

Jeremiah, Weeping for His Nation

November 8, 2020

DAY 1: Jeremiah, the weeping prophet

1. The prophet Jeremiah was known as the “weeping prophet.” Jeremiah had major reasons for weeping. Consider these five as a group:

- a. He preached to the people to repent and get right with God.
- b. The people blew him off, or worse, persecuted him.
- c. He warned them of terrible judgment to come from the north (Babylon)
- d. He witnessed judgment at the gates, in the city, and the utter destruction of Jerusalem, the city, the people, with ninety percent of them taken to captivity in Babylon.
- e. He knew none of this had to be. It just didn’t have to end this way!

Jeremiah 9:1 Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.

2. Why does Jeremiah weep in verse 1?

Jeremiah 9:2 Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers, so that I might leave my people and go away from them; for they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people. ³ "They make ready their tongue like a bow, to shoot lies; it is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge me," declares the LORD.

3. Why does Jeremiah weep in verses 2-3?

Jeremiah 9:7 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says: "See, I will refine and test them, for what else can I do because of the sin of my people? ⁸ Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks with deceit. With his mouth each speaks cordially to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets a trap for him. ⁹ Should I not punish them for this?" declares the LORD..."

4. Why does Jeremiah weep in verses 7-9?

Jeremiah 9:12 What man is wise enough to understand this? Who has been instructed by the LORD and can explain it? Why has the land been ruined and laid waste like a desert that no one can cross? ¹³ The LORD said, "It is because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them; they have not obeyed me or followed my law. ¹⁴ Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts..."

5. Why does Jeremiah weep in verses 12-14?

DAY 2: Jeremiah's trials and suffering

1. Jeremiah's continual message was simple. The people were rebellious, disobedient, and idolaters. They needed to repent. Judgment was coming (from Babylon). But, the people either ignored him or inflicted Jeremiah with severe trials.

*Jeremiah 20:1 When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the chief officer in the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, ² he had Jeremiah the prophet **beaten** and **put in the stocks** at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple.*

2. Who was the one had had Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks?

3. Jeremiah was "at the end of his rope." From a human point of view his ministry was a colossal failure.

Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. ⁸ Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long.

⁹ But if I say, "I will not mention him or speak any more 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.

4. In spite of tremendous ridicule and mocking, there is something deeper than the pain of mocking and ridicule going on in his heart. What is it? (verse 9)

5. Later, Jeremiah was falsely accused of deserting to the Babylonians who were besieging Jerusalem.

*Jeremiah 37:14 "That's not true!" Jeremiah said. "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he **arrested** Jeremiah and brought him to the officials.*

*¹⁵ They were angry with Jeremiah and **had him beaten** and **imprisoned** in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.*

*¹⁶ Jeremiah was put into a **vaulted cell in a dungeon**, where **he remained a long time**.*

¹⁷ Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the LORD?" "Yes," Jeremiah replied, "you will be handed over to the king of Babylon."

¹⁸ Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What crime have I committed against you or your officials or this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹ Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, 'The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land'?"

6. In spite of suffering unjustly, notice the boldness of Jeremiah, faithful to his calling!

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: More trials and suffering

1. As the Babylonians continued to besiege the city of Jerusalem, God gave Jeremiah clear instructions to tell the people. "Stay in the city and you will die. Surrender to the Babylonians and you will live."

Jeremiah 38:1 Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, ² "This is what the LORD says: 'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians will live. He will escape with his life; he will live.'³ And this is what the LORD says: 'This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.'"

2. If you had heard a message like this, how would you have responded?

*Jeremiah 38:4 Then the officials said to the king, **"This man should be put to death.** He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin."⁵ "He is in your hands," King Zedekiah answered. "The king can do nothing to oppose you."*

3. What strikes you about the allegations leveled against Jeremiah?

4. Instead of at least contemplating Jeremiah's message the officials react with rage. It's staggering to think that (1) God gave the people a message, (2) They blew it off as nonsense and worse, as treachery or treason, (3) They took absolutely no heed to the message.

5. Are you open to receive words from God, or have you already made up your mind that you will "filter" what you hear to see if it "fits" what you want to do anyway?

Jeremiah 38:6 So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

6. When life gets discouraging, when you are mocked and ridiculed, when you go through times of suffering what keeps you going?

7. What do you think kept Jeremiah going?

DAY 4: God's tender message about the people's restoration

1. Judgment is rarely final. In today's passage, God promises His exiled community living in Babylon that He will bring back the people to the land of Israel.

2. Notice God's tender language toward His people.

Jeremiah 31:18 "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: ..."

3. Here is what God heard from His exiled people:

'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God. ¹⁹ 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.'

4. This is the voice of a chastened and repentant people. What strikes you about their attitude?

a. About their sin?

b. About God?

5. God responds tenderly to His people.

Jeremiah 31:20 Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD.

6. What strikes you about God's attitude toward His chastened people?

7. Is this how you believe God thinks of you? Why or why not?

Jeremiah 31:21 "Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns."

7. God sees the road back from Babylon to the Promised Land. Mighty Babylon's overthrow and utter defeat stunned the world. On one day, God's people who had lived in exile were suddenly free to return! God knows the day of victory and the day to travel.

Jeremiah 31:22 "How long will you wander, O unfaithful daughter? The LORD will create a new thing on earth..."

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: God's sorrow and lament over our sin, and the New Covenant

1. Jeremiah was not the first one to weep over the state of his nation. He was not the first one to lament over the needless judgment that afflicted God's rebellious people.

2. About five hundred years later, Jesus Christ would stand on the hilltop overlooking Jerusalem and utter a very similar lament.

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

3. This lament has two parts.

a. Part 1—lamenting the sin of the people (and what He implies is the judgment that the people faced because of their sin. It didn't need to end this way).

b. Part 2—lamenting His own sorrow at His people's refusal to come to Him.

4. What strikes you about Jesus' lament?

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31 (RSV) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD.

³³ But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

5. The stunning news that Jeremiah announces to a rebellious and repentant people is God will make a new covenant with them! What strikes you about each verse?

Verse 31:

Verse 32:

Verse 33:

Verse 34: