

QT Questions—for Jeremiah

(Here's a short introduction to the book of Jeremiah from my Study Bibles.)

- The book of Jeremiah is about God's goodness and His people's refusal to follow His ways (Jer 6:16). It also portrays Jeremiah's persistence in following his prophetic call despite indifference and opposition (That's so hard). Jeremiah warned Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, of God's judgment—which culminated in 586 BC with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. But God ultimately provides hope, promising to renew His covenant with His people (31:31-34). Jeremiah proclaims that God had long ago established a contractual agreement with them and will restore that relationship.
- Though Jeremiah had a clear calling, he also experienced the sadness and loneliness of speaking to an unrepentant people. He told God's people that their approaching exile was a consequence of their disregard for God's law. They would not be protected by their political alliances or their cultural markers, but only by a return to God.
- Although Jeremiah prophesied impending disaster, he also prophesied hope. The disaster was not averted, but God would restore His people and form a new covenant with them—His law would be written on their hearts. This covenant is linked to the new covenant in Christ in the NT (Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17). Jeremiah continued to share the word of God in a hopeless situation, knowing that God would remain faithful. Jeremiah offers us a model of what it means to be faithful despite opposition and disaster (incredible).

Jer 1 (10/18/24)

(*Please answer the questions as best as you can.)

1. In vv. 1-3, under whose reigns did Jeremiah ministered and what happened under the last king; in vv. 4-10, what was the discussion between God and Jeremiah; in vv. 11-19, what was God's message that Jeremiah was to share; what do you learn?
 - In vv. 17-19, God wants Jeremiah to get ready, to stand up and fight. But his fight will not be against the enemy. Rather, it will be God's people who will fight him, who will terrify him. Jeremiah will be the last prophet God's people will hear before they are sent into exile to Babylon. So, for all the prophecies, for all the fighting, the people will not repent, as they hear God's word. But, despite the utter failure of his ministry, Jeremiah is called to stand before God's people and preach God's word, though they will fall on deaf ears. We remember here what God said to the church in Corinth, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1Cor 4:2). God desires for His people to be faithful even when there's no sign of success. For many of us, it's a lot easier to be faithful when we are successful. So, God makes it clear to us, He wants us to be faithful even when we don't see success. Moreover, God wants us to be faithful even when we encounter troubles and opposition from God's people. The key in walking faithfully through every valley, through every danger, through every fight will be to learn, where our eyes will be fixed on. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you (I) will not grow weary and lose heart" (Heb 12:1-3). If you are able, please chew on this Scripture a while.

Jer 2 (10/19/24)

1. In v. 5, what happens to the people who follow idols and have you seen some of this in your life; God charges His people of two sins, what are they and have you seen these in your life (v. 13); will you spend some time to repent; what do you learn?
- In v. 19, God speaks to His people, “Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of Me,” declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.” God wants us to consider how we are living; what we are doing. He wants us to think it through, because too often, we just live, without thinking what we are doing. One of the world’s way to get us to NOT consider God, is to make us too busy. Whatever our situation may be, our God wants us to consider. And when we consider, we will realize how evil some of our actions have truly been. Please, let’s not simply do you and be your best version of you. We are not the standard we are striving after. It is God’s image, as we behold Jesus, whom we pray for and desire to grow more into. And when we see we are not growing more into Jesus’ likeness, then we are forsaking God’s way for us. And whenever we forsake His way, then bitterness will be the fruit we will eat. Said it differently, when we realize we are tasting bitterness, may be pause and consider if we have not forsaken our God and His ways. The last phrase got to me, “have no awe of Me.” God does not want us to simply acknowledge Him, give our nod to Him, as if He was sitting in a corner of our hearts. God’s place in our lives is meant to create an awe of Him. He wants us to be overjoyed with Him. He wants us to be excited with Him. He wants us to run to Him and hug Him with love and bow to Him in adoration and dance for Him with pure joy and delight that He is our God, that He is near, that He delights to sit with us, to walk with us, to listen to us, to be present and real in everything we do, every moment of our lives. Let’s earnestly pray and hunger to be in AWE of our God!

Jer 3 (10/21/24)

1. In vv. 1-5, what were the people doing and how did God respond to them; what were Israel and Judah learning from each other and what did God want them to do and why; what do you learn?
- In v. 3, God explains what was happening to Israel, “Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to blush with shame.” The difficulties they were encountering was because God withheld His good things from His people. Of course, it was not because He did not desired to give good things to His children. On the contrary, He wants to give good things to His people, but as He gives, He wants His children to know where they came from, to whom to give thanks, and to know how to use it, which is to glorify our God, and not to indulge in sinfulness or rob God’s glory by thanking the idols. Misplaced appreciation is a terrible sin of idolatry. I am afraid, there’s a lot of that in our world, probably also in our lives. At the end of v. 3, God rebukes His people for having no shame. Our world today hates to acknowledge shame. Being shameless is often seen as a good thing. But, let’s learn today, God desires for us to be ashamed, when dealing with sin, both mine and others. With sin, there’s shame, because we are doing what’s not right before the holy God. In fact, to not feel shame, it’s shameful before God. So, whenever we feel shame, it’s not something we want to avoid or dismiss or even hate. We should learn to stop and see why God is permitting shame into our hearts, and we would most likely find our sin has taken over somewhere. Let’s humbly and genuinely acknowledge and confess our sin before our God, and we will see how God will take away our shame and turn it into genuine thankfulness, into joy, and more love for our God for His goodness.

Jer 4 (10/22/24)

1. In v. 1, how does God say Israel must return and which idol leads you astray (will you explain the steps of repentance? — own; confess; turn); will you explain v. 22, as if to someone who does not understand it; what more do you learn in this chapter?
- In v. 4, God is calling His people to circumcise their hearts because their actions are evil. Instead of calling on God's people to stop doing their evil, God says the place to change is their hearts. Just as when the tree is bearing bad fruits, the place to look to change is not in the branches but in the root, so in our lives, when we keep on running into evil, the place to change is not in our actions per say, though eventually we must intentionally stop that evil act, but the true permanent change must be in our hearts. In other words, when our hearts change, our actions will change. But simply changing or stopping one evil will not stop the many other evils we will commit. Somehow, we may be able to change a few certain evil acts, but the heart to want to do evil will not change, unless our hearts truly change. So, God wants us to circumcise our hearts, to change our hearts. However, on our own, none of us can change our hearts. It's the heart we need to reach, but none of us are able to do that on our own. So, left on our own, we are hopelessly lost. But, for God's people, though we cannot, our God can. He can touch our hearts. He can change our hearts. And what God desires from His people before He changes our hearts, is to humbly repent for the evil we keep running into. Let's humbly repent for our sins. And let's desperately cry out to our God to change our hearts.

Jer 5 (10/23/24)

1. In vv. 1-6, what did God see in His people; in vv. 30-31, what does God call a horrible and shocking thing; how do these apply in your life?
- In v. 22, God asks us, "Should you not fear Me? Should you not tremble in My presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it." Indeed, when we go to the shore of the ocean, we see the waves crashing, but they remain in their place, and do not cross over the sand. The limit God has placed on the waves and the sea remain because God has placed them there. God wants us to see this and realize God's greatness and experience His presence and fear and tremble at His power and goodness. Our feelings seeing the limit of the waves should cause the fear of God in us. Yet, most of us do not feel that when we go to the beach. We are there to enjoy the waves, and lost in our enjoyment, we rarely, if ever, feel the fear of the Lord that He expects. Why? Why do we feel something different than what God would have us feel? Could it be that we are fixated on other things, like excitement, that we push aside God's way in order to do my things, my way? To be honest, I have not felt fearful and trembled standing before the ocean and the waves, unless it is one of those incredibly huge waves that we see on TV. Oh Father, I pray that my heart would humbly learn more of Your ways, and see the world, the waves, and my life, the way You see, so I can live my life seeing everything the way You see. I pray that I would not make my emotion or my experience my final authority. I pray that I would humbly learn to submit lovingly and thankfully before You, even when I don't always have the experience You may desire from me. I pray that Your word will be my authority and my standard I will always delightfully live under. Lord, I pray that I will sincere desire to obey You. I pray in Jesus' name.

