

Exposition of Jeremiah

Chapters 1-2:

1:5a – “**Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.**”

“I knew you” [yada] – to know relationally; **Script. Ref:** Gal. 1:15-16 – But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased [16] to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.

The word “foreknowledge” in the Greek literally means, “to know beforehand”. There is much controversy regarding the exact meaning of this word. Some say that the word “foreknowledge” relates to God’s ability in eternity past to look down the corridors of time and see who would exercise faith in the gospel message. Once the gospel was heard and believed, He would then choose them to be His own. This could be better defined as foresight. Others say that the word “foreknowledge” is based on God’s sovereign freedom, in accordance with His love, to select out of the race of humanity whomever He wants to save, which is not based on anything in the creature or anything that the creature does, but solely based on God’s sovereign grace to bestow favor on whomever He wants (Rom. 9:15). This understanding of foreknowledge can be understood as “fore approved” or “foreordained”.

The Scriptures are clear that “foreknowledge” means God’s sovereign freedom to select beforehand, those whom He wants to save. The eternal destiny of mankind is not determined ultimately by the decisions of man, but by God who chooses whom He wants to save (Jn. 6:37; 15:16; Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13). Arthur Pink writes, “The fact is that foreknowledge is never used in Scripture in connection with events or actions; instead, it always refers to persons. It is to persons God is said to “foreknow,” not to the actions of those persons” (Arthur Pink, *The Nature of God*, p. 30). In other words, it’s not the actual event (the time and place a person received Christ) or action (placing one’s trust in Christ) that God foreknows, but it is the person that God foreknows not what he or she does. He foreknew them unto salvation before they did anything good or bad (Rom. 9:10-13). (Here’s some Scriptures to prove this point – Acts 2:23 (this statement is made by the apostle Peter); Rom. 8:29, 30; 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:20. God the Father is the One in Scripture who is primarily responsible for foreordaining those He wants to save.

Ministry responsibility flows from spiritual relationship. The purpose of election is to have a relationship with God (before I formed you I knew you). Before I brought you into existence I already determined to be in a relationship with you. Before I brought into being (personhood) I already purpose to know you (relationship). What’s the point? You were created to know Me.

What the Lord says of Jeremiah, He says of us: **Script. Ref:** John 17:1-3; Eph. 1:3-6

1:5b – “a prophet to the nations” – chaps. 2-45 [Judah]; chaps. 46-51 [Gentiles]; chap. 52 [fall of Jerusalem] – The gift of the office of a prophet is a revelatory/confirmatory gift – Jeremiah both forth-tells and foretells.

1:6-10 – Jeremiah’s hesitation, the Lord’s promise – [8] “For I am with you to deliver you”.

Scrip. Ref: Ex. 3:10-12; 4:10-12; Acts 18:9-10

*Wherever, whenever and whatever the Lord calls us to a difficult task, He will never leave us to do the work alone. The task may be hard but our God is great. **Quote:** Warren Wiersbe – “God commandments, are God’s enablements”.

1:11-19 – “a rod of an almond tree” [v. 11] – “The Hebrew word for “almond tree” is shaped from the word “to watch or to wake” [shoqed]. The almond tree was named the “awake tree” because in Palestine it is the first tree in the year to bud and bear fruit.” [Bible Knowledge Commentary] – The word of the Lord that will come through Jeremiah will perform its work because the Lord is watching over it. In other words, not one word which falls from the mouth of Jeremiah will fail.

The inspired, infallible, errant and authoritative word will always perform its work because God the Holy Spirit is empowering it: **Scrip. Ref:** Isa. 55:8-11 – “So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” [v. 11]; 1 Cor. 3:6 – I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth; Acts 13:44-49; Acts 16:14; Heb. 4:12-13 – For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [13] And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Heb. 4:12 – “judge” [Gr.] kritikos – decisive. English word “critical”. The word of God is a critic of our motives and affections. It cuts us open and exposes our true selves.

[chaps 2-45] – “This section begins with Jeremiah recording 13 oracles of divine judgment against the nation of Judah” [chaps. 2-25] [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

2:1-3 – “The love of your betrothals” [Heb.] “kel-oo-law” – bridehood [only in the plural]; espousal; “Your following after Me in the wilderness” – The Lord viewed His relationship with Israel as a marriage. He delivered them out of Egyptian bondage [Ex. 3-14]; entered into a marital covenant with them [Ex. 19-24]; and viewed their journey through the wilderness as their honeymoon [Ex. 33:1-11]; There was nowhere for Israel to go they had to follow the Lord. They needed the cloud for shade by day and the fire for warmth by night. Therefore they had to stay close to the Lord. The Lord led them through the wilderness in order to teach them dependence [Deut. 8:2-3]. The Lord views every wilderness experience He puts us in as a time of closeness and discovery. We are made to draw near to the Lord and discover how faithful, merciful, gracious and loving He is.

The Old Covenant is best described not as a covenant based on Law-keeping but based on love expressing itself in Law-keeping [Deut. 6:4-9; 20-25; 10:12-16; 19; 11:1; 18-22; 13:3]. The Lord never wanted external observance of the Law apart from internal devotion towards Him [Isa.

1:11-17]. If the heart is turned away from God, it is because it has turned towards something else [idol].

How can you discern if your heart has turned away from the Lord? There are two ways to discern if you have drifted spiritually away from the Lord: 1] Your heart does not heed God's commandment to love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; 2] Your heart does not heed God's commandment to love your fellow man.

“Jeremiah contrasted Judah's former devotion [vv. 1-3] with her present departure from God” [vv. 4-3:5] [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

2:4-13 – “foundation of living waters” - spiritual nourishment always leads to spreading the news of personal satisfaction in God. But Israel spreads the news of broken cisterns that cannot hold water - idols that thrill the senses for a short time but dull the life; you can only have a sip which ruins and keeps you desperate; yet you boast about that. That's the second evil. It's evil because God is a jealous God and it's dishonoring because what you thirst after cannot satisfy like He can.

“Broken cisterns” – “cisterns were large pits dug into the rock and covered with plaster. These pits were used to gather rainwater. This water was brackish (distasteful); and if the rains were below normal, it could run out. Worse yet, if a cistern developed a crack it would not hold the water. To turn from a dependable, pure stream of running water to a broken, brackish cistern was idiotic”. [Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 1132]

Broken Cisterns – **money** [Psalm 49; Prov. 18:11; 23:4-5]; **alcohol & drugs** [Prov. 23:20-35]; **sexual immorality** [Prov. 5]; **idolatrous human relationships** (codependency) – excessive emotional and psychological reliance on a partner or organization [Jer. 17:5-6]; **the idolatry of self-esteem** or **racial pride** [Jer. 10:23]; **the idolatry of vain imaginations** – spending your time imagining a different life from reality [Psalm 73:7-9; 18-20]; **the idolatry of a false god** – either the acknowledge of the true God of the Christian faith but worshiped based on false premises or the worship of a false god.

2:20-23 – Judah's spiritual apostasy is illustrated under four pictures: [v. 20] a harlot; [v. 21] a wild vine; [v. 22] a stain that cannot be removed; [vv. 23-24] a wild donkey in heat.

Quote: The God of the Bible is too lovely to abandon for lesser pursuits.

