on this place, on humans and animals, and on trees and crops. My anger and fury will burn and not be put out.

²¹This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the meat. ²²When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I did not tell them anything about burnt offerings and sacrifices. ²³But I did tell them this: Obey me and *I will be your God, and you will be my people*. Live the way I told you to live so that things will go well for you. ²⁴But they didn't obey me or pay attention to me. They followed their own plans and their stubborn, evil ways. They went backward and not forward. ²⁵From the time that your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have sent all my servants the prophets to you again and again. ²⁶But you didn't obey me or pay attention to me. You became impossible to deal with and you were worse than your ancestors.

²⁷Jeremiah, you will say all these things to them, but they will not obey you. You will call to them, but they will not respond to you. ²⁸You will say to them: This is the nation that did not obey the LORD their God. They did not accept discipline. Truth has disappeared and vanished from their lips.

²⁹ Cut off your hair and throw it away. Sing a song of mourning on the bare hills because in his anger the LORD has rejected and abandoned the people of this generation.

³⁰ The people of Judah have done what I consider evil, declares the LORD. They set up their detestable idols in the house that is called by my name. They have made it unclean. ³¹ They have built worship sites at Topheth in the valley of Ben Hinnom in order to burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices. I did not ask for this. It never entered my mind.

³² That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD, when that place will no longer be known as Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom. Instead, it will be known as Slaughter Valley. They will bury people at Topheth because no other place will be left. ³³ The dead bodies of these people will become food for birds and animals and no one will be there to frighten them away. ³⁴ In the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, I will banish the sounds of joy and happiness and the sounds of brides and grooms because the land will be a wasteland.

8:1 The LORD declares: At that time the bones of the kings and the leaders of Judah, the bones of the priests and the prophets, and the bones of the others who lived in Jerusalem will be taken out of their graves. ² They will be spread out and exposed to the sun, the moon, and all the stars in the sky. These are the things that they had loved, served, gone after, sought, and worshiped. Their bones will not be gathered or buried, but they will become manure on the ground.

³ Then the few who remain from these wicked people will want to die rather than live where I will scatter them, declares the LORD of Armies.

The LORD's Judgment on Judah's False Religion

8:4 Say to them: This is what the LORD says:

When someone falls, he gets back up.

When someone turns away from me, he returns.

⁵The people of Jerusalem turned away from me
without ever returning.
They still cling to deceit.
They refuse to return.

⁶I have paid attention and listened,
but they weren't honest.
They don't turn away from their wickedness and ask:
What have we done?

They go their own ways
like horses charging into battle.

⁷Even storks know when it's time to return.
Mourning doves, swallows, and cranes know
when it's time to migrate.

But my people don't know
that I, the LORD, am urging them to return.

⁸How can you say that you are wise
and that you have the LORD's teachings?
The scribes have used their pens
to turn these teachings into lies.

⁹Wise people are put to shame, confused, and trapped.
They have rejected the LORD's word.
They don't really have any wisdom.

¹⁰That is why I will give their wives to other men
and their fields to new owners.

All of them, from the least important to the most important,
are eager to make money dishonestly.
All of them, from prophets to priests, act deceitfully.

¹¹They treat my dear people's wounds
as though they were not serious, saying:
Everything is alright. Everything is alright.
But it's not alright.

¹²Are they ashamed that they do disgusting things?
No, they're not ashamed.
They don't even know how to blush.

So they will die with those who die.
They will be brought down when I punish them,
says the LORD.

¹³ I would have gathered their harvest,
declares the LORD,
but there are no grapes on the vine.

There are no figs on the tree,
and the leaves have dried up.
What I have given them will be taken away.

[The people say:]

¹⁴Why are we just sitting here? Let's get up.
Let's go into the fortified cities and die there.

The LORD our God has condemned us to die.
He has given us poison to drink
because we have sinned against the LORD.

¹⁵We hoped for peace, but nothing good has happened.
We hoped for a time of healing, but there's only terror.

¹⁶The snorting of horses can be heard from Dan.
The neighing of stallions makes the whole land tremble.
They are coming to devour the land and everything in it,
the city and its people.

¹⁷ I am going to send snakes among you,
vipers that can't be charmed.
They will bite you, declares the Lord.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God tells Jeremiah not to pray for the chosen people. They are sacrificing to the pagan queen of heaven, probably Ishtar a god of the Assyrians and Babylonians. She is also called Astarte and Ashtoreth by other groups.

God says that obeying him and the Ten Commandments is more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices. God says that only by obeying him will he keep his covenant promise: *I will be your God and you will be my people* – the promise he first made in Egypt. **Exodus 6:7**

God complains that at a site called Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, the people offer their sons and daughters as burnt offerings to Moloch, the god of the Amorites. **Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5**. But God says it never entered his mind to command this. As a punishment for doing this, the people will bury people at this Topheth, another name for the Valley of Ben Hinnom, because no other place will be left. People will be buried in an unclean place.

God further says the bones of kings, leaders, prophets, and priests, and others who lived in Jerusalem will be taken out of their burial places and left out in the open – a sign of desecration.

God says all of his people act deceitfully from prophets to priests. They are not ashamed of the things they do. They are incapable of blushing at the things they do. God will bring them down and cause them to die.

The people say: We hoped for peace, but nothing good has happened. We hoped for a time of healing, but there is only terror. We can hear the snorting of war horses coming from the territory of the tribe of Dan in the north. They will soon be in Jerusalem.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What does it mean when people can't blush when they do wrong? **Jeremiah 8:12**
2. Why does God tell Jeremiah not to pray for these people? Aren't prophets supposed to intercede for people?
3. How did the Judeans learn about the pagan queen of heaven.
4. Where does God's Covenant promise: *I will be your God and you will be my people*, appear in the Book of Jeremiah? Does it appear elsewhere in the Bible?
5. God tells Jeremiah the people will not obey him. **Jeremiah 7:27**. Why then should Jeremiah talk to them?
6. Moses told the people not to worship Moloch, the god of the Ammonites. **Leviticus 8:21**. Yet the people were still doing this in Jeremiah's time. Why?
7. God again says the Babylonians will be given the Judean men's wives. **Jeremiah 8:10**. Why does God emphasize this?

PERICOPE 9 [Sermon 7]

Jeremiah's Grief Over His People's Punishment

8:18 Sorrow has overwhelmed me.
I am sick at heart.

¹⁹The cry from my dear people ~~bath~~-daughter comes from a distant land:
Isn't the LORD in Zion?
Isn't Zion's king still there?

They make me furious with their idols,
with their foreign gods.

²⁰The harvest is past,
the summer has ended,
and we haven't been saved.

²¹I am crushed because my dear people have been crushed.
I mourn; terror grips me.

²²Isn't there medicine in Gilead?
Aren't there doctors there?
Then why hasn't the health of my dear people been restored?

9:1 I wish that my head were filled with water
and my eyes were a fountain of tears
so that I could cry day and night
for my dear people who have been killed.

²I wish I had a place to stay in the desert.
I would abandon my people and go away from them.
They are all adulterers,
a mob of traitors.

³They use their tongues like bows that shoot arrows.
Lies and dishonesty rule the land.

They go from one evil thing to another,
and they don't know me, declares the LORD.

⁴Beware of your neighbors.
Don't trust your relatives.
Every relative cheats.
Every neighbor goes around slandering.

⁵Everyone cheats his neighbor.
No one speaks the truth.
My people train their tongues to speak lies.
They wear themselves out doing wrong.

⁶Oppression follows oppression.
Deceit follows deceit.
They refuse to acknowledge me, declares the LORD.

⁷This is what the LORD of Armies says:
I will now refine them with fire and test them.
What else can I do for my dear people?

⁸Their tongues are like deadly arrows.
They speak deceitfully.
People speak politely to their neighbors,
but they think of ways to set traps for them.

⁹I will punish them for these things, declares the LORD.
I will punish this nation.
I still won't be satisfied.

¹⁰I will cry and weep for the mountains.
I will sing a funeral song for the pastures in the wilderness.
They are destroyed so that no one can travel through them.
No one can hear the sound of cattle.
Birds and cattle have fled.
They are gone.

¹¹I will turn Jerusalem into a pile of rubble, a home for jackals.
I will destroy the cities of Judah so that no one can live there.

¹²No one is wise enough to understand this.
To whom has the LORD revealed this
so that they can explain it?

The land dies.
It has been ruined like the desert
so that no one can travel through it.

¹³The LORD answered:

They've abandoned my teachings that I placed in front of them.
They didn't obey me, and they didn't follow them.

¹⁴They followed their own stubborn ways and other gods—
the Baals, as their ancestors taught them.

¹⁵This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:

I am going to feed these people bitterness
and give them poison to drink.

¹⁶I will scatter them among nations
that they and their ancestors haven't heard of.
I will send armies after them until I've wiped them out.

¹⁷This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Consider this:
Call for the women who cry at funerals.
Send for those who are the most skilled.

¹⁸They should come quickly and cry for us.
Our eyes will run with tears.
Our eyelids will flow with water.

¹⁹The sound of crying is heard from Zion.
We're ruined.
We're very ashamed.
We must leave our land
because our homes have been torn down.

²⁰Listen to the LORD's word, you women,
and open your ears to hear his words.
Teach your daughters how to cry.
Teach your neighbors funeral songs.

²¹Death has come through our windows
and entered our palaces.
Death has cut down the children in the streets
and the young men in the marketplaces.

²²This is what the LORD says:

Dead bodies will fall like manure on the field.
They will be like grain that has been cut but not gathered.

The LORD Is the Only True God

^{8:23}This is what the LORD says:

Don't let wise people brag about their wisdom.
Don't let strong people brag about their strength.
Don't let rich people brag about their riches.

²⁴If they want to brag,
they should brag that they understand and know me.
They should brag that I, the LORD,
act out of love, righteousness,
and justice on the earth.

This kind of bragging pleases me,
declares the LORD.

²⁵The days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will punish all who are circumcised.

²⁶I will punish Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, and Moab.
I will punish all who shave the hair on their foreheads
or live in the desert.

Even though these nations are circumcised,
all Israel has uncircumcised hearts.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah expresses sorrow because God is punishing his people with the wicked Babylonians. They are killing many, torturing many, and deporting a few to Babylon. God is very angry with his people.

Yet Jeremiah says he wishes he could abandon his people. They wear themselves out doing wrong. God says he will refine his people with fire and test them.

God says they have abandoned his teachings and followed Baal so he will scatter them among the nations.

God also says he will punish the nations even though they are circumcised, the nations of Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Even though Israel is circumcised physically, they have uncircumcised hearts.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does Jeremiah call the Judeans *my dear people* ^{bath-daughter} 3X given the way they act toward God?
2. Jeremiah asks: Why hasn't the health of *my dear people* been restored? How can he ask this? Isn't God just to punish Judah?
3. Why is God punishing the land as well as his chosen people?
Jeremiah 9:12
4. God says he will wipe his people out. **Jeremiah 9:16**. Is this hyperbole? Why?

5. Only 4,600 Judean men and their families were deported to Babylon out of a population of 1-2 million. **Jeremiah 52:30**. Why did the Babylonians do to the remainder of the Judeans. **HINT: Jeremiah 9:16, 21-22**
6. God says people should brag that the Lord acts out of love, righteousness, and justice. How can the Judeans say this in view of what is happening now?

PERICOPE 10 [Sermon 8]

Jeremiah Ridicules Judah's Idolatry

10:1 Listen to the message that the LORD has spoken to you, nation of Israel. ²This is what the LORD says:

Don't learn the practices of the nations.
Don't be frightened by the signs in the sky
because the nations are frightened by them.

³The religion of the people is worthless.
Woodcutters cut down trees from the forest.
The hands of craftsmen prepare them as idols with axes.

⁴Craftsmen decorate them with silver and gold
and fasten them together with hammers and nails
so that they won't fall over.

⁵These trees are like scarecrows in cucumber gardens.
They aren't able to speak.
They have to be carried, because they can't walk.

Don't be afraid of them.
They can't harm you.
They can't do you any good either.

⁶No one is like you, O LORD.
You are great.
Your name is powerful.

⁷Everyone fears you, O King of the Nations.
This is what you deserve.
No one is like you
among all the wise people in the nations
or in all their kingdoms.

⁸They are complete idiots.

They learn nonsense from wooden idols.

⁹Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish
and gold from Uphaz.

Craftsmen and goldsmiths shape these metals.

The clothing for the idols is blue and purple,
all made by skilled workers.

¹⁰But the LORD is the only God.

He is the living God and eternal king.

The earth trembles when he is angry.

The nations can't endure his fury.

¹¹Tell them this:

These gods will disappear from the earth
and from under heaven

because they didn't make heaven and earth.

¹²The LORD made the earth by his power.

He set up the world by his skill.

He stretched out the world by his understanding.

¹³He speaks and the water in the sky produces a storm.

He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth.

He makes lightning flash with the rain.

He brings wind out of his storehouses.

¹⁴Everyone is stupid and ignorant.

Metalsmiths are put to shame by their idols.

Their statues are false ^{gods}.

They can't breathe.

¹⁵They are worthless jokes.

When they are punished, they disappear.

¹⁶Jacob's God isn't like them.
He made everything,
and Israel is the tribe that belongs to him.
His name is the LORD of Armies.

¹⁷Pick up your bags.
You are being blockaded.

¹⁸This is what the LORD says:

I am going to throw out those who live in the land at this time
and cause trouble for them so that they will feel it.

¹⁹O, I'm wounded!
My wound is serious.
Then I thought:
This is my punishment and I will bear it.

²⁰My tent is destroyed and all my ropes are broken.
My children have left me and have disappeared.
There's no one to set up my tent again
or put up my tent curtains.

²¹The shepherds are foolish.
They don't look to the LORD for help.
That is why they won't succeed,
and all their flocks will be scattered.

²²The report has arrived.
A tremendous uproar is coming from the land of the north.
Its army will destroy Judah's cities
and make them homes for jackals.

²³O LORD, I know that the way humans act
is not under their control.
Humans do not direct their steps as they walk.

²⁴Correct me, O LORD, but please be fair.
Don't correct me when you're angry.
Otherwise, you'll reduce me to nothing.

²⁵Pour out your fury
on the nations who don't know you
and on people who don't worship you.

They have devoured the descendants of Jacob.
They have devoured them completely.
They have destroyed their homes.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God ridicules idols people make. How can these statues do what God does? God has made the world. He brings rain to Judah. He brings cool winds to the land. God destroys all of Judah's cities and makes them desolate.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Read **Isaiah 44:9-20; 46:6-7**. Compare this to **Jeremiah 10:3-5, 8-9, 14-15**. What is the purpose of making an idol and how well does the idol fulfill its purpose?
2. What are the signs in the sky that frighten people? **HINT: Matthew 16:3**
3. Jeremiah pleads with God:

O Lord, I know that the way humans act is not under their control. Humans do not direct their steps as they walk. Correct me, O Lord, but please be fair. Don't correct me when you're angry. Otherwise, you'll reduce me to nothing. **Jeremiah 10:23-24**

If humans are not responsible for their actions, how can God punish them?

4. Jeremiah asks God to punish the Babylonians. **Jeremiah 10:25**. But how can he ask this? The king of Babylon is God's servant. **Jeremiah 25:9**. He is doing what God asked him to do, isn't he? **HINT: Jeremiah 51:24, 49**

PERICOPE 11 [Sermon 9]

Judah Has Disobeyed the LORD's Covenant

11:1 This is the message that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. He said: ²Listen to the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. ³Say to them: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Cursed is anyone who doesn't listen to the terms of this covenant. ⁴I made this promise to your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, which was an iron smelter. I said: Obey me and do everything that I have told you to do. *Then you will be my people, and I will be your God.* ⁵I will keep the oath I made to your ancestors and give them a land flowing with milk and honey, the land you still have today.

I answered: Yes, LORD.

⁶The LORD said to me: Announce all these things in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: Listen to the terms of this covenant and keep them. ⁷I solemnly warned your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt and the warning still applies to you today. I solemnly warned them to obey me. ⁸But they didn't obey me or pay attention to me. They followed their own stubborn, evil ways. So I punished them because they did not keep all the terms of the covenant, the terms that I commanded them to keep.

⁹The LORD said to me: Conspiracy exists among the people of Judah and among those who live in Jerusalem. ¹⁰They've gone back to the evil ways of their ancestors and refused to obey my words. They are following other gods and worshiping them. The nations of Israel and Judah have rejected the covenant that I made to their ancestors. ¹¹This is what the LORD says: I'm going to bring a disaster on them that they can't escape. Although they will cry out to me, I won't listen to them. ¹²Then the cities of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem will cry to the gods to whom they've been sacrificing. But these gods will never rescue them when they're in trouble.

¹³Judah, you have as many gods as you have cities. You have set up many altars in Jerusalem to sacrifice to Baal. You have as many altars as there are streets in

Jerusalem. ¹⁴Jeremiah, don't pray for these people. Don't cry or pray for them. I won't listen when they call to me for help in times of trouble.

¹⁵What right do these people I love have to be in my house when they do so many devious things?

Can the meat from their sacrifices turn disaster away from them?
They rejoice when they do evil.”

¹⁶The LORD called you a large olive tree
that has beautiful fruit to look at.
He will set fire to you with a mighty storm,
and your branches will be broken.

¹⁷The LORD of Armies planted you.
He has pronounced disaster on you.
This is because of the evil things
that Israel and Judah have done.

They have made him furious
by burning incense as an offering to Baal.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. This was the Ten Commandments. **Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21.** God then summarizes the result of Israel's keeping this covenant. *I will be your God and you will be my people.* **Jeremiah 11:4**

But the Judeans are now worshiping other gods and breaking the covenant. They've gone back to the evil ways of their ancestors. So God again says: Jeremiah, don't pray for these people. **Jeremiah 11:14**

God will bring a disaster on his people. Even though God called Judah a large olive tree with beautiful fruit, now he will set fire to them and its branches will be broken. He has pronounced disaster on them.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does God again tell Jeremiah not to pray for the Judeans? He will say this three times in the Book of Jeremiah.
2. God says: Cursed is anyone who doesn't listen to the terms of this covenant. **Jeremiah 11:3**. What is the curse that God will call on those who break God's covenant?
3. Judah is called an Olive Tree in **Hosea 14:6** and **Jeremiah 11:16**. What does the olive tree represent here?
4. God says: Although they will cry out to me, I won't listen to them. **Jeremiah 11:11**. This seems inconsistent with God's greatest attribute of **chesed** or loving kindness. **Exodus 34:6-7**. Is it? Is God simply saying he will hide his face from them? HINT: **Deuteronomy 31:17-18; 32:20; Psalm 88:14; 143:7**

PERICOPE 12

The Priests of Anathoth Threaten to Kill Jeremiah

¹⁸The LORD revealed their plot to me so that I would understand. He showed me what they were doing. ¹⁹I was like a trusting lamb brought to the slaughter. I didn't know that they were plotting against me. They were saying: Let's destroy the tree with its fruit. Let's cut Jeremiah off from this world of the living so that we won't be reminded of him anymore.

²⁰O LORD of Armies, you judge fairly
and test motives and thoughts.
I want to see you take revenge on them,
because I've brought my case to you.

²¹This is what the LORD says: The people of Anathoth want to kill you. They say: Don't prophesy in the name of the LORD or we'll kill you.

²²This is what the LORD of Armies says: I'm going to punish them. Their young men will die because of war. Their sons and daughters will die because of famine. ²³I will bring a disaster on the people of Anathoth. It will be a year of punishment. There will be no survivors.

Jeremiah's First Confession

12:1 O LORD, even if I would argue my case with you,
you would always be right.
Yet, I want to talk to you about your justice.
Why do wicked people succeed?
Why do treacherous people have peace and quiet?

²You plant them, and they take root.
They grow, and they produce fruit.
They speak well of you with their lips,
but their hearts are far from you.

³You know me, O LORD.
You see me and test my devotion to you.
Drag them away like sheep to be slaughtered.
Prepare them for the day of slaughter.

⁴How long will the land mourn?
How long will the plants in every field remain dried up?
The animals and the birds are dying,
because people are wicked.

They think that God doesn't know what they are doing.

The LORD's Reply to Jeremiah's Question

^{12:5} If you have raced against others on foot,
and they have tired you out,
how can you compete with horses?

If you stumble in open country,
how can you live in the jungle along the Jordan River?

⁶ Even your relatives
and members of your father's household betray you.
They have also formed a mob to find you.
Don't trust them when they say good things about you.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Within this pericope is the first of what are called Jeremiah's Confessions. There are prayers, laments, monologues, dialogues and disputes with God. They are in **Jeremiah 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 20:7-18**. These reveal the inner struggles of the human Jeremiah as he struggles to be God's prophet.

Jeremiah's father Hilkiyah is the High Priest. Apparently, he was the one who found the Book of Deuteronomy in the temple and brought it to Shaphan who then gave it to King Josiah. **2 Kings 22:8-10; 2 Chronicles 34:14-18**.

As Hilkiah's son, Jeremiah expected to be a priest. But God called him to the different job of being a prophet.

How disappointed Hilkiah must have been. He had plans for his son. But now Jeremiah was aggravating the King, the priests, false prophets and almost everyone. So the people of Anathoth, the village of the priests only three miles north of Jerusalem, wanted to kill Jeremiah. God tells Jeremiah he will punish the village and there will be no survivors. This apparently means all of Jeremiah's relatives will be killed also.

Jeremiah asks God why wicked people prosper? Why do treacherous people have peace and quiet? **Jeremiah 12:1; Psalm 73:2-3.** God tells Jeremiah: You have not seen trouble yet. If you have raced against others on foot, how can you compete with those on horses? If you struggle in open country, how can you live in the jungle along the Jordan River.

God tells Jeremiah not to trust his relatives or members of his father's household. They have formed a mob to find you. So Jeremiah is all alone without any friends.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How can God leave his prophet Jeremiah without any friends? He won't. Name the four friends Jeremiah will have. HINT: **Jeremiah 26:24; 32:12; 38:4; 40:5**
2. If all of Jeremiah's family and relatives are against him, why does he want to buy a field at Anathoth? **Jeremiah 32**
3. When God asks Jeremiah if he can't outrun people of foot, how can he outrun people on horses, what is God saying to him?

PERICOPE 13 [Sermon 10]

Jeremiah Performs a Sign Act with a Linen Belt

12:7 I have abandoned my nation.

I have left my own people.

I have handed the people I love over to their enemies.

⁸My people have turned on me like a lion in the forest.

They roar at me, so I hate them.

⁹My people are like a colorful bird of prey.

Other birds of prey surround it.

Go, gather all the animals in the field,

and bring them to devour it.

¹⁰Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard.

They've trampled my property.

They've turned my pleasant property into a wasteland.

¹¹They've left it a wasteland.

Devastated, it mourns in my presence.

The whole land is destroyed,

but no one takes this to heart.

¹²Looters swarm all over the bare hills in the desert.

The LORD's sword destroys them

from one end of the land to the other.

No one will be safe.

¹³My people planted wheat, but they harvested thorns.

They worked until they became sick

but they gained nothing by it.

They were disappointed by their harvests

because of the burning anger of the LORD.

¹⁴This is what I, the LORD, say about all my evil neighbors who take the inheritance that I gave my people Israel: I am going to uproot those neighbors from their lands. I will also uproot the people of Judah from among them. ¹⁵After I've uprooted them, I will have compassion on them again. I will return them to their inheritance and to their lands. ¹⁶Suppose they learn carefully the ways of my people. Suppose they take an oath in my name: As the LORD lives ... as they taught my people to take an oath in the name of Baal. Then they will build homes among my people. ¹⁷But suppose they don't listen. Then I will uproot that nation and destroy it, declares the LORD.

Jeremiah's First Sign Act

13:1 This is what the LORD said to me: Buy a linen belt. Put it around your waist. Don't let it get wet. ²So I bought the belt, as the LORD had told me and put it around my waist.

³The LORD spoke his word to me again. He said: ⁴"Take the belt that you bought, the one you're wearing. Go to the Euphrates River and bury it there in a crack in the rocks. ⁵So I went and buried it by the Euphrates, as the LORD had told me.

⁶After many days the LORD said to me: Go to the Euphrates and get the belt from where I told you to bury it. ⁷So I went back to the Euphrates and dug it up. I got the belt from where I had buried it. Now the belt was ruined. It was good for nothing.

⁸Then the LORD spoke his word to me. He said: ⁹This is what the LORD says: This is how I will destroy Judah's arrogance and Jerusalem's extreme arrogance. ¹⁰These wicked people refuse to listen to me. They go their own stubborn ways and follow other gods in order to serve them and worship them. They are like this good-for-nothing belt. ¹¹As a belt clings to a person's waist, so I have made the entire nation of Israel and the entire nation of Judah cling to me, declares the LORD. I did this so that they would be my people and bring fame, praise, and honor to me. However, they wouldn't listen.

¹² Give this message to them: This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Every bottle will be filled with wine. Then they will say to you: We know that every bottle will be filled with wine. ¹³Say to them: This is what the LORD says: I'm going to make everyone who lives in this land drunk. The kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all those who live in Jerusalem will become drunk. ¹⁴Then I will smash them like bottles against each other. I will smash parents and children together, declares the LORD. I will have no pity, mercy, or compassion when I destroy them.

¹⁵Listen, and pay attention.
Don't be arrogant. The LORD has spoken.

¹⁶Honor the LORD your God before it gets dark,
before your feet stumble on the mountains in the twilight.
You will look for light,
but the LORD will turn it into the shadow of death
and change it into deep darkness.

¹⁷If you won't listen,
I will cry secretly over your arrogance.
I will cry bitterly, and my eyes will flow with tears
because the LORD's flock will be taken captive.

¹⁸Say to the king and his mother King Jehoiachin 597 AD,
Come down from your thrones,
because your crowns have fallen off your heads.

¹⁹The cities in the Negev will be locked up,
and there will be no one to reopen them.
All the people of Judah will be taken away into captivity.

²⁰Look up and see those who are coming from the north.
Where is the flock that was given to you—your beautiful sheep?

²¹What will you say
when God makes the people you thought were your friends

your new masters?
Won't pain grip you like a woman in labor?

²² If you ask yourself:
Why do these things happen to me?
it's because you have so many sins.
Your clothes have been torn off
and your limbs are bare.

²³ Can Ethiopians change the color of their skin
or leopards change their spots?
Can you do good
when you're taught to do wrong?

²⁴ I will scatter you like straw
that is blown away by a desert wind.
²⁵ This is your fate, the destiny I have planned for you,
declares the LORD.
You have forgotten me and trusted false gods.

²⁶ I will also tear off your clothes,
and your shame will be seen.

²⁷ I have seen you commit adultery and squeal with delight.
I have seen you act like a shameless prostitute
on the hills and in the fields.

How horrible it will be for you, Jerusalem!
Will you ever be clean?

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God first talks about Judah's neighbors who rush into Judah after the Babylonians have done their worst. Ammon, Moab, and Edom especially coveted the land of Judah. They are looters over the devastated land.

God says first he will punish them but then he will forgive them if they now take oaths in the genuine God's name **YHWH** instead of the false god Baal. God will allow them to live among his people. If they won't do so, God will uproot their nation.

Now Jeremiah performs his first sign act. God tells Jeremiah to buy a linen belt and walk to the Euphrates River –533 miles away. At the river, he is to bury it in a crack in the rocks. Many day later, he is to recover the linen belt. Jeremiah did so and saw that the belt was ruined. God told him the lesson he was teaching him.

I will destroy Judah's arrogance and Jerusalem's arrogance. As the belt clings to a person's waist, so I have made the nations of Israel and Judah cling to me. I did this so they would bring honor to me. However, they wouldn't listen and so became ruined. God says: I will make everyone drunk. Then I will smash them like bottles against one another.

They will look for light, but I will turn it into the shadow of death – into deep darkness. But I will secretly cry over their arrogance. Say to the king and his mother King Jehoiachin 597 BC, come down from your thrones.

God asks: Can they do good when they've been taught to do wrong?

God asks: Jerusalem, can you ever be clean?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT?

1. Read **Psalm 137:7-9**. What did the Edomites do when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians? How will God punish them?
2. When Judah returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 535 BC, people from Ammon, Moab, and Edom had taken over their land. Apparently, the Judeans had to fight hard to kick these squatters off their land. Nehemiah tells us that when they were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, men had to keep a weapon in their hand as they were building because of threats of enemies. **Nehemiah 4:17**. How will God punish those who threaten God's people?

3. God apparently tells Jeremiah to walk 533 miles from Jerusalem to the Euphrates river twice. Once to place the linen belt in a crack in the rock and again to retrieve it. How long does it take Jeremiah to walk those 533 miles?
4. How does God want the Judeans to become clean? **Jeremiah 13:27**

PERICOPE 14

The LORD Sends a Drought

14:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah about the drought.

²Judah mourns; its gates fall apart.

The people of Judah sit in mourning on the ground.

Their cry goes up from Jerusalem.

³Important people send their assistants out for water.

They go to the cisterns, but they don't find any water.

They come back with their containers empty.

They cover their heads, because they are ashamed and disgraced.

⁴The ground is cracked because there has been no rain in the land.

The farmers are disappointed. They cover their heads.

⁵Even deer in the fields give birth and abandon their young because there's no grass.

⁶Wild donkeys stand on the bare hills.

They sniff the air like jackals.

Their eyesight fails because they have no green plants.

⁷Do something, LORD, for the sake of your name, even though our sins testify against us.

We have been unfaithful and have sinned against you.

⁸You Lord are Israel's hope, the one who saves it in times of trouble.

Why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who stays only one night?

⁹Why should you be like someone taken by surprise, like a strong man who cannot help?

You, O LORD, are among us.

We are called by your name.
Don't leave us.

¹⁰This is what the LORD says about these people: They love to wander. They don't keep their feet where they belong. So the LORD isn't happy with them. He will remember their crimes and punish their sins.

¹¹The LORD said to me: Don't pray for the good of these people. ¹²Even if they go without food, I won't listen to their cries for help. Even if they sacrifice burnt offerings and grain offerings, I won't be pleased with them. But I will destroy these people with wars, famines, and plagues.

¹³Then I said: Almighty LORD, false prophets are saying to them: You won't see wars or famines, because I, the LORD, will give you lasting peace in this place.

¹⁴ Then the LORD told me: These are the lies that the prophets are telling in my name: They claim that I sent them, commanded them, and spoke to them. They dreamed up the visions they tell you. Their predictions are worthless. They are the products of their own imagination.

¹⁵ I didn't send these prophets. Yet, they prophesy in my name that there will be no wars or famines in this land. So this is what I, the LORD, say about them: Wars and famines will bring an end to these prophets. ¹⁶The people they prophesy to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem. They will be victims of famines and wars. No one will bury them, their wives, their sons, or their daughters. I will pour on them the destruction that they deserve.

¹⁷Say this to them:

'My eyes flow with tears day and night without stopping because my dear people will suffer massive destruction. It will be a very serious blow.

¹⁸ If I go to the field, I see those killed because of war. If I go to the city, I see those sick because of famine. Prophets and priests wander through a land they haven't heard of.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Most of the fresh water in Israel comes from the rain that drops from the sky when the warm air over the Mediterranean Sea hits the mountains in Israel. There is also dew on the ground in the morning that waters crops.

But when there is a drought, the people in Israel are in trouble. Abraham left Canaan for Egypt because there was a famine in the land. **Genesis 12:10**. Jacob send his sons to Egypt to buy grain because there was a famine in Canaan. **Genesis 41:54**

Here, in Jeremiah's time, the Lord sends drought withholding rain from heaven. Judah cries out saying: Do something, Lord, for the sake of your name, even though our sins testify against us. **Jeremiah 14:7**. Yet the Lord tells Jeremiah: Don't pray for the god of this people. Even if they go without food, I won't listen to their cries for help. **Jeremiah 14:11-12**

Yet the people are beset by the false prophets saying: You won't see wars or famines in this place because the Lord will give you peace in this place. God says: These are the lies the false prophets tell in my name. I didn't send them. **Jeremiah 14:15**. So the Lord says: Wars and famines will bring an end to these prophets.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The people pray to the Lord: Do something for the sake of your name. **Jeremiah 14:7**. Why do the people feel the Lord should send rain?
2. Why does the Lord tell Jeremiah for a third time not to pray for the people? What will this accomplish? How will Jeremiah feel about doing this?
3. Why does Jeremiah tell God what the false prophets are saying? Doesn't God know this already?
4. Jeremiah attempts to have God forgive the people because they think the false prophets are speaking God's words. How can God show that the words the prophets speak are not his words? **Jeremiah 14:13-15**

5. God says: My eyes flow with tears day and night without stopping because my dear people will suffer massive destruction. **Jeremiah 14:17**. Why, then, doesn't God do something?
6. Early on, God warned people that he controls the rain in the Promised Land. **Deuteronomy 11:10-17**. Summarize this warning.
7. Beginning in **Jeremiah 14:7**, Jeremiah prayed to God for the people. God has told Jeremiah not to pray for the people. **Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11**. Why does Jeremiah disobey God?

PERICOPE 15

Jeremiah Prays for the Nation of Judah

14:19 [Jeremiah says: Lord,] have you completely rejected Judah?
Do you despise Zion?

Why have you struck us so hard that we cannot heal?
We hope for peace, but no good comes from it.
We hope for a time of healing, but there's only terror.

²⁰ O LORD, we realize our wickedness
and the wrongs done by our ancestors.
We have sinned against you.