Jer 6 (10/24/24)

1. In vv. 13-15, what did God see in His people; in vv. 19-20, can you explain this to someone who doesn't know God's word; how applicable are they in your life?
 - This chapter begins in a shocking way. In v. 1, God tells His people to "Flee from Jerusalem!" Normally, it would be the other way around; everyone should run to Jerusalem. But, no, here, it is to flee from her. It is because God will "cut down the trees and build siege ramps against Jerusalem. This city must be punished; it is filled with oppression" (v. 6). God tells the people, to not only flee from Jerusalem, but He says He is going to lay a siege and punish her, for she has filled her life with oppression and wickedness. Why, and how could such thing happen to God's holy people? Let's listen to v. 10, "To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to Me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it." God is lamenting that His people refuse to listen to His words. It gets worse, for God's people find God's word offensive probably because His word goes against what the people want and what they are doing. Therefore, there's no pleasure in God's word for the people. I don't know if there's a progression here, from refusing to hear God's word, to finding it offensive, to no longer finding pleasure in God's word. But, as God has grouped them together, we should learn, if there's one such thing in us, it's safe to think that we will eventually find all three present in us—refusal, offensive and no pleasure of God's word in us. Let's pray earnestly and commit ourselves sincerely to not only study God's word, but pray that we would love to learn God's word, so there's joy in our learning, and most of all, there's great joy in our obedience in walking in His word. Please remember, we are as deaf as we refuse to listen. So, let's pray that we would love to listen to God's word, and love even more to obey His word in our lives. May the people run to us and not flee from us, because we have listened to God's word and we have His word to share with them.

Jer 7 (10/25/24)

1. In vv. 1-11, what kind of lifestyle did the people live, and yet, why were they feeling confident about being right with God; in vv. 16-20, what is God seeing about His people and how was He going to respond to them; what do you learn?
 - In vv. 22-23, God said, "For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you." God desires for His people, for us, to offer the sacrifices. God wants us to do the rituals He instructed for us to do, i.e., read God's word daily, pray without ceasing, come to the corporate worship faithfully and focused. God wants and expects us to do them faithfully. But, walking with God is more than doing certain acts He commanded. Yes, we need to do them. Christians are commanded to do these good acts. God wants that. However, He wants us to also to love to obey our God as He instructs us in His word. Obedience to His words is absolutely necessary and good for us, because God has commanded it for us. God wants us to learn His word, so that we would learn to joyfully and lovingly and humbly and thankfully obey His word in our lives, whatever obstacles may be present, whether be from others or from within us. God's word is meant to have the first priority over our lives, and therefore, to obey His word is what describes God's people. It is also how God explains that's how we love Him. Obedience is not mere duty, but our fullest expression of our love for our God (Jn 14:23-24). Let's learn to obey our God joyfully and lovingly and thankfully.

Jer 8 (10/26/24)

1. In vv. 4-7, what is making God sad about His people and what does He want them to do; in vv. 8-12, how are the people acting and how should they really be doing; how are these applicable to you?
- In v. 21, God says, “Since My people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips Me.” Let me share couple of thoughts to this verse. First of all, as the father hurts for the pain of his child, so is our God. Our God is hurting because His children are hurting. Our God is truly a God of compassion. Secondly, we raise a question, since it is God who is crushing His children, wouldn't the solution be easy enough? Stop crushing them. And here we meet our God who loves His children more than the children love themselves. Because the Father wants to see His children to be right, especially right with the holy God, God would endure His pain for the sake of His children to be right. Hebrews 12:10-11, teaches us of God's heart, “They (the earthly fathers) disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” God's heart is clear, to see His children be right, our Father will endure the pain that He could easily avoid. God's love for us is truly greater than our love for ourselves. Let's always remember, that our God truly loves us more than we love ourselves. So, let's trust our God to lead us than trust ourselves for our lives.

Jer 9 (10/28/24)

1. God expressed His heart twice with an “Oh”, what do you learn about His heart (vv. 1-2); what does God want His people to boast and not boast about (vv. 23-24); what more do you learn and how are they applicable in your life?
- In vv. 25-26, God speaks to the people who are circumcised “only in the flesh.” Surely, God desired and commanded His people to be circumcised in the flesh (Gen 17:9-12). So, the physical act of obeying God's command is great. However, the physical act was always meant to be more than the simple act. The physical act is meant to reflect our heart, our inner values. The physical act of circumcision was meant to declare that our God has made a covenant with us, with people who are sinners, who do not deserve His goodness. So, the visible act of the covenant for God's people was to cut off the flesh of a male, to signal that our God has cut off the sins from our lives, just as the water of baptism is meant to signal that our God has washed away our sins in His blood. Let's clearly understand, the water of the baptism does not cleanse our sins away, only by faith in Jesus' blood does. But, the water is meant to reflect and point to Jesus' blood. Likewise, the cutting away of the flesh is meant to reflect and point to Jesus' work of atonement for us. So, whenever we do any wonderful deeds, like worship or fellowship or serving, let's understand, our job is not to simply do those good deeds, but do those good deeds as they spring forward from our hearts that first loves Jesus and delight to grow more like Jesus and desire to live out our lives with Jesus' heart expressed in all that we do and say. Let's learn to live the circumcised ways of God, not only show in the flesh, but may they first dwell richly in our hearts, and overflow into our lifestyle, so that whatever we do, we will always do all things for God to receive His glory. Our job is not to just get the job done, but to do all of our jobs in such a way that God receives the praise and the glory (Matt 5:16).

Jer 10 (10/29/24)

1. In vv. 1-5, what does God say about the nations, both then and now; in vv. 6-13, how is God described and do you believe it and have you seen Him as such; what do you learn?
 - In vv. 23-24, we read Jeremiah's prayer, "Lord, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps. Discipline me, Lord, but only in due measure—not in Your anger, or You will reduce me to nothing." Oh Lord, please, bless us to learn that our lives are not our own. We are not to direct our own steps. Oh Lord, bless us to learn to look and depend on You to lead our every step. Lord, You know, I don't always do this well. So, unless You bless me, I know I am often going to think that my life is my own, and I therefore, should be able to choose my steps. Please, Lord, don't let me do me. Bless me to learn to look to You and obey You only, not me but You. Lord, I also want to pray as Jeremiah, even though You are already doing so to me. It would be so easy and so deserving for You to treat me as I deserve, that is, to treat me so much harsher, because that's what I truly deserve. But, You are merciful, so I don't receive the full measure of Your wrath. You are also so gracious, so You always shower me with Your goodness, even though I deserve Your anger. So, Lord, even though I pray with Jeremiah, I thank You that You are already treating me with a soft measure, a gentleness that I don't deserve. Thank You for not treating me with Your anger, even though I do and say and think so many things that deserve the wrath of Your anger. Thank You, Lord.

Jer 11 (10/30/24)

1. What did God want Jeremiah to listen and tell to whom and why (vv. 1-8); what were the people plotting to do to Jeremiah and why (vv. 18-23); what do you learn?
 - In v. 21, we read, "Therefore this is what the Lord says about the people of Anathoth who are threatening to kill you..." Two things strikes me and saddens me here. First, Anathoth is Jeremiah's hometown. These are the people who he grew up with; they are his family, neighbors and friends. When life is hard and unfair, it is family and friends who should stick by your side. Loyalty during difficult and unfair days are why family and friends are so precious. But, sadly for Jeremiah, it is the people who he grew up with, who knew him longest, who should love him most are "threatening to kill him." How painful this betrayal must have felt. However, the worst part of this betrayal was why they were plotting to kill Jeremiah. The people, who were God's people, were trying to kill their family and friend, for speaking God's truth to them. Instead of thanking for speaking God's truth, instead of repenting when they heard God's truth, they wanted to silence the voice of God, because their lives were running contrary to God's way. They wanted to continue in their sinful ways, and when their long time friend spoke God's truth in love, they held on to their stubborn evil and fell into deeper sin. We must learn the lesson here well, when God's truth is spoken and we do not want to hear it because we want to continue living our way, then we will go against God, even to silence or kill or hate God's messenger for speaking His truth. We should humbly and earnestly check how we acted the last time we heard God's truth spoken that was contrary to our lives. Did we repent or continue in our way? Please, be careful. God's word is a truthful mirror to our lives.

Jer 12 (10/31/24)

1. What was troubling the prophet Jeremiah and do you also see it today and how do you reconcile (vv. 1-4); God's answer to Jeremiah is interesting, how do you understand God's answer; what do you learn?

- How heartbroken God must have been, when He said, “I will forsake My house, abandon My inheritance; I will give the one I love into the hands of her enemies” (v. 8). How do you give the one you love into the hands of her enemies? That’s call betrayal in our world. But, with God, because of His justice, He does what He hates, so that true justice will prevail. As much as God loves His children, His love for us is always covered with His righteousness and justice. And when God’s children “roars at Me” and “do not listen” (vv. 8, 17), then God will discipline His wayward going children, so that they will learn to be right and walk again in His ways. God’s love is meant to be effectual, so His love is meant to produce the effect of His desire, and that is, for His children to always walk right before the Father, so that they will always taste and delight in His goodness. Obedience before God is the best blessing God’s children can receive, so God will lead His children to obey lovingly, even when at times, it may require a difficult discipline for His children to go through, so that we can learn the joy and blessings of obeying our good God. Oh yes, Father, I want to learn the joy of obeying You in all things. Bless me Lord, to learn this wonderful truth well in my life.

Jer 13 (11/1/24)

1. What does God tell Jeremiah to do with a linen belt and why (vv. 1-11); what did God want His people to learn from the wineskins (vv. 12-14); will you wrestle with v. 23 and see how true it is in our lives and how can this be reversed; what do you learn?
- In v. 22, it reads, “And if you ask yourself, ‘Why has this happened to me?’” God’s people seem to be asking a simple question, why has all these terrible things happening to them. But, as we can read throughout the chapter, “It is because of your many sins” God tells them. It sounds as if the people were playing innocent, questioning the disaster as unjust and inexplicable. But, that’s far from the truth. God knew and so did the people, they were sinning. In fact, God gives them an example of an Ethiopian and a leopard unable to change, teaching God’s people, “Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.” In other words, when all we have done was evil, then all of a sudden, we cannot turn off the switch and stop sinning, and turn on the switch to do good. That’s not in our ability to do. We will do what we have always done, just as the leopard cannot change its spots. We humans need to understand, if we are born with a sinful nature, that’s what we will always do, sin, for it’s our nature, we cannot change on our own. And that’s why, the new creation in God, the new life in Christ, will bless us with a new nature, that will bless us to no longer live as we have, but to live more and more like our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus. Only in Jesus, can we receive a new nature, a new life to be more like Him. But, while we live in this world, it’s called sanctification, because we are meant to wrestle against our old sinful nature, which is to always sin, and learn anew to live more like Christ, obeying His will, and resisting our temptations to sin. Simply, sanctification is wrestling against our sinfulness and learning to grow more like Christ. So, though the Ethiopian cannot change one’s skin, our God can change us into a new creation. Our God has gifted us a great salvation. Let’s learn more of His ways, so that we do not revert back to our old sinful ways, but humbly and thankfully learn to live and grow more and more like Jesus, our great Savior and Lord.

Jer 14 (11/2/24)

1. In vv. 10-12, what does God say about His people; what does the prophets say and what does God say about them and the people listening to them and why (vv. 13-16); what do you learn?

- This is such a despairing chapter. Yet, the chapter ends, “We acknowledge our wickedness, Lord, and the guilt of our ancestors; we have indeed sinned against You. For the sake of Your name do not despise us;... Therefore our hope is in You, for You are the one who does all this” (vv. 20-22). In the end, if we can learn to always end with our repentance, as we acknowledge our sins and confess them humbly before our God and turn to Him, because He alone is the only hope we have. May this be true to us all. Even after our greatest sinfulness, may our God bless our hearts to humbly acknowledge our sins and confess them and turn to our God, because He truly is the only hope we have.

Jer 15 (11/4/24)

1. In vv. 1-9, what does God say He will do to His people and why; in vv. 19-21, what does God declare and what practical acts does God want His people to do and why; how are they applicable in your life?
- In vv. 15-21, I believe it is the prophet Jeremiah speaking with God. As we read vv. 15-18, Jeremiah seems to be living faithfully as God’s prophet, and yet, he was under great pain. And he thought God was not treating him right. But, when God speaks to him, He said, “If you repent, I will restore you... if you utter worthy, not worthless, words... Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.” It seems that the prophet was listening and siding too much with the people under judgment. Having sympathy for others is usually a good thing. But, when the people are against God, then God teaches us, that we must learn to side with God, for our first loyalty should always be with our God, who not only loves us greatly, but who always will do what’s right, even when it is painful to do them. I see this a lot in our churches. Many Christians side and sympathize with the people who are hurting, though it seems quite clear that these people are acting sinfully before God. We must really, really be careful, not to side with them, because when we are, we are choosing to stand against God and His ways. We must humbly learn loyalty to our God first, before sympathy for others, even when they are family and friends and love ones. May our God bless us to be His instrument of grace, to pray for them, to love them, but be sure to lead them to humbly and genuinely repent before our God.
 - I thought this short note on Manasseh (in v. 4) will be helpful to you. Manasseh was the son of the righteous King Hezekiah and grandfather of King Josiah. He ruled Judah 697-642 BC. The Biblical history records Manasseh’s reign as one of unprecedented idolatry and apostasy (2Kgs 21; 2Chron 33). His father, Hezekiah, had destroyed the high places and attempted to wipe out idolatry (2Kgs 18:4), but Manasseh rebuilt the high places, set up altars for the Canaanite deities (Baal, Asherah) engaged in child sacrifice (killing babies) and witchcraft, and set up an Asherah pole in the temple of Yahweh (2Kgs 21:3-7). Manasseh’s evil was so great that even Josiah’s reforms (2Kgs 23:4-25)—removing all those idols, and destroying altars and local shrines—were not enough to prevent Yahweh from bringing judgment on Judah (2Kgs 23:26-27). Second Kings explicitly blames the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC on the sins of Manasseh (2Kgs 24:3-4).

Jer 16 (11/5/24)

1. In vv. 1-2, what did God forbid Jeremiah and why was that significant; what was the attitude of the people and what was God’s reason for doing what He did (vv. 10-13, 17-18); what do you learn?

- From the Bible notes. Why were the people so naive (16:10)? Influenced by false prophets, over time the people had gradually become indifferent to their sin. Unaffected by the gravity of their sin, they could not see that their wickedness was the root cause of their troubles.
- I am thinking, there are many things in our lives where we have become indifferent to our sins and unaffected by them, or at least as far as we can tell. Sin affects us, but at times, we don't see how. But, we must know, God sees our sins, so how could we not be affected? Let's pray for God's grace to open our eyes, for us to see what sins we are committing, and bless us again to humbly repent (OCT) for our sins, so that we would learn to walk right with our God. Though through our Savior, our God has already forgiven our sins, but when we are sinning and we don't will our hearts to repent, then we will linger on the border of self-condemnation or the hypocrisy of our lives will begin to eat us slowly, for we know God's truth but His words would sound empty, because while our talk is right, our walk is wrong. When we don't walk our talk, then we won't taste God's goodness; instead, the disappointment over ourselves and in others will begin to eat us slowly. Life will be painfully disappointing. Let's not be so naive. Let's not follow the stubbornness of our own evil hearts. Let's earnestly pray and humbly learn to love our God greatly and obey Him joyfully.

Jer 17 (11/6/24)

1. How does God describe a curse and a blessing and how have you seen these in your life (vv. 5-8); how does God describe our hearts and can you describe some of the ways you see this in you; what does God tell Jeremiah to do and why (vv. 19-27); what do you learn?
- In vv. 1-3, God speaks about how firm His people are into sin, so much so that even their children will remember how their parents sinned. And we know, children's usually grow up copying their parents, so it's easy to see that the children will repeat and most likely deepen their sinful ways much more than their parents. It's sad; it's frightening; it's disastrous. Parents must know that their sinful ways do not stop with them. It will flow, overflow unto their children. So, parents who are careless with their worship must know that their children will most likely become even more careless, probably not care, probably leave the worship because what good will a careless worship do, except create a burdensome tradition that kills the joy and love for our God, and who wants that? God says, "Even their children remember their altars and Asherah poles..." (v. 2). Children see what their parents did and they remember. But, so does God. He sees, not only what the parents have done, but He also sees what the children do, and the children are no less guiltless than the parents. Each generation, each person, parents and children, will be held accountable for their own sins. Children cannot blame their parents for their sins, even though that's where they learned how to sin. Let's remember, children remember, and so does our God, He remembers.

Jer 18 (11/7/24)

1. What is the lesson God wants His people to learn from the Potter's house, yet how did the people reply (vv. 1-12); how do the people respond to Jeremiah's teaching them God's word and how does Jeremiah feel about their response (vv. 18-23); what do you learn?
- V. 18 is so hard. "They said, 'Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the law by the priest will not cease...'" As unreceptive they were, they knew that would not stop Jeremiah from teaching them God's word. This is remarkable, to continue to teach to a people who kept rejecting the teaching, is something I marvel, because it's so hard. It's really hard.

And the people unwilling to listen, take their sinful ways deeper, as they plan, “So come, let’s attack him with our tongues and pay no attention to anything he says.” They will attack the prophet with their tongues. Who said words don’t hurt? Words are more detrimental and longer lasting and deeper cutting than so many weapons. We must learn, our words can be weapons of deep destruction. We must pray earnestly and humbly about how to use our words, especially when we are angry or hurt or not well. Even well meaning words hurt a lot. Let’s earnestly pray that God will bless us, so that we will not use our words as weapons of harm to others, and let’s also pray that we will pay attention to God’s word and also to people who share God’s word to us.

Jer 19 (11/8/24)

1. What was breaking God’s heart with His people; what was the message God wanted His people to see and hear with the clay jar; how is this applicable to you?
 - In vv. 1-2, God wants Jeremiah to bring specific people, elders and priests, to a specific locale, to the Valley of Ben Hinnon, and bring a specific object, a clay jar, to bring His message to the people, for them to not only hear, but to see and to feel if they could. Even though the people had forsaken God and therefore would not pay attention to Him, even though God knows they are stiff-necked people who would not listen to His words, and yet, that does not stop God from speaking and showing them of their sinful ways. And the amazing love and gentleness of our God is, that the reason why He repeatedly comes and speaks and shows the people of their sinfulness, is not to simply condemn their evil ways, but to bless them to see their ugly sinfulness, so they will learn that judgment follows evil, and they need to humbly confess their sinfulness and turn from them, back to our God and His holy ways. Let’s understand, God’s forgiveness over our sinfulness does not simply erase our sins, but the way God wants us to experience His forgiveness is by us owning up our sins and humbly confess them of our evil and clearly turn from our sins back to God (OCT). We need to know, God’s forgiveness over our sins was painful to Him, for His judgment came, except it landed, not on the guilty ones, but to the sinless God, who knew no sin. So, there’s clearly a judgment and a condemnation over our sins, which was poured unto our God as our Substitute on the cross for us. So, we mustn’t try to evade judgment, as if it was not ours, for it was ours, except the Lamb of God went to the slaughter in our place. Because Jesus was punished for us, we certainly don’t taste the fulness of the pain of God’s judgment, but seeing He took our place, we should humbly pray that we don’t become careless with our sins but see how He was broken for us and pray that we would learn and perhaps even taste a little of His great sacrifice for us.

Jer 20 (11/9/24)

1. Who is Pashhur and what is happening between him and Jeremiah; what is Jeremiah’s complaint against God; what do you learn?
 - Two thoughts. First, in v. 2, this priest Pashhur beat and put the prophet Jeremiah locked up in the Lord’s Temple. He used God’s house as a prison. We know God hates when the people used His house as a den of robbers. How much God must have hated to see His house used as a prison by this priest for a prophet. What a terrible misuse of God’s goodness. Oh, let’s be careful we do not fall into this kind of evil in our lives. The second is in v. 9. Jeremiah is suffering greatly for speaking God’s word to the people. He says in v. 8, “So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long.” So, the natural response to such treatment is to no longer speak God’s word that has brought so much misery to him. Yet, in v. 9, the encounter and experience under God’s word is irresistible, “But if I say, ‘I will not

mention His word or speak anymore in His name,' His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." Oh, what a dilemma. To not speak God's word, his heart burns and it must spread. But, when he does speak, the only return is evil for the good. And as painful as it is, and as much as he hates how the people treat him, in the end, Jeremiah will obey, must obey God, for His truth is alive in him; it is not containable; it must overflow. As much as I don't envy his situation, I envy and love and am humbled and appreciate Jeremiah's heart. Oh, Lord, may I humbly learn to be obedient to You above any and all situations. Thank You for Jeremiah.

Jer 21 (11/11/24)

1. What does God's people want to hear and what does God say to them and why (vv. 1-10); in v. 12, what does God call evil and how is this applicable to you; what do you learn?
 - In v. 2, the mindset and thus their words are shocking, "Perhaps the Lord will perform wonders for us as in times past so that He will withdraw from us." The heart, the mind, the attitude and the words of the people are remarkable in a terrible way. They were not changing any of their evil ways, nor do they want to change anything, but they want God to change His mind, though God has warned them repeatedly to repent (OCT)—to own up their sins, to confess their sins, and to turn from their sins unto God and His ways only. These people were going to continue to live in their sinful ways, but they want God to change because what God is about to do is not what they like. They want God to submit unto them. They want God to be as they want Him to be. Isn't this how we treat the idols we serve? We want our idols to be and to do what we want. And bringing their idolatrous mindset, they applied it to God, making the true God no different than an idol, as far as their lives were concerned. This arrogant, obnoxious and sinful mindset could easily be found in us. Oh, there are times, when I want God to be more in line to what I want Him to be. I am them. Oh Lord, bless me to repent. Oh Father, I am this lowly creature that wants to treat You like my slave. I am so sorry. How could You forgive such ingrate and ugly sinner like me, and yet, You went to cross for me, for my sins, for my arrogance, for my selfishness, for my careless and thoughtless heart and mind towards You. Please, bless me to see my ugly sins and hate them, and bless me more to want to turn from them, and turn humbly only to You, to submit, to lovingly obey, and thankfully follow only You and Your words. In Jesus' name.

Jer 22 (11/12/24)

1. What does God want His people to do and why and how is this applicable in your life (vv. 1-9); in v. 16, what does God say people who know Him do and why would that be when our salvation is by faith alone; what do you learn?
 - From my Bible notes. Whom did they weep for? (22:10). The dead king was Josiah, who had died in battle during an ill-fated encounter with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt (2Kgs 23:29-30). Josiah had been a good king and the loss was keenly felt by the people of Judah. However, his death was not so tragic when compared to the fate awaiting his son. Jeremiah recommended that they save their tears for Josiah's son Jehoahaz, who would die in exile (22:12; 2Kgs 23:34). Sad as it was to die in office, it was worse to be banished to a foreign land and never see Judah again.

Jer 23 (11/13/24)

1. What does God see about the priests and prophets and how were they impacting God's people and why were they doing so; what or who is the Righteous Branch and what will He do and why; what do you learn?
 - V. 17 reads, "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.'" The prophets and priests were encouraging and comforting the people with God's goodness, when they should have been warning them, pleading to them to repent of their sinfulness. No, that's not what the people wanted to hear, nor was it what the leaders wanted to speak on. They wanted to speak on God's goodness as they wanted to receive the people's goodness unto them. This spirit is alive and well today. We have pastors and Christians who speak on God's blessings to all sinners, even though they continue to live a lifestyle contrary to God's holiness, including those celebrating their LGBTQI lifestyle. The goodness that our God delights to pour on the people who are living in our sinfulness is to repent. Repentance is God's beautiful blessings when we are deep in our sinfulness. Repentance is God's awesome way to bless us to see the ugliness of our sinfulness, so we would want to confess them as wrong and turn from it, to turn to our God and follow His way. Our first step in our repentance is to own up our sins and confess them genuinely and humbly. Let's pray that we will not be like these prophets who offer false peace to our friends, when God is not, and let's pray that we will not be like the people who want to believe the lies, when God's truth is near and He calls us to obey Him and His truth. Let God be true and every person (that speaks contrary to God be) a liar (Rom 3:4).

Jer 24 (11/14/24)

1. What vision did God give to Jeremiah and what did it mean; how could God's people find hope from it; what do you learn?
 - In vv. 1 and 8, we are given the names of the last three kings of Judah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (2Chron 36). All three are considered evil, and all three will end up dying in Babylon. Normally, this will mean the end of the dynasty, the end of that nation. Yet the prophesy today is unnatural, illogical, and unusual, because this does not happen to any other nation. In exile and death to their kings, that nation and people perishes, forever injected to be part of the other nation. Yet, God promises, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their 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. I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart.'" What an amazing promise in the midst of such present devastation and misery. Because this world is God's creation, it is His sovereign will that will be done, though the present might paint a whole different picture. Let's learn to trust in God's word over what we may presently see or feel or think or imagine. Let God be true and every person, who disagrees with God, a liar (Rom 3:4).

Jer 25 (11/15/24)

1. How long did Jeremiah minister to the people and how and why did they respond the way they did; how long did God say He will make His people suffer and why those years (2Chron 36:21); what more do you learn?

- To us humans, v. 28 can sound a little odd, “But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: You must drink it!’” To us, it seems like there’s a choice, that is, the people can reject to drink the cup. But the final words come from the Lord Almighty, who can make everything happen as He determines, and He determined that all the nations must drink it! No exceptions, no buts, no refusal. There was no other choice. All the nations are guilty of sin. All have fallen short of God’s glory. And the wages of sin must be paid. What the Almighty God wills, it will be done, that’s His sovereignty, that’s His almightiness, which no one can refuse or reject. His will will be done (Isa 55:9-11). Remember, our God is the Potter, who made the whole world. It’s His creation. He is the Owner. He decides, and we obey. No other options are available. That is why, whenever we are enamored doing things our way, living my life my way, being independent from God, that cannot exist in the world that God has created. And that’s where we are living. So, let’s remember where we live, who created us and how we ought to live, so that we do not clash with God’s will, but humbly and thankfully and lovingly delight to submit under God’s will, and joyfully obey our God to do all things for His glory alone, for that is how He called us to live.

Jer 26 (11/16/24)

1. Where was Jeremiah to stand and to whom was he to preach God’s word and why; who heard God’s word preached and how did they respond (vv. 7-9); how were Jeremiah and Uriah similar and different and why and what happened; how is this chapter applicable in your life?
- In vv. 2-3, we can catch a glimpse of God’s heart for His people. First of all, God knows His people need to hear God’s truth, and He knows how they will respond. But that does not stop Him from sending His servants to tell His people again and again His truth. It’s His truth that they need, and their rejection does not stop Him from reaching out to us again and again. Our God is faithful. His love for us faithless people remains faithful. The first word in v. 3 is, perhaps. Oh, His heart here is incredible. Of course, He knows they will not listen, but still hoping, He says, “perhaps they will listen.” This perhaps is not because God didn’t know what they will do, of course, He does, for He is omniscient. But, this perhaps is His unwillingness to let go of His love for them, though they deserve nothing more than His rejection as they rejected Him. Our God is truly amazing, for He does not treat us as we treat Him. Oh, let’s pray that we will taste deeply His amazing grace for us and may His grace overflow in us to the people around us, so that His graciousness is what others will experience from us to them, because we have first received it from Him. Thank You Lord for Your grace, Your faithfulness.

Jer 27 (11/18/24)

1. What did God say to Jeremiah to do and for whom and why; what did God want all these kings to do with the words of their prophets and why; how could they tell who was telling God’s truth or not and how can you know that; what do you learn?
- In v. 14, God spoke through Jeremiah, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying lies to you.” This is such a difficult thing to do. Most likely, there’s only one lone voice, Jeremiah’s, that keeps preaching to everyone to submit before the Babylonians. On the other hand, there were hundreds of prophets who keep preaching of God’s deliverance, and therefore, they must not submit to the Babylonians, as Jeremiah kept preaching. One against hundreds. And the hundreds not only sound louder and clearer, they are actually more consistent with the past messages of God’s deliverance. Furthermore, the unified message of the many prophets are truly much sweeter

to hear, than the message of hopelessness from this lone rejected weeping prophet. So, when he proclaims, to not listen to the false prophets speaking lies, most people probably thought that he was the false prophet, speaking lies, and not the great majority of the prophets. As we know, it's much, much easier for one man to fall into a delusion, than for hundreds, that is all the prophets minus one, to be deceived. When in doubt, follow the majority, especially when they all appear to be prophets of God, and not one abnormal, contradicting voice, not accepted by any other prophets, right? Yet, that was God's message for the people living then. They needed to learn discernment, to know who spoke with God's voice. The people needed to learn, majority did not rule. The sweeter promise did not come from God. God's message at this time was bitter. And the people needed to learn discernment to know God's voice, and not what they thought sounded best. This is not an easy lesson for us either. How can we truly tell God's voice when all the prophets, all the teachers, perhaps all the pastors are speaking with one voice? Actually for Christians today, God has gifted us His written words, so that as we study and understand them correctly, we will find His words to be more than sufficient for us to discern between God's voice from the lies we may prefer to choose. His words are His gift to us. May we love to study His truth, even the difficult ones. May God bless us with greater love for His words, so that we would delight to dig in a little deeper, and commit to study a little longer and better, so that we would learn His truth, and learn to discern to hear His truth and not the lies we hear often.

Jer 28 (11/19/24)

1. What did the prophet Hananiah prophesied and why was that important; what was Jeremiah wearing that Hananiah broke and why (27:2); what was Jeremiah's message to Hananiah and why was that important; what do you learn?
 - From my Bible notes. Why did Jeremiah bother with false prophets? (28:15-16). Because they claimed to speak for God, false prophets held enormous potential influence. Jeremiah recognized that if they were left unchecked, they could push the entire nation further away from God. Furthermore, God is jealous about who speaks for Him (29:21-23, 31-32). To falsely claim to be the Lord's spokesman is a grievous offense.

Jer 29 (11/20/24)

1. V. 11 is well known by many Christians, can you explain under what context it is written and what it means; who are Ahab, Zedekiah and Shemaiah and how did God treat them and why; what do you learn?
 - In v. 23, God says He witnessed two acts by His people that were outrageous to Him, "they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and in My name they have uttered lies—which I did not authorize"—adultery and lies. Wow, these are two very common acts by the people today, aren't they? They are treated almost normal by the world today, often in the church as well. But, in God's eyes, He sees them differently than we do. To our God, it is so gross and it is so sad that He calls these acts "outrageous". Oh Lord, have we dwelt in this world too long that we see these acts and many others as the world sees them, and not as You see them? Oh Lord, we pray that we will learn Your ways and unlearn the ways of the world seated in us. Oh Lord, bless us to learn to walk with You, to live after Your ways, and to see with Your eyes, and bless us to strip away the ways of the world in us.

Jer 30 (11/21/24)

1. In v. 11, what was the situation of the people and what was God's message to them; though He is going to save His people, yet why would He not let them go entirely unpunished; what do you learn and how is it applicable in your life?
- In the latter part of v. 21, we read, "for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?" declares the Lord." God is desiring and looking for people who will devote ourselves to be close to Him. And as much as I want, the question is, how much am I willing to devote myself to be close to my Lord. I say I want it, but my actions and words and my thoughts and my desire are not always aligned with my words. I make time to do other things, which I know they take my devotion away from my God, and yet, I see me do them though I know, it will not lead me to be more devoted to my God. What a hypocrite I am. With my desire, it almost seems like I am trying to fool myself and even God of my sincerity for Him, and yet, what I do makes me wander away from Him. Oh Lord, like the hymn says, "Prone to wander I feel it." Please Lord, don't let me be me. Please seal me in Your grace, so that I will not walk as I will, but my truest delight will be to walk nearer with You. Lord, I pray that I will be able to answer Your question, "for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?"—Here I am; take me.

Jer 31 (11/22/24)

1. In vv. 1-14, what was Israel's present situation and what was God's promise for them and how should this impact your life; in vv. 31-34, what is God's new covenant and why was significant; what do you learn?
- V. 19 reads, "After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth." The greatest blessing for a person who is not saved is to see that he is unable to save himself, so he desperately needs a Savior and is able to turn and place one's faith in Jesus. That's how the Holy Spirit works for the people who are saved from our sins. And the greatest work God's people can do after we sinned is to find God's grace to genuinely repent for our sins. When the Holy Spirit leads us in repentance, He will bless us to see the shame and humiliation of our sinful ways, so that He can bless us to want to turn away from our sins, and humbly desire to want to turn to our God for His grace again in us, so that we would love our Lord more than our sins. As for the greatest work of God's people is to fall deeper in love with our God, each day. Our greatest work is not about wrestling against our sins so much, but to find sweeter ways to fall deeper in love with Jesus, our Savior and our Lord. Ultimately, sin is not our greatest issue, but falling deeper in love with Jesus is our sweetest endeavor and joy. But, while we live in this world, sin will always be near us, so we must learn how to wrestle against our sinfulness, and it is here, that our repentance is the greatest work we can do when we have fallen into sin, yet again.

Jer 32 (11/23/24)

1. In vv. 6-15, who is Hanamel and what does he and Jeremiah do and why would this be significant; in vv. 26-44, what do we see the people doing and how does God reveal Himself here and what does He say He will do; how is it applicable to your life; what more do you learn?
- In v. 1, we are told what year it was, "the tenth year of Zedekiah." This means, by next year, this war is over, for he will be captured, shackled, and taken into Babylon (2Kgs 24:18-25:7). Yet, even in the midst of impending doom, we see that Jeremiah will purchase a worthless

land, all because he believed God's word of promise for His people, though the people were facing destruction, starvation and deportation. It's amazing how powerful God's word is. There's nothing that Jeremiah sees then, that could have given him any hope, any sign of restoration, any remote possibility of any life back in his beloved nation. Nothing. Yet, over and against everything he sees, everything he must have felt, he refuses to believe what he sees, what he knows, what seems presently real. He refused himself because he chose to believe God's word of promise over everything that did not align with God's word. He truly believes, "Let God be true and every person a liar" (Rom 3:4). What powerful truth that is. Everyone and everything is a liar whenever they differ with God. May we learn this truth well, so that today, as we hear so many lies and falsehoods around us, including even laws that seem to legitimize evil, we must not follow them, but choose to believe and obey God's word over everyone and everything, even the laws of the land whenever they differ with God's truth.

