

Walking in God's way brings blessings and life, but choosing a self-centered path yields death and destruction. This is the choice continually being made. God calls on the king and his people to show mercy to others; to follow God's law. Even when the people and their leaders turn to God in prayer they show they only want a superficial religion – a God that helps them without any personal cost. Jeremiah's vision was that the law of God will become the natural habit patterns of God's people, written in their hearts, so that all among them will know the Lord (JER 33:33-34). While God never wavers in his purposes for Israel and Judah, their stubborn rebellion requires justice. Their punishment and captivity are part of his design to soften people's hearts and restore them. But He never stops loving and longing for the best.

Weekly Reading Plan (p. 777-808)

Day 1: JER 10:17-25; 21:1-22:9;
 JER 34:1-22; 46:13-28
 Day 2: JER 37:1-21; 30:1-33:26
 Day 3: JER 23:1-8; 38:1-28
 Day 4: 2 CH 36:13-16; EZE 8:1-11:25
 Day 5: EZE 13:1-18:32
 Day 6: EZE 20:1-21:17; 22:1-22
 Day 7: EZE 23:1-49

Outline

The Siege of Jerusalem [Day 1]
 Hophra's Assault [Day 1]
 A Lull in the Seige [Day 2-3]
 Priestly Account: Rebellion Against Babylon [Day 4]
 Ezekiel's Temple Vision [Day 4]
 Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem [5-7]

Key Characters

Jeremiah	Zedekiah
Nebuchadnezzar	Hophra
Irijah	Jonathan
Hanamel	Baruch
Ebed-Melek	Ezekiel

Key Locations

Jerusalem
 Babylon
 Judah
 Egypt

Key Terms

Restoration	Righteous
Judgment	Prophecies
Condemnation	Curse
Sovereign	

Key Verses

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his day Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.” [JER 23:5-6]

Look the days are coming –this is the Lord's declaration-- when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah [JER 31:31]

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. [JER 31:34]

“I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.” [EZE 11:17]

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you...and you will know that I am the Lord.” [EZE 16:59-60, 62]

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Jer10: Do not learn the ways of the nations. The LORD is the true God. Listen, a great commotion from the north! They have devoured Jacob.

Jer21: Zedekiah enquired about Nebuchadnezzar. The LORD says: Whoever stays in the city will die. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy it with fire.

Jer22: Proclaim at the palace: I will make you a desert. Shallum will not return. They will not lament for Jehoiakim. Coniah is cast away.

Jer46: Of Egypt: There is no healing for you. Prepare yourselves for exile. I will deliver Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar. But fear not, O Jacob!

Jer37: Zedekiah became king. Jeremiah said: Do not think the Babylonians will leave us. Irijah arrested Jeremiah. Zedekiah gave him bread.

Jer30: Write these words in a book. I will restore my people, says the LORD. I have punished you but I will heal you. I will be your God.

Jer31: Sing with joy for Jacob! Return to your cities. I will make a new covenant with Israel, says the LORD. I will put my law within them.

Jer32: Jeremiah bought a field in Anathoth. O LORD, the city has been handed over to Babylon. The LORD says: I will surely gather my people.

Jer33: The LORD says: I will tell you great things. I will bring healing to the land. David will never lack a son on the throne of Israel.

Jer23: I will raise up a righteous Branch, says the LORD. The prophets fill you with false hopes. I did not speak, yet they have prophesied.

Jer38: Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern. Zedekiah sent for him. Jeremiah said: If you surrender to the king of Babylon then you will live.

2Ch36: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah ruled. Then Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple and took Judah captive for seventy years.

Eze8: The Spirit lifted me up. "Son of man, see what they do. Elders burn incense to idols. Women weep for Tammuz. Men worship the sun."

Eze9: He cried, "Bring the executioners." Six men came. "Kill old and young, but do not touch those with the mark. I will not have pity."

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Eze10: He told the man in linen: "Take fire from between the wheels." Each wheel had four faces. The glory of the LORD left the temple.

Eze11: The Spirit said: "These men plot evil." I said: "Will you destroy the remnant?" The LORD said: "I will put a new spirit within them."

Eze12: "Son of man, they are a rebellious house. Bring out your baggage like an exile. I will disperse them. My word will not be delayed."

Eze13: "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit. I will send a storm in my wrath. Woe to the women who sew magic charms."

Eze14: The elders came to me. The LORD said: "They have set up idols in their hearts. Even Noah, Daniel and Job would only save themselves."

Eze15: "Son of man, is wood taken from the vine to make anything? I have given it to the fire for fuel. So I have given up Jerusalem."

Eze16: "Jerusalem, I made you flourish. But you played the whore. I will gather your lovers against you. Yet I will remember my covenant."

Eze17: "An eagle planted a vine but it grew towards another eagle. Israel rebelled against Babylon with Egypt. I myself will plant a cedar."

Eze18: "If a man is righteous, he shall live. If a son is violent, he shall die. I will judge each according to his ways. Repent and live!"

Ezk20: "I led Israel out of Egypt. They did not walk in my law. I withheld my hand for my name's sake. You will know that I am the LORD."

Ezk21: "Son of man, prophesy against Israel. A sword is sharpened! Mark the way for the king of Babylon. A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it."

Ezk22: "A city that sheds blood. In you they oppress orphans and widows. Israel has become dross to me. I will pour out my wrath upon them."

Ezk23: "Two sisters: Samaria and Jerusalem. Oholah lusted after her lovers. Oholibah was worse in whoring. Bring an army and cut them down."

Teachings About God

- God is sovereign in the affairs of all people and all nations.
- God blesses faithfulness to him and punishes his people when they turn away from him. He values allegiance to him above all else.

Teachings About Humanity

- Jeremiah manifests both the wickedness and the greatness possible in human beings, King Jehoiakim's destruction of the scroll and King Zedekiah's mistreatment of Jeremiah (36-38) show the great evil political leaders can fall into. More is known about the godly Jeremiah than any other prophet.
- Jeremiah was filled with self-doubt and misgivings, but he remained faithful to his calling by God.
- Individuals are responsible before God (EZE 18).

Teachings About Salvation

- The tension between judgment on sin and salvation yet to come make Jeremiah a book of hope in difficult times.
- Ezekiel teaches both the individual and corporate dimensions of salvation.

Reflections of Christ/Holy Spirit

- Both Jesus and Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem (JER 9:1; LK 19:41).
- The New Covenant (JER 31-34) looks forward to what Christ would accomplish in his coming and death.
- Ezekiel uses the term "son of man" throughout the book, which is how Jesus refers to himself.
- Prophecies of a Davidic king, fulfilled by Christ, are throughout Ezekiel.

Literary Genres/Techniques

- Ezekiel includes prophecies, visions and symbolic actions. It is written mainly in Hebrew prose but has some poetry. His visions are a special form of prophecy.
- Jeremiah includes foretelling prophecies.
- The majority of Jeremiah is poetry, with some narrative prose and biographical narrative.
- Jeremiah used repetition and cryptograms.

Author/Date of Writing/Audience

- Jeremiah prophesied to Judah for 40 years c 626-c586. The book was likely compiled c585 BC. Jeremiah was written for the people of Judah during Jeremiah's lifetime.
- 2 Chronicles was likely written by Ezra c450 BC to the Jews in Jerusalem after they returned from exile.
- Ezekiel prophesied during the first part of the Babylonian captivity (c593-571BC).

What did I learn about God?

- Regarding “the Lord’s Council” (JER 23:18, 22) and the shape of the future, do you think God A) knows all? B) controls all? C) both D) neither? What difference does it make to you? How does it affect your faith? What is involved in standing in the council of the Lord?
- The exiles rebuilt Jerusalem after 70 years. The city did not prove invincible, but was sacked again, most notably by the Romans in 70 AD. What then does God’s promise of eternal security for Jerusalem (JER 31:38-40) really mean?
- God gave Jeremiah advance confirmation of his will regarding Jeremiah’s purchase of the field from his cousin. Has God ever told you in advance what he wants you to do when a certain situation arose? What role does God have in your decision making process? What investment would God want you to make in the future of your world as a testimony of your faith in God?
- In EZE 10 the glory of God departs from the temple. What is conditional and what is unconditional about God’s presence? What might cause the “glory of the Lord” to withdraw from a person’s life?

What did I learn about human nature?

- Read JER 9:23. What kinds of things do people today boast or take pride in?
- Even in circumcision, Judah had become like the surrounding countries (JER 9:25). In what ways is the Christian Church today indistinguishable from the society it is in? In what ways is the Christian Church distinct from any other social group? How does the church “stay relevant” yet attract new believers?
- How was the Jewish concept of God different from that of the pagans (JER 10:10-13). How easy would it be to combine the monotheism of Israel with worship of local cultic deities? Why was idolatry such a temptation for the people of Israel? What kinds of things do people idolize today – things they count on to speak to them, carry them or do good for them as only God can?
- Who in our world are “oppressors” and who are the “robbed”? How can we help bring justice to the oppressed?

What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- How much time do you take to meditate on God’s creation and power? What aspect of nature speaks most clearly to you of God’s power?
- In JER 21, Jeremiah tells the people to leave Jerusalem. Would you have deserted the city as Jeremiah advised? What would it have cost you to flee? What would it have cost you to remain? How might leaving Jerusalem be an allegory for becoming a committed Christian? What would you need to leave behind to become more committed to Christ?
- Hope shines in even the most difficult chapters of Israel’s history. How does hope shine for you?
- Jeremiah’s new covenant promises: A) ready forgiveness of sins (JER 30:34)? B) freedom from the sins of the parents (JER 30:29)? C) internal working of the Spirit (JER 31:33-34)? D) all of the above? E) other? Which aspect means the most to your spiritual walk? Why? Which covenant are you living under: the law or grace? How do you know?