

## 34. Jeremiah and Tears

The book of Jeremiah was always a hard slog to endure every time I read the Bible through. It is filled with curses spoken against in so many directions. It has worked the same thing as Revelation through church history in sending darkened hearts down paths of harshness towards others.

One line from Jeremiah – the heart is deceitful – was the primary falseness in my own life experience that prevented us from truly loving one another.

Yet Lamentations 3, Jeremiah and tears, was the comfort of my heart for years for it told me that God was with me.

The Cross on Every Page. I read through the book of Jeremiah recently and saw it through an entirely different set of eyes. The problem has never been Jeremiah; the problem has always been in the seeing of Christians, completely separate from anything Jeremiah wrote.

Christians have long seen Jesus as faraway and irrelevant towards us right now, but the law close at hand and applicable. And Christians have long seen the flesh as huge and the cross as tiny and insignificant.

As I read Jeremiah this last time, I saw the cross on every page, huge, certain, and finished. – the slain of the Lord.

Heart Relationship. Our purpose in this lesson is limited and focused. We want to know Jeremiah the man and his heart relationship with God as well as the depths of his love towards the Church.

And we say “the Church” because we know that Jeremiah and King Josiah and all who belonged to God in his day are born again believers in Jesus right now and members with us of the same body of Christ. I like saying this, because its true and it changes our whole perspective towards Old Testament people.

There is much more in Scripture concerning Jeremiah's life than Isaiah's; let's include a timeline again.

#### A Timeline

|         |  |     |  |
|---------|--|-----|--|
| 681     | Isaiah martyred  | 608 | Jeremiah prophesies the yoke of Babylon, then is declared a traitor.   |
| 650     | Birth of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, a priest  |     |  |
| 648     | Birth of Josiah  | 606 | Habakkuk prophesies;<br>Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem  |
| 642     | Death of Manasseh  |     |  |
| 640     | Death of Amon, Josiah becomes king   | 605 | First deportation, including Daniel (age 23);<br>battle of Carchemish, Babylon over Egypt                                  |
| 633-629 | At 16, Josiah seeks the Lord and cleanses the land of all the idolatry                     | 604 | Daniel and friends choose God;<br>Nebuchadnezzar dreams, Daniel interprets   |
| 628     | Daniel is born; Jeremiah is called of God  |     |  |
| 625     | Assyria weakened; Babylon rises  | 603 | Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's words;<br>Pashur puts Jeremiah in stocks;<br>Jehoiakim defies Nebuchadnezzar                    |
| 623     | Josiah repairs the temple and finds the law, then keeps the Passover with all Israel       |     |  |
| 622     | Birth of Ezekiel   | 602 | Birth of Darius the Mede   |
| 612     | Babylon ascends to world power   | 599 | Birth of Cyrus the Persian   |
| 609     | Josiah slain in battle against Egypt Jehoahaz becomes king, then is taken captive to Egypt | 598 | Babylon besieges again, 2nd deportation;<br>Jehoiakim dies; Jehoiachin taken; 3rd deportation including Ezekiel & Mordecai |
| 608     | Jehoiakim becomes king, trusts in Egypt  | 597 | Zedekiah becomes king  |

|     |   |     |  |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| 597 | Jeremiah prophesies victory of Babylon; writes letter to those in captivity | 580 | Ezekiel continues to prophesy, including dry bones and Gog-Magog |
| 594 | Hananiah's false prophecy; Jeremiah travels to Babylon with King Zedekiah   | 573 | Ezekiel's vision of river and temple                             |
| 594 | Ezekiel sees his visions of the heavenlies                                  | 570 | Neb's second dream – the tree                                    |
| 589 | Ezekiel prophesies Jerusalem's destruction                                  | 569 | Neb invades Egypt – seven years of madness                       |

|     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 588 | The siege presses close; 4th deportation; Jeremiah says “Surrender,” is persecuted; Ezekiel prophesies against all nations  | 562 | Neb converts and dies   |
|     |   | 560 | Jeremiah dies   |
| 586 | Jeremiah buys a property in the country; is accused again of treason and imprisoned; Jerusalem falls captive to Babylon; walls & temple destroyed, 5th & 6th deportations | 559 | Cyrus becomes ruler of Persia                                 |
|     |   | 557 | Buddha is born  |
|     |   | 551 | Confucius is born   |
|     | Jeremiah allowed to remain with those who lived outside of Jerusalem. He weeps over the broken city and writes Lamentations; Gedaliah becomes governor and is slain;      | 550 | Daniel’s vision of future world empires                       |
|     |   | 539 | Babylon falls; Persia the world power                         |
|     |   | 537 | Daniel in the lion’s den                                      |
|     | Ishmael leads remainder to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them; Jeremiah prophesies against Egypt and the Jews living there  | 536 | The first return under Zerubbabel; the altar is reestablished |
| 582 | Nebuchadnezzar continues conquering; 7th deportation  | 535 | The foundation of the new temple is laid in Jerusalem         |

The Flow of History. The timeline goes from Isaiah’s death in 681 BC to the foundation of the new temple in the restoration in 535 BC, a span of 146 years. As such, it includes the layout for Ezekiel and Daniel as well.

Notice how all the many threads of Bible story come together during this period. This makes Jeremiah and Ezekiel much more interesting, because the chapters are interspersed with national and world events.

Notice also the flow of world history. It is not coincidental that the great thinkers that shaped the Gentile world are born in this time – with Socrates born in 470 BC, just before Ezra returns to Jerusalem.

Years of Pleading. Jeremiah was 64 years old when Jerusalem fell to Babylon, and the wall and temple were destroyed. Yet he was just 22 when God called him to speak to the people of Jerusalem to turn – 42 years of pleading, yet it all seemed for nothing.

Jeremiah was a Levite, of a priestly family. He was recognized by the rulers as a man of respect; he commanded their ears even when they hated what he said.

What I want us to see most is the extraordinary sorrow, coming out of years of agony, coming out of great opposition and accusation – traitor! – in which the words of Lamentation were penned. How lonely sits the city that was full of people!

A Weeping Savior. Our purpose again is to trace out Jeremiah's relationship with God through all the cataclysm of events.

But before we do that, I want to set out the next chapter and a sorrowful pattern of redemption we are discovering, that of a rejected Savior weeping over His city of love.

**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”**  
(Matthew 23:37-39).

A Direct Connection. In the next chapter I hope to show a DIRECT connection between Abel placing the Lamb Slain between himself and everything else, all the way through David in Psalm 22 and then to you and me right now in the year of our Lord 2021.

That connection passes through and is shaped by Isaiah in his portrayal of a rejected Messiah and Jeremiah in his brokenness of heart over a city of love that will not hear love.

I hope to show that Lamentations is the weeping of God's Heart fulfilled now in us as 1 John 3:16 – And we also. – A woman clothed with the sun, right now upon the earth, is our entire focus, the few, the firstfruits, for the many.

The Word Is in Your Mouth. **Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you [Pro-Knowing]; before you were born I sanctified you [devoted you to Myself]; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”**

**Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”** (Jeremiah is just 21 or 22.)

Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and **to plant.”**

Binding and Loosing. This same call is upon us just as it was upon Jeremiah.

Assuredly, I say to you, anything you bind upon earth will have been bound inside of heaven, and anything you loose upon earth will have been loosed inside of heaven. Again assuredly, I say to you that if two of you upon earth agree concerning any matter that you ask, it will be done for you in the presence of My Father inside the heavens {all around you}. For where two or three are gathered together into My name, I am there inside of and among them (Matthew 18:18-20).

Quiet certainty, like Elisha; aggressive confidence, like Elijah – this is where we live inside the call of God.

God Trusted Jeremiah. You see, we have a job to do, and our task is described for us from Genesis to Malachi.