Jer 33 (11/25/24)

1. V. 3 is a much beloved Scripture, what is the background it was written and how can it impact our lives; how is God making the connection between His covenant with the day and night with David's descendants and what is He teaching us; what do you learn?
 - In vv. 10-11, God shows us His difference with what the people are saying, "This is what the Lord says; 'You say about this place, 'It is a desolate waste, without people or animals.' yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying, 'Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; His love endures forever.' for I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the Lord." God not only promises the restoration of fortunes on His people, but He gives living examples of how vibrant and joyful and thankful they will be restored, with laughters everywhere, with weddings, and people going to worship and singing praises. What is now will not be, says the Lord. Desolation of the present will turn into joyful and thankful excitement says the Lord to His people. That will be so true as we are called to enter into His glory, in His kingdom. Because that will be true in Heaven, we can find hope and strength when life's present struggles seem overwhelming. But, God's promise of restoration is not only in Heaven, but here, at times, God will bless us to have a foretaste to what He has in-store for us in His perfect kingdom. May our God bless us to learn to have our eyes not fixed here on earth, but to remember often to lift up and look up. Let's remember this world is not our home, for we are coming home, for our King is preparing and is waiting us to come home.

Jer 34 (11/26/24)

1. In vv. 1-7, what was Jeremiah's message to King Zedekiah and why such message; in vv. 17-18, what freedom and cutting in half was God speaking of and why would He say that; what do you learn and how it applicable in your life?
 - From, my Bible notes. How did they profane God's name (34:16)? God desired to liberate, not enslave, His people. God's nature is to release captives; sin's nature is to put people in bondage. Since God's name represents His character, to attack His character, whether by word or deed, is to profane His name. Because Jeremiah's countrymen lived in a way contrary to the nature of God, they profaned God's name and corrupted His character.

Jer 35 (11/27/24)

1. What were the Rekabites following and why; what did God want His people to learn from them and how did they do; what more do you learn and how is it applicable to you?

- In vv. 8-11, the Rekabites shared that they have obeyed not just about drinking wine, but also not building houses and living in tents. It is probably estimated that the command given was about 250 years ago. So, for all these years, they have obeyed and not strayed away, even though this was not a command from God, but from one of their forefathers, who thought this might be the best for their clan. Seeing them, I cannot help but reflect their obedience to ours. For many of us, we are selective in our obedience. Some of God's laws we obey well, but there are others that we do not. We disobey or simply ignore and pay no attention. But, that's not true obedience. We must learn to obey all of God's laws. What strikes me most about the obedience of the Rekabites is that they seem to truly believe the command given by their forefather was truly what was best for them. And so, despite how differently the rest of the world lived, they would rather follow the command of their forefather, than to follow the ways of the people around them. And that's beautiful. If we could also see and believe that God's law is the best for us, than we would not be so easily swayed to follow the ways of the people around us. The world would have so much less impact on us. Their ways would not be so attractive to us, not so appealing, not so interesting, surely we are not to follow them. We have God's law for us, and His ways are best. May this truly be our belief, our joy, our love, our delight, our intention and our reason for our decisions in life.

Jer 36 (11/28/24--Thanksgiving)

1. What did Jeremiah ask Baruch to do after writing on the scroll and why was that a dangerous mission; when King Jehoiakim heard God's word what did he do and why; what did God want Jeremiah and Baruch to re-do and why; what do you learn?

- In vv. 27-32, God commands Jeremiah and Baruch to re-write the scroll that King Jehoiakim burned. Sometimes, the ways of God is very interesting to us. At times, it may seem to us there's an easier way to do things. For example, here, I would think it's easier and perhaps even more powerful, to not allow the King to burn His words, despite all the efforts the King would pour to destroying God's word. In fact, if God does not allow, the King could not burn and destroy God's word. Yet, God allowed, perhaps giving the King and his people the thought that they could stand up against it. As we know, God's word cannot be destroyed, cannot be shackled, and it will always fulfill what God said it would. Though there are probably greater reasons, I thought of one, and that was, by commanding Jeremiah and Baruch to re-write, God was teaching them and us, that God's word can be kept, not only supernaturally by our almighty God, but as His people, with the same heart as our Father, we would desire and commit to keep His word. And if it is burned, then we can re-write them again. Here, we can see God uses His people to naturally keep His word near and dear, as they fight to keep God's word present and available for all to read, to hear, to listen, to learn, and to obey our God. May the word of our God is what's nearest to us, what's dearest to us, and what amazes us most in this world, more than miracles, more than the natural wonders, more than any great achievements, more than anything that we see in this world. May we give thanks to our God for His love and His words that teaches us how much He loves us. Happy Thanksgiving!

Jer 37 (11/29/24)

1. In light of v. 2, why does King Zedekiah's request in v. 3 sound so wrong; in vv. 5-10, though presently the Babylonians withdrew because of the Egyptians, what was God's message and why; why was Jeremiah put in prison; what do you learn?
- In v. 20, we read Jeremiah's plead, "But now, my lord the king, please listen. Let me bring my petition before you: Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, or I will die there." Seeing how courageously Jeremiah stood up against the sins of the kings and other powerful people previously, to see him plead here for his life to this evil king Zedekiah was unexpected. Yet, we see here that we all have a weak point; we all have a breaking point; none of us are strong always. Some miseries are beyond our capacity. The words of 1Corinthians 10:13 is comforting but my guess is most of us have doubted it one time or another, when the pain was too deep, when the darkness went on too long, when all we could see in us was helplessness. We are reminded that even our Lord Jesus pleaded for His cup to be removed, as the pain and burden of the sins of the world on Him must have been overbearing. But unlike Jeremiah, unlike us, Jesus' prayer did not end with His plead to be unburdened by His call. For His final decision and the greater desire than His own deliverance was, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Lk 22:42). As I see my Lord, I also want to truly desire and end my prayer, "yet not my will, but Yours be done."

Jer 38 (11/30/24)

1. Why were the officials angry at Jeremiah and what did they do; in v. 7, who helped Jeremiah, how and why do you think that was significant; what more do you learn?
- In v. 14, King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah again to ask him again what God has to say. Both for him and for many of us today, at times, we keep coming to God to ask Him the same question, hoping that God will change His mind and give a different answer than the one He has already given. But as we can clearly see, God's answer does not change. His truth does not change with the changing of times or seasons or generations or cultures or situations. When we don't like God's answer, we think so alike to this king, for we keep hoping that God will change His answer. The one who needs to change is not God, but us. Remember God is true, and therefore, since it is us who are wrong, it is us who need to change our attitudes, and learn to submit to God's word, rather than try to manipulate God to change the answer. It is us who are wrong; therefore, it is us who need to change and learn to submit under God's truth. The sooner we learn this, the better it will be for us, because the longer we stubbornly live after our desire, the deeper into the mud of falsehood we will sink. The sooner we learn to submit under God's truth, the better our lives will be, as we will be cleansed and freed from the lies of sin, and the more our lives will shine with the beauty of God's truth drape all over us. God's ways are beautiful and ours is not. Let's learn to lovingly submit under God's will. May we live for His glory, and not to exalt ourselves. May we truly pray and delight for Him to increase and us decrease. Thank You Lord for Your desire in us!

Jer 39 (1/1/25)

1. How long did the Babylonian siege over Jerusalem take and what would usually happen (vv. 1-2); what was the last thing Zedekiah saw with his eyes and why would he suffer this misery (vv. 5-7); what do you learn?

- Though this chapter is about the fall of His people, including the miserable last sight of her last king, Zedekiah, yet, this chapter ends with a preservation of a foreigner living in Jerusalem, Ebed-Melek the Cushite. God protects him and preserves him, as God concludes this chapter with the words, “I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in Me, declares the Lord.” While the king and his officials threw God’s prophet Jeremiah into the mud of a waterless cistern, it was this Cushite who took the initiative to speak to the king and had the prophet pulled up with a rope made with old rags (Jer 38:1-13). He could have easily surmised that the king and his leadership knew better, especially in how to treat God’s prophet, for they had God’s word with them. He could have easily said, “It’s not my business. Plus they really know better than I in how to deal with God’s word and His servants.” But, instead of brushing aside, instead of not wanting to get involved, instead of giving himself a way out, he gets involved. He saw what was wrong, and got involved to rectify the wrong, even though it could have gotten him into a whole lot of trouble with very powerful people, who could have also harmed him greatly. James teaches us, “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them” (Jam 4:17). What an incredible challenge this verse is to us, isn’t it? We live in a culture where we like our private space, where we don’t like when someone steps outside of their lane. If it doesn’t involve us, then we usually don’t get involved. We should humbly pray how we should live our lives, especially in light of God’s word. May God be true and every person (including all of our ways) be a liar (when we should differ with God’s ways). Blessings to all of us as we meditate God’s word in our lives.