[3:6-6:30] God calls for Repentance as He promises judgment for violating the Covenant

3:1-5 – Judah's covenantal devotion to the Lord brought the blessings upon the land [Deut. 28:1-14] – [v. 1] **God says, “If a husband divorces his wife, And she goes from him, And belongs to another man, Will he still return to her? Will not that land be completely polluted? But you are a harlot with many lovers; Yet you turn to Me” declares the Lord.**

In other words, Judah cannot commit spiritual adultery against the Lord and expect to receive the blessings of the covenant. But Judah thought they could have relationship with idols but turn back to the Lord for blessings. “But you are a harlot with many lovers; Yet you turn to Me”.

What matters most to you will determine your motives for seeking the Lord. Is it devotional relationship with the Lord or receiving His blessings? Judah prayed to the Lord for blessings but was unrepentant about her spiritual harlotry.

3:6-11 – The Lord compares the spiritual adultery of Israel [Northern Kingdom] to Judah [Southern Kingdom], in that though Israel worshiped false gods and suffered the consequences of being exiled [spiritual divorce] by Assyria in 722 BC. Judah did not learn from Israel’s consequences almost a hundred years earlier but committed the same sins. Yet faithless Israel was more righteous than Judah [or less sinful in comparison], because at least they did not pretend to love the Lord at the same time.

If you are going turn away from the Lord don’t insult Him by pretending that you still love Him. False worship is evil. But pretending to worship the Lord while committing false worship on the side is worst in the eyes of God. The most striking denunciations Jesus made was against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees [Matt. 23]. He hated that they pretended to love God and keep His law while in reality they loved themselves and violated the Law.

Scrip. Ref: Mark 7:6-7 – And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. [7] But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’

If you were to ask the question – where is the worst sin being committed in our world today? It would shock you to know that the worse sin is not being committed by unbelieving sinners but by those who claim to know God but live scandalous lives [Matt. 23:15; Lk. 12:47-48; Rom. 2:8-9; 11-12; Heb. 10:26-31; 2 Pet. 2:20-21]

3:12-18 – The Lord promises Israel [Northern Kingdom] that if they repent of their sins and return to Him: 1] He will guide them by sending shepherds after His own heart [v. 15]; He will multiply their depleted population due to the judgment in exile [v. 16]; they will dwell permanently in the land under the reign of the Messiah and shall never turn away from Him again (New Covenant) [vv.17-18].

3:19-4:2 – How will the Lord regather Israel? He will regenerate their hearts by the gospel so that they will address Him as Father [v. 19] and will bemoan the sin they once loved, idolatry [vv. 20-25]. When will this take place? After the church age during the Tribulation period [Rev. 7:1-8; 12]

4:3-4 – **“Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. [4] “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My wrath go forth like fire and burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.**

Jeremiah uses two metaphors to convey what radical repentance should look like in Judah: 1] Farming metaphor – **“Break up your fallow ground”** – The Lord pictures Judah’s heart like unplowed dirt. In order to soften the ground you got to break it up and grind the dirt into small particles. If you want to experience spiritual fruitfulness in your life. If you want to awaken an

insatiable thirst in your heart for God who is the fountain of living waters. You must first break up the unplowed ground of your heart. How? 1] Confess sins of indifference, hypocrisy and pride in not desiring God in your heart; 2] Turn from these sinful attitudes by asking God to bring about a re-softening of your heart towards Him. We must plead for God to awaken God-centered affections in us. Only God can give us a love for Him [Jer. 32:39; Psalm 86:11; 2 Thess. 3:5]; 3] Meditate on the Word until you become a doer of the Word [Psalm 1:2-3]; **Scrip. Ref:** Psalm 119:2 – How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart – We seek an intimate relationship with the Lord when we observe or keep His testimonies; 4] Surround yourself with godly people who delight in the Lord [Psalm 1:1; 133; 1 Cor. 15:33]; 5] Pray daily not to return to those old sinful habits [Psalm 18:23; 19:12-14; Matt. 6:13; 1 Pet. 1:14-15]; 6] Watch your thought life for temptations towards new sins [Prov. 4:23]; 7] Live a life of repentance before the Lord. If we maintain short accounts before the Lord, we will keep ourselves from drifting away from the Lord [Job 1:5; 31; 1 John 1:9]

2] Circumcision metaphor – “**Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart**”. The first metaphor deals with confronting our sins in order to produce a softening of a heart towards the Lord by confession and repentance. The second metaphor entails a radical cutting away of the sin in our hearts and casting it from us as unclean. We must break up and throw away. But in this metaphor Judah is challenged to prove they are in the Abrahamic covenant, not by physical circumcision but by spiritual circumcision. If there is no change on the inside, the outside sign is useless. Again the Lord wants to turn Judah away from pride in externalism when there is no heart change.

For us, it is good to publicly identify ourselves as Christians by church membership and baptism. But assurance of salvation is not based on church membership and baptism but a transformed life [Rom. 8:12-16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11]

4:5-18 – No radical repentance will lead to devastating destruction. Always remember that the consequences of sin will always lead to some form of death whether temporal or eternal – 1] death of spiritual fruitfulness; 2] death of joy in one’s life [Psalm 51:12]; 3] death of peace – a guilty conscience; 4] death of God’s support in your life [1 Pet. 5:5]; In the case of Judah, the Lord was going to raise up an enemy against His people.

4:19-21 – Jeremiah responds to the Lord’s prophecy with deep anguish in his heart.

4:22-31 – The Lord gives His reason – “**For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children, And they have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know.**” – “stupid” [saka pronounced saw-kawl – silly; foolish]; Basically Judah is an unsaved nation who will be made to pay the covenant consequences for not loving the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength [Deut. 6:4-5].

Scrip. Ref: Deut. 28:47-48 – “Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; [48] therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness[s, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you”. [Loving the Lord is not optional]

[Chapter 5 – The Lord Gives His Reason for Sending Judgment]

5:1 – The Lord gives Jeremiah a command to go through the city of Jerusalem to see if he could find any man [Heb. eesh – male person] who “**does justice, who seeks truth**”. And if Jeremiah could find such a man the Lord would “**pardon**” Judah’s sin – “Pardon” [Heb. “salach” pronounced ‘saw-lakh’ – to spare, to forgive].

Scrip. Ref: Gen. 18:32 – The Lord was willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if He had found 10 righteous people.

This commission by God was for Jeremiah to discover for himself what the Lord already knew, that the entire nation from the king, to the priests, to the prophets, to the rich and to the poor were all spiritually depraved.

5:2 – Even though the people swore by the Lord’s name as a people committed to Him, they were swearing falsely. They honored Him with their lips but their hearts were far from Him.

5:3 – Jeremiah discovered the truth that the people had indeed rebelled against the Lord and that no matter how many painful consequences the Lord brought upon them because of their sin – “**They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to repent**”.

5:4-5 – Even though Jeremiah did not find one righteous person in the entire city, he tries his best to give an excuse as to why the poor of the land have sinned – “**They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord**”. In other words, the poor rely upon the elders, the priests and the prophets to teach them the word of God. But since the ones charged with teaching the Word have failed in their duty the sinful conduct of the poor is more out of ignorance of the truth than willful disobedience to it.

As Jeremiah continues his search through the city he goes to the great, the leaders in the nation – “**But they too, with one accord have broken the yoke and burst the bonds**” of their responsibility to Old Covenant that kept them in the blessings of God. As the saying goes, “Obedience brings blessings”. But also, God’s restraints as revealed in the “shall not” commands keeps us in the blessings: 1] You shall have no other gods before Me; 2] You shall not make for yourself an idol; 3] You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; 4] You shall not murder; 5] You shall not commit adultery; 6] You shall not steal; 7] You shall not bear false witness; 8] You shall not covet; 8 out of the 10 commandments are “shall not commandments”.

If we as believers would receive God’s “shall not commands” as gracious restraints of keeping us from destroying ourselves we would have a different perspective when it comes to being tempted in these areas. If I obey the “shall not command of idolatry” I will be kept from falling away from God and living an empty life. If I obey the “shall not command” of not murdering, committing adultery, bearing false witness and coveting I will be kept from a guilty conscience and suffering painful consequences. If Adam and Eve had seen “the shall not command” of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a restraint of keeping them in life, as opposed to a restraint to keep them from being more like God, they would not have brought death upon

themselves and the world. The “shall not commands” of Scripture are meant to keep us in the blessings not keep the blessings from coming to us.

5:6 – Judgment for Disobedience – The Lord will raise up Babylon, who is described as a lion, wolf and leopard, who will tear the nation of Judah into pieces – the sword, famine and pestilence.

5:7-9 – “**Why should I pardon you?**” – God’s forgiveness of sin is a gift not an obligation. God doesn’t have to forgive anyone for the evils they commit, but He is obligated to bring judgment against sin because He is a just God. Judah had committed the two sins of forsaking the Lord and worshiping false gods.

Vertical sins of irreverence towards God and exchanging Him for idols, always leads to horizontal sins against neighbor [Rom. 1:18-2:3]

5:10-13 – Despite Jeremiah’s prophecy of the coming judgment. Judah doesn’t believe the Lord will send it.

5:14-17 – The Lord tells Jeremiah to prophecy Judah’s judgment. In other words, the Lord will make His words through Jeremiah like “**fire**”. Judah will become bothered by Jeremiah’s prophecy because it will upset the false peace the prophets are seeking to comfort Judah with.

5:18-19 – Since Judah served foreign gods in their land, they will serve a foreign nation in its land. The Lord will cause the punishment to fit the crime. Yet the Lord will not bring a complete destruction upon the nation.

5:20-25 – Jeremiah declares to “the house of Jacob” on behalf of God of how senseless and foolish the people of Judah have become. He illustrates this by comparing Judah to the waves of the sea – the ocean waves obey her boundary of not crossing over and inundating the land. But Judah have cross over the moral boundaries of the covenant and have turned away from the Lord. Even despite the fact the Lord blessed them with fruitful seasons.

When we sin against the Lord: 1] The creation itself, which God has place underneath our feet, demonstrates more sense by obeying the boundaries God has placed over it than us; 2] The goodness of the Lord upon us reveals how ungrateful of a people we are. Every time we sin, we are sinning while God is granting mercy and grace upon our lives.

5:26-29 – Jeremiah describes what type of people his discovered as he went throughout the city of Jerusalem: ‘**For wicked men are found among My people, They watch like fowlers lying in wait; they set a trap, They catch men. [27] Like a cage full of birds, So their houses are full of deceit; Therefore they have become great and rich. [28] ‘They are fat, they are sleek, They also excel [lit. pass over] in deeds of wickedness; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; And they do not defend the rights of the poor. [29] “Shall I not punish these people? Declares the Lord, ‘On a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself?’**

5:30-31 – An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: [31] The prophets prophecy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

It is one thing for unbelievers to listen to false prophets and false teachers but it is indeed an appalling and horrible thing to see those who profess to know the Lord sitting up under false teachers. And it is an appalling and horrible thing to see professing Christians remaining in churches where unqualified pastors rule over them by their own authority. And it is an appalling and horrible thing to hear professing believers talk about how anointed their false shepherd is and hear them defend their false shepherd against the truth. It is an appalling and horrible thing that is still happening today in our churches.

[Chapter 6 – God Declares War Against Judah]

6:1-3 – Jeremiah begins his oracle of coming doom by warning those who resided in his hometown Anathoth, which was in the territory of the “**sons of Benjamin**,” to flee from the midst of Jerusalem... “**Now blow a trumpet in Tekoa**” – the blowing of the trumpet was typically used to assemble Israel for a holy convocation or to warn the people of a military invasion. “**Tekoa**” was 11 miles southeast of Jerusalem [Amos 1:1]. Another means of warning of the people was by signal fires on the high places – “**And raise a signal over Beth-haccerem**” [house of vineyard] – the message that was communicated by the trumpet and single fire was – “**For evil looks down from the north, And a great destruction**” – The Babylonians/Chaldeans are about to invade Jerusalem. In Jeremiah chapters 3-4, the Lord calls on Judah to repent. Chapter 5, the Lord gives reasons for sending judgment upon Judah, because there was not one righteous person in all of Judah aside from Jeremiah [5:1-2]. Chapter 6, the Lord sends judgment... **[3]** The Lord will bring such ruin upon the city of Jerusalem that it will become a pasture land for shepherds and their flock.

6:4-5 – Like Elisha [2 Kings 6:8-12], Jeremiah prophesies the exact plans of the Babylonians’ invasion into Jerusalem, from the time of their invasion – “**let us attack at noon**” to the what they will seek to do when they arrive – “**And destroy her palaces**”. But unlike Elisha who warned the king of Israel of the plans of the Arameans in order to counter their attack. The people of Judah will not be able to counter the attack of the Babylonians, even though they are being told of their plans in advance. There are two reasons for this: 1] When the Lord opposes the proud there is nothing he can do to escape it:

6:6-9 – Notice the title the Lord gives Himself in this declaration of war against Judah – “**For thus says the Lord of hosts**” [tsaw-baw – an army; organized for war; battle; soldiers; servants] The Lord has an army in heaven – the angelic hosts [2 Kings 6:17; Psa. 67:18; 89:5-8; 104:2-4; Matt. 26:52-53]; all of creation is a servant to the Lord [Josh. 10:12-14; Job 37:12-13; 38:22-30]; the devil and his angels unknowingly serve His purposes [1 Kings 22:19-23] and sinful man serve His purposes without knowing it [Prov. 16:4]. Though the servants of evil are allowed to do evil according to God’s secret decree, yet He holds them accountable for the evil He allows them to do. In this instance the Lord gives the devil permission to arouse the hearts of the Babylonians to bring destruction according to His will.

If the Lord gives the devil permission to come after you, there is nothing you can do to escape [Luke 22:31; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20]. In other words, sometimes the Lord will allow the evil one to bring evil upon you, for the evil you committed against Him.

6:6-7 – Listen to the Lord’s command to Babylon against Judah – **“Cut down her trees, And cast up a siege against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished, In whose midst there is only oppression. [7] “As a well keeps its waters fresh, So she keeps fresh [lit. keeps cold] her wickedness. Violence and destruction are heard in her; Sickness and wounds are ever before Me.** The sins of Judah were not only persistent but well-preserved like a well keeping its waters cold. In other words, Judah sought to preserve her sin by electing corrupt spiritual leaders [5:30-31] that would endorse their sinful way of life. This is almost like a country that enacts laws in order to preserve the rights of the citizens to continue in their sinful way of living without repercussions. This led to **“violence and destruction”** throughout the Southern Kingdom.

6:9-10 – The second reason why Judah will not be able to counter the attack of the Babylonians even though they are being warned in advance of their invasion is because they despise the warnings of Scripture. If we don’t heed the warnings of Scripture, we will not escape from the dangers it warned us about: **[9] Thus says the Lord of hosts, “They will thoroughly glean as the vine the remnant of Israel; Pass your hand again like a grape gatherer Over the branches.” [10] To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed [lit. uncircumcised], And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.** “reproach” [Heb. kher-paw] a feminine noun meaning scorn, taunt, a shame, a disgrace; “delight” [khaw-fates] a verb meaning to have pleasure in, to be pleased; a primitive root – “to incline to”.

Judah had no love for the Word of God – no love for its commands, warnings or promises. They were offended by the Word because the Word did not give them a license to live the way they wanted to live. Our attitude towards the Scripture is an indicator of our attitude towards God. If we despise the Word, we despise God Himself: **Scrip. Ref:** 2 Sam. 12:9-10 – Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? [10] Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me

6:11-15 – Jeremiah cannot hold this message of God’s wrath upon Judah in himself. Even though Judah will despise hearing it, Jeremiah has to proclaim it because it’s wearing him out. A true prophet and preacher cannot withhold God’s warnings from His people regardless if the congregation likes it or not. The preacher has a calling on his life and if he does not fulfill it, he will have no peace: **“Pour it out on the children in the street, And on the gathering of young men together; For both husband and wife shall be taken, The aged and the very old. [12] And their houses shall be turned over to others, Their fields and their wives together; For I will stretch out My hand Against the inhabitants of the land,” declares the Lord. [13] For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely.** “greedy” [Heb. baw-tsake] – plunder; covetousness, dishonest gain, profit. This was the sin of every citizen in Judah. This is the original sin of our country.

Greed is when you refuse to be content with what the Lord has given you that you trespass His commandments in order to fulfill your lusts. When you are greedy for money you will use anyone to get it. When you are greedy for power you will break laws in order to achieve it and retain it. When you are greedy with lust you will violate marriage vows. When you are greedy for possessions you will steal. When you are greedy for success you will be willing to lie and destroy others if necessary. Fulfillment and satisfaction in life comes from being content with what the Lord has given you [Phil. 4:11-13]. Wanting more only brings frustration. It is the law of diminishing returns – the more you have, the less satisfied you become.

6:14-15 – And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace.

Quote: John Newton – Everything is needful that He sends. Nothing is needful that He withholds.

6:15 – “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? Were the false prophets and priests ashamed in misleading Judah into sin? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush.

I have heard of spiritual leaders/pastors giving advice to young leaders on how to swindle church members out of their money. They do not blush about it because they believe they are entitled to receive as much money as they want. But the Lord will judge such charlatans:

6:15c – Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the Lord. The office of prophet and priest doesn’t exempt one from being judged for sin: **Scrip. Ref:** James 3:1 – Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

6:16 – The only hope for peace in this life is to walk in the path of obedience: Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls.

Quote: One commentator wrote: “The phrase “ask for the old paths” is a favorite of people who oppose changes in the church and want to maintain a sterile and boring status quo. But the “old ways” refer to God’s truth as revealed in His Word, not to methods of ministry... We stand on His truth in order to make progress in His work. The old Youth for Christ slogan comes to mind: “Geared to the times but anchored to the Rock.”

The phrase “**And you shall find rest for your souls**” should sound familiar to us. Our Lord quoted this verse in His call for sinners to turn from the false religious system of Israel and come to Him: **Scrip. Ref:** Matt. 10:28-30 – “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest. [29] “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light”. “easy” [Gr. chrestos] better, good, gracious, kind. Profitable, fit, good for any use. “**The ancient paths**” and “**the good way**” leads to Christ.

6:16d – But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

6:17-21 – Since Judah refuses to heed the warnings of His watchmen [the prophets], nor listen to the sound of the trumpet [their message] He will bring judgment **“Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My law, they have rejected it also”**. And to add insult to injury the people of Judah still want to pretend they reverence the Lord through their ceremonial observances: **[20] For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba, And the sweet can from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, And your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me.**” When what we do for God replaces our love for God, [ministry replaces worship], when love of doctrine becomes the aim rather than love for the God of doctrine, or when ceremony takes precedence over relationship, the Lord is not offended by our religion [1 Sam. 15:22-23].

6:22-26 – It was Judah’s refusal to love the Lord by obeying His commandments that led to the Lord sending their enemies upon them.

6:27-30 – The Lord used the message of Jeremiah to the people of Judah to test the quality of their heart by their response to the Word: “I have made you an assayer and a tester among My people, That you may know and assay their way.” An assayer is a “tester” of metals. The result of the test was: **[28] All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a talebearer. They are bronze and iron, They, all of them, are corrupt.** Notice, the Lord doesn’t just say they are “rebellious” but they are “stubbornly rebellious”. It’s one thing to be rebellious, all of us have been rebellious at one time or another, but to be “stubbornly rebellious” is to continue in your rebellion despite the consequences you suffer. **[29] The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on, But the wicked are not separated. [30] They call them rejected silver, Because the Lord has rejected them.** When the Lord brings the heat of painful consequences for sin and you still continue in it. There is nothing of value in your life by which God can be glorified but to reject you.

Quote: Thomas Jefferson – “Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever.” [Notes on the State of Virginia]

[Chapters 7-10] These chapters, often known as Jeremiah’s temple address... The people believed that God’s punishment would never extend to Jerusalem or to them [5:12-13] because of the presence of God’s temple and because of their outward display of religion [6:20]. [Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 1139]

Quote: Henry David Thoreau – “The more we know about the ancients, the more we find that they were like the moderns.”

7:1-4 – The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, **[2] “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the Lord!’ [3] Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. [4] “Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’**

According to Deut. 16:16, the people of Israel were to appear before the Lord at the tabernacle/temple three times a year to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread [Passover], the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] and the Feast of Booths [Tabernacles]. The Lord's message to Jeremiah coincided with one of these feasts as Jeremiah took his stand at the entrance of the Lord's house as the people of Judah were arriving for worship.

The message is a call to repentance under the threat of judgment – **[3] Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel** – The Lord of judgment and the God who owns Israel - “Amend your ways and your deeds” – “**Amend**” [Heb. yaw-tab – a verb meaning to be good, to be well, to be pleasing. In the causative stem, it means to do good.] This command is a call to become good in one's person rather than to simply do good in one's actions. The Lord is calling for heart change. And then His blessings would remain on them – “**and I will let you dwell in this place.**”

The first step in heart change always begins with the need to stop believing lies – **[4] “Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of the Lord’** – It is deceitful words that leads us into temptation and keeps us in bondage to our sins. **Quote:** Ed Welch – “All practice sins teaches us to believe lies”.

Judah believed the lie that by repeating the phrase “**the temple of the Lord**” three times would somehow protect them from the consequences of their sins. Judah moved from a nation called to submit to God's covenant to believing in superstitions. They believed they could live anyway they wanted and the temple, which represented God's presence, would absolve them of their sins.

It is the same superstition people have in a church building today. When people believe the building represents God's presence instead of the believing community indwelt by God. We hear statements like “going to church” while in fact, we don't go to church, we are the church. We go to worship. There are some well-known pastors who believe they cannot worship unless they are in a building and you find them with the hashtag – Church is essential. But the church is not a physical building it is a body of believers.

What we will see in these next verses is that the Lord is not impress by His people reciting their theology, if they have no intentions of applying their theology:

7:5-7 – “For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, [6] if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, [7] then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

“Anthropology is the study of humankind... Anthropology answers the ultimate question like, who am I? Why am I here? Why am I able to reason and feel? What is my purpose in life? Where am I headed?”

Anthropology also entails asking questions as it relates to mankind as a whole: How should we relate to another? What is our responsibility before God in our interactions with one another? What is our purpose as the human race? How should we view our unique differences in gender, personality, physical features and roles within society?

From a biblical perspective we see how anthropology addresses the fallen world around us: 1] The role of male headship and female submission in the family and in formal worship settings was meant to undermine women's equality as image-bearers of God [1 Cor. 11:3-12; 1Tim. 2:9-15]; 2] cultural norms of marriage relationships [multiplying of wives and concubines] were clear violations of Scripture [Deut. 17:17; Mark 10:6-8]; 3] social class of rich and poor, though design by God, was never meant to be used as an ontological measure of hierarchy [the rich are inherently superior to the poor by nature] [Prov. 14:31; 22:2] . Nor were those placed in positions of power [government] to function on behalf of God were to view themselves as God [superior to those under their charge] [Psalm 82]; 4] levels of intellectual giftedness was not meant to be used as an ontological measure of importance above other human beings who are not as intelligent. 5] Physical differences were not given by God as a measure of superiority within the human race. Thus the survival of the fittest, Nazism, racism, abortion, euthanasia and genocide are abominations in the sight of God. In fact, God despises those who boast in themselves [Eccl. 9:11; Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:26-29].

Scrip. Ref: Jer. 9:23-24 – Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; [24] but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the Lord.

In other words, distinctions in gender, marital roles, social class, people groups or levels of intellect were never meant to be used as a standard of ontological superiority within the human race. God designed these differences in order to hold mankind accountable as His vice-regents in displaying His character as a holy, compassionate, gracious, loving God who shows no partiality [Lev. 19:9-18; Deut. 10:17-21; Psa. 68:5-6]. In fact, on a number of occasions God reversed the social order in order to humble the proud and exalt the humble [1 Sam. 1-2:10; Psalm 113:5-9]. Therefore the study of anthropology must take into account how God holds man responsible for how he treats other image bearers of God [Job 31:1-23; Prov. 31:10-20]. For man was created to follow His example.

Therefore what the Lord calls for Judah to do in this section is not just isolated to Judah. This is a timeless commandment to all believers. For the Bible commands us to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves, especially the weak and vulnerable in society. [Jas. 1:26-27; 2:1-13; 5:1-6].

7:5-6 – The Lord commands the right/just treatment of one’s neighbor – justice – **“if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor”** – **“justice”** [Heb. mishpat (pronounced mish-pawt – a masculine noun meaning a judgment, a legal decision, a claim, proper, rectitude. Doing what is right and just in the Lord’s eyes was far more important than presenting sacrifices to Him].

The term **“social justice”** is used frequently today. Many argue in support of using this term to convey what the Lord says here and others are against it. I don’t have a particular position on this, I think we miss the spirit of the text when we get caught up in terms and gloss over what the Lord is saying to Judah and us. Let’s not get too caught up in terms that we neglect to do what God commands. I honestly think if the church was committed to **“justice”** as described here in this section, this would not be a controversial subject. Sometimes controversies are for the sake of the truth, other times for the sake of deflecting from the truth.

There were 4 neighbors Judah was called to treat right – 1] **“if you do not oppress the alien”** [Lev. 19:33-34]; 2] **the orphan** [Ps. 10:14]; 3] **the widow** [Ex. 22:21-24; Ps. 68:5; 146:9]; 4] **and do not shed innocent blood – the poor** [Jer. 2:34] and **children** [Jer. 19:4]; Innocent doesn’t mean sinless, it means not in violation of the civil aspects of the law. The poor and the children were being killed not for a crime committed under the Law but because the Judah’s pride of superiority and idolatry – **“nor walk after other gods to your own ruin”** – mistreatment of neighbor stems from the sin of idolatry.

Scrip. Ref: Deut. 10:18-19 – “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. [19] “So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Scrip. Ref: James 1:27 – This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

7:8-11 – “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. [9] “Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal, and walk after other gods that you have not known, [10] then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’ – that you may do all these abominations? [11] “Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” declares the Lord.

Judah has believed the lie that they can disobey God’s Law and enter into the temple in order to escape the consequences. To the point, that the temple is no longer regarded as the house of the Lord but **“a den of robbers”**. A den of robbers is a place where robbers flee after they commit a crime.

Quote: Warren Wiersbe, “Any theology that minimizes God’s holiness and tolerates people’s deliberate sinfulness is a false theology”.

7:12-15 – “But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. [13] “And now, because you have done all these things,” declares the Lord, “and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, [14] therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. [15] “And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim.

Quote: George Santayana – “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Those who do not remember their past are condemned to repeat their mistakes.

Judah felt secured in their sins because of their confidence that the temple of the Lord would deliver them from the consequences of their sins. But the Lord wanted to remind them that such a notion was baseless in light of their history. According to Joshua 18:1, when the nation of Israel settled in the land of Canaan they set up the tent of meeting at Shiloh, thirty miles north of Jerusalem. It remained there throughout the times of the Judges until the time of Samuel. In 1 Samuel 4, Israel was defeated before the Philistines and when they returned to the camp they asked a question, “Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines?” [1 Sam. 4:3] Instead of humbling themselves before the Lord in confession of their sin. They arrogantly assumed they could force God’s hand by taking the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh. But to their surprise the Lord allowed the Philistines to defeat them and take the Ark of the Covenant back to their land.

When the news reached Eli, the high priest, he fell off his seat backwards and broke his neck. His daughter-in-law, who was pregnant, went into labor as a result of the news. And as she was dying she named her son, Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel.” [1 Sam 4:21].

The Lord wants Judah to remember that the reason why He abandoned Shiloh was because Israel was living in the sin of idolatry [1 Sam. 7:3]. And if He abandoned Shiloh because of their sin, He will also abandon the temple in Jerusalem because of Judah’s sin.

The lesson we learn from history is: the Lord will never respond to our disobedience with blessings, always with discipline [1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 12:7-11]: **Scrip. Ref:** 1 Cor. 10:12 – Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

7:16 – “As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you.

Jeremiah is commanded by the Lord not to pray for Judah to be delivered from the coming judgment. Can you imagine sinning against the Lord to a point that He won’t hear any pleas for mercy? This is the first of three times the Lord instructs Jeremiah not to pray for Judah:

Scrip. Ref: Jer. 11:14 - “Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster.

Jer. 14:11 – So the Lord said to me, “Do not pray for the welfare of this people.”

And keep in mind, the issue was not that Jeremiah wasn't respected by the Lord as a great intercessor. It did not matter if Judah had the greatest prayer warriors in its history God was not going to spare them from judgment: **Scrip. Ref:** Jer. 15:1 – Then the Lord said to me, “Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go!

Always remember saints, that even forgiven sins can carry painful consequences in this life.

7:17-18 – “Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? [18] “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out libations to other gods in order to spite Me.

The sins of a nation always begins in the homes of its people. The children, fathers and women were working in concert to worship “**the queen of heaven**” [probably Ishtar (Venus), the Babylonian goddess of love and fertility.] The epithet “of heaven” alludes to her elevated character. Special cakes were baked to this goddess, which were symbolic representations of the goddess. Her worship belonged chiefly to the women (Jer. 44:17) [New Unger’s Bible Dictionary]

“**they pour out libations to other gods in order to spite Me**” – “**libations**” [Heb. neh-sek – a masculine singular noun meaning drinking offering] ; “**spite**” [Heb. kaw-as – to trouble; to grieve, to provoke to anger]; The nation of Judah knew that such false idolatry was a violation of God’s first and second commandments: “You shall have no other gods before Me” [Ex. 20:3] and “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, [Ex. 20:5]. But little did they know that though their sins provoked God to anger, their sins did not harm to His character. It only provided the opportunity to put His glory on display.

7:19-20 – “Do they spite Me?” declares the Lord. “Is it not themselves they spite, to their own shame?” [20] Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it will burn and not be quenched.”

Sin never hurts God; it never diminishes His glory or make Him like bad. God will always show Himself glorious, even when evil is being committed against His name. For in the end, God will get the glory and the sinner will suffer the shame. Theologians refer to this as the impassibility of God – that God does not experience pain or pleasure from the actions of another being. In other words, God doesn’t have mood swings like human beings. We can’t make God angry or control His emotions by our actions. He chooses to respond to our sins in various ways for His glory – sometimes with patience, other times by showing mercy or by demonstrating His wrath. If the intentions of Judah was to cause God to act out of character, they failed. It only provided an opportunity by God’s sovereign design to showcase His holiness in judging them.

7:21-26 – The Lord reminds Judah that He always required obedience from them never sacrifices.

7:27-34 – [31] **they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.**

“Valley of Ben Hinnom [2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6; Jer. 19:5]... “Topheth” possibly came from a word for “cook-stove” or “oven”... In Greek the Valley of Hinnom [Heb. ge-hinnom] became known as Gehenna [geenna] to picture the fiery corruption of hell [Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 2 Pet. 2:4] [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Chapter 8 – **Key verse:** Jer. 8:9 – Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord, And what kind of wisdom do they have?

[8:1-7] **Theme:** Judah says, “We have fallen and we will not get back up”

8:1-2 – “**At that time,**” declares the Lord, “**they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves. [2] “And they will spread them out to the sun, the moon, and to all the host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they had served, and which they have gone after and which they have sought, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered or buried; they will be as dung on the face of the ground.**

What makes the judgment of God so frightening is – He is all powerful so that none can escape Him. And He is all knowing so that He forgets not one sin committed against Him. In these verses the judgment of God upon Judah is traced back to the rulers and religious leaders who led the nation into idolatry in previous generations. And even though, they have since died, the Lord will use the Babylonians to dig up their bodies and expose them on the ground before “**the sun, moon, and all the host of heaven**” whom they worshiped. They would not remain in proper burial. This was to teach the people of Judah that those who turn from the Lord to the sin of idolatry will not receive a blessing from the Lord in life or in death – “**they will be as dung on the face of the ground**”

8:4-7 – “**And you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Do men fall and not get up again? Does one turn away and not repent [lit. turn back]?’**

Common sense living should translate into common sense spiritual living – The Lord asks a question – “**Do men fall and not get up again?** The answer is no. When we fall down accidentally, we always seek to get back up on our feet don’t we not? When we turn down the wrong street, don’t we seek to turn back around? Yes. Spiritually speaking: [5] “**Why then has this people, Jerusalem, Turned away in continual apostasy?** “apostasy” [mesh-oo-baw – backsliding, turning away] **They hold fast to deceit, They refuse to return.** Judah has fallen spiritually but refused to get back up. They have turned away from the Lord and are going in the wrong direction, and they keep going.

[8:6] “I have listened and heard, They have spoken what is not right; No man repented of his wickedness, Saying, ‘What have I done?’ Everyone turned to his course, Like a horse charging to the battle.

The Lord testifies against Judah what He has heard and seen for Himself – they know they are doing wrong but refuse to repent. Judah was much like people today, who charge into sin like a horse charging into battle not knowing how deadly of a situation they are about to get into.

[8:7] “Even the stork in the sky Knows her seasons; And the turtledove and the swift and the thrush Observe the time of their migration. But My people do not know.

Birds have more sense than Judah because they are able to discern the seasons and respond accordingly. But Judah cannot discern their season of judgment in order to turn back to the Lord.

[8:8-12] – “How can you say, ‘We are wise, And the law of the Lord is with us’? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes Has made it into a lie. [9] “They wise men are put to shame, They are dismayed and caught; Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord, And what kind of wisdom do they have?

Quote: R.C. Sproul – “It’s not how much you know the Bible, it’s how much you live the Bible.”

Instead of Judah trusting in the Lord for salvation, they trusted in the symbols of the covenant – circumcision, the temple and the Law. The symbols became dead rituals because Judah had no relationship with the Lord. They were believing “**the lying pen of the scribes**”.

Quote: Warren Wiersbe - What happens to the Lord’s people largely depends on the leaders they follow.

[8:13-17] – “I will surely snatch them away,” declares the Lord; “There will be no grapes on the vine, And no figs on the fig tree, And the leaf shall wither; And what I have given them shall pass away.””

All blessings that Judah once enjoyed in the land will be removed from them. This is exactly what the Lord predicted the Babylonians would do through the prophesy of Habakkuk: 3:17-18 – **Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, [18] Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.**

Habakkuk believed that the Lord would be with His people in exile and bring them back to the land. But despite the promise of future restoration, Judah refused to repent, but decided to trust in themselves for deliverance – **[14] Why are we sitting still? Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the fortified cities, And let us perish there, Because the Lord our God has doomed us And given us poisoned water to drink, For we have sinned against the Lord.** But they would not escape – **[17] “For behold, I am sending serpents against you, Adders, for which there is**

no charm, And they will bite you,” declares the Lord. Judah will not be able to charm their way out of judgment.

[8:18-22] – Jeremiah, the weeping prophet – **My sorrow is beyond healing, My heart is faint within me! [19] Behold, listen! I cry of the daughter of my people from a distant land: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not within her?” “Why have they provoked Me with their graven images, with foreign idols?”** When adversity comes our way, when times get really dark, we often find ourselves asking, “Where is the Lord?” Jeremiah’s cry of lament is at the thought of God’s abandonment of His people, but in reality the Lord had not left Judah, Judah left the Lord.

Quote: Steve Smith – “God had a favorite people and they had a favorite sin, idolatry. God was exclusive, they were inclusive. He loved them, they loved to displace Him. What God wanted was their affection [Jer. 9:23-24], but they loved other things”.

[8:20] “Harvest is past, summer is ended, And we are not saved” – The opportunity for Judah to repent and receive the blessings of the Lord has ended. Now there is nothing but judgment.

[8:21-22] Jeremiah weeps – **“For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. [22] Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?”**

Gilead, east of the Jordan River, was famous for its healing balm [Gen. 37:25] [Bible Knowledge Commentary]. Jeremiah would find no healing balm for Judah’s sin on earth. It must come down from heaven: **Scrip. Ref:** Matt. 9:12 – But when He heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. [13] “But go and learn what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Isa. 53:5 – But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. Jesus is the Balm in Gilead.

Chapter 9 – Key Verse: 9:23-24 – Thus says the Lord, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; [24] but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercise lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

[9:1-6] Theme – Lies Prevail in the Land

9:1-2 – Jeremiah acknowledges that he doesn’t have enough tears to convey the deep pain and agony over Judah’s judgment – **Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!** The pain of seeing how low God’s people had sunk in sin was too much for Jeremiah that he wished that he **“had in the desert A wayfarers’ lodging place; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For all of them are adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men”** – **“treacherous”** [Heb. baw-gad – to be traitorous, to act unfaithfully, to betray]; Judah violated

her spiritual wedding vows by having affections for false gods [Jer. 2:1-2]. And since all non-existence objects of worship are demonically influenced [1 Cor. 10:14-20], the people of God came under the influence of the father of lies, the devil himself. Worship and behavior are inextricably linked:

9:3-6 – “And they bend their tongue like their bow; Lies and not truth prevail in the land; For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me,” declares the Lord. [4] “Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; Because every brother deals craftily [lit. like Jacob], And every neighbor goes about as a slanderer. [5] “And everyone deceives his neighbor, And does not speak the truth, They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves committing iniquity. [6] “Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me,” declares the Lord.

Every sin we commit is always preceded by belief in lies [Heb. 3:12-13]. Spiritual adultery, spiritual unfaithfulness, slander against one’s neighbor and the committing of iniquity are done not because Judah was ignorant but because Judah believed lies instead of the truth.

There are a number of reasons why deceit and lies can catch us unawares: 1] Lies can contain some truth. But remember some truth is still a whole lie [Matt. 4:6-7]; 2] Lies appeal to our egos, our desire to think highly of ourselves. The devil loves to flatter us with lies. [Gen. 3:4-5]; 3] Lies tempt our own lusts. Lies don’t just come from outside of us, but also resides inside of us [Jer. 17:9; Jas. 1:13-16]; 4] Lies always hide the painful consequences of sin [Jer. 5:12]

9:7-9 – Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, I will refine them and assay them; For what else can I do, because of the daughter of My people? [8] “Their tongue is a deadly arrow; It speaks deceit; With his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor, But inwardly he sets an ambush for him. [9] “Shall I not punish them for these things?” declares the Lord. “On a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself?”

The Lord will refine Judah with judgment because they love to lie.

9:10-22 – The land should wail and the professional mourners should teach the nation to wail because of the sword the Lord will bring upon the nation – [21] For death has come up through our windows; It has entered our palaces To cut off the children from the streets, The young men from the town squares. [22] Speak, “Thus declares the Lord, ‘The corpses of men will fall like dung on the open field, And like the sheaf after the reaper, But no one will gather them.’”

9:23-24 – Thus says the Lord, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; - “boast” [haw-lal – to commend; to shine; to glory; to celebrate] When God brings judgment against a nation, it is foolish for that nation to boast about its wealth, educational system and military power. No matter how affluent of a nation might be, if the Lord stands against it, its boasts are meaningless.

[24] but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercise lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD. – “**understands**” [Heb. saw-kal – a verb meaning to act with insight; to be prudent; to consider; to ponder]; “**and knows Me**” – if there should be any cause to boast, celebrate or glory in anything. It should be that God by His grace has granted sinners the privilege of knowing Him in salvation and understanding Him in illumination. Boast that you are in an eternal relationship with the true and living God. To understand and know the Lord entails intellectual understanding of who He is as revealed in His word and practical living in accordance with His commandments; “**that I am the LORD**” – “LORD” [Yahweh – the everlasting, faithful, covenant-keeping God who redeems His people for Himself – Exodus 6:2-8]; “**who exercises**” [aw-saw – to accomplish] “**lovingkindness**” [Heb. hesed – love, grace, mercy and kindness; loyal love; covenant love], “**justice**” [Heb. mish-pawt – judgment; a legal case; rectitude] “**and righteousness**” [Heb. tsed-aw-kaw – rightness; The noun describes justice, right actions] “**delight**” [Heb. khaw-fates – a verb meaning to have pleasure in, to be pleased with]; It is a blessing to be in a relationship with a God who loves to dispense grace and mercy and love upon His own and who will accomplish justice and righteousness against every evil that has ever happened in this world. And we have the assurance that He will continue to shower us in His grace and love, as well as bring about justice and righteousness because He delights or finds pleasure in these things. Boast that your God delights in loving you despite your sinfulness.

9:25-26 – The Lord will bring judgment against all nations who don’t worship Him – **[26] Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, and Moab, and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.”**

Chapter 10 – Key Verse – 10:23 – I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

10:1-10 – Theme: The Folly of Worshiping Idols

10:1-5 – **[1] Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. [2] Thus says the LORD, “Do not learn the way of the nations, And do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens Although the nations are terrified by them; [3] For the customs of the peoples are delusion; Because it is wood cut from the forest, The work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool.**

Verses 1-16 are parenthetical, as Jeremiah briefly compares the emptiness of idols to the greatness of the Lord, before he continues his temple address of judgment against the nation. This address is given to both Israel [Northern Kingdom] and Judah [Southern Kingdom] – “**Do not learn the ways of the nations**” – “**learn**” [Heb. law-mad – a verb meaning to study, to be taught]; Don’t learn the superstitions of the nations. Don’t allow yourself to be intrigued by their folklore, myths and false legends – “**And do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens Although the nations are terrified by them**” – Israel was not to be drawn into the lies of astrology as the pagan nations falsely interrupted the occurrences in the heavens as demonstrations of their gods’ power over nature [eclipses, comets, shooting stars, thunderstorms

etc...] Their false gods were **“wood cut from the forest, The work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. [4] They decorate it with silver and with gold; They fasten it with nails and with hammers So that it will not totter. [5] “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, For they can do no harm, Nor can they do any good.”**

These idols were crafted by man. Therefore, they have no life. They must be carried. Therefore, they have no power. They cannot speak. Therefore, they are without intelligence. They are just as harmless as “a scarecrow” in a field, a mannequin in a department store. Statues of the Virgin Mary or Buddha may be regarded by these religions as sacred but in reality they are empty symbols. We should never bow down to them nor pray to them because they are lifeless statues made by sinful man. Only the Lord is worthy of our worship and devotion:

10:6-7 – There is none like Thee, O LORD; Thou art great, and great is Thy name in might. [7] Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Thy due! For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like Thee.

Human imagination could not come close to the greatness of the Lord. He is unique and infinitely superior to all of the false gods of human imagination. And because He is the Creator of the human race, every nation is under His rule and will have to give an account for not honoring Him in worship [Acts 17:22-31; Rom. 1:18-3:9]

10:8-10 – For worshipping the creature rather than the Creator all of the nations have become “stupid and foolish. In their discipline of delusion their idol is wood!” – “delusion” [Heb. hebel, breath; vanity; worthless – Eccl. 1:2]; All of their religious rituals and sacrifices are empty because the object of their worship doesn’t exist.

10:11 – Thus you shall say to them, “The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

Jeremiah 10:11 is the only verse in this book written in Aramaic instead of Hebrew. Aramaic was the trade language of the day. Probably this verse is in Aramaic because it was directed to the pagan idolaters surrounding Israel. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

10:12-13 – The Lord alone “made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. [13] When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain, And brings out the wind from His storehouses.

Natural revelation is meant to testify to the attributes of God’s power and wisdom in creation so that man might glorify Him and give thanks [Rom. 1:20-21]. As believers God’s present involvement in the weather each and every day is meant for us to reverence Him. We are not witnessing Mother Nature, she does not exist, we are witnessing our great God demonstrating His sovereign rule over all things in the world. **“Do not learn the way of the nations”** [v. 1]

If you want a visible demonstration that God is a caring God – **“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”** [Matt. 6:26] It is God’s constant care over the things that are less important than you that is meant to encourage you not to worry about your needs being met. Creation is a visible demonstration of the glory of God.

10:14-15 – The sin of idolatry blinds sinful man to the glory of God in creation and makes them **“stupid, devoid of knowledge”**.

10:16 – **The portion of Jacob is not like these; For the Maker of all is He, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The LORD of hosts is His name.**

“The portion of Jacob” – **“portion”** [heleq, “share”] usually referred to something allotted to an individual; Psa. 16:5; 73:26; 119:57; Lam. 3:24]. The Lord sovereignly allotted Himself to Israel. In other words, the Lord belongs to Israel and Israel belongs to the Lord. In the New Covenant, Jesus was elected by the Father to be our portion and we were elected by the Father to be Jesus’ portion: **Scrip. Ref:** 1 Pet. 1:20 – For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you; John 17:9 – “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine;

10:17-22 – **My tent is destroyed, And all my ropes are broken; My sons have gone from me and are no more. There is no one to stretch out my tent again Or to set up my curtains** – Jeremiah sympathizes with his nation as the “tent,” which represents the temple will be destroyed and the sons of Judah will be spiritually displaced – **For the shepherds have become stupid And have not sought the Lord; Therefore they have not prospered, And all their flock is scattered** [21]

10:23-25 – **I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps** – Jeremiah acknowledges to the Lord in prayer that Judah’s future doesn’t not lay in their own decisions and plans but in the Lord alone. In other words, if Judah doesn’t agree with the Lord’s plans to send them into captivity there is nothing they can do about it. Because **“a man’s way is not in himself”** – no human being has freedom to decide his own destiny. This truth is contrary to the statement William Ernest Henley, in his poem “Invictus” wrote – **“I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul”**.

Though the Lord grants human beings the ability to make decisions, yet we can never act upon them unless the Lord grants permission: **Scrip. Ref:** Prov. 16:1&9 – The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord; [9] The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps; Prov. 19:21 – Many are the plans in a man’s heart, But the counsel of the Lord, it will stand – **“Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps”** – Judah refuses to heed Jeremiah’s prophecy, but it doesn’t matter because they have no authority to direct their own future. So Jeremiah pleads with the Lord in prayer – **“Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; Not with Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing. [25] Pour out Thy wrath on the nations that do not know Thee, And on the families that do not call Thy name; For**

they have devoured Jacob; They have devoured him and consumed him, And have laid waste his habitation.

Chapter 11 – **Key Verse:** 11:14 – “Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster.

Chapter 11 – **Theme:** Judah Violated the Mosaic Covenant

11:1-13 – The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, [2] “Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; [3] and say to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Cursed is the man who does not heed the words of this covenant [4] which I commanded your forefathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Listen to My voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you shall be My people, and I will be your God,’

When the Jews referred to the OT as a whole, they usually call it, “The Law and the Prophets” [Matt. 7:12; 22:40; Lk. 16:16]. This is meant to describe the two basic divisions of the OT: “The Law” gave comprehensive instructions for Israel’s spiritual, ceremonial and civic life. The Law [5 books of Moses] is the foundation of the OT. “The Prophets” [Joshua – Malachi] were meant to give commentary into Israel’s history and call them back to covenant faithfulness. In other words, the purpose for “the Prophets” was to help Israel view their circumstances in light of the Law. Chapter 11 is an example of the ministry of an OT prophet, calling Judah to realize their present state of affairs was not because their false gods over-promised and under-delivered, but because their failure to keep the Law caused them to be in the situation they were in.

MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

Abrahamic Covenant: An eternal, unconditional covenant made between God and Abraham in which God committed Himself to bless Abraham and to give his descendants a land, a posterity (offspring, descendants, children), and spiritual blessings. (Gen. 12, 15, 17)

Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant: A temporal, conditional covenant made between God and Israel alone after their exodus out of Egypt that was composed of many and various types of laws. If Israel would obey God’s laws they would enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Ex. 20 – 24)

Davidic Covenant: An unconditional covenant made with King David that is an expansion of the “seed promises” given in the Abrahamic covenant in which God promised David a dynasty, throne, kingdom, and rule that will last forever. (2 Sam. 7)

New Covenant: An unconditional covenant, which is based on the death of Christ, in which God promises to bring salvation and the forgiveness of sins. This covenant will ultimately be fulfilled with Israel in the millennial kingdom. (Jer. 31:31-34)

Judah violated the Mosaic covenant, which was a bi-lateral covenant: **Scrip. Ref:** Ex. 19:5 – “Now then, **if you** will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **then you** shall be My own

possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.” As long as Israel kept the Law out of a love for the Lord they would experience the land blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. But once they violated this covenant in unrepentance, they would forfeit God’s blessings upon them: **Scrip. Ref:** Deut. 28:36-37 – “The Lord will bring you and your king, whom you shall set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone. [37] And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the Lord will drive you.

This promise has already been enforced upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel in Assyrian captivity. Now it’s about to be fulfilled against the Southern Kingdom of Judah: **Jer. 11:11-12** – Therefore thus says the Lord, “**Behold, I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them. [12] “Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they surely will not save them in the time of their disaster.**

11:14-17 – Since Judah had violated the covenant there was no need to pray for escape from the consequences: “**Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster.**” [14]

11:18-23 – Jeremiah obeyed the Lord’s command to relay this truth to Judah, and now the people of his hometown want him dead: **Scrip. Ref:** Luke 4:24 – And He [Jesus] said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town.

A true prophet is not called by God to tell the people what they want to hear, even to the people of his hometown. Jeremiah anticipated that the people would be upset with him, but not that they would want to kill him: **11:18-19**– **Moreover, the Lord made it known to me and I knew it; Then Thou didst show me their deeds. [19] But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; And I did not know that they had devised plots against me, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruits, And let us cut him off from the land of the living, That his name be remembered no more.”** The people thought if they cut down the tree [Jeremiah], they would destroy its fruit [his prophesying].

11:20 – Jeremiah’s imprecatory prayer upon his own people: **But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, Who tries the feelings and the heart, Let me see Thy vengeance on them, For to Thee have I committed my cause.**

When you know you have done God’s will and people attack you for it, ask the Lord for vindication.

11:21-23 – The “**men of Anathoth**” threatened Jeremiah by saying: “**Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, that you might not die at our hand.**” What should you do when someone threatens your life? Remember God’s promises to you: **Scrip. Ref:** Jer. 1:18-19 – “Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, and its priests and to the people of the land. [19] “And they will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you,” declares the Lord. [22] **therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, I am about to**

punish them! The young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters will die by famine; [23] and a remnant will not be left to them, for I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth – the year of their punishment.” **Scrip. Ref:** Luke 10:16 – “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me”. When you do God’s will those who fight against you are actually fighting against God. That’s why the Lord refers to Himself as “the Lord of hosts” [22]: **Scrip. Ref:** 2 Chronicles 20:15 – thus says the Lord to you, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s’. Always remember that physical attacks against you are actually spiritual attacks from the devil: **Scrip. Ref:** Eph. 6:12 – For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Chapter 12 – **Key Verse:** 12:5 – “If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, Then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, How will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?”

Chapter 12:1-13 – **Theme:** Jeremiah Prays and the Lord Answers