²¹ For the sake of your name, don't despise us.
Don't dishonor your glorious throne.
Remember your covenant to us; don't break it.

²² The worthless gods of the nations can't make it rain.
By themselves, the skies can't give showers.
But you can, O LORD our God.
We have hope in you because you do all these things.

15:1 Then the LORD said to me: Even if Moses and Samuel were standing in front of me, I would not feel sorry for these people. Send them away from me and let them go. ²When they ask you where they should go, say to them: This is what the LORD says:

Those who are destined to die will die.
Those who are destined to die in wars will die in wars.
Those who are destined to die in famines will die in famines.
Those who are destined to die in captivity will die in captivity.

³I will devise four ways to punish them, declares the LORD. I will send swords to kill, dogs to drag away, and birds and animals to devour and destroy. ⁴I will make these people a horrifying sight to all the kingdoms on

the earth. This will happen because of what Judah's King Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, did in Jerusalem. **2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20**

⁵No one will take pity on you, Jerusalem.

No one will mourn for you.

No one will bother to ask how you are doing.

⁶You have left me, declares the LORD.

You have turned your back on me.

So I will use my power against you and destroy you.

I'm tired of showing compassion to you.

⁷I will separate them with a winnowing shovel at the city gates.

I will make them childless.

I will destroy my people because they will not change their ways.

⁸Their widows will be more numerous
than the grains of sand on the seashore.

At noontime I will send a destroyer
against the mothers of young men.

I will suddenly bring anguish and terror to them.

⁹A mother who gives birth to seven sons will grow faint
and breathe her last.

She will die, ashamed and humiliated,
while it is still daylight.

I will put survivors from these people to death
in the presence of their enemies, declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Despite God telling Jeremiah not to pray for the people, Jeremiah still prays for them telling God he will pray for deliverance for the sake of God's name or reputation. Jeremiah even confesses their sins to God.

God then tells Jeremiah even if Moses and Samuel were praying for these people, he still would not feel sorry for them. Send them away from me and

let them go. **Jeremiah 15:1**. God says: You have left me. You have turned your back on me. So I will use my power against you and destroy you. **Jeremiah 15:4**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. It seems like Judah has really come to an end. Out of 1-2 million people, only 4,600 Judean men and their families will be deported to Babylon. The rest are either killed or will escape to Egypt or another country. The country is really being devastated and will become a wilderness. Why will God still allow some Judeans to return to Jerusalem from Babylon after 70 years?
2. Are the Babylonians the destroyer God will bring to the Judeans or is it a plague or famine? **Jeremiah 15:8**
3. How can God blame all the Judean people for the horrific actions of King Hezekiah's son King Manasseh? [686 - 642 BC] Should people be punished for the sins of their ancestors? **Exodus 34:7**

PERICOPE 16

Jeremiah's Second Confession

15:10 I'm so miserable!

Why did my mother give birth to me?

I am a man who argues and quarrels with the whole earth.

I have never lent or borrowed anything.

Yet, everyone curses me.

¹¹The LORD said:

I will certainly rescue you Jeremiah for a good reason.

I will certainly make your enemies plead with you

in times of disaster and in times of distress.

¹²No one can break iron, iron from the north, or bronze. **Jeremiah 1:16**

¹³I will give away your [Judah's] wealth and treasures as loot
as the price for all the sins that you have committed
throughout your territory.

¹⁴I will make you Judah serve your enemies
in a land that you haven't heard of,
because my anger has started a fire.
It will burn you.

¹⁵ [Jeremiah says:] O LORD, you understand.
Remember me, take care of me,
and take revenge on those who persecute me.

Be patient, and don't take me away.
You should know that I've been insulted because of you.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I devoured them.
Your words are my joy and my heart's delight,
because I am called by your name, O LORD God of Armies.

¹⁷I didn't keep company with those who laugh and have fun.
I sat alone because your hand was on me.
You filled me with outrage.

¹⁸Why is my pain unending
and my wound incurable, refusing to heal?
Will you Lord disappoint me like a stream
that dries up in summertime?

¹⁹This is what the LORD says:

If you will return, I will take you back.
If you will speak what is worthwhile
and not what is worthless,
you will stand in my presence.

The people will return to you,
but you will not return to them.

²⁰I will make you like a solid bronze wall
in front of these people.
They will fight you,
but they will not defeat you.
I am with you,
and I will save you and rescue you,
declares the LORD.

²¹I will rescue you from the power of wicked people
and free you from the power of tyrants.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah is terribly discouraged. Everyone is against him. Yet he continues to speak the Lord's word. God tells his prophet that he will rescue him and make his enemies plead with him. But he will make the people of Judah serve their enemies in a faraway land.

Jeremiah asks that the Lord not allow him to be killed. Please be patient with me Lord and know that I am insulted because of you. Your words are my joy and heart's delight. I sat alone without company.

But then Jeremiah accuses the Lord of being a dry *wadi* that disappoints a thirsty traveler causing him to have an incurable pain and a wound refusing to heal.

Now the Lord answers his prophet. If you will stop speaking like this, I will take you back. I guarantee the Judeans will return to you but you will not turn to their pagan ways. They will fight you but not defeat you. I am with you, says the Lord, and I will save you.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why has Jeremiah allowed us to hear this intimate dialogue with God? What are we to learn?
2. When Jeremiah accuses God of being a dry *wadi*, isn't this blasphemy? Why doesn't God interrupt and chastise Jeremiah immediately?
3. God does not promise Jeremiah freedom from persecution but only that he will not be killed. Keep on keeping on, God says. Is this enough for the prophet? Note that no friends have as yet showed up for Jeremiah.
4. When the Book of Deuteronomy was found in the temple, Jeremiah devoured these words as did King Josiah. Jeremiah 15:16. Can we imagine the king and Jeremiah discussing these words together? Why doesn't the Book of Jeremiah mention Jeremiah meeting with King Josiah?

PERICOPE 17

The LORD Tells Jeremiah Not to Marry and to Isolate Himself

16:1 The LORD spoke his word to me. He said: ²Don't marry. Don't have any sons or daughters in this place. ³This is what the LORD says about the sons and daughters born in this place and about the mothers and fathers who have children in this land: ⁴They will die horrible deaths. No one will mourn for them or bury them. They will be like manure on the ground. Wars and famines will bring them to an end. Their bodies will be food for birds and animals.

⁵This is what the LORD says: Don't go into a house where people are grieving. Don't go to mourn or to grieve for them. I'm taking my peace, love, and compassion away from these people, declares the LORD. ⁶Old and young alike will die in this land. No one will mourn for them or bury them. No one will cut his own body or shave his own head for them. ⁷No one will offer food to comfort those who mourn the dead. No one will give a consoling drink to those who have lost their fathers or mothers.

⁸Don't even go into a home where there is a banquet. Don't sit with them to eat and drink.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Most Jewish men married at age 20. Unmarried men were so rare there is no word for bachelor in the Hebrew language. Jews could become a priest at 30 years old. But God told Jeremiah not to marry and not to have children for children born in this land will have horrible deaths.

God also told his prophet to isolate himself from any social activities, including any mourning for the dead or even any banquets.

If people ask you why God has told you to say such horrible things to us, say it is because not only Judean ancestors sinned against God, you present

Judeans are sinning against God right now. You are following your own evil ways.

One day, people won't begin an oath praising God for delivering them from Egyptian slavery, but will praise God for allowing them to return from exile in the land of the north in Babylon. You are going into exile because you have polluted my land with your wickedness.

Jeremiah ends saying: The Lord is my strength and my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. **2 Samuel 22:2; Psalm 18:2; 31:3; 71:3; 91:2; 144:2**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why isn't God giving Jeremiah any friends to encourage him?
2. Why doesn't God want Jeremiah to participate in social events such as banquets or mourning times?
3. Is this the first time God has revealed to Jeremiah the exiles in Babylon will return to Jerusalem?

The Lord Will Bring More Disasters on Judah

16:9 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to put a stop to the sounds of joy and happiness and the sounds of brides and grooms in this place. This will happen in your lifetime, while you watch.

¹⁰When you tell the people all these things, they will ask you: Why does the LORD threaten us with all these disasters? What have we done wrong? How have we sinned against the LORD our God? ¹¹Then say to them: It's because your ancestors abandoned me, declares the LORD. They followed other gods, served them, worshiped them, and abandoned me. They didn't obey my teachings. ¹²You have done worse than your ancestors. All of you are following your own stubborn, evil ways that keep you from obeying me. ¹³So I will throw you out ~~and~~ hurl, cast out of this land into a land that you and your ancestors haven't heard of. There you will serve other gods day and night because I will no longer have pity on you.

One Day The Lord Will Bring His People Back to This Land

16:14 That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer begin an oath with: The LORD brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. *As the LORD lives...* ¹⁵But they will say: The LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of the north and all the lands where he had scattered them. *As the LORD lives...* They will say this because I will bring them back to the land that I gave their ancestors.

But First the Lord Will Punish Them for Their Wickedness

16:16 I'm going to send for many fishermen, declares the LORD and they will catch the people of Israel. After that, I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt for them on every mountain and hill and even in the cracks in the rocks. ¹⁷ I see everything that they do. They can't hide anything from me. Their wickedness can't be hidden. I can see it. ¹⁸ First, I will have them pay twice as much for their wickedness and their sin because they have polluted

my land. **Isaiah 40:2.** They have filled my property with the lifeless statues of their detestable and disgusting idols.

¹⁹The LORD is my strength and my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble.

Nations come to you
from the most distant parts of the world and say:
Our ancestors have inherited lies,
worthless and unprofitable gods.

²⁰ People can't make gods for themselves.
They aren't really gods.

²¹ That is what I will teach them.
This time I will make my power and my strength known to them.
Then they will know that my name is the LORD.

17:1 [The LORD says:] Judah's sin is written with an iron pen.
It is engraved with a diamond point
on the tablet of their hearts and on the horns of their altars.

² Even their children remember their altars
and their poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah
beside large trees on high hills
³ and on mountains in the open country.

I will turn your wealth and all your treasures into loot.
I will do this because of your worship sites and your sin
throughout all your territory.

⁴ You will lose the inheritance that I gave you.
I will make you serve your enemies in a land
that you haven't heard of.
I will do this because you have stirred up the fire of my anger.
It will burn forever.

⁵ This is what the LORD says:

Cursed is the person who trusts humans,
who makes flesh and blood his strength
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

⁶ He will be like a bush in the wilderness.
He will not see when something good comes.
He will live in the dry places in the desert,
in a salty land where no one can live.

⁷ Blessed is the person who trusts the LORD.
The LORD will be his confidence.

⁸ He will be like a tree that is planted by water.
It will send its roots down to a stream. **Psalm 1:3**
It will not be afraid in the heat of summer.
Its leaves will turn green.
It will not be anxious during droughts.
It will not stop producing fruit.

⁹ The human mind is the most deceitful of all things.
It is incurable.

No one can understand how deceitful it is.

¹⁰ I, the LORD, search minds and test hearts. **1 Chronicles 28:9**

I will reward each person for what he has done.

I will reward him for the results of his actions.

¹¹ A person who gets rich dishonestly is like a partridge
that hatches eggs it did not lay.

During his lifetime, he will lose his wealth.

In the end, he will be a godless fool.

¹² Our holy place is a glorious throne,
highly honored from the beginning.

¹³O LORD, the Hope of Israel,
all who abandon you will be put to shame.
Those who turn away from you will be written in dust,
because they abandon the LORD,
the fountain of life-giving water. **Jeremiah 2:13**

¹⁴Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed.
Rescue me, and I will be rescued.
You are the one I praise.

¹⁵People keep asking me:
Where is the LORD's word?
Let it come.

¹⁶I have not run away from being your shepherd,
and I have not longed for the day of destruction.
You know what came out of my mouth.

¹⁷Do not terrorize me.
You are my refuge on the day of disaster.

¹⁸Put my persecutors to shame,
but do not let me be put to shame.
Terrify them,
but do not let me be terrified.
Bring the day of disaster on them,
and destroy them completely.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The Lord begins by again telling Jeremiah why he is anxious with his people. Not only their ancestors worshiped other gods, but they did also. So God is going to hurl them out of this land to another land where they will worship gods of wood and stone. But one day, he will bring them back to this land he promised to their ancestors.

On that day they will use an oath saying: The Lord has brought us back to his land. But first in the land of the north they will pay twice for all the wickedness they have done as the prophet Isaiah has said.

Then God says: Cursed is the person who trusts humans. He will live in dry places in the desert. But the person who trusts the Lord will be like a tree beside water. He will not be afraid of the heat in summer. This tree will never stop producing fruit.

God says: The human heart is the most deceitful of all things. No one can understand how deceitful it is. I, the Lord, search hearts as King David told King Solomon. I will reward each person for what he has done.

Jeremiah then praises God and then asks YHWH to heal him. He also asked to be rescued from wicked people. Jeremiah says: I am your Shepherd and I have not longed for the day of word. You are my refuge on the day of disaster. Terrify my persecutors. Bring the day of disaster on them and destroy them completely.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Much of the Book of Jeremiah is repetitious. God says over and over: Your ancestors sinned against me and you have sinned against me. Why does God keep repeating himself?
2. God says he will hurl them out of the Promised Land. This rare word hurl expresses the anger of God. Why is God so angry?
3. God says he will make the Judeans serve their enemies in a land the Judeans have never heard of. **Jeremiah 17:4**. Look up the curses in **Deuteronomy 28**. Locate the verse where God says this.
4. Why does God say the human heart is so very deceitful? **Jeremiah 17:9**. What prevents a person from constantly doing wrong?
5. Why is it important for us to know that God knows our motivations – the reasons we do what we do?
6. What does Jeremiah tell the people when they ask: Where is the Lord's word. Let it come. **Jeremiah 17:13**

7. In **Jeremiah 17:16**, Jeremiah says he has not longed for the day of destruction. But in **Jeremiah 17:18** he asks God to bring the day of destruction on his persecutors. Isn't he being inconsistent?

The Blessing That Comes from Observing Sabbath

17:19 This is what the LORD said to me: Stand at People's Gate, where the kings of Judah go in and out. Then stand at every gate in Jerusalem. ²⁰Tell everyone: Listen to the LORD's word, you kings of Judah, all the people of Judah, and all those who live in Jerusalem, and go through these gates. ²¹This is what the LORD says: Watch out! If you value your lives, do not carry anything on the day of rest—a holy day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. ²²Do not bring anything out of your homes on the day of rest. Do not do any work but observe the day of rest as a holy day as I told your ancestors. Your ancestors did not obey me or pay attention to me. They were impossible to deal with and would not listen or accept discipline.

²⁴Now, declares the LORD, you must listen to me and not bring anything through the gates of this city on the day of rest. You must observe the day of rest as a holy day by not doing any work on it. ²⁵If you do this, then the kings and princes who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city. They and their princes will ride in chariots and on horses along with the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. This city will always have people living in it.

²⁶People will come from the cities of Judah, from all around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin, from the foothills, from the mountains, and from the Negev. They will bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, and incense. They will also bring thank offerings to the LORD's temple. ²⁷But you must listen to me and observe the day of rest as a holy day by not carrying anything through the gates of Jerusalem on the day of rest. If you don't do this, I will set its gates on fire. The fire will burn down the palaces in Jerusalem, and you won't be able to put it out.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Observing the Sabbath day is the fourth of the Ten Commandment of God's covenant with Israel. This is the fundamental law of the Lord. How much more basic can you get than this in obeying God?

Isaiah uses the word *Sabbath* 4x, Jeremiah 4x, and Ezekiel 3x. Observing this commandment was important to all of the prophets. It was a visible way people demonstrated they were obeying this law of the Lord.

It was observable that the people in Jerusalem were not observing the Sabbath so Jeremiah speaks of it. God says if people carry things through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath, God will set the gates on fire and that fire will burn down the palaces in Jerusalem.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The Sabbath is mentioned 12x in Exodus and 12x in Leviticus, but less in every other book of the Hebrew Bible. Why is that?
2. What is God's purpose in requiring people to honor the Seventh day? What actions of God did the Sabbath remind people of?

The People of Israel Are Like Clay for a Potter

18:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²Go to the potter's house. There I will give you my message.

³I went to the potter's house, and he was working there at his wheel.

⁴Whenever a clay pot he was working on was ruined, he would rework it into a new clay pot the way he wanted to make it.

⁵The LORD spoke his word to me. The LORD asked: ⁶Nation of Israel, can't I do with you as this potter does with clay? Nation of Israel, you are like the clay in the potter's hands.

⁷At one time I may threaten to tear up, break down, and destroy a nation or a kingdom. ⁸But suppose the nation that I threatened turns away from doing wrong. Then I will change my plans about the disaster I planned to do to it.

⁹At another time I may promise to build and plant a nation or a kingdom.

¹⁰But suppose that nation does what I consider evil and doesn't obey me. Then I will change my plans about the good that I promised to do to it.

¹¹Now say to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem: This is what the LORD says: I'm going to prepare a disaster and make plans against you. Turn from your evil ways, change your lives, and do good.

¹²But they will answer: It's useless. We'll live the way we want to. We'll go our own stubborn, evil ways.

¹³ This is what the LORD says:

Ask among the nations if anyone has ever heard anything like this. The people of Israel have done a very horrible thing.

¹⁴The rocky slopes of Lebanon are never without snow.

The cool mountain streams never dry up.

¹⁵But my people have forgotten me.
They burn incense as an offering to worthless idols,
and they stumble along the way, on the ancient path.
They go on side roads and not on major highways.

¹⁶Their land will become desolate
and something to be hissed at forever.
Everyone who will pass by it will be stunned and shake his head.

¹⁷Like the east wind I will scatter them in front of the enemy.
On the day of their disaster,
I will show them my back, not my face.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Earlier Jeremiah had said: O Lord, I know that the way humans act is not under their control. Humans do not direct their steps as they walk. **Jeremiah 10:23**. In the same way, a potter shapes the clay on his wheel into the shape he wants.

God says that in the same way he may threaten to tear down a kingdom. But if the kingdom repents, God will change his plans and not destroy it.

God then tells Jeremiah to tell the people: Turn from your evil ways and God will not punish you. But if you will not, I will scatter them in the face of the enemy on the day of disaster.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In **Isaiah 64:8**, the people of Jerusalem pleaded with God:

But now Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay and you are the potter. We are the work of your hands.

This is the relationship and repentance God wants with his people. But the people of Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time wouldn't say this. Why not?

2. Why do people often attempt to hold God to his promises but fail to remember when they break their promises to God?
3. How does the Book of Jonah demonstrate the lessons God wants Jeremiah to learn from the work of the potter?

PERCOPE 21

The People Plot to Kill Jeremiah

18:18 Then they said: Let's plot against Jeremiah because the teachings of the priests, the advice of wise people, and the word of the prophets won't disappear. Accuse him. Pay no attention to anything he says.

Jeremiah Prays to God

¹⁹ Pay attention to me, O LORD,
and listen to what my accusers say.

²⁰ Good should not be paid back with evil.
They dig a pit to take my life.
Remember how I stood in your presence and pleaded for them
in order to turn your anger away from them.

²¹ Now, hand their children over to famine.
Pour out their blood by using your sword.
Then their wives will become childless widows.
Their husbands will be put to death.
Their young men will be struck down in battle.

²² Make them cry out from their homes
when you suddenly send troops against them,
because they dug a pit to catch me and hid snares for my feet.

²³ But you, O LORD, know that they plan to kill me.
Don't forgive their crimes.
Don't wipe their sins out of your sight.
Make them stumble in your presence.
Deal with them when you get angry.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Instead of listening to God's shepherd, the people of Jerusalem said: Let's plot against Jeremiah. The teaching of the priests, the advice of wise people, and the word of prophets is contrary to his. Pay no attention to him.

Jeremiah asks God: Pour out their blood by using your sword. Make them cry out when troops arrive because they have dug a pit to catch me. You know, O Lord, that they plan to kill me. Don't forgive their crimes. Deal with them in your anger.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. This is Jeremiah at his angriest. He says: O Lord, you know that they plan to kill me. Deal with them in your anger. **Jeremiah 18:23**. He asks that his persecutors be killed with God's sword. He asks that they have extreme terror when they see the troops coming.

Is this a proper attitude for God's prophet? Is there an alternative for Jeremiah to follow?

2. Why did people think Jeremiah's prophecies were false? What was Jeremiah asking them to do that they did not want to do?

3. While people can ask God to curse others, God will not respond because he is more merciful than humans are? What does God do then to the human who asks him to curse others?

4. Did Jeremiah's request to have God curse these people come from his wounded pride or because the people broke God's covenant? How can you tell?

PERICOPE 22 [Sermon 14] The 2nd Sign Act

Israel Will Be Smashed Like a Clay Jar

19:1 This is what the Lord says: Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some of the leaders of the people and some of the leaders of the priests. ²Go to the valley of Ben Hinnom at the entrance to Potsherd Gate. Announce there the things I plan to do. ³Say: Listen to the LORD's word, you kings of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to bring such a disaster on this place that the ears of everyone who hears about it will ring.

⁴The people, their ancestors, and the kings of Judah have abandoned me. They have made this place unrecognizable by burning incense as an offering to other gods that they hadn't heard of. They have filled this place with the blood of innocent people. ⁵They have built worship sites to burn their children as sacrifices to Baal. I didn't ask them or command them to do this. It never entered my mind.

⁶That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben Hinnom. Instead, it will be called Slaughter Valley. ⁷I will smash the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place. I will cut them down with swords in front of their enemies and with the hands of those who want to kill them. I will give their bodies as food to birds and to animals. ⁸I will devastate this city. It will become something to hiss at. Everyone who goes by it will be stunned and hiss with contempt at all the disasters that happen to it. ⁹I will make the people eat the flesh of their sons and daughters. They will eat each other's flesh during blockades and hardships that their enemies impose on them when they want to kill them.

¹⁰ [The LORD says:] Then smash the jar in front of the men who went with you. ¹¹Say to them: This is what the LORD of Armies says: I will smash these people and this city as this potter's jar was smashed beyond repair. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there's no other place to bury them. ¹²That's what I will do to this place and to those who live in it, declares the LORD. I will

make this city like Topheth. ¹³The houses in Jerusalem, the houses of the kings of Judah, and all the rooftops of the houses will be unclean like this city Topheth. This is because people burned incense to the entire army of heaven and poured out wine offerings to other gods.

¹⁴Then Jeremiah left Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy. He stood in the courtyard of the LORD's temple and said to all the people. ¹⁵This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to bring on this city and on all its towns the disasters that I threatened. They've become impossible to deal with, and they refuse to obey me.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God tells his prophet to buy a clay pot and ask some of the leaders of the people and some of the leaders of the priests to accompany him to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, the place where the garbage of the city was dumped and where previously people sacrificed their children to Moloch, the god of the Ammonites.

Jeremiah begins by saying: This is the Lord's word: I'm going to bring such a disaster on this place that everyone's ears will ring. The people, their ancestors, and the kings of Judah have abandoned the Lord. They have filled this place with the blood of innocent children.

So the days are coming when this place will no longer be called the Valley of Ben Hinnom but it will be called Slaughter Valley. I will cut down the people of Jerusalem in this place. Birds and animals will feast on their bodies. During the coming blockade of the city, people will eat the flesh of their sons and daughters.

God says: Smash this jar. Jeremiah, saying: This is what the Lord of Armies says: I will smash these people as you smash this jar. All the roofs of the houses in Jerusalem will become unclean because people burned incense to the army of heaven on these rooftops.

Then Jeremiah went to the temple courtyard. He said: God will bring on this city all the disasters he threatened. The people have become impossible to deal with and they refuse to obey me.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah has come to a point where he does not mince his words any longer, but says in a straight-forward way God's condemnation of the people of Jerusalem, and their priests, their prophets, and their kings. What does this indicate in God's timetable?
2. The people of Jerusalem really loved the army of heaven or the queen of heaven. Read **Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-18**. What did they use as proof that the queen of heaven would protect them?
3. Why did the people of Jerusalem worship the queen of heaven on the rooftops of their houses?

PERICOPE 23

Pashhur, the High Priest, Imprisons Jeremiah

20:1 Now the priest, Immer's son Pashhur, the chief officer of the LORD's temple, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. ²Pashhur struck the prophet Jeremiah and put him in prison at Upper Benjamin Gate that was in the LORD's temple.

³The next day when Pashhur took Jeremiah out of prison, Jeremiah said to him: The LORD doesn't call you Pashhur, but he calls you Terror Everywhere.

⁴This is what the LORD says: I'm going to make you terrify yourself and all your friends. Their enemies' swords will kill them and you will see it with your own eyes. I will hand all of Judah over to the king of Babylon. He will take the people away as captives to Babylon or kill them with swords. ⁵I will hand all the riches of this city over to their enemies. This will include all its produce, all its valuables, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. Their enemies will loot them, take them away, and bring them to Babylon.

⁶And you, Pashhur, and all those who live in your house will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon, and you will die there. You will be buried there together with all your friends to whom you prophesied these lies.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

We are not surprised when Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple imprisons Jeremiah for a day. We are only surprised it is for just one day. Jeremiah's words are terrible and he must have spoken them with a great deal of emotion.

Yet after Jeremiah is released, he continues his angry talk this time against the people of Jerusalem and now against Pashhur himself. Jeremiah prophesies that Pashhur and all in his house will be taken to Babylon. This is the first time in the book that Jeremiah mentions the word *Babylon*.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why doesn't Pashhur place Jeremiah immediately back into prison after he prophesies against him individually?
2. Why does Jeremiah call Pashhur *Terror Everywhere*?
3. What lie did Pashhur tell?
4. Why is it now an appropriate time for Jeremiah to use the word *Babylon*? He will use the word 16ix, the most of any book in the Bible. Isaiah uses the word 13x and Ezekiel 17x.

PERICOPE 24

Jeremiah Prays to the LORD—Jeremiah's 4th Confession

20:7 O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived.
You overpowered me and won.
I've been made fun of all day long.
Everyone mocks me.

⁸ Each time I speak, I have to cry out and shout:
Violence and destruction!
The LORD's word has made me the object of insults
and contempt all day long.

⁹ I think to myself: I can forget the LORD
and no longer speak his name.
But his word is inside me like a burning fire shut up in my bones.
I wear myself out holding it in, but I can't do it any longer.

¹⁰ I have heard many people whispering:
Terror is everywhere!
Report him! Let's report him!

All my closest friends are waiting to see me stumble.
They say: Maybe he will be tricked.
Then we can overpower him and take revenge on him.

¹¹ But the LORD is on my side like a terrifying warrior.
That is why those who persecute me will stumble.
They can't win.

They will be very ashamed that they can't succeed.
Their eternal shame will not be forgotten.

¹² But the LORD of Armies examines the righteous.
He sees their motives and thoughts.

I want to see you take revenge on them,
because I've brought my case to you.

¹³ Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!
He has rescued the lives of needy people
from the power of wicked people.

¹⁴ Cursed is the day that I was born,
the day that my mother gave birth to me.
May it not be blessed.

¹⁵ Cursed is the man who made my father very happy with the news
that he had just become the father of a baby boy.

¹⁶ May that man be like the cities
that the LORD destroyed without pity.
May he hear a cry of alarm in the morning
and a battle cry at noon.

¹⁷ If only he had killed me while I was in the womb.
Then my mother would have been my grave,
and she would have always been pregnant.

¹⁸ Why did I come out of the womb?
All I've seen is trouble and grief.
I will finish my days in shame.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is the last of Jeremiah's four confessions. Here he speaks to God in a most dramatic way. Jeremiah feels he is being carried away by God's word and he is powerless to stop it. He tries but he can't stop it.

He knows people are plotting to kill him. Yet he also knows that the Lord is on his side. His pursuers can't possibly overpower him. Jeremiah is confident the Lord will rescue him.

Yet Jeremiah falls into a depression cursing the man who delivered the news that he was born. If God had only killed me while I was in my mother's womb, he thinks. Why did I come out of the womb?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT?

1. How human Jeremiah is? We wonder if Jesus, in his human nature, ever had thoughts like this?
2. What reason could Jeremiah give for God deceiving him? How did God deceive him?
3. Jeremiah must have been persecuted everywhere and we still have no mention of him having any friends. What gives him the strength to endure?
4. Jeremiah cries out to the Lord to take revenge on his enemies. Would God be pleased at this request?
5. Why does Jeremiah give Pashhur the title: Terror Everywhere. **Psalm 31:13**. It is the title people give to Jeremiah.

PART 3: Events In Jeremiah's Life

One scholar described the Book of Jeremiah as a jumble. Events are not put down in chronological order. Jeremiah ministered for over 40 years under the rule of the following five kings and a short time thereafter:

Josiah	640-609 BC	31 year reign
Jehoahaz	609	3 months
Jehoiakim	609-598	11 years
Jehoiakin	598-597	3 months
Zedekiah	597-586 BC	11 years

God called Jeremiah as his prophet in 627 BC, Josiah's 13th year as king.

These are the events addressed in this Part 3 of the Book of Jeremiah:

Pericope 25	588 BC	Jerusalem Will Be Captured by the Babylonians	
Pericope 26	597 BC	God Warns Wicked Kings	Sermon 15
Pericope 27		The Righteous Branch: The Messiah	
Pericope 28		Warnings to False Prophets	
Pericope 29	597 BC	The Good Figs and the Bad Figs	
Pericope 30	605 BC	Jeremiah Preaches God's Judgment	Sermon 16
Pericope 31	598 BC	Jeremiah's Second Temple Sermon	Sermon 17
Pericope 32	597 BC	The Yoke of Babylon Will Be on Judah	Sermon 18
Pericope 33	594 BC	Hananiah's False Prophecy	
Pericope 34		Jeremiah Writes to the Captives in Babylon	

PERICOPE 25 [588 BC]

Jerusalem Will Be Captured by the Babylonians

21:1 [588 BC] The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur, son of Malchiah, and the priest Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah. They said: ²Consult the LORD for us, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking us. Maybe the LORD will perform miracles for us so that Nebuchadnezzar will retreat.

³Jeremiah responded to them: This is what you should say to Zedekiah: ⁴This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I'm going to take your weapons away from you. You are using these weapons to fight the king of Babylon as well as the Babylonians who are now blockading you outside the wall. I will bring the Babylonians inside this city. ⁵I will fight you in anger, fury, and rage with my powerful hand and my mighty arm. ⁶I will defeat those who live in this city, both people and animals. They will die from a terrible plague. ⁷Afterwards, declares the LORD, I will hand over Judah's King Zedekiah, his officials, the people, and everyone else in this city who survives the plague, war, and famine. They will be handed over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and to their enemies who want to kill them. Nebuchadnezzar will kill them with swords. He won't spare them, show them compassion, or care for them.

⁸Say to these people: This is what the LORD says: I am going to give you the choice of life or death. ⁹Those who live in this city will die in the war, famine, or plague. Those of you who go out and surrender to the Babylonians will live. You will escape with your lives. ¹⁰I've decided to harm this city, not to do good to it, declares the LORD. It will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down.

¹¹Say to the nation of the king of Judah: Listen to the LORD's word, ¹²descendants of David. This is what the LORD says:

Judge fairly every morning.

Rescue those who have been robbed

from those who oppress them.
Otherwise, my fury will break out and burn like fire.

No one will be able to put it out
because of the evil things you have done.

¹³ I'm against you, Jerusalem.
You are the city that is in the valley
and on the rock in the plain,
declares the LORD.

But you ask: Who can attack us?
Who can enter our places of refuge?

¹⁴ I will punish you because of the evil things you have done,
declares the LORD.
I will start a fire in your forests,
and it will burn up everything around you.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This event happens in 588 BC, two years before King Nebuchadnezzar came and burned down the city and the temple. King Zedekiah sent Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple and the priest Zephaniah to Jeremiah to ask God to stop Nebuchadnezzar's army who is blockading Jerusalem.

God first says Nebuchadnezzar will capture and enter the city. But God adds: I'm going to give you the choice of life or death. Those who stay in the city will die from the war, famine or plague. But those who go out to the Babylonians and surrender will live. In any event, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians.

God says the city will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah will preach the message that those people who surrender to the Babylonians during the two years of the siege will not lose their lives. Why is God being so kind?
2. God says those people who stay in the city will die from a terrible plague. **Jeremiah 21:6**. What does the plague result from?
3. God also says he will start a fire in Jerusalem's forests. The entire mountain area of Jerusalem will be denuded of trees. Why is God doing this?

PERICOPE 26 [597 BC] [Sermon 15]

God Warns Wicked Kings

22:1 This is what the LORD says: Go to the palace of the king of Judah and speak this message there: ²Listen to the LORD's word, you officials, you people who come into these gates, and you, king of Judah, the one sitting on David's throne.

³ This is what the LORD says: Judge fairly and do what is right. Rescue those who have been robbed from those who oppress them. Don't mistreat foreigners, orphans, or widows and don't oppress them. Don't kill innocent people in this place. ⁴ If you do what I say, then the kings who sit on David's throne will ride through the gates of this palace in chariots and on horses along with their officials and their people. ⁵ But if you don't do what I say, I will take an oath on myself, declares the LORD, that this palace will become a pile of rubble.

⁶ This is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah:

This palace is like Gilead to me,
like the top of Lebanon.
I will certainly turn it into a desert,
into cities that no one lives in.

⁷ I will send people to destroy you.
They will have their own weapons.
They will cut down your finest cedar trees
and throw them on a fire.

⁸ People from many nations will pass by this city and ask each other: Why has the LORD done this to this important city? ⁹ The answer will be: They rejected the covenant of the LORD their God. They worshiped other gods and served them.

¹⁰ Don't cry for the dead.
Don't shake your heads at them.

Cry bitterly for those who are taken away,
because they won't come back to see their homeland.

¹¹ This is what the LORD says about King Josiah's son Shallum [Jehoahaz] **1 Chronicles 3:15**, who succeeded his father [Josiah] as king of Judah and left this place: He will never come back here again. ¹² He will die in the place where he was taken captive, and he will never see this land again.

¹³ "How horrible it will be for the person [Jehoiakim] who builds his house dishonestly and his upper rooms through injustice.

He makes his neighbors work for nothing and doesn't pay them for their work.

¹⁴ He says, I will build a large house for myself with big upper rooms. He cuts out windows in it, panels the rooms with cedar, and paints them red.

¹⁵ Do you think you're a better king than others because you use more cedar? Your father [Josiah] ate and drank and did what is fair and right. Everything went well for him.

¹⁶ He defended the cause of the poor and needy. Everything went well for him. Isn't this what it means to know me? asks the LORD.

¹⁷ But your eyes and your mind are set on nothing but dishonest profits. You kill innocent people and violently oppress your people.

¹⁸ This is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim, son of Judah's King Josiah:

People won't mourn for him and say,
How horrible it is for my brother and sister.
They won't mourn for him and say:
How horrible it is for my master and his splendor.

¹⁹ He will receive a donkey's burial.
He will be dragged off
and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem.

²⁰ Go to Lebanon and cry. Raise your voice in Bashan.
Cry out from Abarim because all your lovers are defeated.

²¹ I spoke to you when you were prosperous,
but you said that you wouldn't listen.
This is how you've been ever since you were young.
You don't listen to me.

²² The wind will blow away all your shepherds,
and your lovers will go into captivity.
Then you will be ashamed and disgraced by all your wickedness.

²³ You live in Lebanon and have your nest in the cedars.

But you will groan when pain strikes you,
pain like a woman giving birth to a child.

²⁴ As I live, declares the LORD, even though you, Jehoiakin, son of Judah's King Jehoiakim, are the signet ring on my right hand, I will pull you off my hand. ²⁵ I will hand you over to those who want to kill you, those you fear — King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonians. ²⁶ I will throw you and your mother into another land. You weren't born there but you will die there. ²⁷ You will want to return to this land, but you won't be allowed to come home.

²⁸ This Jehoiakin is like a rejected and broken pot that no one wants.
Is that why he and his descendants will be thrown out
and cast into another land they've never heard of?

²⁹O land, land, land!

Listen to the word of the LORD.

³⁰This is what the LORD says:

Write this about Jehoiakin: He will be childless.

He won't prosper in his lifetime.

None of his descendants will succeed him as king.

They won't sit on David's throne and rule Judah again.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah now prophesies that the palace of the kings of Judah will be burned down – it will become a pile of rubble. All the cedar trees in Jerusalem will be burned and this mountain will look like a desert. People will pass by and ask: Why has the Lord done this to this important city. The answer will be: They rejected the covenant of the Lord and worshiped other gods and served them.

Now Jeremiah prophesies about three of Judah's kings: Jehoahaz also named Shallum, Jehoiakim, and his son Jehoiakin or Jehoiachin. Jehoahaz will be taken away from Jerusalem and die in Egypt. He also prophesies about Jehoahaz's successor, Jehoiakim, who was appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Jehoiakim was a self-righteous cruel and selfish man. Despite the dangers, he spent time building himself a magnificent palace. He killed many innocent people. The people hated him and he received a donkey's burial – thrown in a dung heap during the blockade. His son Jehoiakin, who was only 21 years old succeeded him.

Three months after Jehoiakin took the throne in 597, Nebuchadnezzar carried him and his mother and many others off to Babylon. Jehoiakin was put in prison there.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah doesn't mention King Zedekiah. Yet Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah after he took King Jehoiakin away to Babylon. Why didn't Jeremiah mention Zedekiah?
2. Jeremiah says Jehoiakin will be childless. None of his descendants will succeed him as king. **Jeremiah 22:20**. But **1 Chronicles 3:15-19** says:

Josiah's firstborn son was Johanan, the second was Jehoiakim, the third was Zedekiah, and the fourth was Shallum. Jehoiakim's son was **Jeconiah** Jehoiakin, whose son was Zedekiah. The descendants of the prisoner **Jeconiah** were his son Shealtiel, then Malchiram, **Pedaiah**, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. **Pedaiah's** sons were **Zerubbabel** and Hananiah.

In 535 BC, Zerubbabel accompanied High Priest Joshua leading the Babylonian exiles back to Jerusalem. **Ezra 2:2**. He was made Governor and rebuilt the temple but he disappeared and the High Priest Joshua assumed his position as leader of the exiles. **Zechariah 4:9; 6:9-15**. The prophet Haggai thought Zerubbabel was the Messiah. **Haggai 2:23**

It is certainly true that Zerubbabel was never king of Judah.

3. We will learn more about King Jehoiakim later in this book. This arrogant king really hated Jeremiah and burned all of the prophecies he wrote on a scroll. **Jeremiah 36:23-25**. Yet God allow him to reign as king of Judah for 11 years. Why?

PERICOPE 27

The Righteous Branch –the Messiah

23:1 How horrible it will be for the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep in my care, declares the LORD ²This is what I, the LORD God of Israel, said to the shepherds who take care of my people: You have scattered my sheep and chased them away. You have not taken care of them so now I will take care of you by punishing you for the evil you have done, declares the LORD.

³Then I will gather the remaining part of my flock from all the countries where I chased them. I will bring them back to their pasture and they will be fertile and increase in number. ⁴I will put shepherds over them. Those shepherds will take care of them. My sheep will no longer be afraid or terrified and not one of them will be missing, declares the LORD.

⁵The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will grow a righteous branch for David. He will be a king who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land.

⁶In his lifetime, Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. This is the name that he will be given: The LORD is Our Righteousness.

⁷That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people's oaths will no longer be: The LORD brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. As he lives.... ⁸Instead, their oaths will be: The LORD brought the descendants of the nation of Israel out of the land of the north and all the lands where he had scattered them. As the LORD lives... At that time they will live in their own land.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God is disgusted with these last four kings of Judah, as is Jeremiah. So God prophesies through Jeremiah that one day his Righteous Branch will come. Jeremiah will again use this word branch in **Jeremiah 33:15**. Isaiah will use the word in **Isaiah 4:2 and 11:1** also meaning the Davidic Messiah.

Shepherds to God are kings, priests, prophets, or court officials who are responsible for the care of God's people. God is angry with those shepherds who do not take good care of his sheep – his people.

God says that one day he will gather his flock and return them to his good land. One day, God will bring his Messiah, a descendant of King David to whom God made a covenant that his descendant would be on the throne of Judah forever. **1 Samuel 7:16**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The kings that reigned on the throne of Judah after King David were far below King David in their love for God. Only two really come to mind: King Hezekiah **2 Kings 18:1-8; 20:23** and King Josiah **2 Kings 22:1-23:30**. Read these passages and state how they showed their love for God.
2. Why did God make a covenant with King David? **2 Samuel 7:16**
3. Read **Ezekiel 34:1-31**. What does God expect of his shepherds?

PERICOPE 28

Warnings to the False Prophets

23:9 Say this about the prophets:

I am deeply disturbed.
All my bones tremble.

I am like a drunk,
like a person who has had too much wine,
because of the LORD and his holy words.

¹⁰The land is filled with adulterers.
The land mourns because of the curse.
Pastures in the wilderness have dried up.

The people are evil,
and they use their strength to do the wrong things.

¹¹The prophets and priests are godless.
Even in my temple I've found them doing evil,
declares the LORD.

¹²That is why their own way will become
like slippery paths in the dark.
They will be chased away, and they will fall down in the dark.

I will bring disaster on them.
It is time for them to be punished,
declares the LORD.

¹³ Say this about the prophets of Samaria the Northern Kingdom:

I saw something disgusting.
The prophets of Samaria prophesied by Baal
and led my people Israel astray.

¹⁴ Say this: about the prophets of Jerusalem:

I see something horrible.

The prophets of Jerusalem commit adultery and live a lie.

They support those who do evil

so that no one turns back from his wickedness.

They are all like Sodom to me,

and those who live in Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.

¹⁵ This is what the LORD of Armies says about the prophets:

I will give them wormwood to eat and poison to drink.

The prophets of Jerusalem have spread godlessness
throughout the land.

¹⁶ This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Don't listen to what the prophets are saying to you.

They fill you with false hope.

They speak about visions that they dreamed up.

These visions are not from the LORD.

¹⁷ They keep saying to those who despise me:

The LORD says: Everything will go well for you.

They tell all who live by their own stubborn ways:

Nothing bad will happen to you.

¹⁸ Who is in the LORD's inner circle

and sees and hears his word?

Who pays attention and listens to his word?

¹⁹ The storm of the LORD will come with his anger.

Like a windstorm, it will swirl down on the heads of the wicked.

²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn back

until he has done everything he intends to do.

In the last days you will understand this clearly.

²¹ I didn't send these prophets,
yet they ran with their message.
I didn't speak to them,
yet they prophesied.

²² If they had been in my inner circle,
they would have announced my words to my people.
They would have turned back from their evil ways
and the evil they have done.

²³ I am a God who is near.
I am also a God who is far away, declares the LORD.

²⁴ No one can hide so that I can't see him, declares the LORD.
I fill heaven and earth, declares the LORD.

²⁵ I've heard the prophets who speak lies in my name. They say: I had a dream!
I had a dream! ²⁶ How long will these prophets continue to lie and deceive?
²⁷ They tell each other the dreams they had, because they want to make my
people forget my name, as their ancestors forgot my name because of Baal.
²⁸ The prophet who has a dream should tell his dream. However, the person
who has my word should honestly speak my word. What does grain have to
do with straw? asks the LORD. ²⁹ Isn't my word like fire or like a hammer that
shatters a rock? asks the LORD. ³⁰ I'm against the prophets who steal my words
from each other, declares the LORD. ³¹ I'm against the prophets who speak
their own thoughts and say that they speak for me. ³² I'm against those who
prophesy dreams they made up, declares the LORD. They tell the dreams they
made up and lead my people astray with their lies and their wild talk. I didn't
send them or command them to go. They don't help these people at all,
declares the LORD.

³³ When these people, the prophets, or the priests ask you: 'What revelation
has the LORD burdened you with now?' say to them: You are the burden. I
will abandon you, declares the LORD. ³⁴ Suppose the prophets, the priests, or
these people say: This is the LORD's revelation. I will punish them and their

families. ³⁵They should ask their neighbors and their relatives: What is the LORD's answer? And: What did the LORD say? ³⁶They should never again say: This is the LORD's revelation because each person's word becomes the revelation. They will twist the words of the living God, the LORD of Armies, our God.

³⁷ Jeremiah, say this to the prophets: What was the LORD's answer to you? and: What did the LORD say? ³⁸Suppose they say: This is the LORD's revelation. Then say: This is what the LORD says: Because you have said: This is the LORD's revelation, even though I commanded you not to repeat this saying, ³⁹I will certainly forget you. I will throw you out of my presence and out of the city that I gave you and your ancestors. ⁴⁰I will bring eternal disgrace and shame on you. It will never be forgotten.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God and Jeremiah are deeply disturbed about how the false prophets mislead God's people. God is also disturbed that both the prophets and the priests in the temple are godless doing evil. God says: I will bring disaster on them. The land mourns because of the curse.

God says not only the prophets of Samaria prophesied by Baal, the prophets of Jerusalem commit adultery and live a lie. They are like Sodom and Gomorrah to me, says the Lord. Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities in the days of Abraham whom God destroyed with sulfur and brimstone from the sky because of their wickedness. **Genesis 19:24-25**

God criticizes all the things these false prophets are doing. They lie and deceive and tell each other one another's dreams. They speak their own thoughts and then say these words came from the Lord.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God says I am a God who is near. I am also a God who is far away No one can hide so that I can't see him. I fill heaven and earth. **Jeremiah 23:23-24.** God

says that he is imminent or near and transcendent or far away. What does God mean?

2. God asks: Isn't my word like fire or a hammer that shatters rock? **Jeremiah 23:29**. What does God mean?
3. God is furious these false prophets are misrepresenting his word.

The storm of the Lord will come with his anger. Like a windstorm, it will swirl down on the heads of the wicked.

The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has done everything he intends to do. In the last days you will understand this clearly.

What will God do to these false prophets? He says he will forget them and throw them out of his presence. **Jeremiah 23:39**. What does this mean?

PERICOPE 29 [597 BC]

The Two Fig Baskets: The Good Figs and the Bad Figs

24:I [597 BC] King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took Jehoiakin, the son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, the princes of Judah, the skilled workers, and the builders from Jerusalem into captivity and brought them to Babylon. After this, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs set in front of the LORD's temple. ² One basket had very good figs, like figs that ripen first. The other basket had very bad figs. These figs were so bad that they couldn't be eaten.

³Then the LORD asked me: What do you see, Jeremiah? I answered: Figs. Figs that are very good. I also see figs that are very bad, so bad that they can't be eaten.

⁴The LORD spoke his word to me: ⁵This is what the LORD God of Israel says: The captives of Judah, whom I sent away from here to Babylon, are like these good figs. I will look kindly on them. ⁶I will watch over them for their own good and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not uproot them. ⁷I will give them the desire to know that I am the LORD. *They will be my people, and I will be their God*, because they will wholeheartedly come back to me.

⁸But this is what the LORD says about the bad figs that are so bad that they can't be eaten. The LORD says: Like these bad figs, I will abandon King Zedekiah of Judah, his princes, the remaining few in Jerusalem who stayed behind in this land and those who are living in Egypt.

⁹ I will make them a horrifying sight to all the kingdoms of the earth. They will be a disgrace and an example. They will become something ridiculed and cursed wherever I scatter them. ¹⁰I will send wars, famines, and plagues until they disappear from the land that I gave to them and their ancestors.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah prophesies at a turning point for the exiles. God declares those who have been exiled up to this point are good figs. God will watch over them and bring them back from exile to Jerusalem. God will give them the ability to know that he is the Lord, and he will renew his covenant with them by stating the covenant promise: *I am your God, and you are my people.*

But the people left in Jerusalem and not exiled at this point are bad figs. King Zedekiah and these people will be a horrifying example to the world. God will send wars, famines, and plague on them until they disappear.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why would only the people exiled to Babylon be loved by God?
2. Does God pick who will be exiled and who will not be exiled? How does he choose?
3. Most of the Jewish exiles in Babylon did not return to Jerusalem when King Cyrus of Persia gave his edict in 539 BC. Did this prophecy come true?
4. God cared for the exiles in Babylon. The prophet Daniel was exiled to Babylon in the first deportation of 605 BC, the third year of King Jehoiakim. Ezekiel was deported in the second deportation of 597 BC together with King Jehoiakin and his mother. How did these prophets help the exiles. Both of these prophets knew of Jeremiah. How can you tell?

Jeremiah Preaches God's Judgment on Judah and the Nations

25:1 [605 BC] The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah about all the people of Judah when Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was in his fourth year as king. This was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. [605 BC] ²The prophet Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and to everyone who lived in Jerusalem. He said: ³For 23 years, from the time that Josiah, son of Amon, was in his thirteenth year as king of Judah ^{617 BC} until today, the LORD continued to speak his word to me. So I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

⁴Even though the LORD has sent all his servants the prophets to you, you haven't listened or paid attention to them. ⁵The prophets said: Turn from your evil ways and the evil you have done and live in the land that the LORD permanently gave to you and your ancestors. ⁶Don't follow other gods to serve and worship them. Don't make me furious about the idols your hands have shaped. Then I won't harm you. ⁷But you haven't listened to me, declares the LORD. You have made me furious about the idols your hands have shaped and have brought harm upon yourselves.

⁸This is what the LORD of Armies says: You did not listen to my words ⁹so I'm going to send for all the families from the north. I will also send for my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, declares the LORD. I will bring the families from the north to attack this land, its people, and all these surrounding nations. I'm going to destroy them and turn them into something terrible, something ridiculed, and something permanently ruined. ¹⁰I will take from them the sounds of joy and happiness, the sounds of brides and grooms, the sound of mills, and the light of lamps. ¹¹This whole land will be ruined and become a wasteland. These nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years.

¹²When the 70 years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their crimes, declares the LORD. I will turn Babylon into a permanent wasteland. ¹³I will bring on that land all the disasters I threatened to do to it,

everything that Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations, everything written in this book. ¹⁴ Many nations and great kings will make slaves of the people of Babylon, and I will pay them back for what they have done.

God Commands Jeremiah to Preach Judgment to the Nations

¹⁵ This is what the LORD God of Israel said to me: Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my fury and make all the nations to whom I'm sending you drink from it. ¹⁶ When they drink from it, they will stagger and go insane because of the wars that I'm going to send them.

¹⁷ So I took the cup from the LORD's hand. I made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink from it, ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah as well as its kings and officials. When they drank from it, they became wastelands and ruins, something ridiculed and cursed, until today.

¹⁹ I also made these people drink from it: Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, officials, all his people, ²⁰ and all the foreign people living among them; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of Philistia, those from the cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron, and the people left in Ashdod; ²¹ Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon; ²² all the kings of Tyre and Sidon, and the kings on the seacoast, ²³ Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who shave the hair on their foreheads; ²⁴ all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the foreign people living in the desert; ²⁵ all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; ²⁶ all the kings of the north, near and far, one after another—all the kingdoms of the earth. Last of all, the king of Sheshach will drink from the cup.

²⁷ The LORD said: Say to them: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk, vomit, fall down and don't get up because of the wars that I'm going to send you. ²⁸ But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink from it, say to them: This is what the LORD of Armies says: You must drink from it. ²⁹ I am going to bring disaster on the city that is named after me. Do you think you'll go unpunished? You will not go

unpunished. I'm declaring war on all those who live on earth, declares the LORD of Armies.

³⁰That is why you will prophesy all these things to them and say:

The LORD roars from above.
He thunders from his holy dwelling place.
He roars against his land.

He shouts like those who stomp grapes.
He shouts against all those who live on earth.

³¹The sound is echoing to the ends of the earth
because the LORD has brought charges against the nations.
He will judge all humans.
He will kill the wicked, declares the LORD.

³²This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Disaster is spreading from nation to nation.
A great storm is brewing from the distant corners of the earth.

³³On that day those killed by the LORD will stretch from one end of the earth
to the other.
They will not be mourned, taken away, or buried.
They will become like manure on the ground.

³⁴Mourn, you shepherds, and cry.
Roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.
The time has come for you to be slaughtered.

The time has come for you to be scattered,
and you will break like fine pottery.

³⁵There will be no place for the shepherds to flee,
no escape for the leaders of the flock.

³⁶The shepherds are crying
and the leaders of the flock are mourning
because the LORD is stripping their pasture.

³⁷The peaceful pastures are destroyed
by the LORD's burning anger.

³⁸He has left his lair like a lion.
Their land has been ruined
because of the heat of the oppressor,
because of the fury of his anger.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah speaks in the year 605 BC when King Nebuchadnezzar first came to Jerusalem. He had been speaking in Jerusalem for 23 years before that. First, in the reign of good King Josiah. Then in the brief three-month reign of King Jehoahaz before Pharaoh Neco II, who had killed King Josiah, took King Jehoahaz to Egypt and had King Jehoiakim placed on the throne. And then for the first four years of Jehoiakim's reign.

Jeremiah says that Nebuchadnezzar will deport Judeans to Babylon and that exile will last 70 years 605-535 BC. The prophet Daniel read this prophecy.

Xerxes' son Darius, who was a Mede by birth, was made ruler of the kingdom of Babylon. In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel learned from the Scriptures the number of years Jerusalem would remain in ruins. The Lord had told the prophet Jeremiah that Jerusalem would remain in ruins [be in desolations KJV] for 70 years. **Daniel 9:1-2**

When the 70 years are over, God will punish the king of Babylon. The prophet Isaiah said that King Cyrus of Persia would conquer Babylon.

Gather together, all of you, and listen. What idol has revealed such things? The Lord loves Cyrus. He will carry out the Lord's plan against Babylon. He will use his strength against the Babylonians. I

alone have spoken. I have called him. I will bring him here and he will succeed. **Isaiah 48:14-15**

God then tells Jeremiah to take from his hand this cup filled with the wine of my fury and make all the nations to whom I am sending you drink from it. These prophecies are contained in “Part 8: Jeremiah, a Prophet to the Nations”.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah says that for 19 years during the reign of good King Josiah he has spoken to the people of Jerusalem, but they haven't listened. This was four years prior to King Nebuchadnezzar coming to Jerusalem, taking the prophet Daniel and other young men to Babylon, and making a vassal treaty with Jehoiakim, a treaty Jehoiakim broke by conspiring with Egypt.

If Jeremiah spoke to a king that listened for 19 years, what would life be like for Jeremiah under his sons who wouldn't listen?

2. God made Jeremiah a prophet to the nations. This was in addition to prophesying in Jerusalem. Where did Jeremiah find the time to do all this traveling? Or did he talk to the ambassadors of these nations when they were in Jerusalem plotting with King Jehoiakim or King Zedekiah to break the yoke of Babylon?

3. What does God *leaving his lair like a lion* mean? **Jeremiah 25:38**

4. Jeremiah says the nations of the world will serve the King of Babylon for 70 years. **Jeremiah 25:11** Is this because Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant?
Jeremiah 25:9

PERICOPE 31 [598 BC] [Sermon 17]

Jeremiah's Second Temple Sermon

26:1 [609 BC] The LORD spoke his word when Judah's King Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, began to rule. He said: This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's Temple, and speak to all the people who come from the cities of Judah to worship in the LORD's temple. Tell them everything that I command you to tell them. Don't leave out a single word. ³Maybe they'll listen, and they'll turn from their evil ways. Then I'll change my plan about the disaster I intend to bring on them because of the evil they have done.

⁴The LORD added: Also say to them: This is what the LORD says: Suppose you don't listen to me and don't follow my teachings that I set in front of you. ⁵Suppose you don't listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent to you again and again, even though you didn't listen. ⁶Then I will do to this temple what I did to Shiloh. I will turn this city into something that will be cursed by all the nations on earth.

⁷The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these things in the LORD's temple. ⁸But as soon as Jeremiah finished saying everything that the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets, and all the people grabbed him and said: You must die. ⁹Why do you prophesy in the LORD's name that this temple will be like Shiloh and this city will become a pile of rubble with no one living here? Then all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the LORD's temple.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went from the king's palace to the LORD's temple. They sat at the entrance of New Gate to the LORD's temple. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people: This man is condemned to die because he prophesied against this city as you yourselves have heard.

¹²Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: The LORD sent me to prophesy everything that you have heard me say against this temple and against this city. ¹³Now, change your ways and what you are doing, and listen

to the LORD your God. Then the LORD will change his plan about the disaster that he intends to bring on you.

¹⁴ My life is in your hands. Do with me whatever you think is good and right.

¹⁵ But know for certain that if you put me to death, you, this city, and the people living in it will be guilty of killing an innocent person. The LORD has certainly sent me to speak all these things to you.

¹⁶ Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and prophets: This man should not be condemned to die. He has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

¹⁷ Then some of the leaders in the land got up and said to the entire crowd:

¹⁸ Micah from Moresheth prophesied at the time of Judah's King Hezekiah and said to all the people of Judah: This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble,
and the temple mountain will become a worship site
covered with trees. **Micah 3:13**

¹⁹ Did Judah's King Hezekiah and all the people of Judah put Micah to death? No! Hezekiah feared the LORD and sought the LORD's favor. So the LORD changed his plan about the disaster he intended to bring on them. But we are about to bring a bigger disaster on ourselves.

²⁰ There was another man prophesying in the name of the LORD. His name was Uriah, son of Shemaiah, from Kiriath Jearim. He prophesied against this city and this land as Jeremiah did. ²¹ When King Jehoiakim and all his personal troops and officials heard what Uriah said, the king wanted to put him to death. But Uriah heard about it and fled in fear to Egypt. ²² King Jehoiakim sent soldiers to Egypt: Elnathan, son of Achbor, and other soldiers along with him. ²³ They brought Uriah from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim. The king executed Uriah and threw his body into the burial ground for the common people. ²⁴ Ahikam, son of Shaphan, supported Jeremiah. So Jeremiah was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah goes into the temple and again preaches the same sermon he preached before. **Jeremiah 7:1-15**. If the people don't repent, God will remove this temple in the same way he removed the Wilderness Tabernacle at Shiloh. The priests, the prophets, and all the people grab him. Then the officials of the city come. The crowd says: He should be put to death.

Jeremiah says: The Lord has sent me. If you put me to death, you will be guilty of killing an innocent person. Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and prophets: He should not be killed. He has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.

Some of the leaders then spoke up: In the days of Hezekiah the king, the prophet Micah from Moresheth prophesied: Zion will be plowed like a field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble and the temple mountain will become a worship site covered with trees.

King Hezekiah did not put Micah to death because he feared God. But we are about to bring a disaster on ourselves. Another man Uriah from Kiriath Jearim where the Ark of the Covenant was once stored also prophesied. When King Jehoiakim heard about it, he wanted to put him to death. Uriah escaped to Egypt, but the king's officers went to Egypt, brought him back to Jerusalem and King Jehoiakim put him to death.

Ahikam, son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah so he was not put to death. Now Jeremiah has at least one friend.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. This is the second time Jeremiah preaches the same sermon. Why does he repeat the same words again?
2. Why are the people supporting Jeremiah, but the priests and prophets are not supporting him?

3. Why did King Hezekiah support the prophet while King Jehoiakim did not?
4. Ahikam, son of Shaphan, was one of the four court officials King Josiah told to take the Book of Deuteronomy that was found in the temple to Huldah, a prophetess, to see if it was genuine. **2 Kings 22:12-14**. His father Shaphan was also a court official. Why was he the only court official to befriend Jeremiah?

The Yoke of Babylon Will Be on Judah

27:1 [597 BC] When Zedekiah, son of King Josiah of Judah, began to rule, the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah.

²This is what the LORD said to me: Make leather straps and a wooden yoke and strap the yoke on your neck. ³Then send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, with messengers who have come to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem. ⁴Give them an order for their masters: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Say this to your masters: ⁵I used my great strength and my powerful arm to make the earth along with the people and the animals on it. I give it to anyone I please. ⁶Now I have handed all these countries over to my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have even made wild animals serve him. ⁷All nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until Babylon is defeated. Then many nations and great kings will make him their slave.

⁸Suppose nations or kingdoms won't serve or surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will punish those nations by wars, famines, and plagues, until I have put an end to them by Nebuchadnezzar's power, declares the LORD. ⁹Don't listen to prophets, mediums, interpreters of dreams, fortunetellers, or sorcerers who tell you that you'll never serve the king of Babylon. ¹⁰They are prophesying lies to you. They will cause you to be taken far from your lands. I'll scatter you and you will die. ¹¹But suppose a nation surrenders to the king of Babylon and serves him. I will let it stay in its own land. People will farm the land and live on it, declares the LORD.

¹² I spoke the same message to King Zedekiah of Judah: Surrender to the king of Babylon, serve him and his people and you will stay alive. ¹³Why should you and your people die in wars, famines, and plagues? The LORD has threatened the nations that don't serve the king of Babylon. ¹⁴Don't listen to the prophets who tell you that you'll never serve the king of Babylon. They are prophesying

lies to you. ¹⁵I didn't send them, declares the LORD. They prophesy lies in my name. So I will scatter you, and you and the prophets will die.

¹⁶I also spoke this message to the priests and all the people. This is what the LORD said to me: Don't listen to the prophets who tell you that the utensils of the LORD's temple will be brought back from Babylon soon. They are prophesying lies to you. ¹⁷Don't listen to them. Instead, serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city be turned into rubble? ¹⁸If they are prophets and the LORD is speaking to them, they should beg the LORD of Armies not to allow the utensils that are left in the LORD's temple, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem to be taken away to Babylon.

¹⁹⁻²⁰Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakin, son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem in 597 BC. But he didn't take the pillars, the bronze pool, the stands, and the rest of the utensils that are left in this city. ²¹This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says about the utensils that are left in the LORD's temple, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem: ²²They will be taken to Babylon and stay there until I come for them, declares the LORD. I will take them from there and bring them back to this place.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Messengers from the small nations surrounding Judah came to Jerusalem to meet with King Zedekiah plotting to rebel against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. God tells Jeremiah to place a wooden yoke on his neck and send messages to their representatives of foreign kings.

This is what the Lord God of Armies, the God of Israel says. I have handed your country over to my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. All nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until Babylon is defeated.

If you surrender to him, your country will be safe. Otherwise, you will be punished by wars, famines, and plagues. Don't listen to any lies from prophets, mediums, interpreters of dreams, fortunetellers or sorcerers who tell you different. They will cause you to be taken far from your lands and die.

Jeremiah spoke the same message to King Zedekiah. Serve the king of Babylon and you will live. Jeremiah also spoke the same message to the priests and the people Jerusalem. Don't listen to false prophets.

In 597, when Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiakin and his mother to Babylon together with the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem, he didn't take the bronze pool of the temple, the stands, and the rest of the utensils in the city. But they will be taken to Babylon when I take them, declares the Lord.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why doesn't Jeremiah tell us the reaction of these foreign kings to the Lord's message he gave them?

PERICOPE 33

Hananiah's False Prophecy

28:I [594 BC] In that same year, early in the rule of King Zedekiah of Judah, in the fifth month of his fourth year as king, the prophet Hananiah, son of Azzur, from Gibeon, spoke to me in the LORD's temple. He said to me in front of the priests and all the people: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³Within two years I will bring back all the utensils of the LORD's temple that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from this place and carried off to Babylon. ⁴I will also bring back to this place Jehoiakin, son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, and all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon, declares the LORD. So I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

⁵The prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah in front of the priests and all the people standing in the LORD's temple. ⁶He said: Amen! May the LORD do this. May the LORD make your prophecy come true and bring back the utensils of the LORD's temple and all the captives from Babylon to this place. ⁷But now listen to this message that I am speaking to you and to all the people. ⁸Long ago, the prophets who preceded you and me prophesied wars, disasters, and plagues against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹But the prophet who prophesied peace was recognized as a prophet that the LORD sent only if the message of the prophet came true.

¹⁰Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it. ¹¹Hananiah said in front of all the people. This is what the LORD says: In the same way, I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years. Then the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

¹²After the prophet Hananiah broke the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ¹³Tell Hananiah: This is what the LORD says: You have broken the wooden yoke, but I will replace it with an iron yoke. ¹⁴This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of

Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations so that they will serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. They will serve him! I will even make wild animals serve him.

¹⁵Then Jeremiah told the prophet Hananiah: Now listen, Hananiah, the LORD hasn't sent you. You have made these people believe a lie. ¹⁶This is what the LORD says: I'm going to remove you from the face of the earth. You will die this year because you have encouraged rebellion against the LORD.

¹⁷So the prophet Hananiah died in the seventh month of that year.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Four years after King Jehoiachin and his mother were deported to Babylon, the prophet Hananiah prophesied that the utensils of the temple carried off four years earlier would be returned within two years. King Nebuchadnezzar will also return King Jehoiachin and all the captives he had taken to us.

The prophet Jeremiah said: Amen! May the Lord do this. May your prophecy come true. But remember this: A prophecy comes from the Lord only if that prophecy comes true.

Then Hananiah broke the yoke Jeremiah had on his neck. Hananiah said: In the same way the Lord will break the yoke Nebuchadnezzar has put on the nation's necks within two years. God told Jeremiah: I will replace the wooden yoke with an iron yoke.

Jeremiah went to Hananiah and told him: The Lord hasn't sent you. You have told the people a lie. This is what the Lord says: You will die this year because you have encouraged rebellion against the Lord. Hananiah died in the seventh month of that year.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. False prophets constantly bothered Jeremiah. How could Jeremiah prove that their prophecies were false?
2. How did Jeremiah prove that all Hananiah said was a lie?

PERICOPE 34 [597 BC]

Jeremiah Writes to the Captives in Babylon

29:I [597 BC] The prophet Jeremiah sent a letter from Jerusalem to the rest of the leaders among the captives. He also sent it to the priests, the prophets, and all the people that Nebuchadnezzar took away as captives from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²This was after King Jehoiakin and his mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and metal workers left Jerusalem.

Jeremiah Tells the Captives How to Live in a Pagan Land

³He sent the letter with Shaphan's son Elasah and Hilkiyah's son Gemariah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah had sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. The letter said:

⁴This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says to all those who were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons, and let your daughters get married so that they can have sons and daughters. Grow in number there; don't decrease. ⁷Work for the good of the city where I've taken you as captives, and pray to the LORD for that city. When it prospers, you will also prosper.

Jeremiah Warns the People about False Prophets

⁸This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Don't let the prophets or the mediums who are among you trick you. Don't even listen to your own dreams. ⁹These people are prophesying lies to you in my name. I didn't send them, declares the LORD.

¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: When Babylon's 70 years are over, I will come to you. I will keep my promise to you and bring you back to this place.

¹¹I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope. ¹²Then you

will call to me. You will come and pray to me and I will hear you. ¹³When you look for me, you will find me. When you wholeheartedly seek me, ¹⁴I will let you find me, declares the LORD. I will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I've scattered you, declares the LORD. I will bring you back from the place where you are being held captive.

God Talks about the Bad Figs

¹⁵ You've said that the LORD has given you prophets in Babylon. ¹⁶ But this is what the LORD says about the king Zedekiah who sits on David's throne and about all the people who live in this city, the people who are your relatives and who weren't taken away as captives: ¹⁷ The LORD of Armies says: I'm going to send them wars, famines, and plagues. These people are like rotten figs to me, figs that are so bad that they can't be eaten. ¹⁸ I will chase them with wars, famines, and plagues. I will make them a horrifying sight to all the kingdoms on the earth. They will become something cursed, ridiculed, and hissed at, and they will be a disgrace among all the nations where I scatter them. ¹⁹ They didn't listen to me, declares the LORD. I sent them my servants the prophets again and again, but they refused to listen, declares the LORD.

Jeremiah Talks about False Prophets

²⁰ So listen to the LORD's word, all you captives who were sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon.

²¹ This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says about Kolaiah's son Ahab and about Maaseiah's son Zedekiah, who prophesy lies to you in my name: I'm going to hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will kill them as you watch. ²² Because of them, all the captives from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: May the LORD curse you as he cursed Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned to death. ²³ They have done shameful things in Israel. They committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and spoke lies in my name. I didn't command them to do this. I know what they have done. I'm a witness, declares the LORD.

A False Prophet in Babylon Tells the Jerusalem High Priest to Arrest Jeremiah

²⁴The LORD says: Say to Shemaiah from Nehelam: ²⁵This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: You sent letters in your own name to all the people who are in Jerusalem, to the High priest Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests. These letters said: ²⁶The LORD made you High priest instead of Jehoiada so that there would be officials for the LORD's temple. You should put any lunatic who acts like a prophet in prison and in shackles. ²⁷Now, why haven't you arrested Jeremiah from Anathoth? After all, he acts like a prophet among you. ²⁸That's why Jeremiah sent this message to us in Babylon: You will be captives a long time. Build houses, and live in them. Plant gardens, and eat what they produce.

²⁹The priest Zephaniah read this letter to the prophet Jeremiah.

³⁰Then the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ³¹Send this message to all the captives: This is what the LORD says about Shemaiah from Nehelam: Shemaiah prophesied to you, but I didn't send him. He has made you believe a lie. ³²The LORD says: I will punish Shemaiah from Nehelam. I will also punish his descendants. No one from his family will be left alive. He will not see the blessings that I'm going to send my people, declares the LORD, because he has encouraged rebellion against the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In 597 BC, Jeremiah wrote a letter to the captives in Babylon. He said: Live peaceably, get married and have children. Find wives for your children. Work for the good of Babylon and pray to God for that city. Don't listen to false prophets. The exile will end in 70 years. I will bring you back from captivity.

The people who remain in Judah and Jerusalem are bad figs. The Lord will send them wars, famines, and plagues. The false prophets in Babylon will be killed by the king of Babylon. The prophet who sent a letter to the High Priest about you will not return to Jerusalem. He will die.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What things Jeremiah told the captives in his letter to do are surprising to you?
2. This is the only time Jews were told how to live outside the land of Israel. Why is it important that they follow these directions?

PART 4: Jeremiah's Glorious Prophecies

Chapter 30 and 31 appears to be about the Northern Kingdom of Israel. God will refer to this kingdom as Ephraim after its largest tribe or as Samaria after its capital city. From 735 BC to 722 BC, the kingdom of Assyria ravaged this land deporting most of its inhabitants to other parts of Assyria. Then they brought in Gentiles from territories in Assyria to replace them. The Judeans then referred to them as Samaritans.

God says even though they reject him he will restore them. They are still God's people. He will bring them home to Israel. This time they will worship in Jerusalem on top of Mount Zion. God says: I love you with an everlasting love. So I will continue to show you my kindness. **Jeremiah 31:3**

In the latter part of Chapter 31, God says he will give Israel a New Covenant. In Chapter 32, God tells Jeremiah to buy a field his cousin will offer him as a sign that the exiles will return from Babylon. Then, in Chapter 33, God predicts the coming of the Righteous Branch, the Messiah, who will inaugurate the New Covenant.

PERICOPE 35

Israel's Glorious Future

30:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Write in a book everything that I tell you. ³The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity. I will bring them back to the land that I gave their ancestors, and they will take possession of it.

⁴ This is the message that the LORD spoke about Israel and Judah: ⁵This is what the LORD says:

We hear cries of fear, cries of panic, not cries of peace.

⁶Ask now, and see: Can a man give birth to a child?

Why, then, do I see every strong man

holding his stomach in pain

like a woman giving birth to a child?

Why has every face turned pale?

⁷How terrible that day will be!

There will be no other day like it.

It will be a time of calamity for the descendants of Jacob,

but they will be rescued from it.

⁸On that day, declares the LORD of Armies, I will break the yokes off your necks and tear off your ropes. Foreigners will no longer make you serve them.

⁹You will serve the LORD your God and David your king. I will establish him for you.

¹⁰Don't be afraid, my servant Jacob, declares the LORD.

Don't be terrified, Israel.

I'm going to rescue you from a faraway place.

I'm going to rescue your descendants

from where they are captives.

The descendants of Jacob will again have peace and security,
and no one will frighten them.

¹¹ I am with you, and I will rescue you, declares the LORD.
I will completely destroy all the nations where I scattered you,
but I will not completely destroy you.
I will correct you with justice.
I won't let you go entirely unpunished.

¹² This is what the LORD says:

Your wound is incurable.
Your injury is beyond healing.

¹³ No one argues that you should be healed.
No medicine will heal you.

¹⁴ All your lovers have forgotten you,
and they don't want you anymore.
I've punished you as an enemy would.
I've corrected you as a cruel person would.
You are very wicked, and you have many sins.

¹⁵ Why do you cry about your wound,
your injury that can't be cured?
I've done this to you.
You are very wicked, and you have many sins.

¹⁶ That is why everyone who devours you will be devoured,
and all your enemies will be taken away as captives.
Those who looted you will be looted.
Those who stole from you in war
will have things stolen from them.

¹⁷ I'll restore your health and heal your wounds,
declares the LORD.

People call you an outcast:
Zion, no one cares for you.

¹⁸ This is what the LORD says:

I'm going to bring the captives back to Jacob's tents
and show compassion on their homes.
Cities will be built on the ruins,
and fortified palaces will be built in their rightful place.

¹⁹ The people who live there will sing songs of praise,
and the sound of laughter will be heard from there.
I'll make them numerous and their number won't decrease.

I'll bring them honor
and they won't be considered unimportant.

²⁰ Their children will be like they were long ago.
Their community will be established in my presence,
and I will punish everyone who oppresses them.

²¹ Their leader will be someone from their own people.
Their ruler will come from among them.
I'll bring him near, and he will come close to me.
Who would dare to come near me? asks the LORD.

²² *You will be my people, and I will be your God.*

²³ The storm of the LORD will come with his anger.
Like a driving wind, it will swirl down on the heads of the wicked.

²⁴ The LORD's burning anger will not turn back
until he has done everything he intends to do.

In the last days you will understand this clearly.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God tells Jeremiah to write these prophecies down in a book.

God now declares that the days are coming when the Babylonian exile will be over, and God will bring his people home to the land. God promises they will serve their king, a descendant of King David.

Your enemies who looted you will be punished. They themselves will be looted. Your health and your wounds will be healed. Cities and fortified palaces will be rebuilt.

Their leader will come from among their own people. He will come close to God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The things to come are few but very important. The people will come home. They will have a king, a descendant of David. Cities and homes will be rebuilt. God will bring them honor. God will restore their health and heal their wounds. But nothing is said about a temple. Why not?
2. God says: Your wound is incurable. Your injuring is beyond healing. But then he says: I'll restore your health and heal your wounds. What is God saying?
3. God says their leader will be very godly. He will come close to God. Then God asks: Who would dare to come near me? Who is this leader? HINT: See Pericope 27

PERICOPE 36

Both Israel and Judah Will Be Rescued

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

²This is what the LORD says:

The people who survived the wars
have found favor in the desert.
Israel went to find its rest.

³The LORD appeared to me in a faraway place and said:

I love you with an everlasting love.
So I will continue to show you my kindness ~~checced~~.

⁴Once again I will build you up,
and you will be rebuilt, my dear people Israel.
Once again you will take your tambourines,
and you will go dancing with happy people.

⁵Once again you will plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria.
Those who plant them will enjoy the fruit.

⁶There will be a day when watchmen on the mountains of Ephraim
will call out this message:
Arise! Let's go to Zion, to the LORD our God.

⁷This is what the LORD says:

Sing a happy song about Jacob.
Sing joyfully for the leader of the nations.
Shout, sing praise, and say:

O LORD, rescue your people, the remaining few from Israel.

⁸I will bring them from the land of the north.
I will gather them from the farthest parts of the earth.
Blind people and lame people will return
together with pregnant women and those in labor.

A large crowd will return here.

⁹They will cry as they return.
They will pray as I bring them back.
I will lead them beside streams
on a level path where they will not stumble.

I will be a Father to Israel,
and Ephraim will be my firstborn.

¹⁰You nations, listen to the LORD's word.
Tell it to the distant islands.
Say: The one who scattered the people of Israel
will gather them and watch over them
as a shepherd watches over his flock.

¹¹The LORD will free the descendants of Jacob
and reclaim them from those who are stronger than they are.

¹²They will come and shout for joy on top of Mount Zion.
They will stream to it to enjoy the LORD's blessings:
fresh grain, new wine, and olive oil, lambs and calves. **Isaiah 2:2-4**
Their lives will be like well-watered gardens,
and they will never suffer again.

¹³Then young women will rejoice and dance
along with young men and old men.

I will turn their mourning into joy.
I will comfort them.
I will give them joy in place of their sorrow.

¹⁴ I will satisfy the priests with rich food.
My people will be filled with my blessings, declares the LORD.

¹⁵ This is what the LORD says:

A sound is heard in Ramah,
the sound of crying in bitter grief.
Rachel is crying for her children.
She refuses to be comforted,
because they are dead.

¹⁶ This is what the LORD says:

Stop your crying, and wipe away your tears.
You will be rewarded for your work, declares the LORD.
You will return from the land of the enemy.

¹⁷ Your future is filled with hope, declares the LORD.
Your children will return to their own territory.

¹⁸ I have certainly heard Ephraim mourn and say:
You disciplined me, and I was disciplined.
I was like a young, untrained calf.
Turn me, and I will be turned,
because you are the LORD my God.

¹⁹ After I was turned around,
I changed the way I thought and acted.
After I was taught a lesson, I hung my head in shame.
I was so ashamed and humiliated,
because of all the stupid things I have done
ever since I was young.

²⁰ Is Ephraim my dear son?
Is he a pleasant child?

Even though I have often spoken against him,
I still think fondly of him.
That is why my heart longs for him,
and I will certainly have compassion on him, declares the LORD.

²¹ Set up landmarks.
Put up road signs.
Remember the highway,
the road on which you traveled.
Come back, my dear people Israel,
come back to your cities.

²² How long will you wander around, you unfaithful people?
The LORD will create something new on earth:
A woman will protect a man.

²³ This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:
When I have brought them back from captivity,
they will once again use this saying in Judah and in its cities:
The LORD bless you, home of righteousness, holy mountain.

²⁴ Judah and all its cities will live there together.
Farmers and shepherds will also live there.

²⁵ I will give those who are weary all they need.
I will refresh everyone who is filled with sorrow.

²⁶ At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant.

²⁷ The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will plant the nations of Israel and Judah with people and animals. ²⁸ Once I watched over them to uproot them, to tear them down, and to wreck, ruin, and hurt them. Now I will watch over them to build them up and to plant them, declares the LORD.

Children Will No Longer Die for the Sins of Their Parents

²⁹ When those days come, people will no longer say: Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge. ³⁰ But each person will die for his own sin. Whoever eats sour grapes will have his own teeth set on edge.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

When God brings the exiles back, there will be only one nation called Israel. God will return all the exiles from wherever they were, in all the countries where they have been scattered. Israel now has rest.

God then says:

I love you with an everlasting love. So I will continue to show you my lovingkindness, my ~~cheed~~.

These are perhaps the most beautiful words in the entire Bible.

The Lord will watch over his chosen people as a shepherd watches over his flock. God will comfort them. God will hear Ephraim mourn and confess: You disciplined me and I was disciplined. I changed the way I thought and acted.

God says:

Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child. Even though I have often spoken against him, I still think fondly of him. That is why my heart longs for him and I will certainly have compassion on him, declares the Lord.

Jeremiah concludes saying that each person will now be responsible for their own sins. Children will no longer be punished for the sins of their parents.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did the Lord appear to Jeremiah in a faraway place? **Jeremiah 31:3**
2. Why does God say: Ephraim will be my first born? **Jeremiah 31:9**

3. What is the meaning of **Jeremiah 31:15**? Remember that Rachel was the mother of Joseph. Joseph's two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh, the two largest tribes in Israel.

4. What is the meaning of:

How long will you wander around, you unfaithful people? The Lord will create something new on earth: A woman will protect a man.
Jeremiah 31:22

5. Why does Jeremiah say: *At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant?* **Jeremiah 31:26**

6. Where did God first say: *I will punish children and grandchildren for the parents' sins to the third and fourth generation?* Why will he no longer do this?

7. God says people in Judah will once again use this saying:

The Lord bless you, Home of Righteousness, Holy Mountain.
Judah and all its cities will live there together.
Farmers and shepherds will also be there.
I will give those who are weary all they need.
I will refresh everyone who is filled with sorrow.

Jeremiah 31:24-25

What does this saying mean? How can the city of Jerusalem be known as the Home of Righteousness?

EXTRA CREDIT

In **Jeremiah 30:21**, God says: Their leader will come close to me. Is he talking about Israel's new leader having a priestly function? See **Psalms 110:1**. Who is this?

PERICOPE 37

The New Covenant

³¹The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made to their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt. They rejected that covenant, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD.

³³But this is the covenant that I will make to Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my teachings inside them, and I will write those teachings on their hearts. *I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

³⁴No longer will each person teach his neighbors or his relatives by saying: Know the LORD. All of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me, declares the LORD, because I will forgive their wickedness and I will no longer hold their sins against them.

³⁵The LORD provides the sun to be a light during the day.
He orders the moon and stars to be lights during the night.
He stirs up the sea so that its waves roar.
His name is the LORD of Armies.

This is what the LORD says:

³⁶Only if these laws stop working, declares the LORD, will Israel's descendants stop being a nation in my presence.

³⁷This is what the LORD says:

Only if the heavens could be measured
or the foundations of the earth could be searched,
would I ever reject all of Israel's descendants
because of everything that they have done, declares the LORD.

³⁸The days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to Corner Gate. ³⁹A measuring line will stretch from there straight to the Hill of Gareb and then it will turn to Goah.

⁴⁰The whole valley, filled with its dead bodies and ashes and the whole area

to the Kidron Valley, as far as the corner of Horse Gate in the east, will be holy to the LORD. It will never be uprooted or torn down again.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is a covenant that supersedes the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. **Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:4-21.** Moses read the Book of the Lord's Covenant, the people said they would do all the Lord commanded, Moses sprinkled blood on the people, and the elders ate a meal with God. **Exodus 24: 8-10.** God then wrote these rules on tablets of stone. **Exodus 31:18**

In the new covenant, God writes his rules on peoples' hearts. Then God affirms the covenant promise. *I will be their God and they will be my people.* People will have a close, personal relationship with God and God will forgive their sins.

God further says that only if the laws of physical creation stop working, will Israel's descendants stop being a nation in his presence.

In addition, God says that the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The new covenant will come into effect only when blood is shed. When will that be?
2. What does it mean to know God?
3. How can God forgive peoples' sins after the new covenant is made?
4. How does a person make a new covenant with God?

PERICOPE 38

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32:1 [587 BC] The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah during Zedekiah's tenth year as king of Judah. This was Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year as king. ²At that time the army of the king of Babylon was blockading Jerusalem.

The prophet Jeremiah was locked up in the courtyard of the prison. This prison was in the palace of the king of Judah. ³When King Zedekiah of Judah locked up Jeremiah, Zedekiah asked him: Why are you prophesying? You are saying: This is what the LORD says: I'm going to hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will capture it. ⁴King Zedekiah of Judah will not escape from the Babylonians. He will certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon. He will talk to Nebuchadnezzar in person and look him in the eye. ⁵Nebuchadnezzar will take Zedekiah to Babylon and Zedekiah will stay there until I deal with him, declares the LORD. When you fight the Babylonians, you won't win.

⁶Jeremiah said: The LORD spoke his word to me. He said: ⁷Jeremiah, your cousin Hanamel, son of Shallum, is going to come to you and say: Buy my field that is in Anathoth, because as the closest relative it is your responsibility to buy it.

⁸Then, as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the prison. He said to me: Please buy my field that is in Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. It is your responsibility to purchase it, because the rights of the closest relative belong to you. Buy it for yourself. Then I knew that the LORD had spoken to me.

⁹ So I bought the field in Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and gave him the money. The field cost seven ounces of silver. ¹⁰I signed the deed, sealed it, had people witness the signing of the deed, and paid out the silver. ¹¹Then I took the sealed copy of the deed containing the terms and conditions as well as an unsealed copy. ¹²I gave the copies of the deeds to Baruch, son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah. I did this in the presence of my cousin Hanamel

and the witnesses who had signed the deed and in the presence of all the Jews who were sitting in the courtyard of the prison. ¹³Then I gave Baruch these orders: ¹⁴This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Take both of these documents, both the sealed and the unsealed copies of the deed. Put them in a clay jar so that they will last a long time. ¹⁵This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: My people will again buy houses, fields, and vineyards in this land.

¹⁶After I had given the copies to Baruch, son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD. I prayed: ¹⁷Almighty LORD, you made heaven and earth by your great strength and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸You show mercy to thousands of generations. However, you punish children for the wickedness of their parents. You, God, are great and mighty. Your name is the LORD of Armies. ¹⁹You make wise plans and do mighty things. You see everything the descendants of Adam do. You reward them for the way they live and for what they do. ²⁰You performed miraculous signs and amazing things in Egypt. To this day you are still doing them in Israel. You made a name for yourself that continues to this day. ²¹You brought your people from Egypt with miraculous signs and amazing things, with a mighty hand and a powerful arm, and with great terror. ²²You gave them the land that you swore with an oath to give their ancestors, the land flowing with milk and honey. ²³They entered and took possession of it. However, they refused to obey you or to follow your teachings. They didn't do anything you commanded them to do so you brought all this disaster on them.

²⁴See how the dirt ramps have been built up around the city to capture it. Because of wars, famines, and plagues, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you have threatened to do has happened, as you can see. ²⁵Yet you, Almighty LORD, told me to buy a field with money and get witnesses to confirm it, although the city was [will be] handed over to the Babylonians.

²⁶The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²⁷I am the LORD God of all humanity. Nothing is too hard for me. ²⁸This is what the LORD says: I'm

going to hand this city over to the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. They will capture it.

²⁹The Babylonians who are attacking this city will break in, set this city on fire, and burn it down. They will burn down the houses of people who made me furious by going up to the roofs to burn incense to Baal and to pour out wine offerings to other gods. ³⁰Ever since they were young, the people of Israel and Judah have done what I consider evil. The people of Israel have made me furious by what they've done, declares the LORD. ³¹The people in this city have made me so angry and furious from the day they built it to this day. So now I must remove this city from my presence.

³²The people of Israel and Judah have made me furious because they are evil. The people, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, and the Judeans and those who live in Jerusalem ³³have turned their backs, not their faces to me. I taught them again and again, but they refused to listen and learn. ³⁴They set up their detestable idols in the temple that is called by my name, and they dishonored it. ³⁵In the valley of Ben Hinnom they built worship sites for Baal to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech. I didn't ask them to do this. It never entered my mind. I didn't make Judah sin.

³⁶You have said this about the city: Because of wars, famines, and plagues it will be handed over to the king of Babylon. Now this is what the LORD God of Israel says: ³⁷I am going to gather the people from all the lands where I scattered them in my anger, fury, and terrifying wrath. I will bring them back to this place and make them live here securely. ³⁸*They will be my people, and I will be their God.* ³⁹I will give them the same attitude and the same purpose so that they will fear me as long as they live. This will be for their own good and for the good of their children. ⁴⁰I will make an eternal covenant with them that I will never stop blessing them. I will make them fear me so that they will never turn away from me. ⁴¹I will enjoy blessing them. With all my heart and soul I will faithfully plant them in this land.

⁴²This is what the LORD says: As I brought all these disasters on these people, so I will bring on them all these blessings that I have promised them. ⁴³You

have said that this land is a wasteland, without people or animals living in it. You have also said that it has been handed over to the Babylonians. But people will once again buy fields in this land.

⁴⁴They will buy fields for money, sign deeds, seal them, and have people witness the signing of the deeds. This will happen in the territory of Benjamin, in the region of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities on the mountains, in the hill country, and in the Negev because I will bring them back from their captivity, declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

During the Babylonian blockade of Jerusalem 588-586 BC, Jeremiah was locked in prison in the palace of the king of Judah.

King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah: Why do you prophesy that the Lord said he would hand Jerusalem over to the king of Babylon and King Zedekiah will not escape from the Babylonians? When you fight the Babylonians, you won't win.

Jeremiah said: The Lord said my cousin Hanamel is going to come and ask me to buy his field in Anathoth.

Then as the Lord had said, Jeremiah's cousin came. He asked Jeremiah to buy his land. So Jeremiah bought the field and gave him money. He signed the deed, sealed it, had people witness it, and paid the silver. Then Jeremiah took the sealed copy of the deed and gave it to Baruch. He told him to put it in a clay jar to preserve it.

Then Jeremiah prayed to God thanking him for doing all the things he was doing and giving Jeremiah a sign that one day the captives would return home from Babylon.

God replied saying:

I am going to hand this city over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down. One day I will bring my people back to this place. *They will*

be my people and I will be their God. I will make an eternal covenant that I will never stop blessing them. I will make them fear me so that they never turn away from me. I will enjoy blessing them. With all my heart and soul I will faithfully plant them in this land.

One day people will again buy fields in this land.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How did Jeremiah's cousin get into the blockaded city?
2. Where did Jeremiah get silver to pay for the land?
3. This is the first mention of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch. Where has he been all this time?
4. What is the Everlasting Covenant God will make with the people?

PERICOPE 39

The LORD Will Restore and Heal Judah

33:1 While Jeremiah was still being held in the courtyard of the prison, the LORD spoke his word to him a second time. The LORD said: ²I made the earth, formed it, and set it in place. My name is the LORD. This is what the LORD says: ³Call to me, and I will answer you. I will tell you great and mysterious things that you do not know. ⁴The houses in this city and the palaces of the kings of Judah have been torn down to be used against the dirt ramps and weapons of the Babylonians. This is what the LORD God of Israel says about this: ⁵The people of Israel fought the Babylonians. Now their houses are filled with the bodies of their own people I killed in my anger and my fury. I will hide my face from this city because of its wickedness.

⁶But one day I will heal this city and restore it to health. I will heal its people, and I will give them peace and security. ⁷I will restore Judah and Israel and rebuild them as they were before. ⁸I will cleanse them from all the sins that they have committed against me. I will forgive them for all the sins that they have committed against me and for rebelling against me. ⁹Then Jerusalem will be my source of joy, praise, and honor. All the nations on earth will hear about all the blessings that I will give to Jerusalem. They will be afraid and tremble because of all the prosperity that I will provide for it.

¹⁰This is what the LORD says: You have said that this place is ruined and that no people or animals live in it. It's true. The cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem are deserted. No people or animals live there. But once again you will hear ¹¹the sounds of joy and happiness and the sounds of brides and grooms. You will hear those who bring thank offerings to the LORD's temple say:

Give thanks to the LORD of Armies because the LORD is good,
because his mercy endures forever.

I will restore the fortunes of the land to what they were before, says the LORD.

¹²This is what the LORD of Armies says: In this deserted place, where no people or animals live, and in all its cities, there will once again be pastures where shepherds can rest their flocks. ¹³In the cities on the mountains, in the foothills, in the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the area around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shepherds will once again count their sheep, says the LORD.

¹⁴The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will keep the promise that I made to Israel and Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time, I will cause a righteous branch the Messiah to spring up for David. He will do what is fair and right in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live securely. Jerusalem will be called The LORD Our Righteousness.

¹⁷This what the LORD says: David will never fail to have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel. ¹⁸The Levitical priests will never fail to have a descendant in my presence to sacrifice burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare daily sacrifices.

¹⁹The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²⁰This is what the LORD says: Suppose you could break my arrangement with day and night so that they wouldn't come at their proper time. ²¹Then my arrangement with my servant David could be broken and he would not have a descendant to rule on his throne. The arrangement with my servants the Levitical priests could also be broken. ²²I will multiply the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who serve me like the stars of heaven that cannot be counted and the sand on the seashore that cannot be measured.

²³Then the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²⁴Haven't you noticed what these people have said? They have said that the LORD has rejected the two families he has chosen. They despise my people and they no longer consider them a nation.

²⁵This is what the LORD says: Suppose I hadn't made an arrangement with day and night or made laws for heaven and earth. ²⁶Then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and of my servant David. I would not let any of David's

descendants rule the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, I will restore their fortunes and love them.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah is held in the courtyard of the prison. God says he will tell him great and mysterious things he does not know. One day God will heal this city. He will restore Judah and Jerusalem. As a sign of this prophecy, God tells Jeremiah to buy a field from his cousin.

God says:

In those days, I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David. He will do what is fair and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live securely. Jerusalem will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.

David will never fail to have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel. The Levitical priests will never fail to have a descendant in my presence to sacrifice burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare daily sacrifices.

Unless the physical arrangements of the world are broken all these things will come true.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God speaks of the Messiah coming. When will he come?
2. God says David will never fail to have a descendant sitting on the throne of Israel. This prophecy doesn't appear to have come true.
3. God says the Levitical priests will always be offering sacrifices. Does this mean the Jerusalem temple will be rebuilt when the Messiah comes?

King Zedekiah and the People Break Their Covenant

34:I [588 BC] The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, his entire army and all the kingdoms and people that he ruled were attacking Jerusalem and all its cities. He said: ²This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Go to King Zedekiah of Judah and tell him: The LORD says: I'm going to hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down. ³You will not escape from him. You will certainly be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will talk to you face to face. Then you will go to Babylon.

⁴Listen to the LORD's word, King Zedekiah of Judah. This is what the LORD says about you: You will not die in war. ⁵You will die peacefully. People will burn funeral fires for you as they did for your ancestors, the kings who lived before you. They will say: Oh, master, as they mourn for you. I have spoken my word, declares the LORD.

⁶The prophet Jeremiah told all these things to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem. ⁷He did this when the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and the cities of Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities of Judah that were left.

[The army of Egypt came to help Judah, so the army of Babylon temporarily stopped its blockade of Jerusalem and left to meet the Egyptian army, but the Egyptians returned home without engaging the Babylonians in battle. During this interlude, Jerusalem enjoyed a respite from its siege. The people of Jerusalem freed their slaves in appreciation to God.]

⁸The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah after King Zedekiah and all the people in Jerusalem promised to free their slaves. ⁹Everyone was supposed to free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female. No one was supposed to keep another Jew as a slave. ¹⁰All the officials and all the people agreed and promised to free their male and female slaves and not to keep them as slaves anymore. So they set them free.¹¹But afterwards, they changed their minds

and took back the men and women they had freed and made them their slaves again.

¹²The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ¹³This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I put a condition on the covenant I made to your ancestors when I brought them from Egypt, where they were slaves. I said: ¹⁴Every seven years each of you must free any Hebrews who sold themselves to you. When they have served you for six years, you must set them free. **Deuteronomy 15:12.** But your ancestors refused to obey me or listen to me. ¹⁵Recently, you changed and did what I consider right. You agreed to free your neighbors and you made a covenant in my presence in the temple that is called by my name. ¹⁶Now you have changed again and dishonored me. You brought back the male and female slaves that you had set free to live their own lives. You have forced them to be your male and female slaves again.

¹⁷This is what the LORD says: You didn't obey me. You haven't freed your relatives and neighbors. Now I am going to free you, declares the LORD. I will free you to die in wars, plagues, and famines. I will make all the kingdoms of the world horrified at the thought of you. ¹⁸I will hand over the people who have rejected my covenant. They have not kept the terms of the covenant which they made in my presence when they cut a calf in two and passed between its pieces. ¹⁹I will hand over the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the palace officials, the priests, and all the common people who passed between the pieces of the calf. ²⁰I will hand them over to their enemies who want to kill them, and their corpses will be food for birds and wild animals. ²¹I will hand King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials over to their enemies who want to kill them and to the army of the king of Babylon, the army that has withdrawn from you. ²²I am going to give a command, declares the LORD. I will bring that army back to this city to attack it, capture it, and burn it down. I will destroy the cities of Judah so that no one will live there.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

When the Egyptian army came up to help the Judeans, the Babylon army left off their blockade of Jerusalem and went to meet them. Then the people of

Jerusalem freed their slaves as a thank offering to God for their release. But the Babylonians returned so the people of Jerusalem re-enslaved their slaves.

God criticized them because in Deuteronomy God commanded Hebrew slaves be released in the seventh year of their slavery. To punish them, God brought the Babylonians back and they continued their blockade.

God says that the Babylonians will attack Jerusalem, capture it and burn it down. The Babylonians will also destroy all the fortified cities of Judah.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Did the Jerusalemites only really free the slaves so they wouldn't have to feed them during the blockade?
2. Jeremiah told Zedekiah he would not die by the sword, but in peace. Since Zedekiah died in prison in Babylon, was Jeremiah's prophecy of his peaceful death conditioned on his surrendering to the Babylonians?
3. Would God have spared Jerusalem if the Jews had let their Jewish slaves remain free?

The Obedient Example of the Family of Rechab

35:1 [602 BC] The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah during the reign of Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah of Judah. He said: ²Go to the family of Rechab and talk to them. Take them into one of the side rooms in the LORD's temple and offer them a drink of wine.

³ I took Jaazaniah, who was the son of Jeremiah and the grandson of Habazziniah, and I took Jaazaniah's brothers and all his sons—the whole family of Rechab. ⁴I brought them into the LORD's temple, into the side room of the sons of Hanan. He was Igdaliah's son, the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials and above the side room of Maaseiah, Shallum's son, the doorkeeper. ⁵Then I set cups and pitchers filled with wine in front of the family of Rechab. I said to them: Drink some wine.

⁶They answered: We don't drink wine because our ancestor Jonadab, Rechab's son, gave us this order: You and your descendants must never drink wine. ⁷Never build any houses or plant any fields or vineyards. You must never have any of these things. You must always live in tents so that you may live for a long time in the land where you are staying.

⁸ We, along with our wives, sons, and daughters, have obeyed our ancestor Jonadab, Rechab's son, in everything he ordered us to do. We have never drunk wine, ⁹built houses to live in, or owned vineyards, pastures, or grainfields. ¹⁰We live in tents, and we have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab ordered us to do. ¹¹But when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded this land, we said: Let's go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies. That's why we are living in Jerusalem.

¹²Then the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ¹³This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel says: Tell the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem: Won't you ever learn your lesson and obey my words? declares the LORD. ¹⁴Jonadab, Rechab's son, ordered his descendants not to drink wine. This order has been carried out. His descendants have not drunk

any wine to this day because they have obeyed their ancestor's order. I have spoken to you again and again, but you have refused to listen to me. ¹⁵I have sent all my servants the prophets to you again and again. They said: Turn from your evil ways, do what is right, and don't follow other gods in order to serve them. Then you will live in the land that I gave you and your ancestors. However, you refused to listen to me or obey me. ¹⁶The descendants of Jonadab, Rechab's son, have carried out the orders of their ancestor, but you refuse to listen to me.

¹⁷This is what the LORD God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring on Judah and on all those who live in Jerusalem all the disasters that I threatened. I have spoken to them, but they didn't listen. I called to them, but they didn't answer.

¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to the family of Rechab: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel says: You obeyed the order of your ancestor Jonadab, followed all his instructions, and did exactly what he told you to do. ¹⁹So this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: A descendant of Jonadab, Rechab's son, will always serve me.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

What a severe contrast the family of Rechab is to the people of Jerusalem and King Zedekiah. They followed the commands of their ancestors.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did Jonadab require his family and his descendants to live a nomadic lifestyle as did Abraham? Why then did they move into the city of Jerusalem?
2. What happened to the family of Rechab? Were they deported to Babylon or set free by the Babylonians?
3. What is the spiritual lesson God is teaching by the example of the Rechabites?

PART 5: Jeremiah Is Profoundly Persecuted

Now comes a very sad part of Jeremiah's story. In 604-605 BC, King Jehoiakim's fourth year of his reign, God tells Jeremiah to write down his prophecies since the time of King Josiah until now. I have indicated 18 sermons Jeremiah preached during that time period. It is difficult to determine how many sermons Jeremiah dictated to Baruch that were written on this scroll. All we know is that three times in one day this scroll was read.

NOTE: In determining the rank of people, their ancestor's names were attached to their names. The more names attached to their names, the greater their rank. Shaphan was the scribe High Priest Hilkiah told to bring the Book of Deuteronomy found in the temple to King Josiah. **2 Kings 22:8-9**

Baruch read it in the temple to all the people on a day of fasting. Micaiah ben Gemariah ben Shaphan heard Baruch read it. Then he told the king's officers in the room of Gemariah ben Shaphan what he had heard.

The scribes sent Jehudi bar Nethaniah bar Shelemiah bar Cushi, a very distinguished scribe, to Baruch who then read it to the king's officers. Four officers are named. Elishama, Delaiah ben Shemaiah, Zedekiah ben Hananiah. Other officers were also there.

After Baruch read it to them, they turned to each other in terror. The scribes told Baruch to hide and also for Jeremiah to hide. Then they went to King Jehoiakim and told him everything. The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll and read it to him.

Jehudi read the scroll to the king with the officers standing around him. As Jehudi read several columns of the scroll, he cut these columns off with a penknife and threw them in the fire. He did this until the entire scroll was burned up. The king and his officials didn't show any fear when they did this. But the officers standing there begged him not to burn the scroll.

Then the king commanded his son Jerahmeel, Seriah bar Azriel, and Shelemiah bar Abdeel to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah. But the Lord had hidden them.

Then the Lord commanded Jeremiah to dictate another scroll to Baruch. He also said: Jehoiakim will have no one to sit on David's throne and his own corpse will be thrown out. I will punish him, his descendants, and his attendants for their wickedness. **Jeremiah 36:30-31**

Jeremiah had earlier prophesied King Jehoiakim would receive a donkey's burial. **Jeremiah 22:19**. King Jehoiakim's son Jehoiakin or Jehoiachin would be King for only three months in 597 BC. **Jeremiah 22:24-30**. Jeremiah also said Jeconiah would be childless. But **1 Chronicles 3:17** lists Jeconiah's descendants. Yet there would be no king of Judah after this.

We wonder what was on the scroll King Jehoiakim burned. I conclude it was the 18 sermons I have indicated in the Table of Contents, as it was read three times in one day: Pericopes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 30, 31, 32.

Many of the king's scribes liked Jeremiah.

PERICOPE 42

Jeremiah's Prophecies Are Written, Read, and Burned

36:1 [605 BC] In the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah of Judah, the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²Take a scroll, and write on it everything that I have dictated to you about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations from the time I spoke to you during the reign of Josiah until today. ³Maybe the nation of Judah will hear about all the disasters that I plan to bring on them and they will turn from their wicked ways. Then I will forgive their wickedness and their sins.

Jeremiah's Scribe Baruch bar Neriah Writes Down Jeremiah's Sermons

⁴Then Jeremiah called Baruch, son of Neriah. Jeremiah dictated everything that the LORD had told him, and Baruch wrote it all down on a scroll. ⁵Jeremiah told Baruch: I'm no longer allowed to go to the LORD's temple. ⁶On a day of fasting, you must read from the scroll the LORD's message that you wrote as I dictated. You must read it to the people in the LORD's temple. You must also read it to all the people of Judah when they come from their cities. ⁷Maybe their prayers will come into the LORD's presence, and they will turn from their evil ways. The LORD has threatened these people with his terrifying anger and fury.

⁸Baruch, son of Neriah, did as the prophet Jeremiah commanded him. In the LORD's temple he read from the scroll everything that the LORD had said. ⁹In the ninth month of the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah of Judah, a time for fasting was called. It was a time for all the people in Jerusalem and for everyone who was coming from any city in Judah to Jerusalem to fast in the LORD's presence.

Baruch Reads Jeremiah's Scroll to the People in the Temple

¹⁰Then Baruch read the scroll containing Jeremiah's words. Baruch read it to all the people in the LORD's temple in the room of the scribe Gemariah, son

of Shaphan, in the upper courtyard at the entrance of New Gate of the LORD's temple.

¹¹ Micaiah, who was the son of Gemariah and the grandson of Shaphan, heard Baruch read from the scroll everything the LORD had said. ¹² Then he went down to the scribe's room in the king's palace where all the scribes were sitting. The scribe Elishama, Delaiah, son of Shemaiah, Elnathan, son of Achbor, Gemariah, son of Shaphan, Zedekiah, son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were there. ¹³ Micaiah told them everything he heard Baruch read from the scroll publicly. ¹⁴ Then all the officials sent Jehudi, who was the son of Nethaniah, the grandson of Shelemiah, and the great-grandson of Cushie, to Baruch. Jehudi said to Baruch: Bring the scroll that you read publicly and come with me. Baruch, son of Neriah, took the scroll and went with him to see the officers.

Baruch Reads Jeremiah's Scroll to the Officers of the King

¹⁵ They said to Baruch: Please sit down, and read it to us. So Baruch read it to them. ¹⁶ When they heard everything, they turned to each other in terror. They said to Baruch: We must tell the king everything. ¹⁷ Then they asked Baruch: Please tell us how you wrote all this. Did Jeremiah dictate it to you?

¹⁸ Baruch answered: He dictated everything to me and I wrote it on the scroll in ink.

¹⁹ The officials said to Baruch: You and Jeremiah must hide. Don't let anyone know where you are.

²⁰ After they put the scroll in the side room of the scribe Elishama, they went to the king in the courtyard and told him everything. ²¹ Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He took the scroll from the side room of the scribe Elishama.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God tells Jeremiah to write down all of God's words of prophecy he has given him during the reign of Josiah until the present day. Jeremiah called Baruch and dictated to him God's words.

Then Jeremiah told Baruch to go to the temple and read the scroll to the people in the temple on a day of fasting. In King Jehoiakim's fifth year, Baruch did so.

Micaiah bar Gemariah bar Shaphan heard Baruch. Then he went down to the scribes' room and told them what was said. The scribes sent Jehudi bar Nethaniah bar Shelemiah bar Cushi back to get Baruch and have him read the scroll to them. Baruch read them the scroll. The scribes turned to each other in terror.

They told Baruch: You and Jeremiah must hide. Then they went and told King Jehoiakim. The king ordered Jehudi to get the scroll.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Since the scroll was read out loud on three separate occasions in one day (vv. 8, 15, 21), perhaps Baruch did not read the whole scroll on the first two of these occasions. How long was it?
2. What pericopes do you think were included on the scroll? Do you agree with my conclusion?
3. How can you tell that Jehudi was more senior than the other scribes of the king?

PERICOPE 43

Jehudi Reads Jeremiah's Scroll to King Jehoiakim But the King Burns the Scroll

36:21 [606-605 BC] Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials standing by the king. ²²It was the ninth month, and the king was in his winter house sitting in front of the fire in the fireplace. ²³As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a scribe's knife and throw them into the fire in the fireplace. He did this until the whole scroll was burned up. ²⁴The king and all his attendants didn't show any fear or tear their clothes in fear when they heard everything being read. ²⁵Even when Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he refused to listen to them. ²⁶The king commanded Jerahmeel, the king's son, Seraiah, son of Azriel, and Shelemiah, son of Abdeel, to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. But the LORD had hidden Baruch and Jeremiah.

²⁷After the king burned up the scroll that Baruch had written and that Jeremiah had dictated, the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said: ²⁸Take another scroll, and write on it everything that was written on the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned. ²⁹Say about King Jehoiakim of Judah: This is what the LORD says: You burned this scroll, and you asked Jeremiah: Why did you write that the king of Babylon will certainly come to destroy this land and take away people and animals? ³⁰This is what the LORD says about King Jehoiakim of Judah: He will have no one to sit on David's throne and his own corpse will be thrown out and exposed to the heat of day and the cold of night. ³¹I will punish him, his descendants, and his attendants for their wickedness. They refused to listen. So I will bring on them, on those who live in Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah all the disasters that I have threatened.

Jeremiah Again Dictates His Sermons to Baruch Who Writes On Another Scroll

³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch, son of Neriah. As Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it everything that was on the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah had burned. They added many similar messages.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jehudi read the scroll to the king. As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king took a pen knife, cut off the three or four columns of the scroll and threw them into the fire. He did this until the entire scroll was burned. The king and his attendants didn't show any fear when they did this. Even when the scribes urged the king not to burn the scroll, he didn't listen.

After the scroll was burned, the king ordered his attendants to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. But the Lord had hidden them.

The Lord spoke his word to Jeremiah:

Takes another scroll and write my words again. Say about King Jehoiakim: This is what the Lord says:

You asked Jeremiah why did you write that the king of Babylon will certainly come to destroy this land and its people. This is what the Lord says about King Jehoiakim: He will have no one to sit on David's throne and his corpse will be thrown out and exposed to the heat of the day and the cold of night.

I will punish him, his descendants, and his attendants for their wickedness. They refused to listen. So I will bring on them, on those who live in Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah all the disasters I have threatened.

Jeremiah then dictated God's words to Baruch who wrote them down on a scroll.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did the three scribes urge King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll while the king's officers showed no fear?
2. Jeremiah previously predicted that King Jehoiakim would receive a donkey's burial. **Jeremiah 22:19**. Now God has confirmed it. How appropriate is this?
3. The year when King Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's scroll is a significant year. In 605 BC, King Jehoiakim's fourth year as king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians and Assyrians at Carchemish. He defeated them again at Hamath, then invaded Syria or Aram. Then he came to Jerusalem where he ordered King Jehoiakim to renounce his vassal oath to Egypt and make a vassal oath to Babylon.

At this time, Nebuchadnezzar deported many young men including Daniel and took treasure from the temple. This was the first of four deportations of Judeans from Jerusalem.

In making a vassal oath, each king swore in the name of their gods. Nebuchadnezzar swore in the name of Marduk while Jehoiakim swore in the name of the God of Judah. **YHWH** criticized King Jehoiakim since he swore this oath falsely. Jehoiakim never stopped his dealings and political intrigues with Egypt.

What was God's punishment for swearing in his name falsely?

PERICOPE 44

Jeremiah Attempts to Leave the City But Is Thrown in Prison

37:I [597 BC] King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appointed Zedekiah, son of Josiah, to be king of Judah. Zedekiah succeeded Jehoiakin, son of Jehoiakim. ²But Zedekiah, his administrators, and the common people didn't listen to what the LORD had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah.

³King Zedekiah sent Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, and the priest Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah, to the prophet Jeremiah. They asked him: Please pray to the LORD our God for us.

⁴Jeremiah was still free to come and go among the people. The people of Jerusalem hadn't put him in prison yet. ⁵Pharaoh's army had come from Egypt, and when the Babylonians who were blockading Jerusalem heard this news, they retreated from Jerusalem.

⁶The LORD spoke his word to the prophet Jeremiah. He said: ⁷This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Say this to the king of Judah, who sent you to get advice from me: Pharaoh's army has come out to help you. But it will go back to Egypt, its own land. ⁸Then the Babylonians will return. They will attack the city, capture it, and burn it down.

⁹This is what the LORD says: Don't deceive yourselves by thinking that the Babylonians will leave you. They will not leave you. ¹⁰Even if you would defeat the entire Babylonian army so that they had only a few badly wounded men left in their tents, they would get up and burn down this city.

¹¹The Babylonian army had retreated from Jerusalem because Pharaoh's army was coming. ¹²So Jeremiah wanted to leave Jerusalem and go to the territory of Benjamin to take possession of his property there among the people. ¹³But when he came to Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard there, whose name was Irijah, son of Shelemiah and grandson of Hananiah, arrested the prophet Jeremiah. He said: You're deserting to the Babylonians.

¹⁴Jeremiah answered: That's a lie. I'm not deserting to the Babylonians. But Irijah wouldn't listen to him. Irijah arrested Jeremiah and took him to the officials. ¹⁵The officials were so angry with Jeremiah that they beat him and put him in prison in the scribe Jonathan's house that had been turned into a prison. ¹⁶Jeremiah went into a prison cell, and he stayed there a long time.

¹⁷Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and the king asked him privately in the palace: Is there any message from the LORD? Jeremiah answered: Yes. There is a message from the LORD. You will be handed over to the king of Babylon. ¹⁸ Then Jeremiah asked King Zedekiah: What crime have I committed against you, your administrators, or these people? Why have you put me in prison? ¹⁹Where are the prophets who told you that the king of Babylon wouldn't attack you and this land? ²⁰ But now, Your Majesty, please listen, and accept my plea for mercy. Don't return me to the scribe Jonathan's house, or I will die there.

²¹King Zedekiah gave the command to have Jeremiah put in the courtyard of the prison. He gave him a loaf of bread every day from the bakers' street until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the prison.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Since the Babylonian army had broken off the siege, Jeremiah wanted to visit his field in Anathoth. But when he went to the gate to leave, the guard accused him of deserting to the Babylonians. So Jeremiah was placed in the scribe Jonathan's house that had been turned into a prison.

King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah to ask him if there was a word from the Lord. Jeremiah repeated the message he had already told the king many times: You will be handed over to the Babylonians. But then Jeremiah asked the king what crime he had committed. He had told the king the truth that came from the Lord. The king's false prophets had lied.

Then Jeremiah asked: Please don't return me to this prison or I will die there. So Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah be placed in the courtyard of the prison and gave him a loaf of bread every day.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why was King Zedekiah kind to Jeremiah by allowing him out of the prison house?
2. This was the second time that the king asked Jeremiah for information about the outcome of the invasion. **Jeremiah 21**. Why does the king ask again now? Hint: Read verse 5.

PERICOPE 45

Jeremiah Is Thrown into a Muddy Cistern But Ebed Melech Saves Him

38:1 Shephatiah, son of Mattan, Gedaliah, son of Pashhur, Jucal, son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur, son of Malchiah heard that Jeremiah was speaking to all the people. ²They heard Jeremiah say: This is what the LORD says: Those who stay in this city will die in wars, famines, or plagues. But those who surrender to the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives.

³This is what the LORD says: This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon and it will capture the city.

⁴Then the officials said to the king: Have this man put to death. He discourages the soldiers who are left in this city and all the people by telling them such things. This man is not trying to help these people. He's trying to hurt them.

⁵King Zedekiah answered: He's in your hands. I won't do anything to stop you.

⁶So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son. It was in the courtyard of the prison. They used ropes to lower Jeremiah into the cistern. There was no water in the cistern, only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

⁷But an official in the royal palace, Ebed Melech from Sudan, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the cistern. The king happened to be sitting at Benjamin Gate. ⁸Ebed Melech left the royal palace and spoke to the king at Benjamin Gate. ⁹Your Majesty, everything that these men have done to the prophet Jeremiah is wrong. They have thrown him into the cistern where he'll starve to death because there's no more bread in the city.

¹⁰Then the king gave Ebed Melech from Sudan this command: Take 30 men from here and lift the prophet Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.

¹¹So Ebed Melech took the men with him and went to the royal palace to a room under the treasury. He took rags and torn clothes from there and lowered them with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. ¹²Ebed Melech from Sudan said to Jeremiah: Put these rags and torn clothes under your arms to protect you from the ropes. Jeremiah did. ¹³They used the ropes to pull Jeremiah up and lift him out of the cistern. Then Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the prison.

¹⁴King Zedekiah sent for the prophet Jeremiah and brought him to the third entrance in the LORD's temple. I'm going to ask you a question, the king said to Jeremiah. Don't hide anything from me.

¹⁵Jeremiah answered Zedekiah: If I answer you, you'll kill me. If I give you advice, you won't listen to me.

¹⁶So King Zedekiah secretly swore an oath to Jeremiah: The LORD gave us life. As the LORD lives, I will not kill you or hand you over to these men who want to kill you.

King Zedekiah Is Given an Opportunity to Keep Jerusalem from Being Destroyed

¹⁷Jeremiah said to Zedekiah: This is what the LORD God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, you will live, and this city will not be burned. You and your household will live. ¹⁸But if you don't surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians. They will burn it down and you will not escape from them.

¹⁹King Zedekiah answered Jeremiah: I'm afraid of the Jews who have deserted to the Babylonians. The Babylonians may hand me over to them, and they will torture me.

²⁰Jeremiah said: You will not be handed over to them. Obey the LORD by doing what I'm telling you. Then everything will go well for you, and you will live. ²¹But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has shown me.

²²All the women who are left in the palace of Judah's king will be brought out to the officers of the king of Babylon. These women will say: Your trusted friends have misled you and used you. Your feet are stuck in the mud and your friends have deserted you.

²³All your wives and children will be brought to the Babylonians. You will not escape from them. You will be captured by the king of Babylon and this city will be burned down.

Jeremiah and Zedekiah Make an Agreement

²⁴Zedekiah said to Jeremiah: Don't let anyone know about this conversation or you will die. ²⁵The officials may find out that I've been talking with you. They may come to you and say: Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you. Don't hide anything from us or we'll kill you. ²⁶If they come to you, say to them: I asked the king not to send me back to Jonathan's house to die there.

²⁷All the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him. He told them exactly what the king had told him to say. So they stopped questioning him because they hadn't heard his conversation with the king. ²⁸Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the prison until the day Jerusalem was captured.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Four of the king's officials heard Jeremiah tell the people to surrender to the Babylonians. So they went to the king and asked to punish Jeremiah. King Zedekiah said: Do what you will. So they lowered Jeremiah into a dry cistern where he sank into the mud.

Ebed Melech, another official who was from Sudan, heard what they did to Jeremiah and went to King Zedekiah. He said: Jeremiah will die in that cistern as there's no more bread in the city. The king told him to get 30 men and pull Jeremiah out. So from then on Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the city.

King Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah for a private one-on-one conversation and, once again, he told the king if you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, you will live, and this city will not be burned. You and your household will live. But if you don't surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians. They will burn it down and you will not escape from them.

The king confesses he is afraid to surrender the city for fear the Jews who have already surrendered to the Babylonians would kill him. Jeremiah assures the king no harm will come to him, but the king is unconvinced and on pain of death swears Jeremiah to secrecy regarding their private conversation. Jeremiah complies.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. King Zedekiah apparently didn't want Jeremiah to die. But apparently, he didn't want his officials to know that he was the one who authorized Ebed Melech to pull Jeremiah out of the cistern. Why was Zedekiah afraid of his officials? Zedekiah was only 21 years old when he was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. **2 Kings 24:18**
2. Jeremiah now has three friends. Who are they? How do you know that each of these three men are his friends? **HINT: Jeremiah 26:24; 32:12; 38:7**
3. Why does Jeremiah agree to the king's request that he lie when asked about what was discussed in their private conversation?

PART 6: Jerusalem Is Captured By The Babylonians [586 BC]

In 590 BC, King Zedekiah entered into an alliance with the Egyptian Pharaoh Hophra and refused to pay tribute to King Nebuchadnezzar. So the Babylonians began a siege in January 588 BC. Many Judeans fled to Moab, Ammon, Edom and other surrounding countries.

For 30 months, Jerusalem was blockaded. There was a terrible famine in the city. **2 Kings 25:3**. King Zedekiah, his sons, the High Priest, and the army fled from the city between the walls through the king's garden. The Babylonians caught up with the fleeing party and took them all to King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah.

There Nebuchadnezzar killed the High Priest and the Judean soldiers. King Zedekiah watched as Nebuchadnezzar slew his sons. Then Nebuchadnezzar put out Zedekiah's eyes and sent him in chains to Babylon where he eventually died.

The Babylonian army systematically destroyed the city and its temple. The walls of the city were pulled down and many of its inhabitants were sent to exile in Babylon. Jeremiah was allowed to go to Ramah where the Babylonians installed Gedaliah, a Judean prince as Governor of the Babylonian province of Yehud. He was given a Babylonian guard to protect him.

Many Judeans who had fled to neighboring countries returned to Mizpah in the territory of Benjamin to live under Gedaliah's protection. Zedekiah's daughters also went to stay with Gedaliah.

PERICOPE 46

Jerusalem Is Captured by the Babylonians

39:1 [589-586 BC] In the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year as king of Judah, 588 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem with his entire army and blockaded it. ²On the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year as king 586 BC, they broke into the city.

³Then all the officers of the king of Babylon came in and sat in Middle Gate: Nergal, the quartermaster, Samgar Nebo, the chief officer, Nergal, the quartermaster and the chief fortuneteller, and all the rest of the officers of the king of Babylon.

King Zedekiah, His Sons, and His Officials Attempt to Escape the Babylonians

39:4 When King Zedekiah of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled. They left the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls, and they took the road to the plain of Jericho.

King Nebuchadnezzar Judges King Zedekiah and Takes Him to Babylon

39:5 The Babylonian army pursued them and caught up with Zedekiah in the plain of Jericho. They arrested him and brought him to Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in the territory of Hamath. The king of Babylon passed sentence on him. ⁶The King of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons as Zedekiah watched at Riblah. He also slaughtered all the leaders of Judah. ⁷Then he blinded Zedekiah, put him in bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon.

⁸The Babylonians burned down the royal palace and the people's homes, and they tore down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹Nebuzaradan, Babylon's captain of the guard, captured the few people left in the city, those who surrendered to him, and the rest of the people. ¹⁰But Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left some poor people who had nothing in the land of Judah. At that time he gave them vineyards and farms.

King Nebuchadnezzar Orders Jeremiah Be Spared

^{39:11} King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon gave Nebuzaradan an order concerning Jeremiah. He said: ¹²Take him and look after him. Don't harm him in any way, but do for him whatever he asks. ¹³Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, Nebushazban, the chief official, Nergal, the quartermaster and the chief fortuneteller, and all the other leaders of the king of Babylon sent for Jeremiah. ¹⁴They took Jeremiah out of the courtyard of the prison and handed him over to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, to take him home. So he lived among the people.

God Speaks to Jeremiah in Prison

^{39:15} While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the prison, the LORD spoke his word to him. The LORD said: ¹⁶Say to Ebed Melech from Sudan: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to carry out my threat against this city by bringing disaster on it instead of prosperity. At that time these things will happen as you watch.

¹⁷But at that time I will rescue you, declares the LORD. You will not be handed over to those you fear. ¹⁸I will certainly rescue you. You will not die in war. You will escape with your life because you trusted me, declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

After a two-year blockade, the Babylonians finally entered the city in 586 BC. But King Zedekiah, his sons, and his officials escaped through the city wall. However, the Babylonian army caught them and brought them to King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Hamath.

Zedekiah's sons were killed as King Zedekiah watched. Zedekiah's officials were also killed. Then Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah's eyes out, shackled him, and sent him to Babylon.

The Babylonians burned the royal palace, the temple and tore down the walls of the city. A few people were deported leaving only a few poor people left.

They took Jeremiah out of the courtyard of the prison and handed him over to the new Governor Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan who was living at Mizpah.

While Jeremiah was still in the prison before the Babylonians conquered the city, the Lord told him: Say to Ebed Melech from Sudan: You will not be handed over to the Babylonians. I will rescue you. You will not die in war. You will escape with your life because you trusted me.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Fortunately, Jeremiah is sent to Gedaliah, the son of his friend Ahikam. Gedaliah is a Judean noble Nebuchadnezzar appointed Governor of Judah. His headquarters was located at Mizpah. **Jeremiah 39:6** says Jeremiah was handed over to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

But **Jeremiah 40:1** says the Babylonian Captain of the Guard found him chained among the prisoners. He told Jeremiah he might go to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Jeremiah then went to Mizpah. **Jeremiah 40:5-6**. Apparently, there was a great deal of confusion during Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. Where is Baruch all this time?

2. Does Gedaliah now become Jeremiah's fourth friend?

3. Where did Eben Melech go?

4. The fall of Jerusalem is also recorded in **2 Kings 25** and **2 Chronicles 36**. Read these two chapters. Do we find out anything more that Jeremiah doesn't tell us?

PERICOPE 47

Jeremiah Is Freed

40:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, let him go at Ramah. Nebuzaradan found Jeremiah in chains along with the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being taken to Babylon. **2**The captain of the guard took Jeremiah aside and said to him: The LORD your God threatened to bring this disaster on this place. **3**He has carried out his threat. The LORD did as he promised because you Israelites have sinned against him and refused to obey him. That is why this has happened to you. **4**Today I'm removing the chains from your hands. If you would like to come with me to Babylon, come and I'll look after you. But if you don't want to come with me to Babylon, don't come. The whole land is yours. Go wherever you want.

5If you wish to remain, then go back to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed to govern the cities of Judah. Live among the people with him or go anywhere you want. The captain of the guard gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let him go.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Apparent Jeremiah got caught up and mixed with other prisoners scheduled to go to Babylon. But the captain of the guard found him and Jeremiah went to Mizpah with Governor Gedaliah.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Where is Baruch?
2. Did Ebed Melech escape from the Babylonians? HINT: **Jeremiah 39:17-18**
3. Did Gedaliah become Jeremiah's fourth friend? How can you tell? HINT: **Jeremiah 39:14**

PART 7: The Lamentations of Jeremiah Over Jerusalem

Most scholars believe that Jeremiah wrote these; however, there is no proof of this. The purpose of these was to demonstrate God's faithfulness to bring punishment on God's people when they failed to keep God's covenant as explained in Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, and his faithfulness not to wipe out all of the chosen people. Lamentations 3:23

Jews value the Book of Lamentations and read it to memorialize the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the city as it portrays the continued faith of the Judeans in their God despite his discipline of them for covenant disobedience.

Lamentations consists of five funeral or morning songs written in a complex acrostic pattern. All but the third song describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Songs 1, 2, and 4 contain 22 verses, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The third song contains 66 verses, three verses for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The fifth song is not an acrostic.

This is similar to Psalms 119 where there are 176 verses with 22 sections of eight verses with each section beginning with a Hebrew consonant. Usually acrostics are written to help people remember the beginning of the lines of the poem.

Two other books in the Bible deal with suffering: The Book of Job and the Book of Habakkuk. Jeremiah also wrote another lament for the death of King Josiah but we do not have a copy. 2 Chronicles 35:25

PERICOPE 48

The Prophet Speaks Out: No One Offers Comfort

1:1 Look how deserted Jerusalem is.
Once the city was crowded with people.
Once it was important among the nations.
Now it is a widow.

Once it was a princess among the provinces.
Now it does forced labor.

² Jerusalem cries bitterly at night
with tears running down its cheeks.
Out of all those who love the city,
no one offers it comfort.

All of Jerusalem's friends have betrayed it
and become its enemies.

³ Judah has been exiled
after much suffering and harsh treatment.
Its people live among the nations.
They find no rest.

Those who chased them caught up with them
in places where there was no way out.

⁴ The roads to Zion are deserted
No one comes to the annual festivals.
No one passes through any of its gates.

Its priests are groaning.
Its young women are made to suffer.
Zion is bitter.

⁵ Its opponents are now in control.
Its enemies have no worries.
The LORD made Zion suffer for its many rebellious acts.
Its children go ahead of their opponents into captivity.

⁶ All splendor has abandoned the people of Zion.
Its influential people were like deer that couldn't find any pasture.
They ran without any strength ahead of the hunters.

⁷ Now, during its suffering and oppression,
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures it had from ancient times,
when its people fell into the power of their enemies
with no one to help them.

Their opponents looked on,
and they laughed at Jerusalem's downfall.

⁸ Jerusalem has sinned so much
that it has become a filthy thing.
Everyone who used to honor it now despises it.
They've seen it naked.
Jerusalem groans and turns away.

⁹ Jerusalem's own filth covers its clothes.
It gave no thought to its future.
Its downfall was shocking.

No one offers it comfort.
O LORD, look at my suffering,
because my enemies have triumphed.

¹⁰ The enemies laid their hands on all of the city's treasures.
Jerusalem has seen the nations enter the Holy Place.
O Lord, they are the same people
you have forbidden to enter your congregation.

¹¹All the people are groaning
as they beg for bread.
They trade their treasures for food
to keep themselves alive.

O LORD, look and see how despised I am.

Zion Speaks Out: No One Offers Comfort

¹² Doesn't this affect all of you who pass by?
Look and see if there's any pain
like the pain that the LORD has caused me,
like the pain that he has made me suffer
on the day of his fierce anger. **Isaiah 13:9,13**

¹³ He sent fire from above.
He made it go deep into my bones.
He spread a net for my feet.
He made me turn back.

He has left me devastated.
He has made me sick all day long.

The Lord's Discipline for Rebellion

¹⁴ My rebellious acts are a heavy burden for me.
They were tied together by God's own hands.
They were tied around my neck.
He has weakened me with them.

The Lord has handed me over
to people I cannot oppose.

¹⁵The Lord has treated all the warriors
inside my walls with contempt.
He called an army to defeat my young men.
The LORD trampled the people of Judah in a winepress.

¹⁶ I'm crying because of all these things.
My eyes — my eyes flow with tears.
No one can give me the comfort.
I need to keep me alive.

Everyone is too far away from me.
My children are devastated
because my enemies have won.

¹⁷ Zion holds out its hands.
No one offers it comfort.

The LORD has given this order about Jacob:
His own neighbors will become his opponents.
Jerusalem has become a filthy thing among them.

God Punished Us for Breaking His Covenant

¹⁸ The LORD is right in what he did,
because I rebelled against his word.
Please listen, all you people,
and look at my pain.

My young women and young men
have gone into captivity.

¹⁹ I called for those who love me,
but they betrayed me.
My priests and leaders breathed their last breath in the city,
looking for food to keep themselves alive.

²⁰ O LORD, see the distress I'm in.
My stomach is churning.
My heart is pounding because I've been very bitter.

In the streets swords kill my children.
Inside the houses it's like death.

²¹ All my enemies have heard that I am groaning.
No one offers me comfort.
All my enemies have heard about my disaster.
They are happy that you did it.

You have allowed the day to come,
the one that you had announced.
Let my enemies be like me now.

²² Recall all of their wickedness.
Then deal with them as you have dealt with me
because of all my rebellious acts.
I groan so much and feel so sick at heart.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In this first song, Jeremiah first describes the pitiful condition of the city and its inhabitants. They are suffering mightily. Then he describes the justice of God's punishment. This suffering is terrible expressed by the repeated phrase: *No one offers me comfort*. Many words of suffering appear.

But the greater emphasis is on how Judah disobeyed God by rebelling against him. God had warned Judah it would suffer and then go into exile. Deuteronomy 28:36-37; 48-50, 53, 64

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah repeats the phrase: *No one offers it comfort* 3x. Why should anyone comfort the inhabitants of Jerusalem? Why does God offer comfort in Isaiah 40:1?
2. Why does Jeremiah describe the groaning and suffering of the city's inhabitants?
3. Jeremiah describes the *young* women and the *young* men going into captivity. Why does he emphasize their age?

4. Jeremiah says God punished Jerusalem for its rebellious acts *pesha*-transgressions 3x? Describe these acts?
5. Jeremiah says Gods is righteous even though he allowed the city of Jerusalem and its temple to be destroyed because Judah has rebelled against him. How many Judeans would have admitted that at the time?
6. Has Jeremiah mentioned the temple in this first song? What does he mention about it?
7. Why does Jeremiah describe the action of the Babylonians as the *day of the Lord's fierce anger*?

PERICOPE 49

The Prophet Speaks Out: The LORD Destroyed Zion

2:I Look how the Lord has covered the people of Zion
with the cloud of his anger.
He has thrown down Israel's beauty
from heaven to earth.

He didn't even remember his footstool
on the day of his anger.

2The Lord swallowed up all of Jacob's pastures without any pity.
He tore down the fortified cities of Judah in his fury.
He brought the kingdom of Judah and its leaders
down to the ground in dishonor.

3In his burning anger he cut off all of Israel's strength.
He withdrew his right hand when they faced their enemy.
He burned like a raging fire in the land of Jacob,
destroying everything around him.

4Like an enemy he bent his bow.
Like an opponent his right hand held the arrow steady.
He killed all the beautiful people.
He poured out his fury like fire
on the tent 'ohel-temple of Zion's people.

5The Lord became an enemy.
He swallowed up Israel.
He swallowed up all of its palaces.
He destroyed its strongholds.
He made the people of Judah mourn and moan.

6 He stripped his own booth sok-temple as if it were a garden
and destroyed his own festivals.
The LORD wiped out the memory of festivals

and days of worship in Zion.

He expelled kings and priests because of his fierce anger.

⁷ The LORD rejected his altar and disowned his holy place.

He handed the walls of Zion's palaces over to its enemies.

The enemies made noise in the LORD's temple

as though it were a festival day.

⁸ The LORD planned to destroy the wall of Zion's people.

He marked it off with a line.

He didn't take his hand away

until he had swallowed it up.

He made the towers and walls mourn.

They are completely dejected.

The Prophet Describes Jerusalem's Destruction

²⁹ Zion's gates have sunk into the ground.

The LORD destroyed and shattered the bars across its gates.

Its king and influential people are scattered among the nations.

There is no longer any instruction from Moses' Teachings.

Its prophets can find no visions from the LORD.

¹⁰ The respected leaders of Zion's people sit silently on the ground.

They throw dirt on their heads and put on sackcloth.

The young women of Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground.

¹¹ My eyes are worn out with tears.

My stomach is churning.

My heart is poured out on the ground

because of the destruction of my people.

Little children and infants faint in the city streets.

¹² They're asking their mothers for some bread and wine

as they faint like wounded people in the city streets.
Their lives dwindle away in their mothers' arms.

The Prophet Speaks Out: The LORD Destroyed You

^{2:13}What example can I give you?

What parallel can I show you, people of Jerusalem?

What comparison can I make that will comfort you,
beloved people of Zion?

Your wounds are as deep as the sea.

Who can heal you?

⁴Your prophets saw misleading visions about you.

They painted a good picture of you.

They didn't expose your guilt in order to make things better again.

They gave you false prophecies that misled you.

⁵Everyone who walks along the road shakes a fist at you.

They hiss and shake their heads at Jerusalem's people:

Is this the city they used to call absolutely beautiful,
the joy of the whole world?

⁶All your enemies gawk at you.

They hiss and grit their teeth.

They say: We've swallowed it up.

Yes, this is the day we've been waiting for.

At last we have seen it.

⁷The LORD has accomplished what he had planned to do.

He carried out the threat he announced long ago.

He tore you down without any pity, Jerusalem.

He made your enemies gloat over you.

He raised the weapons of your opponents.

¹⁸The hearts of Jerusalem's people
cried out to the LORD,
the wall of Zion's people.

Let your tears run down like a river day and night.
Don't let them stop.
Don't let your eyes rest.

¹⁹Get up! Cry out at night, every hour on the hour.
Pour your heart out like water in the presence of the LORD.

Lift up your hands to him in prayer
for the life of your little children
who faint from hunger at every street corner.

Zion Speaks Out: The LORD Destroyed Me

^{2:20} O LORD, look and consider:
Have you ever treated anyone like this?
Should women eat their own children,
the children they have nursed?

Should priests and prophets be killed
in the Lord's holy place?

²¹ Young and old lie on the ground in the streets.
My young women and men are cut down by swords.
You killed them on the day of your anger.
You slaughtered them without any pity.

²² You have invited those who terrorize me on every side,
as though they were invited to a festival.
No one escaped or survived on the day of the LORD's anger.
My enemy has murdered the children I nursed and raised.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FOR FAR?

If there is one motif in this song, it is that on this day, *it is the day of the Lord's anger*. This word appears many times –at the beginning and end of the song.

God's *anger* is *a burning fire, a raging fire, with fury like fire*, that poured out on the temple of God's people. *The Lord became an enemy and stripped his own booth* or temple.

Jeremiah describes the destruction of all of God's people from kings to little children. He criticizes the false prophets. God has carried out his previous threats of punishment. Jeremiah recommends fervent prayer.

Finally, Jeremiah reminds people of God's threat in **Deuteronomy 28:53-57** where food will be so scarce people will commit cannibalism.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah says the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple is caused by God's anger. How does he emphasize this?
2. Jeremiah says the Babylonians have also destroyed the 46 fortified cities of Judah. Why isn't this mentioned in his narrative?
3. Describe how many times Jeremiah mentions people are killed.
4. What religious places, events, and institutions are destroyed by God?
5. Who does Jeremiah say are suffering most? HINT: **Lamentations 2:11-12, 19**
6. How do Jerusalem's enemies gloat?
7. Where and how many times does the expression, *Terror is All Around* appear in the Book of Jeremiah? What does this expression symbolize?

EXTRA CREDIT

Why do the people seem more distressed that God's temple has been destroyed than God does?

PERICOPE 50

The Prophet—A Man of Despair

3:1 I am the man who has experienced suffering
under the rod of God's fury ^{‘ebrah}-wrath.

² God has driven me away
and made me walk in darkness instead of light.

³ He beat me again and again all day long.

⁴ He has made my flesh and my skin waste away.
He has broken my bones.

⁵ He has attacked me and surrounded me
with bitterness and hardship.

⁶ He has made me live in darkness,
like those who died a long time ago.

⁷ He has blocked me so that I can't get out.
He has put heavy chains on me.

⁸ Even when I cry and call for help,
he shuts out my prayer.

⁹ He has blocked my way with cut stones
and made my paths crooked.

¹⁰ He is like a bear waiting to ambush me,
like a lion in hiding.

¹¹ He has forced me off the road I was taking,
torn me to pieces,
and left me with nothing.

¹² He has drawn his bow
and made me the target for his arrows.

¹³ He has shot the arrows
from his quiver into my heart.

¹⁴ I have become a laughingstock to all my people.
All day long they make fun of me with their songs.

¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness.
He has made me drink wormwood.

¹⁶ He has ground my teeth with gravel.
He has trampled me into the dust.

¹⁷ My soul has been kept from enjoying peace.
I have forgotten what happiness is.

¹⁸ I said: I've lost my strength to live
and my hope in the LORD.

¹⁹ Remember my suffering
and my aimless wandering,
the wormwood and poison.

²⁰ My soul continues to remember these things
and is so discouraged.

The Prophet—A Man of Hope

^{3:21} The reason I can still find hope
is that I keep this one thing in mind:

²² the LORD's mercy.

We were not completely wiped out tamam-consumed.
His compassion is never limited.

²³ It is new every morning.
His faithfulness is great.

²⁴ My soul can say: The LORD is my lot in life.
That is why I find hope in him.

²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to anyone who seeks help from him.

²⁶ It is good to continue to hope and wait silently
for the LORD to save us.

²⁷ It is good for people to endure burdens
when they're young. Ecclesiastes 11:9

²⁸ They should sit alone and remain silent
because the LORD has laid these burdens on them.

²⁹ They should put their mouths in the dust.
Maybe a reason to hope exists.

³⁰ They should turn their cheeks to the one who strikes them
and take their fill of insults.

³¹ The Lord will not reject such people forever.

³² Even if he makes us suffer,
he will have compassion
in keeping with the richness of his mercy.

³³ He does not willingly
bring suffering or grief to anyone,
³⁴ crush any prisoner on earth underfoot,
³⁵ deny people their rights
in the presence of the Most High God,
³⁶ or deprive people of justice in court.

The Lord isn't happy to see these things.

37 Who was it who spoke and it came into being?
It was the Lord who gave the order.

38 Both good and bad *ra*-evil come
from the mouth of the Most High God. **Isaiah 45:7**

39 Why should any living mortal, any person,
complain about being punished for sin?

40 Let us look closely at our ways and examine them
and then return to the LORD.

41 Let us raise our hearts and hands to God in heaven.

42 We have been disobedient and rebellious.
You haven't forgiven us.

43 You covered yourself with anger and pursued us.
You killed without pity.

44 You covered yourself with a cloud
so that no prayer could get through it.

45 You made us the scum and trash of the nations.

46 All our enemies gawk at us.

47 Panic and pitfalls have found us,
so have devastation and destruction.

48 Streams of tears run down from my eyes
over the ruin of my dear people.

49 My eyes will keep flowing without stopping for a moment
50 until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees.

51 What I see with my eyes disturbs me deeply
because of all the young women in my city.

⁵² Those who were my enemies for no reason
hunted me like a bird.

⁵³ They threw me alive into a pit
and threw rocks at me.

⁵⁴ Water flowed over my head.
I thought I was finished.

Jeremiah's Prayer

⁵⁵ I call your name from the deepest pit, O LORD.

⁵⁶ Listen to my cry for help.
Don't close your ears when I cry out for relief.

⁵⁷ Be close at hand when I call to you.
You told me not to be afraid.

⁵⁸ Plead my case for me, O LORD.
Reclaim my life.

⁵⁹ Look at the wrong that has been done to me, O LORD.
Give me a fair verdict.

⁶⁰ Look at all their malice,
all their plots against me.

⁶¹ Listen to their insults,
all their plots against me.

⁶² The words and thoughts of those who attack me
are directed against me all day long.

⁶³ Look at them.
Whether they are sitting or standing,
they make fun of me in their songs.

⁶⁴ Pay them back, O LORD, for what they deserve,
for what their own hands have done.

⁶⁵ Make them stubborn.
Let your curse be on them.

⁶⁶ Pursue them in anger and wipe them out from under the LORD's heaven.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is the longest of the songs, in 66 verses rather than in 22 verses like the other songs. This purports to be Jeremiah's own emotions as he surveys the ruined city—God's holy mountain.

Jeremiah regards this destruction as complete darkness. Who would have thought God would allow this to be done to his holy city and his holy temple? Jeremiah even says that God shuts out his prayer for mercy. Jeremiah even says he has lost his strength to live and even lost his hope in the Lord. He is very discouraged.

But then, even then, he finds hope because he remembers the Lord's mercy – his loving kindness ~~checced~~. All the people in Jerusalem were not killed. There is still a remnant.

So God's compassion is not limited. It is new every morning. His faithfulness to his covenant – his faithfulness to his chosen people is great. Because of this, Jeremiah can say: The Lord is good to those who wait in faith on him. They should wait in silence.

Even if God makes us suffer, he will still have compassion for us as his greatest attribute is his mercy ~~checced~~. God says: I create good and I create evil. **Isaiah 45:7**. *But at this time you have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can get through.*

I, Jeremiah, call your name from the deepest pit. Be close at hand when I cry to you. Let your curse be on the Babylonians.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In this third song Jeremiah falls to the depths of despair and rises to the heights of hope. Where does Jeremiah get his hope in God?
2. Jeremiah admits he has lost his strength to live and his hope in the Lord. How does he regain his hope in God?
3. Jeremiah says a person should turn his cheeks to the one who strikes them and take their fill of insults? Jesus also says this. **Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29**. Why should a person do this?
4. What is the one attribute of God that constantly gives Jeremiah hope? This word appears 6x in the Book of Jeremiah and 3x in Lamentations.
5. Jeremiah struggles because he says *God has hidden his face* and yet Jeremiah still prays to God. In his book, God has told Jeremiah more than once not to pray for God's people. **Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11**. Why does Jeremiah disobey God and still pray even when God has hidden his face? **Lamentations 3:44**
6. How determined is Jeremiah to continue to pray to God? **Lamentations 3:49**
7. Why does Jeremiah ask God to curse the Babylonians? After all, God has brought them to Jerusalem.

PERICOPE 51

The Prophet Speaks Out: Zion's Suffering Was Worse Than Sodom's

4:1 Look how the gold has become tarnished.
The fine gold has changed.
The sacred stones are scattered at every street corner.

² Zion's precious children,
who are worth their weight in fine gold,
are now treated like clay pots,
like those made by a potter's hands.

³ Even jackals offer their breasts to nurse their young,
but the women of my people are as cruel as wild ostriches.

⁴ The tongues of nursing infants
stick to the roofs of their mouths
because of their thirst.

Little children beg for bread,
but no one will break off a piece for them.

⁵ Those who used to eat delicacies
are now destitute in the streets.
Those who used to wear expensive clothes
now pick through piles of garbage.

⁶ The punishment for my people's wickedness
has been more severe
than the punishment for the sins of Sodom.

Sodom was destroyed instantly,
without one human hand touching it. *Genesis 19:24-25*

⁷ Zion's princes were purer than snow, whiter than milk.
Their bodies were more pink than coral.
Their hair was like sapphires.

⁸ Their faces are now blacker than soot.
No one recognizes them on the streets.
Their skin has shriveled on their bones.
It has become as dry as bark.

⁹ Those who were killed with swords are better off
than those who are dying from starvation.
Those who were stabbed bled to death.
The others are dying because there is nothing in the fields to eat.

¹⁰ The hands of loving mothers cooked their own children.
The children were used for food by my people
when they were being destroyed by a blockade.

¹¹ The LORD's fury has accomplished his purpose.
He unleashed his burning anger.
He started a fire in Zion that even burned its foundations.

¹² Neither the kings of the earth
nor anyone living on earth could believe
that enemies or invaders
would ever get through the gates of Jerusalem.

¹³ They got through because of the sins of Jerusalem's prophets
and the crimes of its priests,
who spilled the blood of righteous people within it.

¹⁴ My people staggered blindly through the streets.
They were so contaminated with bloodstains
that no one would touch their clothes.

¹⁵ Get away! You're unclean, people yelled at them.
Get away! Get away! Don't touch anyone.

When they fled and wandered around,
the people of the nations said:
They can't stay here any longer.

¹⁶The LORD himself has scattered them.
He will no longer look favorably on them.
They no longer respected the priests,
nor did they honor their older leaders.

The People of Zion Speak Out

^{4:17} We are still straining our eyes,
trying in vain to find help.
We waited and waited
for a nation that didn't save us.

¹⁸ The enemy kept tracking us down,
so we couldn't even go out into the streets.

Our end was near.
Our time was up.
Our end had come.

¹⁹ Those who were hunting us
were faster than eagles in the sky.
They chased us in the mountains
and ambushed us in the wilderness.

²⁰ The person the LORD anointed King Zedekiah
who is the breath of our life,
was caught in their pits.

We had thought that we would live
in our king's shadow among the nations.

The Prophet Speaks Out: Be Warned about Edom's Impending Doom

^{4:21} Rejoice and be glad, people of Edom,
inhabitants of the country of Uz.

The cup of the LORD's fury will be passed to you next.
You'll get drunk and take off all your clothes.

²² People of Zion,
the punishment for your wickedness will end.
The LORD will not let you remain in exile.

People of Edom,
he will punish you for your wickedness.
He will expose your sins.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the fourth song, Jeremiah returns to describing how horrible the Babylonians have treated the Judeans. This has made women consider their own survival before they help their children. He again refers to people cannibalizing their children.

Jerusalem's people were so contaminated no one would come near them or allow them to even stay in their country where they escaped.

The Babylonians were so thorough in catching the Judeans that there was no place to escape. Even King Zedekiah was captured.

Jeremiah is confident that the people of Jerusalem will not remain in exile forever. **Jeremiah 4:22**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

I. Why does Jeremiah say the destruction of Jerusalem is worse than it was for the people of Sodom?

2. Jeremiah again refers to the Lord's burning wrath. He says it was because of the sins of Jerusalem's prophets and the crimes of their priests. What does he describe as their sins and crimes?
3. The people of Jerusalem constantly looked for help, but no one came. Who were they looking for as their savior?
4. The Edomites helped the Babylonians capture people who escaped from the city. Jeremiah says God will punish them for their sins.
5. Why is Jeremiah confident the people of Jerusalem will not remain in exile forever? Has he read Isaiah or has God told him this?

PERICOPE 52

A Prayer of the Prophet

5:1 Remember, O LORD,
what has happened to us.
Take a look at our disgrace.

² The land we inherited
has been turned over to strangers.
Our homes have been turned over to foreigners.

³ We are orphans without a father.
Our mothers are like widows.

⁴ We have to pay to drink our own water.
We have to pay to chop our own wood.

⁵ Our enemies are breathing down our necks.
We are worn out and not permitted to rest.

⁶ We had to beg Egypt and Assyria for food.

⁷ Our ancestors sinned.
Now they are gone,
but we have to take the punishment
for their wickedness.

⁸ Slaves rule us.
There is no one to rescue us from them.

⁹ To get our food, we have to risk our lives
in the heat of the desert.

¹⁰ Our skin is as hot as an oven
from the burning heat of starvation.

¹¹ Women in Zion are raped,
so are the girls in the cities of Judah.

¹² Our leaders are hung by their hands.
Our older leaders are shown no respect.

¹³ Our young men work at the mill,
and our boys stagger under loads of wood.

¹⁴ Our older leaders have stopped meeting at the city gate,
and our young men no longer play their music.

¹⁵ There is no joy left in our hearts.
Our dancing has turned into mourning.

¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head.
Because we have sinned,
it has been disastrous for us.

¹⁷ This is why we feel sick.
This is why our eyes see less and less.

¹⁸ Foxes roam around on Mount Zion
which lies in ruins.

¹⁹ “But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever,
and your reign continues throughout every generation.

²⁰ Why have you completely forgotten us?
Why have you abandoned us for such a long time?

²¹ O LORD, bring us back to you,
and we'll come back.
Give us back the life we had long ago,
²² unless you have completely rejected us
and are very angry with us.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the fifth song of Lamentations, Jeremiah complains about all the people of Jerusalem have had to suffer. Not all the people of Jerusalem are deported.

Many are tortured especially the older leaders of Judah. The Babylonians employ many in work projects. Women are raped. Yet again, Jeremiah admits they are being punished because of their sins.

Jeremiah ends by asking God to give the people of Jerusalem the life they had long ago. He is confident God still loves his chosen people.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. List the number of times throughout the five songs of Lamentations Jeremiah says the Babylonians raped and abused women and young girls.
2. Jeremiah says that the current inhabitants of Jerusalem are being punished because of the sins of their ancestors. **Lamentations 5:7; Exodus 34:7**. How does God tell the prophet Ezekiel this will change? **HINT: Ezekiel 18:1-32**
3. Jeremiah asks God: Why have you abandoned us for such a long time? How does Jeremiah think God has abandoned his nation?
4. How does Jeremiah think God will bring the people back to himself?
5. Does Jeremiah really think that God will completely abandon his people?

PART 8: Events After Jerusalem Is Captured

When the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 586 BC, the Babylonian captain of the guard sends Jeremiah to the new Governor of Yehud, who will now govern Judah. He is named Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, both who were members of the royal Judean court.

He is established at Mizpah north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin, and is given Babylonian soldiers to help him administer the country. But on the way, Jeremiah gets caught up with people of Jerusalem who are bound and set to leave for Babylon.

The captain of the guard sees Jeremiah and frees him to go to Mizpah to Gedaliah.

The next incident that happens is that Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, a descendant of the royal family assassinates Gedaliah, kills the Babylonian soldiers with Gedaliah, and takes the Judeans there in Mizpah, including King Zedekiah's daughters, and leaves for Ammon to claim his reward from the king of Ammon who had hired him to assassinate Gedaliah.

But nothing is mentioned of Jeremiah and Baruch being captured by Ishmael. They are later seen with this group of refugees after Johanan bar Kareah and other Judean officers chase Ishmael and recover the people. Then the group heads south toward Egypt.

Johanan asks Jeremiah: What does God want us to do now? Jeremiah tells them: God wants you to remain in Judah. But the people have already decided to go to Egypt. Jeremiah protests but to no avail. The people arrive in Egypt and Jeremiah tells them they will die there.

PERICOPE 53

Jeremiah Goes to Live with Gedaliah at Mizpah

40:6 Jeremiah went to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, at Mizpah and lived with him among the people who were left in the land.

⁷All the army commanders and their men who were in the field heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, to govern the country and some of the country's poorest men, women, and children who had not been taken away to Babylon. ⁸These are the Judean commanders who went with their men to Gedaliah at Mizpah: Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan, sons of Kareah, Seraiah, son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai from Netophah, and Jezaniah, who was the son of a man from Maacah. ⁹Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, swore an oath to them and their men. He said: Don't be afraid to serve the Babylonians. Live in this country, serve the king of Babylon, and you will prosper. ¹⁰I'm going to live in Mizpah and represent you when the Babylonians come to us. Gather grapes, summer fruit, and olive oil, and put them in storage jars. Live in the cities you have taken over.

¹¹Now, all the Jews who were in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and in all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a few survivors in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, to govern them. ¹²So all the Jews returned from all the places where they had been scattered. They came to Judah and to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They gathered a large harvest of grapes and summer fruit.

¹³Kareah's son Johanan and all the army commanders who were still in the country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. ¹⁴They asked him, "Do you know that King Baalis of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael, Nethaniah's son, to kill you? However, Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, didn't believe them.

¹⁵Then Johanan, Kareah's son, secretly asked Gedaliah at Mizpah: Let me kill Ishmael, Nethaniah's son. No one will know about it. Why should he kill

you? All the Jews who have gathered around you would scatter. What is left of Judah would disappear.

¹⁶Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, told Johanan, Kareah's son: Don't do that. What you are saying about Ishmael is a lie.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan was an experienced court official with a good pedigree. Judean army commanders and others joined him. Gedaliah swore that he would represent them to Babylon. Many Jews returned from Moab, Ammon, Edom and other countries to Mizpah. They gathered a large harvest of grapes and summer fruit.

The army commanders warned Gedaliah that Ishmael ben Nethaniah has been bribed by King Baalis of Ammon to kill you. But Gedaliah didn't believe them.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah hasn't been mentioned since the Babylonian captain of the guard sent him to Mizpah. Baruch hasn't been mentioned since he wrote the scroll Jeremiah dictated to him that King Jehoiakin burned. **Jeremiah 36:32**. What are they doing?
2. Why doesn't Governor Gedaliah pay attention to the assassination plot?

PERICOPE 54

Governor Gedaliah Is Assassinated by Ishmael

4:1 [585 BC] In the seventh month Ishmael, son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, a descendant of the royal family and of the king's officers, went with ten men to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. As they ate together at Mizpah, ²Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him got up, drew their swords, and killed Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. So they assassinated the man whom the king of Babylon had appointed to govern the land. ³Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah as well as the Babylonian soldiers that he found there.

Ishmael Kills Pilgrims Coming to Jerusalem

4:4 The day after the murder of Gedaliah, before anyone knew about it ⁵80 men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. Their beards were shaved off, their clothes were torn, and cuts were on their bodies. They brought grain offerings and incense to the LORD's temple. ⁶Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, left Mizpah to meet them, crying as he went. When he met them, he said to them: Come to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam.

⁷When they came into the city, Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, and his men slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. ⁸However, ten men from the group had said to Ishmael: Don't kill us. We have wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey hidden in the country. So he left them alone and didn't kill them along with the others.

⁹Now, the cistern where Ishmael threw all the bodies of the men he had killed was the same one that King Asa made as a part of his defense against King Baasha of Israel. Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, filled it with the bodies.

Ishmael Takes Captive the People at Mizpah and Leaves for Ammon

4:10 Then Ishmael took captive the rest of the people who were at Mizpah. He captured the king's daughters and all the other people who had been left at Mizpah. They were the people whom Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard,

had put under the control of Gedaliah, son of Ahikam. Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, took them captive and left for Ammon.

Johanan ben Kareah Leads a Party to Chase Ishmael

^{41:11} When Kareah's son Johanan and all the army commanders who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, had done, ¹² they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael. They caught up with him at the large pool in Gibeon. ¹³ When all the people who were with Ishmael saw Kareah's son Johanan and all the army commanders who were with him, they were glad. ¹⁴ Then all the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and ran to Kareah's son Johanan. ¹⁵ Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to Ammon.

¹⁶ Then Kareah's son Johanan and all the army commanders who were with him brought back the rest of the people of Mizpah whom he had rescued from Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, son of Ahikam. Johanan brought back men, women, children, soldiers, and commanders from Gibeon. ¹⁷ When they left Gibeon, they stayed near Bethlehem at Geruth Kimham on their way to Egypt. ¹⁸ They were afraid of the Babylonians because Ishmael had killed Gedaliah whom the king of Babylon had appointed to govern the land.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Ishmael kills Gedaliah and takes captive all the Jews that were with him at Mizpah. He kills 70 pilgrims going to mourn at Jerusalem, but allows 10 others to leave to continue their pilgrimage.

Then Ishmael takes his captives to Gibeon. The army commander Johanan ben Kareah pursued them. Ishmael abandoned his captives and escaped to Ammon. The party left Gibeon and headed south near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Where are Jeremiah and Baruch?

2. Why does Johanan ben Kareah take the people south near Bethlehem instead of returning to Mizpah?

PERICOPE 55

Jeremiah Warns the People of Judah Not to Go to Egypt

42:1 [585 BC] Then all the army commanders along with Kareah's son Johanan and Hoshai's son Jezaniah and all the people, from the least important to the most important, came to the prophet Jeremiah. ²They said to him: Please listen to our request and pray to the LORD your God for all of us who are left here. As you can see, there are only a few of us left. ³Let the LORD your God tell us where we should go and what we should do.

⁴The prophet Jeremiah answered them: I have listened to your request. I will pray to the LORD your God as you have requested and I will tell you everything the LORD says. I won't keep anything from you.

⁵They said to Jeremiah: May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we don't do exactly what the LORD your God tells us to do. ⁶We will obey the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, whether it's good or bad. Yes, we will obey the LORD our God so that everything will go well for us.

⁷After ten days the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. ⁸So Jeremiah called Kareah's son Johanan, all the army commanders who were with him and all the people from the least important to the most important. ⁹Jeremiah said to them: You sent me to plead your case humbly to the LORD. This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ¹⁰Suppose you stay in this land. Then I will build you up and not tear you down. I will plant you and not uproot you. I will change my plans about the disaster I've brought on you. ¹¹Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon whom you now fear. Don't be afraid of him, declares the LORD. I'm with you. I will save you and rescue you from his power. ¹²I will have compassion on you. I will make him have compassion on you and return you to your land.

¹³Jeremiah said: But suppose you say: We won't stay in this land, and you disobey the LORD your God. ¹⁴Then you say: We'll go to Egypt, where we won't have to see war, hear the sound of a ram's horn, or be hungry. We'll stay there.

¹⁵Now, listen to the LORD's word, you people who are left in Judah. This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Suppose you're determined to go to Egypt, and you go and live there. ¹⁶Then the wars you fear will catch up with you in Egypt. The famines you dread will follow you to Egypt and you will die there. ¹⁷So all the people who decide to go and live in Egypt will die in wars, famines, and plagues. No one will survive or escape the disasters I will bring on them.

¹⁸This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: As my anger and my fury were poured out on those who live in Jerusalem, so my fury will be poured out on you if you go to Egypt. You will become a curse word. You will become something ridiculed, cursed, and disgraced. You won't see this place again.

¹⁹The LORD has told you people who are left in Judah not to go to Egypt. You need to know that I am warning you today. ²⁰You only deceived yourselves when you sent me to the LORD your God and said: Pray to the LORD our God for us and tell us everything that the LORD our God says and we'll do it. ²¹I have told you today, but you won't obey anything the LORD your God sent me to tell you. ²²But now, you need to know that you will die in wars, famines, or plagues in the place where you want to go and live.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah now appears. He is asked by the people to pray to the Lord and ask him to tell them where to go and what they should do.

After ten days, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah. Jeremiah said: The Lord told me he wants you to stay in this land. But you have already decided to go to Egypt. God says in Egypt you all will die in wars, famines, and plagues.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Where has Jeremiah been all this time? Suddenly he appears. Where has Baruch been? He also suddenly appears.

2. Why did the people ask Jeremiah to pray to the Lord if they had already decided to go to Egypt?
3. What promises does God make to the refugees if they return to Mizpah?

PERICOPE 56

Jeremiah Is Forced to Go to Egypt

43:1 So Jeremiah finished telling all the people the message from the LORD their God. He told them everything the LORD their God sent him to tell them. ²Azariah, son of Hoshaiah, Johanan, son of Kareah, and all the arrogant people said to Jeremiah: You're lying. The LORD our God didn't send you to tell us that we must not go to live in Egypt. ³But Baruch, son of Neriah, has turned you against us in order to hand us over to the Babylonians. Then they will kill us or take us as captives to Babylon.

⁴So Johanan, son of Kareah, all the army commanders, and all the people didn't obey the LORD. They didn't stay in Judah. ⁵Johanan, son of Kareah, and all the army commanders took all the people who were left in Judah to Egypt. These were all the people who had come back to Judah from the places where they had been scattered. ⁶They took men, women, children, and the King's daughters. They took every person whom Nebuzaradan, the Captain of the Guard, had left with Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, including the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch, son of Neriah. ⁷They didn't listen to the LORD, so they went to Egypt. They went as far as Tahpanhes.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Now people blame Baruch, who has apparently been with them all the time for misleading Jeremiah. But in any case, the party leaves for Egypt.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why doesn't Jeremiah protest and leave the party with Baruch and go back to Mizpah? Certainly, Nebuchadnezzar will appoint another Governor.
2. Why do the refugees blame Baruch for misleading Jeremiah?

3. Why did the Babylonians allow King Zedekiah's daughters to go to Mizpah instead of killing them or deporting them to Babylon? Nebuchadnezzar had killed Zedekiah's sons.

PERICOPE 57

Jeremiah Prophecies That Egypt Will Be Invaded by Nebuchadnezzar

43:8 Then the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes Egypt. He said: ⁹Take some large stones, and bury them under the brick pavement at the entrance to the Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. Do this while the people of Judah watch you.

¹⁰Say to them: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to send for my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will set his throne over these stones that I buried, and I will spread his royal canopy above them. ¹¹He will defeat Egypt. He will bring death to those who are supposed to die. He will capture those who are supposed to be captured. He will kill in battle those who are supposed to be killed in battle. ¹²He will set fire to the temples of Egypt's gods. He will burn down the temples and take their gods captive. Nebuchadnezzar will put on Egypt as his coat as a shepherd puts on his coat. He will leave Egypt peacefully. ¹³At Beth Shemesh he will break the monuments in Egypt and burn down the temples of Egypt's gods.

The Jews in Egypt Will Be Punished for Their Idolatry

44:1 The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah about all the Jews living in Egypt at Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and Pathros. ² This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel says: You have seen all the disasters I brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah. Today they are deserted ruins. ³It is because their people did evil, and they made me angry. They went to burn incense and serve other gods that neither you nor your ancestors heard of. ⁴I have sent my servants the prophets to you again and again to tell you not to do these detestable things that I hate. ⁵But you wouldn't listen or pay attention. You wouldn't turn from your wicked ways and wouldn't stop burning incense as an offering to other gods. ⁶That is why my fury and anger were poured out and continued to burn in the cities of Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem. So they became the desolate ruin that they are today.

⁷Now this is what the LORD God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Why do you bring this terrible disaster on yourselves? Why do you keep destroying men, women, children, and babies from Judah until none are left? ⁸Why do you make me angry by burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live. You will destroy yourselves and be cursed and ridiculed by all the nations on earth. ⁹Have you forgotten the wicked things done by your ancestors, by the kings of Judah and their wives, and by you and your wives in Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰You have not humbled yourselves even to this day. You haven't feared me or lived your lives by my teachings or by my decrees that I gave your ancestors.

¹¹This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I'm going to bring disaster on you and destroy all of Judah. ¹²I will take away from Judah those who are left, those who were determined to go to live in Egypt. They will die in Egypt. All of them, from the least important to the most important, will die in wars or be brought to an end by famines. They will become something cursed, ridiculed, and disgraced. ¹³I will punish those living in Egypt as I punished Jerusalem with wars, famines, and plagues. ¹⁴None of the people of Judah who went to live in Egypt will survive or return to Judah, where they long to return and live. Only a few refugees will return there.

The Jewish Exiles Say They Will Continue to Serve Idols

¹⁵Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, all the women who were standing there, and all the people who lived at Pathros in Egypt answered Jeremiah. They said: ¹⁶We won't listen to the message that you have spoken to us in the LORD's name. ¹⁷We will do everything we said we would do. We will burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out wine offerings to her as our ancestors, our kings, and our officials did in the cities of Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem. We had plenty to eat then, and we lived comfortably and saw no disaster. ¹⁸But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out wine offerings to her, we have had nothing but wars and famines.

¹⁹The women added: When we burned incense to the queen of heaven, poured out wine offerings to her, and made cakes for her with her image on them, do you think our husbands didn't approve?

²⁰Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, to everyone who answered him: ²¹Doesn't the LORD remember that you burned incense in the cities of Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem along with your ancestors, your kings and your officials, and the people in the land? ²²The LORD could no longer bear the wicked and detestable things you did. That is why your land has become something ruined, destroyed, and cursed. No one lives in that land today. ²³You burned incense as offerings to other gods, sinned against the LORD and wouldn't obey him. You didn't live by his teachings, decrees, or written instructions. That is why you have met with this disaster as it is today.

²⁴Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women: Listen to the LORD's word, all you people of Judah who are in Egypt. ²⁵This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives made promises and you have kept them. You said: We will certainly do what we vow. We will burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out wine offerings to her.

So go ahead. Keep your vows, and do what you vow. ²⁶But listen to the LORD's word, all you people of Judah who live in Egypt. I swear by my great name, says the LORD, that no one from Judah who lives anywhere in Egypt will ever again call on my name and take the oath, As the Almighty LORD lives. ²⁷I am going to watch over them. I am going to watch over them to bring disasters, not blessings. In Egypt the people from Judah will die in wars and famines until everyone is gone. ²⁸Those who escape the wars will return to Judah from Egypt. Then all the people of Judah who went to live in Egypt will know whose words have come true, mine or theirs. ²⁹I will give you this sign, declares the LORD. I will punish you in this place so that you will know that my threats of disaster will happen to you. ³⁰This is what the LORD says: I'm going to hand Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, over to his enemies and to those who want to kill him, just as I handed over King Zedekiah of Judah to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and to those who wanted to kill him.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah at God's instruction, plants large rocks under the brick pavement at the entrance to the Pharaoh's palace at Tahpanhes. These symbolize that King Nebuchadnezzar will come to Egypt and defeat Egypt burning down the temples of their false gods.

God tells Jeremiah he will punish these Jews because of their idolatry. They worship the pagan queen of heaven. All of these Judeans will die in Egypt. Only a few refugees will return to Judah.

But the men standing there said: We won't listen to your message. We will continue to burn incense to the queen of heaven. Their wives agree with them.

Jeremiah told them Nebuchadnezzar would do to Egypt what he had done to Judah: He would burn down the Egyptian temples and take people captive. As Jeremiah prophesied, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt about 568-567 BC and defeated Pharaoh Ahmose. Nebuchadnezzar would also break down the obelisks that stood at On, the Egyptian city of the sun about five miles northeast of modern Cairo. And he would burn the temples of the gods of Egypt.

This chapter records an incident late in Jeremiah's ministry, though how much later than Chapter 43 is unknown. Many commentators suppose it dates from about 580 BC, because it would have taken some time for the Judean refugees to spread throughout Egypt, as this chapter pictures them. This chapter contains the prophet's last known words. The prophecies in the succeeding chapters of the book date from earlier times.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why didn't Jeremiah and Baruch return to Judah?

PERICOPE 58

The LORD's Promise to the Scribe Baruch

45:1 [605 BC] This is the message that the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch, son of Neriah. Baruch wrote these things on a scroll as Jeremiah dictated them during the fourth year that Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king of Judah. Jeremiah said: ²This is what the LORD God of Israel says to you, Baruch: ³You said: I'm so miserable! The LORD has added grief to my pain. I'm worn out from groaning. I can't find any rest.

⁴Say this to Baruch: This is what the LORD says: I will tear down what I have built. I will uproot what I have planted throughout the earth. ⁵Are you looking for great things for yourself? Don't look for them because I'm going to bring disaster on all people, declares the LORD. But wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God gives consolation to Baruch that he will be able to escape with his life.

This chapter belongs after Chapter 36 chronologically, either after 36:8 or 36:32. Literarily, it serves as an appendix to the historical incidents recorded there. Perhaps the writer or final editor placed it here to show that the Lord exempted faithful Baruch from the threats to the Judean remnant recorded in Chapter 44.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Is Baruch discouraged because he has written out a long scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies and King Jehoiakim has burned the scroll. Moreover, Jeremiah wants him to write down all these prophecies again.

PART 9: Jeremiah, A Prophet To The Nations

1:5 [627 BC] The Lord spoke his word to me:

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Before you were born,

I set you apart for my holy purpose.

I appointed you to be *a prophet to the nations*.

27:1 [597 BC] When Zedekiah, son of King Josiah of Judah, began to rule, the LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. ²This is what the LORD said to me: Make leather straps and a wooden yoke and strap the yoke on your neck. ³Then send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, with messengers who have come to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem. ⁴Give them an order for their masters: This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Say this to your masters: ⁵I used my great strength and my powerful arm to make the earth along with the people and the animals on it. I give it to anyone I please. ⁶Now I have handed all these countries over to my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have even made wild animals serve him. ⁷All nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until Babylon is defeated. Then many nations and great kings will make him their slave.

⁸Suppose nations or kingdoms won't serve or surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will punish those nations by wars, famines, and plagues, until I have put an end to them by Nebuchadnezzar's power, declares the LORD. ⁹Don't listen to prophets, mediums, interpreters of dreams, fortunetellers, or sorcerers who tell you that you'll never serve the king of Babylon. ¹⁰They are prophesying lies to you. They will cause you to be taken far from your lands. I'll scatter you, and you will die. ¹¹But suppose a nation surrenders to the king of Babylon and serves him. I will let it stay in its own land. People will farm the land and live on it, declares the LORD.

The following pericopes are oracles Jeremiah gave to the nations.

PERICOPE 59

A Prophecy Against Egypt

46:1 The LORD spoke this message to the prophet Jeremiah about the nations.

² [605 BC] This is the message about Egypt, about the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated his army at Carchemish along the Euphrates River during the fourth year that Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king of Judah.

³Get your large and small shields ready; advance into battle.

⁴Harness your horses. Mount up, you horsemen.

Take your positions and put on your helmets.

Polish your spears.

Put on your armor.

⁵ What do I see in them?

They are terrified.

They are retreating

Their warriors are defeated.

They flee without looking back.

Terror is all around them, declares the LORD.

⁶ The infantry can't flee.

The warriors can't escape.

They stumble and fall in the north by the Euphrates River.

⁷Who is this, rising like the Nile River,

like streams that flow swiftly?

⁸ Egypt is like the rising Nile River,

like a river quickly overflowing its banks.

Egypt says: I will rise. I will cover the earth.

I will destroy cities and the people in them.

⁹Go into battle, you horsemen.
Drive wildly, you chariot drivers.
March into battle, you warriors,
you warriors from Sudan and Put who carry shields,
you warriors from Lydia who use bows and arrows.

¹⁰That day belongs to the Almighty LORD of Armies.
It is a day of vengeance
when he will take revenge on his enemies.
His sword will devour until it has had enough,
and it will drink their blood until it's full.

The Almighty LORD of Armies will offer them as sacrifices
in the north by the Euphrates River.

¹¹Go to Gilead, and get medicine, dear people of Egypt.
You have used many medicines without results;
you can't be cured.

¹²The nations have heard of your shame.
Your cry fills the earth.
One warrior will stumble over another,
and both will fall together.

¹³The LORD spoke this message to the prophet Jeremiah about the coming of
King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who will defeat Egypt.

¹⁴Tell this in Egypt; announce this in Migdol.
Make it known in Memphis and in Tahpanhes.
Say: Take your positions, and get ready.
Swords will kill those around you.

¹⁵Why should your soldiers be cut down?
They can't stand because the LORD will push them down.

¹⁶They have repeatedly stumbled,
and now they have fallen.

They say to each other:
Get up. Let's go back to our people,
to the land where we were born,
and escape our enemy's sword.

¹⁷There they will cry:
Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is a big windbag.
He has missed his chance.

¹⁸As I live, declares the king, whose name is the LORD of Armies,
someone who is like Mount Tabor
among the mountains will come.
Someone who is like Mount Carmel
by the sea will come.

¹⁹Pack your bags, inhabitants of Egypt,
because you will be taken away as captives.
Memphis will become a dreary wasteland,
a pile of rubble where no one lives.

²⁰Egypt is like a beautiful cow,
but a horsefly from the north will attack it.

²¹Egypt's hired soldiers are like fattened calves.
They will turn and run away together.
They won't stand their ground.
The day of destruction is coming.
At that time they will be punished.

²²Egypt will hiss like a snake as it slithers away.
Its enemies will come with full force.
They will attack it with axes like those who chop wood.

²³They will cut down the forest, declares the LORD,
since Egypt can't be found.

They are more numerous than locusts;
they can't be counted.

²⁴The people of Egypt will be put to shame.
They will be handed over to the people from the north.

²⁵The LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:

I'm going to punish Amon, who is the god of Thebes.
I will also punish Pharaoh, Egypt, its gods, its kings,
and whoever trusts Pharaoh.

²⁶I'll hand them over to those who want to kill them,
to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his officers.
Afterward, they will live in peace as they did long ago,
declares the LORD.

²⁷Don't be afraid, my servant Jacob.
Don't be terrified, Israel.
I'm going to rescue you and your descendants
from a faraway land,
from the land where you are captives.
Then Jacob's descendants will again have undisturbed peace,
and no one will make them afraid.

²⁸Don't be afraid, my servant Jacob, declares the LORD.
I am with you.
I will completely destroy all the nations where I scattered you,
but I will not completely destroy you.
I will correct you with justice.
I won't let you go entirely unpunished.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

These oracles against Egypt are designed to discourage King Jehoiakim from violating his vassal oath with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

A brief history of the period will help understand why this was important.

When the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, was overrun by the Medes, Scythians, Babylonians, and their allies in 612 BC, the Assyrians moved their capital to Harran. When Harran was captured by the alliance in 609 BC, ending the Assyrian Empire, remnants of the Assyrian army joined Carchemish, a city under Egyptian rule, on the Euphrates.

Egypt, a former vassal of Assyria, was allied with Assyrian King Ashur-uballit II and marched in 609 BC to his aid against the Babylonians.

The Egyptian army of Pharaoh Neco II was delayed at Megiddo by the forces of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was killed and his army was defeated at the Battle of Megiddo in 609 BC.

The Egyptians and the Assyrians together crossed the Euphrates and laid siege to Harran, which they failed to retake. They then retreated to northwestern Assyria in what is now northeastern Syria.

Pharaoh Neco II then came to Jerusalem, deposed King Jehoahaz and replaced him with another son of King Josiah named Jehoiakim. Pharaoh took King Jehoahaz to Egypt where he died.

Biblical Account of King Josiah's Death in 609 BC—2 Chronicles 36:20-26

36:20 [609 BC] After all this, when Josiah had repaired the temple, King Neco of Egypt came to fight a battle at Carchemish at the Euphrates River. Josiah went to attack him.

²¹But Neco sent messengers to Josiah to say: What's your quarrel with me, king of Judah? I'm not attacking you. I've come to fight those who are at war with me. God told me to hurry. God is with me, so stop now or else he will destroy you.

²² But Josiah would not stop his attack. He disguised himself as he went into battle. He refused to listen to Neco's words that came from God and he went to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

²³ Some archers shot King Josiah. The king told his officers: Take me away because I'm badly wounded.

²⁴ His officers took him out of the chariot and brought him to Jerusalem in his other chariot. He died and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

²⁵ Jeremiah sang a funeral song about Josiah. All the male and female singers still sing funeral songs about Josiah today. This became a tradition in Israel. They are written in the Book of the Funeral Songs.

²⁶ Everything else about Josiah — including his devotion to God by following what is written in the LORD's teachings.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In 609 BC, the Egyptian Pharaoh was going to Carchemish in northern Syria to join his allies, the fading neo-Assyrian Empire fighting against the neo-Babylonian Empire. King Josiah of Judah took his army to stop him. When the Pharaoh killed King Josiah, Judah became a vassal state under Egypt.

Why did King Josiah want to fight Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo in 609 BC?

2. When King Josiah died in 609 BC, the people of Judah anointed King Jehoahaz, a younger son of King Josiah, as king of Judah. But the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco came to Jerusalem, replaced King Jehoahaz with Jehoiakim, made a vassal treaty with him, and took King Jehoahaz to Egypt where he died.

Why did Pharaoh Neco replace King Jehoahaz, a son of Josiah, with another son of Josiah, his older brother, Jehoiakim?

3. The Battle of Carchemish was then fought about 605 BC between the armies of Egypt allied with the remnants of the army of the former Assyrian Empire against the armies of Babylonia, allied with the Medes, Persians, and Scythians. This was while Nebuchadnezzar was Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Nabopolassar was still king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon right after this battle.

Later in 605 BC, after his father had died, King Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and made a vassal treaty with King Jehoiakim. He then took Daniel and other captives to Babylon with much treasure of the temple. But Jehoiakim still maintained relations with Egypt violating his vassal oath with King Nebuchadnezzar. Why was King Jehoiakim still loyal to Egypt?

4. At the Battle of Carchemish, Jeremiah was shocked seeing the Egyptians being defeated. So he used his stock phrase: *Terror is All Around*, as he had done earlier in his book. **Jeremiah 46:5**. Locate the times this phrase appears in the Book of Jeremiah.

5. King Josiah was very loyal to God. Yet he was killed by the Egyptians. Is that why Jeremiah wants to see the Egyptians defeated? **Jeremiah 46:10**

6. In 568-567 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt. Jeremiah predicted this. **Jeremiah 43:10**. The verses in this oracle, beginning with **Jeremiah 46:13**, speak of this time. By this time, the Judeans are in exile in Babylon. The exile will not end until 539 BC when Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon. But is God still angry about the killing of King Josiah? Only Hezekiah and Josiah of all the kings of Judah after King David really loved God.

PERICOPE 60

A Prophecy Against Philistia

47:1 The LORD spoke this message to the prophet Jeremiah about the Philistines before Pharaoh defeated Gaza. ²This is what the LORD says:

Water is rising in the north.
It will become an overflowing river.
It will overflow the land and everything in it,
the cities and those who live in them.

People will cry out
and everyone who lives in the land will cry loudly.

³They will hear the sound of galloping war horses,
the rattling of enemy chariots,
and the rumbling of their wheels.
Fathers who lack courage abandon their children.

⁴The time has come to destroy all the Philistines,
to cut off from Tyre and Sidon any Philistine
who might have escaped to get help.

The LORD will destroy the Philistines
and anyone who is left from the island of Crete.

⁵Gaza will shave its head in mourning.
Ashkelon will be destroyed.
How long will you cut yourselves,
you people left on the plains?

⁶You cry out: Sword of the LORD,
how long will you keep on fighting?
Go back into your scabbard.
Stay there and rest.

⁷How can the sword of the LORD rest?

The LORD has ordered it to attack Ashkelon and the coast.

He has put it there.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The Philistines were a sea people who originally migrated from Greece to the island of Crete and then to Canaan. They came to Canaan about the same time as the Israelites.

They lived in five cities near the Mediterranean Sea called Gath, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron. They were Israel's fiercest enemies, as they lived a warrior lifestyle, had iron swords and chariots, while the Israelites fought with copper swords and bows and arrows. They were destroyed in 604 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Only King David consistently defeated them. The Philistines killed King Saul. Then David of Bethlehem became king of all Israel around 1010 BC.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did the Philistines migrate to Canaan?
2. Why were the Israelites and Philistines constantly fighting?
3. Why was only David consistently able to defeat the Philistines?
4. How did God visibly demonstrate that he was superior to the Philistine god Dagon? HINT: 1 Samuel 5:2-4

PERICOPE 6I

A Prophecy Against Moab

48:1 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says about Moab:

How horrible it will be for Nebo.

It will be destroyed.

Kiriathaim will be put to shame.

It will be captured.

Its stronghold will be put to shame and torn down.

²People will no longer praise Moab.

The people in Heshbon will plan Moab's destruction.

Let's destroy that nation.

You will be silenced, city of madmen.

Death will come after you.

³People will cry out from Horonaim:

Looting and great destruction.

⁴Moab will be broken.

Its little ones will cry out.

⁵People go up the pass of Luhith,

crying bitterly as they go.

On the road down to Horonaim they have heard
the distressful cry of destruction.

⁶Run away! Run for your lives!

Run like a wild donkey in the desert.

⁷Since you trust the things you do and your treasures,
you will be captured.

Chemosh will go into captivity with all its priests and officials.

⁸The destroyer will come to every city, and no city will escape.
The valley will be destroyed, and the plain will be laid waste,
as the LORD has threatened.

⁹Put salt on Moab.
It will be destroyed.
Its cities will become deserted ruins.

¹⁰Cursed are those who neglect doing the LORD's work.
Cursed are those who keep their swords from killing.

¹¹Moab has lived securely ever since it was young.
Its people are like wine left to settle in a jar.
They aren't poured from one jar to another.
They haven't gone into captivity.

That is why its flavor has remained the same,
and its aroma hasn't changed.

¹²That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will send people to pour Moab out of its jars
and to smash its pitchers.

¹³Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh,
as the nation of Israel was ashamed when it trusted Bethel.

¹⁴How can you say:
We are soldiers and warriors?

¹⁵The enemy will attack Moab and destroy its cities.
Its finest young men will be slaughtered,
declares the king, whose name is the LORD of Armies.

¹⁶Moab's destruction is coming near;
disaster is coming quickly.

¹⁷Mourn over it, all of its neighbors
and everyone who knows its fame.

Say: Look at the strong staff,
the beautiful rod, that is broken.

¹⁸ People of Dibon, come down from your place of honor
and sit on the dry ground.
The destroyers of Moab will attack you.
They will destroy your fortresses.

¹⁹ Stand by the road in Aroer and watch.
Ask those who are fleeing
and those who are escaping: What is happening?

²⁰ They will answer: Moab is disgraced.
It is defeated.
Shout loudly and cry.
Tell the news in Arnon that Moab is destroyed.

²¹ Judgment has come to all the cities on the plain:
to Holon, Jahzah, Mephaath, ²² Dibon, Nebo, Beth
Diblathaim, ²³ Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, Beth Meon, ²⁴ Kerioth, Bozrah, and
on all the cities of Moab, far and near.

²⁵ Moab's horn is cut off, and its arm is broken,
declares the LORD.

²⁶ Get the people of Moab drunk.
They have spoken against the LORD.
They will wallow in their own vomit
and people will laugh at them.

²⁷ People of Moab,
didn't you laugh at the people of Israel?
Were they caught among thieves?

Whenever you talk about them
you shake your heads in contempt.

²⁸ People of Moab, abandon your cities.
Live among the cliffs.
Be like doves that make their nests
at the entrance of a cave.

²⁹ We have heard about the arrogance of Moab's people.
They are very arrogant.
They are very arrogant, conceited, and boastful.

³⁰ I know how arrogant they are, declares the LORD,
but it isn't right.
They brag and don't do what they say.

³¹ That is why I will weep for Moab and cry for all of Moab.
I will moan for the people of Kir Hareseth.

³² I will cry for you as Jazer cries.
I will cry for you, grapevines of Sibmah.
Your branches ^{once} spread as far as the sea,
and they reached as far as the sea of Jazer.

The destroyer will destroy your ripened fruits
and your grapes.

³³ Joy and gladness have disappeared
from the orchards and fields of Moab.
I will stop the wine flowing from the winepresses.

No one will stomp on grapes with shouts of joy.
There will be shouts, but not shouts of joy.

³⁴ The cry will be heard from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz.
It will be heard from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah. Even the
streams of Nimrim will dry up.

³⁵ I will stop those in Moab who come to worship sites,
those who bring offerings to their gods,
declares the LORD.

³⁶ That is why I moan for Moab like a flute.
I sound like a flute for the people of Kir Hareseth.
The wealth they gained has disappeared.

³⁷ Every head is shaved, and every beard is cut off.
There are gashes on every hand
and sackcloth on every waist.

³⁸ People in Moab will mourn on every rooftop
and in every street.
There will be mourning everywhere,
because I will break Moab like a jar that no one wants,
declares the LORD.

³⁹ They will cry: Look how Moab is defeated.
Moab turns away in shame.
Moab has become something ridiculed
and something held in contempt by everyone around it.

⁴⁰ This is what the LORD says:

The enemy will swoop down like eagles
and spread their wings over Moab.

⁴¹ The cities will be taken
and the fortified places will be captured.

On that day Moab's soldiers
will be like women in childbirth.

⁴² Moab will be destroyed as a nation,
because it spoke against the LORD.

43 Disasters, pits, and traps are in store
for those who live in Moab,
declares the LORD.

44 Whoever flees from a disaster will fall into a pit.
Whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a trap.
I will bring a year of punishment to Moab,
declares the LORD.

45 Those who flee will stand exhausted
in the shadow of Heshbon.
A fire will come out of Heshbon
and a flame from Sihon.

It will burn the foreheads of the people of Moab
and the skulls of those noisy people.

46 How horrible it will be for you, Moab.
You people of Chemosh will die.
Your sons will be taken away into exile,
and your daughters will be taken away into captivity.

47 But I will restore Moab in the last days, declares the LORD.

The judgment against Moab ends here.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The country of Moab lies to the east of Israel, separated by the Jordan River. Moab was generally at peace with Israel. Naomi, a widow of Bethlehem, went to Moab with her two sons: Mahlon and Chilion because of a famine. In Moab, her sons married Moabite women.

When Naomi returned to Israel, only one of her daughters-in-law who was now a widow returned with her. Ruth married an Israelite named Boaz. They had a son named Obed. His son was Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. **Ruth 4:32**

Chemosh was the god of Moab. He was associated with the Semitic mother-goddess Ashtar. Chemosh was introduced to Israel by King Solomon who built an illegal worship for him on the Hill of Corruption opposite Jerusalem. **1 Kings 11:7**. He did this for one of his foreign wives.

Jeremiah says that Chemosh would be carried off. Invading armies often took the statues of their enemies' gods home with them.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. King David was the eighth son of Jesse and his youngest son. **1 Samuel 16:8-11**. It is possible that Jesse had David by a second wife, perhaps a Philistine as David had relatives in Gath, a Philistine city. **1 Samuel 21:10**

This second wife of Jesse perhaps could possibly have been a Moabite Jesse met while he was in Moab, that is located just east across the Jordan River. Remember that Ruth from Moab who married Boaz from Bethlehem was King David's great grandmother. **Ruth 4:21**

While King Saul once fought against Moab **1 Samuel 14:47**, David took his father and mother to Moab asking the king to protect them while King Saul was chasing him attempting to kill him. **1 Samuel 22:3-4**

We are never told the name of David's mother. Why not?

2. Moab generally had a peaceful history. As a result, they were complacent. It was isolated geographically. God says its well-known wine will attract invaders. Moabites will be angry that their god Chemosh would not be able to attract them.

Why will God take their complacency away? **HINT: Jeremiah 48:29-30**

3. God seems to have a genuine heart for Moab **Isaiah 15:6 Jeremiah 48:31-32** despite their arrogance and pride. **Jeremiah 48:47**

Why is that?

PERICOPE 62

A Prophecy Against Ammon

49:1 This is what the LORD says about the people of Ammon:

Doesn't Israel have any children?

Doesn't it have any heirs?

Why, then, has the god Milcom
taken over the inheritance of Gad's descendants?

Why do Milcom's people live in Gad's cities?

²That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will sound the battle cry against Rabbah,
where the people of Ammon live.

It will become a pile of rubble.

Its villages will be burned down.

Then Israel will take possession of its inheritance,
says the LORD.

³Cry loudly, Heshbon, because Ai is destroyed.

Cry, people of Rabbah, put on your sackcloth, and mourn.

Run back and forth between the walls.

Milcom will be taken away into captivity
with its priests and officials.

⁴Why do you brag about your valleys,
your fertile valleys, you unfaithful people?

You trust your treasures.

You think: Who would attack me?

⁵I am going to bring terror on you from all around,
declares the Almighty LORD of Armies.

Everyone will be scattered.
No one will gather the refugees.

⁶But afterward, I will return the captives of Ammon,
declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Ammon was on the east side of the Jordan River opposite Israel. The Ammonites were bitter enemies of Israel in the time of King David. **1 Chronicles 19:1-5**. Their country lay just south of the territory of the Israelite tribe of Gad.

Their God was Moloch or Milcom, who demanded the sacrifice of live children. God decried this worship by Israel. **Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-5**. Yet King Solomon built an idol of Molech on the Hill of Corruption for his foreign wife. **1 King 11:7**. Israel was still worshiping Molech in the time of Jeremiah. **Jeremiah 7:31-32**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does the Bible call the Ammonite god Milcom instead of Molech?
2. God is angry with any Israelite territory taken away. When King Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria deported Israelites living east of the Jordan River in Gilead 732-722 BC, the Ammonites moved in. But did God say that the land Israel acquired east of the Jordan was part of the Promised Land he had given them? HINT: **Numbers 32:1-42**
3. Moloch was a god who demanded human sacrifice. He is first mentioned in the Book of Leviticus written while Israel was at Mount Sinai under Moses. But despite God's many prohibitions of worshiping this god, Israelites were still worshiping Moloch in the Valley of Ben Hinnom in Jeremiah's time. **Jeremiah 32:35**. What was the attraction of worshiping Moloch?

PERICOPE 63

A Prophecy Against Edom

⁷This is what the LORD of Armies says about Edom:

Is there no longer any wisdom in Teman?
Has wisdom disappeared from your people?
Has their wisdom vanished?

⁸Turn and run.

Hide in deep caves, inhabitants of Dedan.
When I punish them,
I will bring disaster on the descendants of Esau.

⁹If people come to pick your grapes,
won't they leave a few grapes behind?
If thieves come during the night,
won't they steal only until they've had enough?

¹⁰Yet, I will strip the descendants of Esau.
I will find their hiding places.
They won't be able to hide.
Their children and relatives will be destroyed.

None of their neighbors will say:

¹¹Abandon your orphans
and I will keep them alive.
Your widows can trust me.

¹²This is what the LORD says:

If those who don't deserve to drink from the cup
still drink from it,
why should you go unpunished?

You won't go unpunished.
You must drink from it.

¹³ I take an oath on myself, declares the LORD, that Bozrah will become a pile of rubble. It will become something horrifying, ridiculed, ruined, and cursed. All its cities will lie in ruins permanently.

¹⁴ I heard a message from the LORD.
A messenger was sent among the nations to say:
Assemble and attack Edom.
Get ready for battle.

¹⁵ Edom, I will make you the smallest of nations
and despised among humanity.

¹⁶ You have frightened other people.
Your arrogance has deceived you.
You live on rocky cliffs
and occupy the highest places in the hills.

Even though you build your nest as high as an eagle,
I will bring you down from there, declares the LORD.

¹⁷ Then Edom will become something horrible.
Everyone who passes by it will be horrified
and hiss at all its wounds.

¹⁸ Edom will be like Sodom, Gomorrah,
and their neighboring cities
when they were destroyed.

No one will live there.
No human will stay there, says the LORD.

¹⁹ I will suddenly chase them from their places
like a lion coming out of the jungle
along the Jordan River into pastureland.

I will appoint over Edom whomever I choose.

Who is like me?

Who can challenge me?

Is there any leader who can stand up to me?

²⁰ Listen to the plans that the LORD is making against Edom and the things he intends to do to those who live in Teman. He will surely drag away the little ones of the flock.

He will surely destroy the pasture because of the people who live in Teman.

²¹ The earth will quake at the sound of their downfall. The sound of their crying will be heard at the Red Sea.

²² The enemy will swoop down like eagles and spread their wings over Bozrah. On that day Edom's soldiers will be like women in childbirth.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Edom was Israel's most hated enemy. It lay south of Israel. The Edomites helped the Babylonians by capturing Judean escapees from Jerusalem. The Israelites remembered Edom in **Psalm 137**:

137:7 O Lord, remember the people of Edom. Remember what they did the day Jerusalem was captured. They said: Tear it down. Tear it down to its foundation.

⁸ You destructive people of Babylon, blessed is the one who pays you back with the same treatment you gave us.

⁹ Blessed is the one who grabs your little children and smashes them against a rock.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Many think the great animosity between Edom and Israel never stopped after Jacob stole a blessing from his father Isaac that Esau deserved. **Genesis 27:1-46**. Do you think that hostility could last that long?
2. Isaiah mentioned that God, the divine warrior, had just come from Edom where he slew many people. **Isaiah 63:1**. How had the Edomites made God so angry?
3. Ezekiel says that God will lay his vengeance on Edom because Edom took revenge on the nation of Judah. **Ezekiel 25:12**. The animosity between these two nations was intense. The last prophet Malachi says:

I loved Jacob but Esau I hated. I will tear it down. They will be called the Wicked Land and the people with whom the Lord is always angry.
Malachi 1:2-4

The arrogant Edomites chased Judeans who escaped from Jerusalem and brought them back to the Babylonians. Where did this hatred of Israel come from?

PERICOPE 64

A Prophecy Against Damascus

49:23 This is a message about Damascus.

Hamath and Arpad are worried
because they heard the bad news.

They melt in fear.

They are troubled like a sea that can't be calmed.

²⁴The people of Damascus are weak.

They turn to flee, but panic grips them.

Anguish and pain grip them like a woman in labor.

²⁵Why isn't that famous, happy city abandoned?

²⁶That is why its young men will die in the streets,
and its soldiers will be silenced that day,
declares the LORD of Armies.

²⁷ I will set fire to the walls of Damascus
and burn down Benhadad's palaces.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Damascus was the capital of the kingdom of Aram, an enemy of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. During the time of Isaiah the prophet in 732 BC, the king of Aram and the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel joined in partnership to oust King Ahaz of Judah and replace him. **Isaiah 7:1-6**

Damascus was one of the oldest cities in the world and a great trade center existing before the time of Abraham. **Genesis 15:2**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What famous person was riding his horse to Damascus when God met him and blinded him? **HINT: Acts 9:1-9**

PERICOPE 65

A Prophecy Against Kedar and Hazor

49:28 This is about the tribe of Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated.

This is what the LORD says:

Get ready, attack Kedar,
and loot the people from the east.

²⁹ Their tents and their flocks will be taken.
Their tent curtains, utensils, and camels will be carried away.
People will shout to them: *Terror is all around.*

³⁰ Run far away. Find a place to hide,
inhabitants of Hazor, declares the LORD.
King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has made plans against you
and intends to attack you.

³¹ Get ready.
Attack the nation living peacefully and securely,
declares the LORD.
It is a nation with no gates or bars.
Its people live alone.

³² Their camels will be taken as prizes.
Their large herds will be taken as loot.
I will scatter to the winds
those who shave the hair on their foreheads.

I will bring disaster on them from every side,
declares the LORD.

³³ Hazor will be a place where only jackals live.
It will become a permanent wasteland.

No one will live there.

No human will stay there.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Hazor is located north of the Sea of Galilee in Upper Galilee. Around 1750 BC, it was the largest city. Joshua conquered Hazor. **Joshua 11:10**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Kedar was one of the four sons of Ishmael, Abraham's son. **Genesis 25:13**. How has this tribe survived long enough to be mentioned by King Solomon in the **Song of Solomon 1:5** ?

2. Arabs were raiders and often came into the south of Israel plundering the few scattered settlements in the Negev. King David fought against the Amalekites **2 Samuel 30:1-20**, whom God cursed and with whom Israel fought since the days of Moses. **Exodus 17:8-16**. Haman, who wrote a law in Persia setting a date to kill all the Israelites living in Persia was an Amalekite. **Esther 3:8-10**

Why did God issue such a horrific curse against the Amalekites? **Exodus 17:4**

PERICOPE 66

A Prophecy Against Elam

49:34 [597 BC] Early in the rule of King Zedekiah of Judah, the LORD spoke his word to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam.

³⁵ This is what the LORD of Armies says:

I'm going to break the bows of Elam's archers,
the most important weapon of their strength.

³⁶ I'll bring the four winds
from the four corners of heaven against Elam
and scatter its people in every direction.

There won't be a nation
where Elam's refugees won't go.

³⁷ I'll defeat the people of Elam in the presence of their enemies,
in the presence of those who want to kill them.
I'll bring disaster with my burning anger, declares the LORD.
I'll send armies after them until I put an end to them.

³⁸ I'll set my throne in Elam and destroy its king and officials,
declares the LORD.

³⁹ But afterward, I'll return the captives of Elam,
declares the LORD.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Chedorlaomer was the king of Elam. Together with three other kings, they fought against five kings in Canaan including the king of Sodom and took Abraham's nephew Lot and his family prisoner. Abraham went after him and defeated him. **Genesis 14:1-16**

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Elam was located in southwest Iran, east of the Babylonians. In the days of Persia, Susa, the winter palace of the kings was located here. Elamites were famous archers. They do not seem to be involved in Israel's history after the days of Abraham. Why has Jeremiah included them in his book?

PERICOPE 67

A Prophecy Against Babylon

50:1 This is the message that the LORD spoke about Babylon and the land of the Babylonians through the prophet Jeremiah.

²Announce this among the nations
and spread the news.

Raise a flag, and announce it.

Don't hide anything.

Say: Babylon will be captured.

Bel ^{their god} will be put to shame.

Marduk ^{their god} will be filled with terror.

Babylon's statues will be put to shame.

Its idols will be filled with terror.

³A nation from the north ^{Persia} will attack Babylon
and destroy its land so that no one will live in it.
People and animals will run away.

⁴ In those days and at that time, declares the LORD,
the people of Israel and Judah will cry
as they go ^{return} together to seek the LORD their God.

⁵They will ask which road goes to Zion
and turn in that direction.

They will go there to make
a permanent covenant with the LORD.

It will not be forgotten.

⁶My people have been lost sheep.

Their shepherds have led them astray.

They wander around on the mountains.

They go from mountains to hills.
They have forgotten their resting place.

⁷ Everyone who finds them eats them.
Their enemies say: We're not guilty.

They have sinned against the LORD,
their true pasture.

They have sinned against the LORD,
the hope of their ancestors.

⁸ Run away from Babylon.
Leave the land of the Babylonians.
Be like the male goats that lead the flock.

⁹ I am going to stir up an alliance
of strong nations from the north
and bring it against Babylon.

Those nations will take up positions against Babylon.
Babylon will be captured from the north.
Its enemy's arrows will be like skilled soldiers
who don't come back empty-handed.

¹⁰ The Babylonians will become the prize.
All who loot them will get everything they want,
declares the LORD.

¹¹ Babylon, You are happy and excited.
You have looted the people who belong to me.
You dance around like calves on the grass
and neigh like stallions.

¹² But your mother will be greatly ashamed.
The woman who gave birth to you will be disgraced.
Babylon, you will be the least important nation.
You will become a parched desert.

¹³ No one will live in Babylon because of the LORD's anger.
It will be completely abandoned.
Everyone who passes by Babylon will be horrified
and hiss at all its wounds.

¹⁴ Take up your positions around Babylon,
all you archers with bows.
Shoot at it; don't save any arrows,
because the people of Babylon
have sinned against the LORD.

¹⁵ Shout a war cry against them on every side.
They'll surrender.
Their towers will fall
and their walls will be torn down.

Since this is the LORD's vengeance,
take revenge against them.
Do to them what they did to others.

¹⁶ Don't allow anyone in Babylon to plant or harvest.
Everyone will turn to his own people
and flee to his own homeland
because of the enemies' swords.

¹⁷ The people of Israel are like scattered sheep
that lions have chased.
The first to devour them was the king of Assyria.
The last to gnaw at their bones
was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

¹⁸ This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:
I am going to punish the king of Babylon and his land
as I punished the king of Assyria.

¹⁹ I will bring the people of Israel back to their pastures.
They will eat on Mount Carmel and Mount Bashan.
They will eat until they are full
on the mountains of Ephraim and Gilead.

²⁰ In those days and at that time, declares the LORD,
people will look for Israel's crimes
but they will find none.
They will look for Judah's sins,
but none will be found.

I will forgive the faithful few
whom I have spared.

²¹ Attack the land of Merathaim
and the people who live in Pekod.
Claim them for me by killing them with a sword,
declares the LORD.
Do everything I commanded you.

²² The noise of battle and great destruction fills the land.
²³ The hammer of the whole earth is broken and shattered.
See how desolate Babylon is of all the nations.

²⁴ I will set traps for you, Babylon.
You will be caught but you won't know it.
You will be found and captured
because you have opposed the LORD.

²⁵ The LORD will open his armory
and bring out the weapons of his fury,
because the Almighty LORD of Armies
has a job to do in the land of the Babylonians.

²⁶ Attack them from a distance,
open their storehouses,
pile up their corpses like piles of grain.

Claim them for me by destroying them,
and don't leave anyone behind.

²⁷ Kill all their young bulls.
Let them go to be slaughtered.
How horrible it will be for them
when their time has come,
the time for them to be punished.

²⁸ Listen! Fugitives and refugees from Babylon
are coming to Zion to tell about
the vengeance of the LORD our God,
the vengeance for his temple.

²⁹ Call together the archers,
the soldiers with bows against Babylon.
Set up blockades around it.
Don't let anyone escape.

Pay the people of Babylon back
for what they have done.
Do to them what they did to others.
They have disobeyed the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

³⁰ That is why their young men will die in the streets,
and all their soldiers will be silenced that day,
declares the LORD.

³¹ I'm against you, you arrogant city,
declares the Almighty LORD of Armies.
Your day has come,
the time when I will punish you.

³² Those arrogant people will stumble and fall,
and there will be no one to help them get up.
I will light a fire in their cities
that will burn up everything around them.

³³ This is what the LORD of Armies says:

All the people of Israel and Judah are oppressed.
All their enemies have captured them.
They refuse to let them go.

³⁴ Their redeemer is strong.
His name is the LORD of Armies.

He will certainly take up their cause
in order to bring rest to the land of Israel
and unrest to the people who live in Babylon.

³⁵ A sword will kill the Babylonians
and everyone who lives in Babylon,
declares the LORD.
A sword will kill their officials
and their wise men.

³⁶ A sword will kill the false prophets.
They will become fools.
A sword will kill their soldiers and defeat them.

³⁷ A sword will kill their horses, their chariots,
and all the foreigners within their ranks.
They will become women.
A sword will destroy their treasures,
and they will be looted.

³⁸ A drought will diminish their water supply
and it will dry up.

Babylon is a land of idols,
statues that will go crazy with fear.

³⁹ That is why desert animals will live with hyenas.
Desert owls will also live there.
It will no longer be inhabited
or lived in for generations.

⁴⁰ Babylon will be like Sodom, Gomorrah,
and their neighboring cities
when I, God, destroyed them.
No one will live there.
No human will stay there, declares the LORD.

⁴¹ People are going to come from the north.
A great nation and many kings
will rise from the ends of the earth.

⁴² They will take hold of bows and spears.
They will be cruel and have no compassion.
They will sound like the sea when it roars.

They will ride horses.
They are ready for war, ready to attack you,
people of Babylon.

⁴³ The king of Babylon has heard reports about them
and he loses courage.
Anguish will grip him as pain grips a woman in labor.

⁴⁴ I will suddenly chase them from their places
like a lion coming out of the jungle
along the Jordan River into pastureland.

I will appoint over Babylon whomever I choose.
Who is like me?

Who can challenge me?

Is there any leader who can stand up to me?

⁴⁵ Listen to the plans
that the LORD is making against Babylon
and the things he intends to do
to the land of the Babylonians.

He will surely drag away the little ones of the flock.
He will surely destroy the pasture
because of the Babylonians.

⁴⁶ The earth will quake
at the news that Babylon has been captured.
Its cry will be heard among the nations.

51:1 This is what the LORD says:

I will stir up a destructive wind against Babylon
and against the people who live in Leb Kamai.

² I will send people to winnow Babylon,
to winnow it and strip its land bare.
They will attack it from every direction
on the day of trouble.

³ Have the archers bend their bows.
Have them put on their armor.
Don't spare Babylon's young men.
Completely destroy its whole army.

⁴ Babylon's soldiers will fall down badly wounded
in their streets.
They will lie dead in their own land.

⁵ Israel and Judah haven't been abandoned by their God, the LORD of Armies,
although their land is guilty of abandoning the Holy One of Israel.

⁶ Run away from Babylon!
Run for your lives!
You shouldn't die because of Babylon's crimes.

This is the time for the vengeance of the LORD.
He will pay the people of Babylon back
for what they have done.

⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand.
It made the whole world drunk.
The nations drank its wine.
That is why the nations have gone insane.

⁸ Babylon will suddenly fall and be shattered.
Cry for it.
Bring medicine for its pain.
Maybe it can be healed.

⁹ We wanted to heal Babylon
but it couldn't be healed.
Let's abandon it and go to our own land.

God has judged Babylon.
Its judgment is complete.

¹⁰ The LORD has brought about our victory.
Let's announce in Zion
what the LORD our God has done.

¹¹ Sharpen the arrows; fill the quivers.
The LORD will stir up
the spirit of the kings of the Medes
because his plan is to destroy Babylon.
The LORD will avenge his temple.

¹² Raise your battle flag
in front of the walls of Babylon.

Strengthen the guards.
Station watchmen.
Prepare ambushes.
The LORD will carry out his plans
against the people who live in Babylon.

¹³ Babylon, you live beside many rivers
and are rich with treasures,
but your end has come.
The thread of your life has been cut off.

¹⁴ The LORD of Armies has taken an oath on himself:
I will certainly fill you with many enemy armies.
They will swarm like locusts.
People will shout their victory over you.

¹⁵ The LORD made the earth by his power.
He set up the world by his wisdom.
He stretched out heaven by his understanding.

¹⁶ When he thunders, the water in the sky roars.
He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain.
He brings wind out of his storehouses.

¹⁷ Everyone is stupid and ignorant.
Metalsmiths are put to shame by their idols.
Their statues are false gods.

¹⁸ They can't breathe.
They are worthless jokes.
When they are punished, they will disappear.

¹⁹ Jacob's God isn't like them.
He made everything,

and Israel is the tribe that belongs to him.
His name is the LORD of Armies.

²⁰ You are my war club and my weapon for battle.
I will use you to crush nations.
I will use you to destroy kingdoms.

²¹ I will use you to crush horses and their riders.
I will use you to crush chariots and their drivers.

²² I will use you to crush men and women.
I will use you to crush the old and the young.
I will use you to crush young men and women.

²³ I will use you to crush shepherds and their flocks.
I will use you to crush farmers and their oxen.
I will use you to crush governors and officials.

²⁴ In your presence I will pay back Babylon
and all the people who live in Babylon
for all the evil things that they did in Zion,
declares the LORD.

²⁵ I am against you, Babylon,
you destructive mountain.
You have destroyed the whole earth,
declares the LORD.

I will use my power against you,
roll you off the cliffs,
and make you a scorched mountain.

²⁶ People won't find any stones in you
to use as a cornerstone.
They won't find any stones in you
to use for a foundation.

You will become permanent ruins, declares the LORD.

²⁷ Raise your battle flag throughout the world.

Blow the ram's horn among the nations.

Prepare nations to attack Babylon.

Tell the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni,
and Ashkenaz to attack it.

Appoint a commander to lead the attack.

Bring up horses like a swarm of locusts.

²⁸ Prepare nations to attack Babylon.

Prepare the king of the Medes,
their governors, all their deputies,
and all the countries that they rule.

²⁹ The earth trembles and writhes in pain.

The LORD carries out his plans against Babylon
to make Babylon a wasteland
so that no one will live there.

³⁰ The warriors of Babylon have stopped fighting.

They stay in their fortified cities.

Their strength has failed.

They have become women.

Their buildings are set on fire.

The bars across their gates are broken.

³¹ Runners run to meet runners.

Messengers follow messengers.

They inform the king of Babylon
that his entire city is captured.

³² The river crossings have been taken.

The enemy has burned its marshes,
and its soldiers are terrified.

³³ This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:

The people of Babylon are like a threshing floor¹
at the time it is trampled.

Their harvest time will come soon.

³⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has devoured us.

He has thrown us into confusion.

He has turned us into empty jars.

He has swallowed us like a monster.

He has filled his belly with our delicacies.

Then he spit us out.

³⁵ The people who live in Zion say:

May the violence done to us
be done to Babylon.

Jerusalem says:

May the people of Babylon
be held responsible for our deaths.

³⁶ This is what the LORD says:

I am going to take up your cause
and get revenge for you.

I will dry up Babylon's sea
and make its springs dry.

³⁷ Babylon will become piles of rubble.

It will become a dwelling place for jackals,
something horrible, and an object of contempt,
where no one lives.

³⁸ Its people are like roaring lions
and growling lion cubs.

³⁹ When they are excited,
I will prepare a feast for them
and make them drunk
so that they will shout and laugh.

They will fall into a deep sleep
and never wake up again, declares the LORD.

⁴⁰ I will take them to be slaughtered
like lambs, rams, and male goats.

⁴¹ Sheshach has been captured.
Babylon, the city that the whole world praised,
has been taken captive.

⁴² What a horrifying sight Babylon will be to the nations.
The sea will rise over Babylon,
and its roaring waves will cover it.

⁴³ Its cities will be ruined.
It will become a desert, a land where no one lives
and where no human travels.

⁴⁴ I will punish Bel in Babylon.
I will make Bel spit out everything
that it has swallowed.
Nations will no longer stream to Babylon,
and its walls will fall.

⁴⁵ Leave it, my people!
Run for your lives.
Run from the burning anger of the LORD.

⁴⁶ Don't lose courage or be afraid
when rumors are heard in the land.
One rumor comes one year;
another rumor comes the next year.

Rumors of violence are in the land.
Rumors that one ruler will fight against another
are in the land.

⁴⁷That is why the days are coming
when I will punish Babylon's idols.
The whole country will be put to shame
and all its soldiers will lie dead.

⁴⁸Then heaven and earth and everything in them
will rejoice over Babylon,
because destroyers from the north will attack it,
declares the LORD.

⁴⁹ Because the people of Babylon
have killed many Israelites
and because they have killed many people
throughout the earth,
Babylon must fall.

⁵⁰ You people who escaped from the sword, leave.
Don't just stand there.
Remember the LORD in a distant land,
and think about Jerusalem.

⁵¹ We have been put to shame,
and we have been disgraced.
Shame covers our faces,
because foreigners have gone
into the Holy Places of the LORD's Temple.

⁵² That is why the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will punish their idols,
and those who are wounded
will moan everywhere in the land.

⁵³ The people of Babylon might go up to heaven.
They might fortify their strongholds.
But destroyers will still come from me against them,
declares the LORD.

⁵⁴ Cries of agony are heard from Babylon.
Sounds of terrible destruction are heard
from the land of the Babylonians.

⁵⁵ The LORD will destroy Babylon.
He will silence the loud noise coming from it.
Waves of enemies will come roaring in like raging water.
The noise will be heard everywhere.

⁵⁶ A destroyer will attack Babylon,
its soldiers will be captured,
and their bows and arrows will be broken.

I, the LORD, am a God who punishes evil.
I will certainly punish them.

⁵⁷ I will make their officials and wise men drunk,
along with their governors, officers, and soldiers.
They will fall into a deep sleep and never wake up,
declares the king, whose name is the LORD of Armies.

⁵⁸ This is what the LORD of Armies says:

The thick walls of Babylon will be leveled,
and its high gates will be set on fire.
People exhaust themselves for nothing.
The nations wear themselves out only to have a fire.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is the longest of the diatribes against the nations. Isaiah the prophet predicted that Cyrus of Medo-Persia would arise as a conqueror of nations

quick and would conquer Babylon. In 539 BC, Cyrus did conquer Babylon and in his first year as king of Babylon, he issued an edict that said that the Jews in exile could go home to Jerusalem and build a temple where prayers would be offered for him.

In 535 BC, 70 years after King Nebuchadnezzar had been deporting Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon, 42,360 Jewish men and their families led by Governor Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua left Babylon.

Babylon was destroyed by Xerxes in 476 BC and again in 330 BC by Alexander the Great of Greece.

Pekod is a tribe in Babylon and Merathaim is a name for Babylon meaning rebellion.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Who founded Babylon in the Bible? What famous building was located there. HINT: **Genesis 11:1-9**
2. Marduk was the principle god of Babylon. But the city had many gods. What were some of their names Jeremiah mentions?
3. The word sword appears many times in this pericope especially in **Jeremiah 50:35-37**. Now read the Song of the Sword in **Ezekiel 21:9-17**. How does this song parallel some thoughts in this pericope?
4. The city had high and thick walls. How did Cyrus of Persia get into the city?
5. The word Babylon appears 286 times in the Bible: 13x in Isaiah, 14x in Jeremiah, 15x in Ezekiel, 15x in Daniel, and 28x in 2 Kings. Why does the word appear so much in Jeremiah?
6. This oracle says that Babylon will be destroyed. In immediate history, Babylon was only conquered by Cyrus of Persia in 539 BC, who then lived in it. Was the oracle referring to a time further in the future? Alexander the Great destroyed Babylon in 330 BC.

7. There is a brief salvation oracle where the Israelites return home to Israel from Babylon **Jeremiah 50:4-6; 19-20** paralleling Isaiah.
8. Why does the oracle say that God will destroy Babylon? **Jeremiah 51:25**. Earlier, Jeremiah said Babylon was God's servant. **Jeremiah 25:9; Jeremiah 51:20-23**. What has Babylon done to deserve God's punishment? HINT: **Jeremiah 51:49**
9. Jeremiah says the king of the Medes will attack Babylon. **Jeremiah 51:28**. Cyrus was the king of the Medo-Persian Empire who conquered Babylon in 539 BC. Had Jeremiah read Isaiah?

PERICOPE 68

Jeremiah Writes a Scroll about the Destruction Of Babylon: Babylon Will Sink Like This Scroll

51:59 [593 BC] This is the message that the prophet Jeremiah gave to Seraiah, son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah, when Seraiah went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah in the fourth year of Zedekiah's rule. 593 BC Seraiah was the quartermaster.

⁶⁰Jeremiah wrote on a scroll all the disasters that would happen to Babylon. He wrote all these things that have been written about Babylon. **Jeremiah 50:1-51:59.** ⁶¹Jeremiah said to Seraiah: When you come to Babylon, see that you read all this. ⁶²Then say: LORD, you have threatened to destroy this place so that no person or animal will live here, and it will become a permanent ruin. ⁶³When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River. ⁶⁴Say: Babylon will sink like this scroll. It will never rise again because of the disasters that I the Lord will bring on it.

The words of Jeremiah end here.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jeremiah writes a scroll regarding the destruction of Babylon. This is the previous pericope. Then the scroll is tied to a stone and thrown into the Euphrates River.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. To whom does Serial bar Neriah, Baruch's brother, **Jeremiah 32:16** read this scroll before it is thrown into the Euphrates River? If the Babylonians heard these words, would they have treated Jeremiah so kindly?
2. Serial was to announce that like the scroll sunk to the bottom of the Euphrates River, Babylon would fall. **Revelation 18:21.** Who was he to announce this to?

3. How could Jeremiah advise King Zedekiah to surrender to the king of Babylon and then at the same time, prophecy that Babylon would be overthrown?

PERICOPE 69

The Fall of Jerusalem

52:I [597 BC] Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ²Zedekiah did what the LORD considered evil, as Jehoiakim had done. The LORD became angry with Jerusalem and Judah and threw the people out of his sight.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴On the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign 588 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem with his entire army. They set up camp and built dirt ramps around the city walls. ⁵The blockade of the city lasted until Zedekiah's eleventh year as king 586 BC. ⁶On the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine in the city became so severe that the common people had no food.

King Zedekiah, His Sons, and His Officials Flee from the City

⁷The enemy broke through the city walls and all Judah's soldiers fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden. While the Babylonians were attacking the city from all sides, they took the road to the plain of Jericho. ⁸The Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and caught up with him in the plain of Jericho. His entire army had deserted him.

King Zedekiah Appears Before King Nebuchadnezzar

⁹The Babylonians captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in Hamath, where the king of Babylon passed sentence on him. ¹⁰The king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons as Zedekiah watched. He also slaughtered all the officials of Judah at Riblah. ¹¹Then he blinded Zedekiah and put him in bronze shackles. The king of Babylon took him to Babylon and put him in a prison, where he stayed until he died.

One Month Later the City and Temple Are Burned Down

¹²On the tenth day of the fifth month of Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year as king of Babylon 586 BC, Nebuzaradan, who was the captain of the guard and an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ¹³He burned down the LORD's temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. Every important building was burned down. ¹⁴The entire Babylonian army that was with the captain of the guard tore down the walls around Jerusalem.

¹⁵Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, captured the few people left in the city, those who surrendered to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the population. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left some of the poorest people in the land to work in the vineyards and on the farms.

The Babylonians Loot the Temple

¹⁷The Babylonians broke apart the bronze pillars of the LORD's Temple, the stands, and the bronze pool in the LORD's temple. They shipped all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸They took the pots, shovels, snuffers, bowls, dishes, and all the bronze utensils used in the temple service. ¹⁹The captain of the guard also took pans, incense burners, bowls, pots, lamp stands, dishes, and the bowls used for wine offerings. The captain of the guard took all of the trays and bowls that were made of gold or silver. ²⁰The bronze from the 2 pillars, the pool, and the 12 bronze bulls under the stands that King Solomon had made for the LORD's temple couldn't be weighed. ²¹One pillar was 27 feet high and 18 feet in circumference. It was three inches thick and hollow. ²²The capital that was on it was 7½ feet high with a filigree and pomegranates around it. They were all made of bronze. The second pillar was the same. It also had pomegranates. ²³There were 96 pomegranates on the sides. The total number of pomegranates on the surrounding filigree was 100.

²⁴The captain of the guard took the high priest Seraiah, the second priest Zephaniah, and the 3 doorkeepers. ²⁵From the city he also took an army commander, 7 men who had access to the king whom he found in the city, the scribe who was in charge of the militia, and 60 common people whom he

found in the city. ²⁶ Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷ The king of Babylon executed them at Riblah in the territory of Hamath. So the people of Judah were captives as they left their land.

The Number of Jewish Men Departed to Babylon

²⁸ These are the people Nebuchadnezzar took captive: In his seventh year as king 597 BC, he took 3,023 Jews. ²⁹ In his eighteenth year, Nebuchadnezzar took 832 people from Jerusalem 586 BC. ³⁰ In Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year as king 581 BC, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took away 745 Jews. In all, 4,600 people men and their families were taken away.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

King Zedekiah was only 32 years old when Jerusalem was captured, and burned down. In 588 BC, Nebuchadnezzar and his army arrived at Jerusalem. For two years, they blockaded the city. Finally, they entered the city. But one month before, King Zedekiah, his sons, and officials escaped through the wall.

The Babylonians captured them and took them to King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. The king killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him and then put out King Zedekiah's eyes. Then he was taken in shackles to Babylon. Zedekiah's officials were killed.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The number of Judean men deported to Babylon with their families was 4,600, which seems very low. Best estimates of the population of Judea at this time were 1-2 million with Judah now having in it many from the Northern Kingdom of Israel who fled from the Assyrians. How did the Babylonians determine who to deport and who to kill?
2. Many Judeans did escape to Egypt and elsewhere. But this low deported figure seems to indicate that the Babylonians killed many Judeans. Give the

prophecies in Jeremiah where God says many Judeans will be killed by the Babylonians.

3. Jeremiah describes the deported Judeans as good figs. God says: I will give them the desire to know that I am the Lord. They will be my people and I will be their God because they will whole-heartedly come back to me. **Jeremiah 24:7**. If this prophecy came true why did only 46,360 men and their families return with Zerubbabel and Joshua to Jerusalem in 535 BC? History tells us that the majority of Jews stayed in Babylon.

4. Read the accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem in **2 Kings 25:1-26** and in **2 Chronicles 36:19-21**. How do we know that all three accounts were written by priests? **HINT: Jeremiah 52:17-23**. Are there any details in these two accounts different from or in addition to details mentioned by Jeremiah?

5. Do we learn anything new here in this chapter of Jeremiah? This appears to be a repetition of two other accounts. Why then is it included? **HINT: Jeremiah 52:28-30**

6. In **2 Kings 24:14-16**, it is said that 10,000 captives were taken to Babylon in 597 BC, while Jeremiah says only 3,023 were taken. These numbers apparently include only adult males. What is the reason for this discrepancy?

7. Why isn't the first deportation in 605 BC mentioned when Daniel and others were taken to Babylon? **2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6-7; Daniel 1:1-7**

8. In 535 BC, led by Governor Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua, 42,360 Judeans returned to Jerusalem. 5,000 returned with Ezra, the scribe in 458 BC and 42,000 with Nehemiah in 444 BC. How many Judeans were left in Babylon after these returns?

9. Prince Sheshbazzar is mentioned receiving the utensils of the temple and taking them with him when the exiles left Babylon to go to Jerusalem. **Ezra 1:11**. Sheshbazzar is also mentioned in **Ezra 5:14** as Governor and in **Ezra 5:16** as laying the foundation of the temple. But in **Ezra 5:2**, it is Zerubbabel who is building the temple. In **Haggai 2:2**, Zerubbabel is referred to as Governor. But

he is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, not in the family genealogies in 1 Chronicles, nor in Ezra's account of the leaders in the first return **Ezra 2:1-2** or Nehemiah's account **Nehemiah 7:7; 12:1**.

What happened to the prince? Both he and Zerubbabel were descendants of David.

PERICOPE 70

King Jehoiakin Released from Prison

52:31 [560 BC] On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the imprisonment of King Jehoiakin of Judah 560 BC, King Evil Merodach of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, freed King Jehoiakin of Judah and released him from prison. ³²He treated him well and gave him a special position higher than the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³Jehoiakin no longer wore prison clothes, and he ate his meals in the king's presence as long as he lived. ³⁴The king of Babylon gave him a daily food allowance as long as he lived.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

King Jehoiakin was 18 years old when he began to rule Judah. **2 Chronicles 36:9** says he was 8 years old. His father Jehoiakim had died during the second blockade of Jerusalem. Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin or Coniah, **Jeremiah 22:24, 28; 37:1** succeeded him, but only ruled three months before Jehoiakin was made king. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakin to Babylon, along with the king's court, all the wise men, tradesmen or builders, plus many trained soldiers. **2 Kings 24:14** says there were 18,000 men taken in all. Then Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah who was only 21 years old as king of Judah.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. There is a discrepancy in the Bible about King Jehoiakin's age when he began to rule. Was it 8 or 18 years old? In **2 Kings 24:12**, it says his mother was deported with him.
2. Why is this pericope placed at the end of Jeremiah's book? Is there a hope that Jehoiakin, considered by many to be the last genuine king of Judah might return to Jerusalem and be its king?

3. Since Nebuchadnezzar deported the entire court of King Jehoiakin, most people considered Zedekiah to only be a puppet king – more like a governor. Jews considered King Jehoiakin to be the last true king of Judah.

Jehoiachin's descendant Zerubbabel **1 Chronicles 3:15-19** returned to Jerusalem after the exile. The prophet Haggai thought Zerubbabel was the Messiah. **Haggai 2:21**. But Zerubbabel disappeared without explanation after he had rebuilt the Jerusalem temple, so Joshua the high priest apparently replaced him as the leader of the community. **Zechariah 6:9-15**

EPILOGUE

Jeremiah, compared to Isaiah and Ezekiel, had the most difficult prophetic ministry. His name means: **YHWH Hurls**. In fact, many compare him to Jesus of Nazareth, who ministered in Israel for only 3 ½ years from 27 AD to 30 AD, and who also suffered much. Like Jesus in his human nature, Jeremiah had relentless faith in God.

Jeremiah was the right man for the right time. He was the last prophet in Judah before the Judeans were sent into exile in Babylon and the city was destroyed. He attempted to turn the people around and understand completely why their God was sending them away and destroying the holy city of Jerusalem and their beloved temple where they thought he resided in the Holy of Holies.

Fortunately, Jeremiah had four friends who supported him. There was Baruch bar Neriah bar Maaseiah, Anakim bar Shaphan, Ebed-Melech, and Gedaliah ben Anakim bar Shaphan. But even these loyal friends could not prevent all the abuse that was heaped upon him.

Because the Book of Jeremiah is not in chronological order, here is my attempt to tell the story of the prophet in order.

Jeremiah was the same age as King Josiah. While Josiah became king at 8 years old, in Josiah's 13th year as king 627 BC, Jeremiah was a teenager when God called him to be his prophet, at around 21 years old. **Jeremiah 25:3**. Hilkiah, the high priest was apparently Jeremiah's father.

Jeremiah was brought up in Anathoth, the city of priests, only three miles north of Jerusalem. How difficult it must have been when Jeremiah told his father Hilkiah, the high priest, he was called to be a prophet, rather than a priest.

Jeremiah was not allowed by God to marry as most Jewish men did at age 20. He was called to be a prophet as a teenager, although to have a responsible

position in Israel like a priest or a prophet, a man had to be 30 years old. But God had other plans.

Jeremiah was thrilled when his father found the Book of Deuteronomy in the temple in Josiah's 18th year. **2 Kings 22:8**. Hilkiah gave it to the scribe Shaphan who read it to King Josiah. Josiah then sent Hilkiah, Ahikam ben Shaphan, Achbor ben Micaiah, Shaphan, and Asaiah to the prophetess Huldah to verify the book that was found was authentic.

Terrified at God's warnings, King Josiah began a religious reform in Judah, of which Jeremiah approved. But then Josiah was killed in a battle with Pharaoh Neco in 609 BC when he was only 49 years old **2 Chronicles 34:1** and the people anointed his son Jehoahaz as king. Jehoahaz was 23 years old. **2 Kings 23:31**

But three months later, Pharaoh Neco came to Jerusalem and appointed Josiah's son Jehoiakim as king taking Jehoahaz to Egypt where he died. Jehoiakim was only 25 years old. **2 Kings 23:36**

But four years later in 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar came to Judah. He forced King Jehoiakim to swear allegiance to Babylon instead of Egypt. Jehoiakim ruled for 11 years in a very autocratic and selfish way. He hated Jeremiah. In fact, when Jeremiah's scribe Baruch wrote Jeremiah's prophecies on a scroll, the king burned them.

Because King Jehoiakim continued to conspire with Egypt, King Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem in 598 BC. During the blockade, Jehoiakim died. The people anointed Jehoiakim's son Jehoiakin a king. He was only 18 years old. **2 Kings 24:8**

Three months later in 597 BC King Nebuchadnezzar entered the city. He took Jehoiakin in chains to Babylon together with his mother, his court, all the tradesmen, and all the wealthy landowners, and appointed Josiah's son Zedekiah as a puppet king. Zedekiah was 21 years old. **2 Kings 24:18**

It was probably during the reign of King Jehoiakim that the people in the priestly city of Anathoth threatened to kill Jeremiah. **Jeremiah 12:21**. Then Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple put Jeremiah in prison. **Jeremiah 20:2**. After speaking his first temple sermon, Jeremiah was arrested. The priests and prophets wanted to put Jeremiah to death, but Ahikam bar Shaphan supported him. **Jeremiah 26:24** Jeremiah's first friend.

In 605 BC, the fourth year of the reign of King Jehoiakim, God told Jeremiah to dictate to Baruch all the prophecies he had preached from the time God called him in the last 23 years until now. Jeremiah dictated them to Baruch who read them in the temple on a day called for fasting. **Jeremiah 36:10**

Micaiah bar Gemariah bar Shaphan heard Baruch read the scroll and went and told the scribes. The scribes sent Jehudi bar Nethaniah bar Shelemiah bar Cushi to ask Baruch to read it again to the scribes in the temple. Baruch did so. The scribes then said: We must tell the king. They went and told King Jehoiakim. The king ordered Jehudi to get the scroll and read it to him. But then the scribes told Baruch that he and Jeremiah must hide.

As Jehudi read the scroll, the king took a penknife and cut off the three or four columns of the scroll that were read and threw them in a fire blazing nearby. The scribes begged the king not to burn the scroll. But the king and his attendants showed no fear at hearing the words on the scroll. Then the king ordered Jeremiah and Baruch to be arrested.

During the reign of King Zedekiah, who was afraid of the men he had appointed as court officials, the false prophet Hananiah challenged Jeremiah, saying the exile would end in two years. **Jeremiah 28:34**. Jeremiah later said to Hananiah: You will die this year. He did.

God told Jeremiah to buy a field in Anathoth in 587 BC, the 10th year in the reign of King Zedekiah. This would be proof that God would bring the exiles back to Jerusalem one day. Jeremiah was still locked up in the courtyard of the prison and King Nebuchadnezzar was blockading Jerusalem for the last time.

Here we are again introduced to Jeremiah's scribe Baruch ben Neriah ben Mahseiah. **Jeremiah 32:12**. Jeremiah's second friend. Jeremiah's cousin Hananiah came to Jeremiah through the blockade and was given silver for his land.

The Egyptian army had come to Judah so the Assyrian army left off the blockade to meet them. So Jeremiah attempted to leave Jerusalem to look at the field he had purchased. But the guard accused Jeremiah of deserting to the Babylonians. Jeremiah was thrown into prison. **Jeremiah 37:35**

King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and asked if there was a message from God. Jeremiah said: You will be handed over to the Babylonians. **Jeremiah 37:17**. Then Jeremiah asked to be put in a better place in the prison. Three of the king's attendants heard Jeremiah preaching. So the attendants asked the king to silence Jeremiah. King Zedekiah said: Do what you will. So the attendants put Jeremiah in a cistern where he sank into the mud. **Jeremiah 38:6**

But an attendant of the king, Ebed-Melech from Sudan spoke to the king, saying Jeremiah will die in that cistern. So the king commanded Ebed-Melech take 30 men and take Jeremiah out and place him in the courtyard of the prison. He also gave him bread to eat. Here is Jeremiah's third friend, Ebed-Melech.

Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah to meet him at the temple gate. Jeremiah told the king that if he surrendered the city to the Babylonians, the city would not be burned and destroyed. The king said: I'm afraid to do that. Jeremiah replied: If you do not do that, the Babylonians will capture you and you will not escape from them. Then Zedekiah said: Do not tell my officials what we talked about. **Jeremiah 38:24**

Finally, the Babylonians broke through the city walls. But Zedekiah and his officials slipped out through the walls. The Babylonians caught up with them and brought them to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king first killed Zedekiah's sons and the officials with them. Then he blinded Zedekiah and sent him off in chains to Babylon. **Jeremiah 39:4-7**

King Nebuchadnezzar gave an order to Nebuzaradan, his captain of the guard. Find Jeremiah and do whatever he asks. Nebuzaradan offered Jeremiah the choice of going to Babylon or going to Mizpah where Nebuchadnezzar had authorized Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan to rule as Governor over the new Babylonian province of Yehud. Here was Jeremiah's fourth friend, the son of Ahikam.

Unfortunately, Ishmael ben Nethaniah ben Elishama of the royal family was bribed by the king of Ammon to murder Gedaliah. This he did. Then he took the survivors at Mizpah and left for Ammon. But Johanan ben Kareah, an army commander chased Ishmael. Ishmael escaped, but left the survivors he had captured.

Now Jeremiah and Baruch are exposed among the survivors Ishmael had taken from Mizpah. Johanan asks Jeremiah: What does God want us to do? Jeremiah says: I'll tell you in ten days. When the time had elapsed Jeremiah said: God wants you to remain in Judah. But you've already made up your mind to go to Egypt as you are afraid Nebuchadnezzar will kill you because his Governor Gedaliah was murdered.

Johanan said: We're going to Egypt. Then the group accused Jeremiah of being influenced by Baruch, rather than seeking God's advice. Johanan took the entire group to Egypt. As they came on the border of Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied that King Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Egypt.

As a parting note, the group said: Everything went well for us when we burned incense to the queen of heaven in Jerusalem. But when we stopped giving offerings to her and made cakes with her image on them, everything went bad. So we will continue to worship her. Jeremiah said: Here is a sign that you are wrong. God will hand Pharaoh Hophra over to his enemies.

The book ends with a series of prophesies Jeremiah gave against the nations – the longest prophecy being against Babylon. Finally, there is a summary of the fall of Jerusalem. Then there is a last pericope that in 560 BC, the 37th year of the imprisonment of King Jehoiakin, the new Babylonian King Evil

Merodach in the first year of his reign, allowed former King Jehoiakin to wear normal clothes and eat at the king's table.

In the middle of the Book of Jeremiah are Chapters 30-33 that many call the Book of Consolation. We do not know when God gave Jeremiah these prophecies. In the present text it is located just before King Jehoiakim burns the scroll that Jeremiah dictated to Baruch.

The first chapter contains prophecies concerning the Northern Kingdom of Israel, often called Ephraim after its largest tribe. **Jeremiah 31:9.** Assyria had destroyed these ten tribes and deported them to other parts of Assyria from 735-722 BC. Yet God says: I'll restore your health and heal your wounds. **Jeremiah 30:17**

In Chapter 31, God begins by saying: *I will be the God of all the families of Israel and they will be my people.* **Jeremiah 31:1.** Here God expresses the covenant language he first used when the Israelites were doing forced labor in Egypt. **Exodus 6:7.** Then God continues with these beautiful words: *I love you with an everlasting love. So I will continue to show you my kindness.* **Jeremiah 31:3.** He also says: *I will be a Father to Israel and Ephraim will be my firstborn.* **Jeremiah 31:9**

God goes on: *The days are coming when I will plant the nations of Israel and Judah with people and animals. Once I watched over them to uproot them, to tear them down, and to wreck, ruin and hurt them. Now I will watch over them to build them up and to plant them.* **Jeremiah 31:27-28**

Then God gives them the words of a new covenant. I will put my teachings inside them and I will write those teachings on their hearts. All of them from the least important to the most important will know me because I will forgive their wickedness and I will no longer hold their sins against them. **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

But God has also given Jeremiah two prophecies of the person who will inaugurate this new covenant:

The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will grow a righteous branch for David. He will be a king who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land. In his lifetime Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name he will be given: The Lord Is Our Righteousness. **Jeremiah 23:5-6**

The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will keep the promise that I made to Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous branch to spring up for David. He will do what is fair and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live securely. Jerusalem will be called the Lord Our Righteousness. **Jeremiah 33:14-16**

If I was writing the Book of Jeremiah, this is how I would end his book.