Jer 40 (1/2/25)

1. In vv. 1-6, where does the Babylonian commander find Jeremiah and what does he say about God’s plan; what choices were given to Jeremiah and why do you think he chose that; what do you learn?
- This chapter ends with the Governor defending Ishmael, “But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, ‘Don’t do such a thing! What you are saying about Ishmael is not true.’ Johanan learned that Ishmael was coming to kill Gedaliah, so Johanan volunteered to kill Ishmael covertly. Interesting, isn’t it, that Gedaliah would defend the man who will eventually kill him, but not believe on the man who was trying to save him. In life, it’s not always so easy who to believe and who to trust. Giving other people the benefit of the doubt is usually a wonderful thing to do, but there are times, when we do need to be more careful, not suspicious but careful and discerning, because not everyone thinks and acts like they should. Let’s pray for more of God’s wisdom in us, so that we will have better discernment in our lives.

Jer 41 (1/3/25)

1. What did Ishmael do to Gedaliah, despite Gedaliah’s trust on him and why; what did Johanan do to Ishmael and why did he decide to go to Egypt; what do you learn?
- Both Gedaliah and Johanan are good men. But unfortunately, they both gave themselves too much credit, trusting their own judgment too much. Gedaliah saw no harm in Ishmael, and Ishmael took advantage of that, and came near, and killed him. Johanan saw harm everywhere, and even when the prophet Jeremiah assured him of God’s protection for him where they were, they will eventually choose to not hear and obey God’s word, because they have chosen to heed their fear and run to Egypt. Trusting in men too much or trusting in no one, neither are good. Our trust must be placed on our God alone. May His word rule our

lives, learning to hear and heed His word over what we feel, even if we should be convicted by what we feel and know. Let God be true and every person a liar.

Jer 42 (1/4/25)

1. What did Johanan and the people want from Jeremiah and what did they promise; what was God's answer and how did they respond and why do you think that was; what do you learn?
 - In v. 7, we are told, "Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah." Both the people and Jeremiah waited for ten days for the Lord to answer them, "Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do" (v. 3). As frightened as they were, as anxious as they must have been, to wait for ten days is a long time. Yet, they waited, to hear from the Lord. They made assurances that they will obey the Lord whatever His words would be, even if they heard an answer contrary to their desire, so they said. As it is with them, so it is also with us, it's really hard to go against ourselves. Many people do not win against ourselves. What we want, is what we want. And when God says different, many people still want what we want, and we will do what we want. As we keep repeating Romans 3:4, this word of God is so applicable, so valuable, so absolutely necessary for us to believe and submit to, "Let God be true, and every person a liar." But, may I also say, when God says a different message than the one I do or want, then this is one of God's amazing blessings for us. Because God sees we are wrong, He gives us His truth so that we can repent, and change from our ways unto God's. That's how God's people are meant to live, to put away our ways, and humbly submit and thankfully adopt God's ways over mine. Let's humbly pray today, to unlearn what these people are doing, and learn what God would have us do.

Jer 43 (1/6/25)

1. Why would Azariah and Johanan not believe in Jeremiah's words and how applicable is this in your life (vv. 1-3); in their sinfulness, what do they make others do, including Jeremiah, and do you remember if you have also done this (vv. 4-7); what more do you learn from this chapter?
 - After reaching Egypt, we have v. 8, "In Tahpanhes the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah." God giving us His word are very mysterious and very unique. God chooses to not speak His word while they were going to Egypt. God could have forced them to stop, but He doesn't. I had hoped that God would protect His messenger, Jeremiah, from being dragged into the sinfulness of the people, but God did not do that either. Then, God makes Jeremiah bury large stones in full view of the people simply to tell them what He will do, especially through the Babylonians whom the people are trying to escape from. God knows the people will not believe and turn from their sinfulness, yet that does not stop God from speaking His word again. I am shocked, humbled, thankful and sad that God would keep speaking His word to a disobedient people. Their disobedience did not and does not stop God from giving His word to His people. And though Jeremiah knew that the people were not listening (could we be not listening either), yet, like his God, His servant does not stop giving them God's word. Like His God, His servant spoke and acted. Oh Lord, I am so humbled by Your grace and Your servant's obedience and deed to reflect You to the people. That's what I should do, that's what I want to do more. But, too often, I fail Lord. I am so sorry. I want to live more like You, and less like I have. May You increase and I decrease Lord, and may this be my joy.

Jer 44 (1/7/25)

1. What is God's message to His people living in Egypt and why such terrible news; how did the men and their wives respond to God's message and why; what do you learn?

- At the back end of v. 28, it reads, "Then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand—Mine or theirs." Objectively reading this verse, the comparison God makes between the power and reality of God's word against ours, is ludicrous. How can our words compare to God's powerful living word. Sadly, however, we live our lives subjectively, and too often, my life it's really about me, and not about our God, who created us, who bought us, and who gifted us the new life. Though we may recite that we have been crucified with Christ, and yet, when we live, it's about me and what I want. So, it was for the remnant of Judah, though they believe they were people of God, they would not submit under God, but they did what they did because they wanted what they wanted. It was their lives, though objectively they might have said that God is the creator and giver of their lives. Too often in our lives, we also compete with God, if we could. (How foolish our thoughts can be, right?). We keep competing with God's word, and too often we choose our words to stand over God's. Whenever we are disobeying God, we have chosen our words over God. Whenever we are ignoring, dismissing, forgetting God's word, we have chosen mine over His. Oh, we are living dangerously. We are living rebelliously, aren't we? May God's objective truth descend and capture our small subjectiveness, so that His truth will rule and guide our lives, and not my small and imperfect and selfish ways to overrule God's amazing truthful ways. May God be true, and every person a liar. That's it, I am the liar and my God is truly true. May I love Him more than I love me.

Jer 45 (1/8/25)

1. How did Baruch view his life and why; how did God want him to view his life and why; what do you learn and how can this be implemented into your life?

- The first portion of v. 5 struck hard to me, "Should you then seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them." The disappointment in my life is real because I seek great things for myself. I think I should have done better. Thinking where I should be now, and comparing myself with others, I keep thinking I should be better. So, as I sit here and hear the Lord speak to Baruch and also to me, "Should you then seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them," hits hard because it's precisely what I am thinking. Oh Lord, I want to pray earnestly, not to seek great things for myself. I truly pray that I will delight to seek great things for my God and not for me. I want to pray Lord, that You increase, and I decrease. Oh Lord, this is a battle I cannot triumph in my own strength. Oh Lord, I need You. May I truly delight in Your greatness and not in mine.

Jer 46 (1/9/25)

1. What is the message against Egypt and who will do this and why; this chapter ends with the words on Israel, why do you think that is and what is the message; what do you learn?

- The imagery God gives us is beautiful in v. 20, "Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a gadfly is coming against her from the north." As beautiful Egypt was, yet, a gadfly can do what many other bigger animals cannot, and that is, attack and destroy. Every animal has a weakness, at times by a much smaller insect, but it will prove to be deadly. It is also true of us people. We all have our weaknesses, and sometimes, where we fall is not on the bigger issues, but on the

smaller ones, like insects, that others can crush easily enough, but we can't, because that's our weakness. We all have our weaknesses. Do we know which is ours? Do we know which small insect can bite us and bring more trouble than we can handle? Let's humbly pray that our God will bless us and open our eyes to see where we fall often, what our gadfly is. Let's pray earnestly that we will bring our weaknesses before our God and seek His blessings to bring our helplessness to Him. And let's also pray that when we see others falling because of their gadfly, something so small, that we would not be quick to criticize them for their weak faith, but remembering our smallness, we will pray that they will be blessed to bring their cares to our God, and find their strength in our God to bless them to overcome. Let's remember, our job is not, to not criticize, but it is to bless them to see their need of our God and run to Him with all of their cares. Leading them to our God is what Christians are called to do, and not be, not critical. When we see others fall, as God's people, our job is to help them to come to our God, and find our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus, to be more than sufficient for all of their weaknesses, for all of their troubles.

