

From the Garden to Glory

Jeremiah

Author: Jeremiah

Timeline: 627 - 580 B.C. (2 Kings 23-25)

Location: Judah

Category: Prophetical, Major Prophet

Theme: The Judgment of Judah

Overview:

Jeremiah began his ministry to Judah after the Northern Kingdom of Israel had fallen to the Assyrians, and not many years before the end of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He prophesied in Judah before and during the captivity of the nation. He brought a message of judgment to God's people and faithfully labored over forty years without seeing any repentance. Jeremiah was heartbroken because of this and has been called "the weeping prophet".

The book of Jeremiah is not arranged chronologically or thematically but its message is clear ~ surrendering to God's will is the only way to escape disaster.

Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Daniel were contemporaries of Jeremiah. Toward the middle-end of Jeremiah's ministry, Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Jeremiah, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Jeremiah is often called the "Weeping Prophet." The New Open Bible calls him "a heartbroken prophet with a heartbreaking message." What heartbreaking message has the Lord instructed you to deliver? How has He comforted you as you have been obedient?
2. Jeff Lasseigne says of Jeremiah, "He often found himself standing alone and opposed by people, prophets (false), princes and priests." How have you felt alone or even opposed in your ministry? What has enabled you to persevere in the face of this loneliness and opposition?

Jeremiah Warns Judah

Read Jeremiah 1:1-10; 2:1-13; 3:12-13, 3:22-23; 4:14-18; 6:1-30

1. Look at 1:4-5. The Lord had a plan and a purpose for Jeremiah's life even before Jeremiah was conceived. What is the Lord's plan and purpose for your life? How has He revealed it to you? What are you doing *today* to fulfill that plan and purpose?
2. Look at 2:13. What were the "two evils" that God's people had committed? What might these "look like" in our world today? How do you avoid these in your own life?
3. Look at 6:14, Jeremiah 8:11, and Ezekiel 13:10. What are the dangers of falsely proclaiming peace? What parallel do you see in our world today?

A Rebuke

Read Jeremiah 7:1-15; 9:1-16; 17:5-18

1. Look at 7:1-4. The people were trusting in the temple rather than in God. What is the difference between trusting in the Lord and trusting in religion? How would you describe this difference to someone who isn't a Christian?

2. Look at 7:5-7. What did the Lord require of His people? The word *thoroughly* is used twice in verse 5. Think about what the word *thoroughly* means. Why is it important that obedience to the Lord's commands be thorough?
3. Look at 17:5-18. Choose one of the "truths" found in these verses and share how you have experienced the validity of it in your own life.

The Potter

Read Jeremiah 18:1-17

1. Look at verse 6. What does it mean to you to know that *you* are clay in the Potter's hand? In what way(s) do you allow Him to mold you as He desires? In what way(s) do you resist Him?
2. Look at verse 12. Think of a time when you thought the Lord's way was hopeless so you chose to walk according to your own plans. What was the result?
3. Look at verse 15. How has forgetting the Lord caused you to stumble?

The Faithless Shepherds

Read Jeremiah 23

1. Look at verses 1-3. According to these verses, to whom do the pasture, the flock and the people belong? Consider this quote from Pastor Damian Kyle, "A leader must always remember that the people he or she serves are *God's* people." Who are the people the Lord has called *you* to serve? In what way(s) do you view them as "God's people"? How could you improve in this area?

2. Look at verse 4. Make a list of the qualities that are important for those who have a position of spiritual leadership over you. How does coming under the protection of a "good shepherd" cause you to be fed? What are the potential dangers of coming under the authority of an evil shepherd?
3. Look at verses 26-32. What do you learn from these verses about the importance of knowing the Word of God and/or the danger of not knowing the Word of God? How does Acts 17:10-11 add to your understanding?

Repentance and Restoration

Read Jeremiah 24 and 25

1. Look at 24:5. Why did the Lord send His people into the land of the Chaldeans? Describe a time when the Lord sent you to a difficult place for *your* own good. What did you learn during this time?
2. Look at 24:7. What did it mean when the Lord said that He would give His people "a heart to know Me"? How has He given *you* a heart to know Him? Be specific.
3. Summarize 25:1-7. Describe a time when the Lord spoke to you but you refused to listen. What were the consequences? What did you learn from this experience about the dangers of disobedience?

Israel's Last Days and the Overthrow of Judah

Read Jeremiah 30:18-24, 31:1-40 and 52:1-34

1. Summarize God's promises in 30:18-24. Meditate on verse 22. What does it mean to you to know that He is *your* God and you are one of *His* people? Spend some time today praising and thanking Him for His personal involvement in your life.

2. Look at 31:3-5. Describe a time when the Lord "rebuilt" you.

3. Summarize chapter 52.

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Jeremiah consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?

2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord:

From the Garden to Glory

Lamentations

Author: Jeremiah

Timeline: c. 586 B.C. (2 Kings 24 - 25, Jeremiah 42 - 43)

Location: Jerusalem

Category: Poetical, Major Prophet

Theme: Lament and Restoration

Overview:

The "weeping prophet" exposes his tender and broken heart over the destruction of Jerusalem. Rather than rejoicing that his prophecies have been fulfilled, Jeremiah wept bitterly over the ruin of the city and the miseries of his people. He writes this lamentation in acrostic or alphabetical form. Each chapter is an individual poem; beginning with the first letter A (aleph) and progressing verse by verse through the Hebrew alphabet. Each chapter/poem is like a funeral dirge; but in the midst of the book (3:21-33), God's mercy and grace shine forth giving hope to all.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Lamentations, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. The title of Lamentations represents the content of the book. Look up the word *lament* in a dictionary, and write the definition. List three of your own lamentations, and prayerfully take them before the Lord.

2. Speaking of the book of Lamentations, C. I. Scofield, wrote, "The touching significance of this book lies in the fact that it is the disclosure of the love and sorrow of Jehovah for the very people whom He is chastening." What does this tell you about the heart of God? What changes will you make in your life based on this knowledge of the Lord's heart?

Comfort to the Sorrowing

Read Lamentations

1. The first chapter of Lamentation describes the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem. What do you find the most grievous? Why?
2. Summarize 3:22-27. Commenting on the book of Lamentations, Henrietta Mears said:

It is not all sorrow. Above the clouds of the poet's weeping over the sins of the people, God's sun is shining...The light breaks through to throw a shining rainbow across the murky sky. God's grace always shines above the clouds of sin (see Romans 5:20), and it will always shine in the heart that is trusting in God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3).

Describe a time in your own life when *God's grace shone above the clouds of sin*.

3. In verse 5:20, we see that God's people doubted His concern for them. According to The New Open Bible Study Edition, "Doubt may be defined as uncertainty of belief or lack of confidence in something...All doubt may be traced ultimately to unbelief in the Word of God, which affirms beyond question the existence and character of God." What do you do when you are tempted to trust feelings of doubt rather than trusting the Word of God? Can you share a verse or section of Scripture that has been an encouragement to you during these times?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Lamentations consider the following questions and write your answers:

- 1.** What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
- 2.** What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
- 3.** List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: