

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 6-10-12 PM NOTES
JEREMIAH
#26 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

Jeremiah 20:14-15, 18 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Cursed *be* the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! ¹⁵ Let the man *be* cursed Who brought news to my father, saying, 'A male child has been born to you!' Making him very glad. ¹⁸ Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?"

2 Corinthians 11:23b-28 (NKJV) ²³ ...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."

I. The Preparation of Jeremiah (Chapter 1)

A. The Context of Jeremiah (Chapter 1:1-3)

Jeremiah prophesied under five different kings: Josiah (31 years), Jehoahaz (3 months), Jehoiakim (11 years), Jehoichin (3 months) and Zedekiah (11 years).

B. The Choice of Jeremiah (Chapter 1:4-10)

Jeremiah 29:11 (HCSB) "For I know the plans I have for you"—[this is] the Lord's declaration—'plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'"

Jeremiah 1:8 (ESV) "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."

C. The Charge to Jeremiah (Chapter 1:11-19)

II. The Proclamation to Judah (chapter 2-45)

1 Peter 4:17 (NKJV) "For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

A. The Condemnation of Judah (Chapter 2-29)

John 3:16 (NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

"God is clear with His people: They have become brazen in their sin. They have no shame. They

have become so accustomed to prostituting themselves to other gods that they don't even know how to blush.” —Mark Dever

Jeremiah 6:15 (NKJV) “‘Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down,’ says the Lord.”

Jeremiah 3:19 (NIV) “I myself said, ‘How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.’ I thought you would call me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following me.”

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

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

Jeremiah 1:8b (NKJV) “‘...for I *am* with you to deliver you,’ says the Lord.”

B. The Consolation of Judah (Chapter 31-34)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NKJV) “³¹Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- ³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. ³³But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Luke 22:20 (NKJV) “Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’”

C. The Calamity of Judah (Chapter 34-45)

Jeremiah 38:2-6 (NKJV) “²Thus says the Lord: ‘He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.’ ³Thus says the Lord: ‘This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon’s army, which shall take it.’ ⁴Therefore the princes said to the king, ‘Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm.’ ⁵Then Zedekiah the king said, ‘Look, he *is* in your hand. For the king can *do* nothing against you.’ ⁶So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king’s son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So

Jeremiah sank in the mire.”

III. The Proclamations of Judgment on the Nations (Chapter 46-51)

IV. The Fall of Jerusalem (Chapter 52)

“God reminds Jeremiah that He called him to be a prophet, to speak His words. God didn’t call Jeremiah to be successful. He didn’t call Jeremiah to win a popularity contest. God called Jeremiah to be faithful and to be His representative, period. So why should Jeremiah be discouraged? So what if people didn’t like him, if kings and captains opposed him? So what if he wasn’t successful in the eyes of the world? Jeremiah needed to concern himself with only one standard of success: God’s standard. If Jeremiah was faithful and obedient, if he spoke God’s words with boldness and clarity, then it didn’t matter if those words produced results. It didn’t matter if the people repented, if the nation came back to God or not. Results are God’s department. Obedience was Jeremiah’s department. As long as he kept in view the goal of obedience to God, he would be depression-proof. The same is true for you and me.”

—Ray Steadman

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JEREMIAH

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In my opinion, the prophet Jeremiah is one of the most courageous men who ever lived. His life has been a great encouragement to me over the last 35 and 1/2 years of pastoral ministry. Jeremiah’s ministry lasted around 40 years and during that time he saw no evidence in the sense of results that his ministry was at all successful. His message to the people of Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel) was summarized by one word – “Repent!” Yet, the nation didn’t repent. Toward the end of his ministry it was too late to repent and all that was left was the judgment of God. In fact God tells Jeremiah not to even pray for the nation any more. God says that even if two of the heroes of the faith interceded (Moses and Samuel, Jeremiah 15:1), He would still not withhold His judgment. When the nation crossed over the line where repentance was too late, Jeremiah exhorted them to cooperate with Babylon and not resist. That message resulted in his being called a traitor and actually being incarcerated.