Jer 47 (1/10/25)

1. Where was the land of the Philistines and what was her relationship with Israel; what was God's word for her and why would God do that; what do you learn?
- In vv. 6-7, God's sword is spoken to as if a person, having a will to obey what God commanded. Actually, when God speaks to anything, such as to the water or the clouds or the rock or the mountains, they obey, as if they heard and are doing exactly what God had commanded them to do. We humans would be wise to learn from these, to obey our Maker when He commands us to do so. Sadly, in all of creation, we humans seems to be the only created creatures that will defy our Creator's command. Actually, before us, there were the angels that rebelled with Satan, whom God threw them out of His kingdom and created an eternal habitation just for them and his followers, who are not only the angels but also all the humans who rebels against God's commands like Satan and his followers. To rebel or disobey or dismiss or ignore, in a word, people who choose to not obey God's command are following in Satan's footsteps, and will end up with Satan in his everlasting home, where the fire and torment and misery and pain and agonies do not end. To imitate, to follow, to grow like Satan, the devil, is to end up like he, at his home, in hell. God's commands, God's word, should have only one good response, and as we see the sword today, to obey God's command is what our lives should be like. Let's learn to not be like the devil, but let's learn to be obedient to our God like the sword of the Lord.

Jer 48 (1/11/25)

1. Where was Moab and what was her relationship with Israel; what message of God for the Moabites strikes you and why; what do you learn?
- From my Bible notes. Why would God call His work bloodshed? (48:10). The OT approach to getting rid of sin was to get rid of the sinner, which often resulted in men, women and children being slaughtered. Those who picked up the sword to slay the guilty were considered agents of the Lord's wrath and judgment. Those who were killed were not viewed as victims since it was their own sins and hardened hearts that had brought punishment on them.
 - Why did shaving, cutting and dressing in sackcloth have to do with sorrow? (48:37). While we dress in black in our culture to express sorrow, people in the ancient Near East expressed sorrow in other ways. Since a beard signified a man's maturity and dignity, to shave the beard or the head was to suggest humility and great loss. To tear one's clothing—which was

handmade and more valuable in their culture than ours—demonstrated the depth of a tragedy greater than mere clothing. Garments represented personalities: to tear them indicated a grievous inner hurt. Cutting oneself was an expression of grief among pagans, although it was forbidden by the law (Lev 19:28; 21:5). Other ancient mourning customs included going barefoot, putting ashes on the head, covering the head, throwing dust in the air, and wailing loudly (Jer 41:5; 2Sam 13:19; 15:30; Esther 6:12).

Jer 49 (1/13/25)

1. What was the sin of the Ammonites God wants us to not learn and why (v. 4); what was the sin of the Edomites that God wants us to not learn and why (v. 16); what was the sin of the Kedar God wants us to not learn and why (v. 31); what strikes your heart and what do you want to learn?
- In v. 39, after speaking out of the many sins of these neighboring nations and thus their judgment, God ends this chapter very differently than what He says throughout, “Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam in days to come,” declares the Lord. I would think this ending is fitting for God’s people, whom He is disciplining presently because of our sinful behaviors. Yet, God ends this chapter of judgment with His blessing, to restore their fortunes. And I remember, God’s blessings to Abraham was always meant to overflow to the nations, which included these people. So, as much as they may not have been God’s people at this time, God’s grace is meant to also overflow unto them, and they too would be adopted into His family, just as God first adopted Israel. Though presently, they were enemies of God’s people, and yet, when God’s grace overflows unto them, they too will be adopted into God’s family, and they will become His children, thus making the non-believers today, our brothers and sisters. Oh, the grace of God is truly transformational, for He brings enemies into His house, for He adopts the unlovely, and loves us so deeply, that His love in us will change us more like our Lord Jesus, because His love truly is effectual in us. May we taste His love in us greatly, and may the people around us see His loveliness in us.

Jer 50 (1/14/25)

1. What does God say against Babylon and what does Israel got to do with this; are there anything specific God says in this chapter that captures you and why; what do you learn?
- In v. 20, we are told, “In those days, at that time,’ declares the Lord, ‘search will be made for Israel’s guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare.” Clearly, Israel has sinned greatly, which is why God has sent Babylon to destroy her land. And thus, if a search is made to seek her sins, there should be many to find easily. But God says here, “none will be found.” How can none be found when they have actually committed many? As completely guilty she was, yet, to find no sin in her is possible only because, “for I will forgive the remnant I spare.” When God forgives, no sin can be found, because in His forgiveness, all of our sins are cleansed, forgiven, to be found no more, ever in us. Not because we have not sinned, but because He has forgiven us, is what makes our sins completely covered under Christ’s righteousness. How amazing, how complete, how white, how righteous are we, all because Jesus paid for all of our sins fully, leaving not a single strain behind, none to be found.

Jer 51 (1/15/24)

1. What was God's message against Babylon and why; can you explain v. 5 to someone who may be confused; what more do you learn?

- In v. 6, it reads, "Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. It is time for the Lord's vengeance; He will repay her what she deserves." God's message can sound confusing at times. There was a time when God told His people in Jerusalem, they needed to go to Babylon. In fact, to not go to Babylon, was against His will. Now, is God changing His tune, by telling His people to flee from Babylon? Of course not. God does not change His mind, as if He was wrong, regretting His previous words. This change of command is because when Jerusalem needed to be rebuked for her sins, God's clear command was for His people to go to Babylon. And now, the time is for Babylon to receive what she deserves for her sins, and thus, God commands His people to leave, or otherwise, they will also suffer with the Babylonians, as God strikes these people for their sins. This is not God changing His mind. This is God teaching us discernment, to know when to leave, when to stay, and where to go. This is about learning that sin brings severe consequences. This is about learning, that we do not ever want to be anywhere near when God is striking out against sin, for if we should choose to stay nearby, we will suffer sin's consequences. There is a time for God's protection from evil, but there is also a time when God commands us to leave that place or people (even our friends) because otherwise, we too will suffer the same severe painful punishment for sin. We must not assume and rely simply what God has been in the past, but learn anew in our intimate relationship with our God, and learn to listen and obey what He commands us today.

Jer 52 (1/16/25)

1. What was the ending the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, saw for God's Temple, God's city, and his family and why was that; how old would King Jehoiachin be when he was released from prison (2Chron 36:9-10) and why would this book end with such an account; what do you learn?

- In v. 8, we see that Zedekiah, the last king of Israel, was fleeing the Promised Land via Jericho, without his soldiers. Some 490 years earlier, under the leading of Joshua, together with over 600,000 men for battle, they marched in to the Promised Land, via the first city they encountered and conquered, Jericho. Today's ending wasn't a fitting end, but a sad ending. It almost feels like they came full circle, when they didn't have to. Just as they conquered and dispersed the people living then, now it almost appears as if it was their turn, to be conquered and to flee. But, there is a repeat message we need to hear and to learn. The Canaanites were not simply removed from the land because it belonged to the Israelites. The Gentiles were destroyed because they were paying the wages of their sin. And now, the Israelites were thrust out of God's presence (v. 3) because of their sinfulness, and their unwillingness to humble themselves and repent of their sins, when God sent them again and again His servants to teach them to turn from their sins and turn and trust in their God alone.
- We need to understand and learn, that sin is God's greatest enemy, and so sin is our greatest enemy. And with sin, God will not tolerate, He will destroy, just as sin desires to destroy God, if it could, but it can't. Dear brothers and sisters, the sins we commit, as each of us struggle with a sinfulness that we often fall into, we need to learn, it wants to destroy our God, and since it can't, it is trying to destroy us. But, let's learn, we are not alone to fight against our sin. Christ came because He knew sin would conquer us if we fought with only our strength. So, He came to fight for us. And in what appeared like a defeat before sin because of His death, we

must learn, what the world called a defeat, His death, it was God's victory over sin, over our sins. And because Jesus conquered all sin, including ours, that is the reason why, there is no condemnation for us (even though we are still sinning) who are in Christ Jesus by faith (Rom 8:1). So, the great battle we must fight against our sinfulness, must never be fought with our own strength, but we need to learn to march out to battle and stand to see how awesome our God is, in His fight for us. Let's remember dear brothers and sisters, we are a new creation because Jesus purchased us from our sins. We are covered now with Jesus' complete and unending righteousness, that can never be stripped away from us, ever. And so, we must learn to live our lives, remembering, we have been crucified with Christ, which means, our lives are no longer ours (that's why, we must not speak and act as we like, because this is not my life), but we truly belong to Christ, because He took up our sins to become our Substitute on my cross, because it was for my sins He was lifted up. Our home is in heaven, so we are heavenly citizens, living as ambassadors in this world. Our glorious job here is to display for the citizens of this world to taste and see how good our God truly is, through the life and words we exhibit in our lives. Is our God truly beautiful in the way we reflect Him before all to see, starting with our family members? Let's not be like the Israelites that we meet here. Let's not do stubbornness, that shows more of our foolishness. Let's repent. Let's love our God. And let's pray that we would truly delight to grow more like our King, our Lord Jesus. The ending with our King Jesus is not a sad ending but we will enter into His kingdom to dwell under His perfect, loving, and glorious ways that our God is with His people. Home will be sweet. Can't wait!