It should come as no surprise to us that Jeremiah struggled with discouragement and depression during his tumultuous ministry. **Jeremiah 20:14-15, 18 (NKJV)** “¹⁴ Cursed *be* the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! ¹⁵ Let the man *be* cursed who brought news to my father, saying, ‘A male child has been born to you!’ making him very glad. ¹⁸ Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?” That sounds a lot like some of the things Job said in his time of trial. So many of God’s special saints have struggled with discouragement and depression – Charles Spurgeon, G. Campbell Morgan, David

Brainerd, Andrew Bonar, and William Cowper (who wrote “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood”) are a few. We learn from Jeremiah and a host of other choice saints of the Lord that following the Lord completely doesn’t insure a trouble free, pain free comfortable life. On the contrary, following Him in complete obedience often results in increased trials, loneliness, and rejection. Listen to a summary of the Apostle Paul’s troubles that came not just during the time he was a Christian, but the trials that came because he was a Christian: **2 Corinthians 11:23b-28 (NKJV)** “²³ ... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” Where did we ever get the idea that if we obey God we will be prosperous, pain free, accepted by the same world system that crucified Jesus? We are soldiers in a real war doing battle behind enemy lines and there are deep wounds and many casualties. Heaven is where we finally rest from the results of sin and the constant battles.

I. The Preparation of Jeremiah (Chapter 1)

Before we deal with the text of the book of Jeremiah, let me tell you about how most of the books of the prophets are arranged. Jeremiah is not arranged like most books today. Jeremiah is a collection of speeches, prophesies, and messages that have been compiled. These speeches, prophesies, and messages aren’t always arranged in chronological order. Keep that in mind as we study Jeremiah.

A. The Context of Jeremiah (Chapter 1:1-3)

Jeremiah prophesied under five different kings: Josiah (31 years), Jehoahaz (3 months), Jehoiakim (11 years), Jehoichin (3 months) and Zedekiah (11 years). Jeremiah was both a priest and a prophet who lived about 60 years after the prophet Isaiah. The first king Jeremiah served under was a godly king – the boy king Josiah who came to the throne at 8 years of age after his wicked father was assassinated. Josiah sought to wipe out idolatry in Judah and bring the people back to God. The revival during Josiah’s time was only on the surface with the people of Judah. Josiah was Judah’s last good king. The kings after him until Judah was taken into captivity were not obedient to God. The situation in the nations surrounding Judah when Jeremiah began prophesying was that the world power, Assyria was deteriorating quickly. Babylon was on the rise. During the time of Jeremiah’s prophesy, it was Babylon that God would use to bring His judgment against rebellious Judah.

B. The Choice of Jeremiah (Chapter 1:4-10)

Jeremiah was the son of a priest from a little town where the priests lived that was about 3 miles from Jerusalem (Anathoth). It is likely that Jeremiah was 19 or 20 years old when God called him. God’s call in verse 5 is worth our time to look a little more in depth. God is sovereign and omniscient (all knowing). He tells Jeremiah that before he was conceived in his mother’s womb, God knew him, knew all about him. God had sanctified him (set him apart) and ordained him to be the Lord’s prophet to the nations. The word “ordained” means to appoint. Oh how this verse exposes the evil of abortion. It

is not a blob of tissue, it is a person that God knows and knew before they were conceived in the womb. Jeremiah, later in the book shares more about God's plan for each of us.

Jeremiah 29:11 (HCSB) “‘For I know the plans I have for you’—[this is] the Lord’s declaration—‘plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” Just as Isaiah endured through trials and disappointing times and even martyrdom because of the assuring call he had from God, even so Jeremiah endured knowing that God had known him before his conception, set him apart for God’s purposes, and appointed Jeremiah for the ministry of a prophet. When you come to the place that you know that God had plans for you before you were born and because God is sovereign He is working all things together for good (“for your welfare and not for disaster”) because you love Him and you are called according to His purpose, then you can endure hard times, perplexing times and disappointing times knowing that there is hope for the future.

God promised Jeremiah something much better than a comfortable life, a life of material prosperity and a life where everyone would like him. He promised in **Jeremiah 1:8 (ESV)** “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.” The promise of His presence is better than anything tied to this earth!

C. The Charge to Jeremiah (Chapter 1:11-19)

Just as some 60 years earlier when God sent Isaiah forth with a message of judgment and then hope to the nations, even so He sends Jeremiah with a similar message [Read 1:10]. Just as God warned Isaiah of opposition and rejection, even so He warns Jeremiah [Read 1:17-19].

II. The Proclamation to Judah (Chapter 2-45)

There is a timeless principle given in **1 Peter 4:17 (NKJV)** “For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” The principle is that God begins dealing with sin first in His own people. To be one of God’s people means that you have had greater light, more truth than others and you will be held to a higher standard. When Jeremiah starts announcing God’s judgment, he starts with the people of God, the inhabitants of Judah.

A. The Condemnation of Judah (Chapter 2-29)

God speaks sternly with Judah concerning their rebellion against Him and their idolatry in 2:9-13 [Read]. Verse 13 is one of the most important verses in the book of Jeremiah. What a word picture of the foolishness of backsliding – God’s people pulling away from Him and going back into the world. It is like living in a dry land where water is scarce and yet you have access to a beautiful clear spring (NIV) that never runs dry – a spring of pure living water. Then, in an incredibly foolish, dumb move you turn away from that beautiful clean, cool, never run dry spring and take a mattock and shovel and start to dig out your own container. You work hard plastering the sides and bottom. You make channels so that the scarce rain water runs into your homemade cistern. The water is scarce and its nasty with dirt and debris in the water. Still you manage to collect a little in the bottom of your cistern. Then, the plaster that has been wet and then exposed to the sun cracks and what little dirty water you had leaks out into the dry ground. That is a perfect picture of those who backslide from their surrendered walk with the Lord and give in to the allurements of the world system. In verse 12, God even speaks to the heavens and says, “Have you ever seen anything like this? Be astonished!”

In chapter three, God speaks through Jeremiah comparing Judah to a prostitute who has

turned from the one true husband (God) and prostituted themselves to dumb idols. Mark Dever summarizes this section: “God is clear with His people: They have become brazen in their sin. They have no shame. They have become so accustomed to prostituting themselves to other gods that they don’t even know how to blush” [Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, Page 596]. **Jeremiah 6:15a (NKJV)** “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush.”

As God prepares to judge His people, we hear His heart in **Jeremiah 3:19 (NIV)** “I myself said, ‘How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.’ I thought you would call me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following me.” It is not that God is enraged with His people turning away from Him; He is wounded and grieved. Jeremiah was so close to God that he didn’t just speak for God, he felt with God. Listen to a verse that scholars debate over whether Jeremiah is speaking or God is speaking: **Jeremiah 9:1 (NKJV)** “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!” I think that this is Jeremiah speaking, but he is reflecting the heart of God. In the early 1950’s a young preacher named Bob Pierce visited the orient and saw postwar devastation especially on the children. When he returned home, he wrote down this prayer request: “Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God”. In answer to that prayer Bob Pierce was led to start World Vision, a ministry that for more than 50 years has reached out with food and clothing to hurting souls and has become one of the largest relief organizations in the world. I heard Bob Pierce’s testimony sitting on my couch in Fort Worth, Texas in the mid 1970’s and prayed that prayer. I still long for God to do that in a deeper way in my life. I have so far to go, but we see that embodied in Jeremiah.

Let me add in here a personal note about Jeremiah. We read in **Jeremiah 16:1-2 (NKJV)** “¹The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, ²‘You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.’” In light of the trouble coming, God told Jeremiah that he could not marry or have children. Think of the heavy burdens Jeremiah dealt with – the hard prophesies of God; the misunderstandings of the people; the times of imprisonment. He had no human being to share in his struggles, to encourage him, to give him diversion from the pressures and the suffocating trials. Jeremiah persevered, no doubt hanging on to the promise of **Jeremiah 1:8b (NKJV)** “‘...for I am with you to deliver you,’ says the Lord.”

B. The consolation of Judah (Chapter 30-33)

These 4 chapters contain what has been called “The New Covenant”. These chapters are like the sunlight that breaks through the dark clouds. We read of the new covenant in **Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NKJV)** ³¹“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- ³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. ³³But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” The problem with the

existing covenant was not that it was wrong or flawed. The problem was not with the covenant; it was with the people. They made a habit of being unfaithful to God's covenants. The new covenant that would be inaugurated by Christ was different in that it involved a "nature change". The power of the new covenant is summarized in **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)** "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." The law would be written not on tablets of stone, but in their minds and hearts. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted by the writer of the Hebrews in what is the longest quotation from the Old Testament in the New Testament. This New covenant was inaugurated through the cross and Jesus shed blood there. When Jesus established the Lord's Supper, he said in **Luke 22:20 (NKJV)** "Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'" Right now the covenant is fulfilled in individuals (Jew and Gentile) through the church, but there is coming a day that it will be fulfilled in ethnic Israel (Romans 11:16-27)

C. The Calamity of Judah (Chapters 34-45)

This section of Jeremiah takes us through the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. As the time got closer to Babylon taking Jerusalem, the persecution against Jeremiah intensified. It is in this section that Jeremiah moves from urging Judah to repent to urging them to surrender to the Babylonians. We see the consequences of that message in **Jeremiah 38:2-6 (NKJV)** ²"Thus says the Lord: 'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'³ Thus says the Lord: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'⁴ Therefore the princes said to the king, 'Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm.'⁵ Then Zedekiah the king said, 'Look, he *is* in your hand. For the king can *do* nothing against you.'⁶ So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire." That pretty well shoots down the false teaching that if you obey and trust God you will prosper. Tell that to Jeremiah and see what he would say! God did move in the heart of the wicked king to get Jeremiah out a short time later.

Through all of his trials, Jeremiah never faltered. He did pour out his heart to God, but he obeyed God when God said to speak forth His word.

III. The Proclamations of Judgment on the Nations (Chapter 46-51)

These messages aren't in chronological order and were probably compiled over a period of time. While God started by dealing with sin among His people, He didn't stop there. Judgment was also coming against the Gentile nations. In this section, Jeremiah pronounces judgment against Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, Elam, and finally Babylon. God used Babylon as His instrument of judgment against His people Judah, but then God judged Babylon.

IV. The Fall of Jerusalem (Chapter 52)

This chapter is almost identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30. It is really an historical supplement giving the historical details of Jerusalem's fall. When we come to the end of

Jeremiah, we see that the temple is destroyed; the city is plundered and burned. Oh the sad result of sin, and especially the sin of idolatry.

CONCLUSION

I want to close with three lessons that we learn from Jeremiah. First, we learn the lesson that God uses unlikely people to accomplish His purposes. Jeremiah was just a young man- late teens or early twenties. God used him in spite of his youth and inexperience. Second, proclaiming God's word should reflect God's heart. If God has called you to a teaching position, cultivate God's heart of compassion before you pronounce the hard words of the Lord. Yes, say the hard things, talk about Hell and judgment, but do it with an ache in your heart and a tear in your eye. Third, we must learn to define success in terms of being faithful to God. We saw this in Isaiah last week, but it is even more evident in Jeremiah's life.

Allow me to close with these words from Ray Steadman: "God reminds Jeremiah that He called him to be a prophet, to speak His words. God didn't call Jeremiah to be successful. He didn't call Jeremiah to win a popularity contest. God called Jeremiah to be faithful and to be His representative, period. So why should Jeremiah be discouraged? So what if people didn't like him, if kings and captains opposed him? So what if he wasn't successful in the eyes of the world? Jeremiah needed to concern himself with only one standard of success: God's standard. If Jeremiah was faithful and obedient, if he spoke God's words with boldness and clarity, then it didn't matter if those words produced results. It didn't matter if the people repented, if the nation came back to God or not. Results are God's department. Obedience was Jeremiah's department. As long as he kept in view the goal of obedience to God, he would be depression-proof. The same is true for you and me" [Ray Steadman, *Adventuring Through the Bible*, Pages 328-329].