Here is the problem with *“the old must vanish before the new can come”*; it’s the same reason Jesus commanded not to be pulling out tares. Most will be tearing down what God wants to build up and building up what God wants to tear down. Most will be jerking out wheat, calling it tares, and tending the tares, calling them wheat.

God trusted Jeremiah because He had placed in him the same heart that David carried towards God's people, towards Jerusalem. Everywhere I look, people are writing off the Christian church as FAILED. We refuse to do the same.

Do Not Be Dismayed. And yet – as God recently took me through – the very ones whom we claim inside the presence of God are opposed to us and to the word of full Salvation that we share. And their faces can be very hard (and frightening to me).

“Therefore prepare yourself and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them. For behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. **They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,” says the Lord, “to deliver you.”**

Knowing Jeremiah Personally. Here is the word to us. – To root out and to pull down, to build and to plant.

God does not want His people destroyed; He wants them to HEAR the voice of the Son out from God that they might live. **And when we say “God’s people in their hour of need,” we will be amazed at those who do hear and astonished at those who do not.**

Jeremiah was 21-22 when he was called of God to speak to the people of Jerusalem; he was 64 when the city was destroyed, a span of over 42 years, a time that means something to me personally. – God intends us to know these brethren personally.

Two Evils. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Everyone drinking of this water will thirst again. However, whoever might drink out of the water that I will give him, will never thirst in this age, but the water that I will give him

will become inside of him a spring of water bubbling up into age-unfolding life (John 4:13-14).

“Broken cisterns that can hold no water” are mental ideas about God and salvation – ideas cannot save anyone.

Turn Around. We could go through Jeremiah Chapter 2 and see how every one of God’s contentions with His people then are translated to the same problems God has with His people now. God has already set all Christians free into all Salvation now, but most still want to spin their own stories of self, contrary to Christ.

Then here is the same terrible word as we grappled with in “Isaiah and Love.” – Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you.

But with Jeremiah and Isaiah, the word was “turn”; with us, on the other hand, the word is “turn around.”

Treasonous Words. Then we see that, all the way through, Jeremiah was protected. Although he was opposed by many, yet none could hurt him. Even the general of Nebuchadnezzar’s forces treated Jeremiah with respect.

Consider the impossible word that Jeremiah spoke as the end of Jerusalem was coming near. The king sent two of Jeremiah’s enemies to “Inquire of the Lord for us.”

God’s answer in part. – Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him.

Submit to the Beast. Nebuchadnezzar represents the entirety of the beast government in our day. And his place in Scripture is something I have long held as a critical understanding for the church now in the end of this age.

God spoke through Jeremiah that “I have given all nations to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, those who serve him will survive and those who refuse will be destroyed.”

Then we see in Daniel’s story that this same Neb created a golden statute and commanded all to worship it. All the Jews did except for three, and, we assume, that Daniel was not there at that time.

**Just Don’t Worship It.** God has given the whole world to the arising of the beast in our day. All who fight against the beast in any natural way will be destroyed.

We are at the turning of the ages, and those who “fight” to restore “America as it was” are fighting FOR evil, not for the proving of Christ.

Yet at the same time, the beast has created an image, politicized ‘science’ and television news, and requires everyone to sing its song and to dance to its music – and all our brethren are doing exactly that. The difference between submitting to the beast in what is right and NOT worshipping the beast is a distinction that many fail to grasp.

Babylon Removed from Jerusalem. There is a huge difference between us now and Jeremiah in 586 BC. That difference is that Jeremiah spoke to the old, whereas God and us together are bringing forth the new.

Come out of her My people, so that you may not have fellowship together with her sins and so that you may not receive out of her afflictions and beatings (Revelation 18:4).



Yet this is Babylon, not our Jerusalem. And so, when God also says, “Shall not be in you anymore,” that is a most wonderful promise to us, for it means that our Jerusalem today will be fully free of Babylon. The pattern of the next lesson will take us to this focus.

I Weep. Finally, we want to consider a broken elderly man, in tears as he wanders around a broken and dead city.

A man so filled with word and so filled with hope in God and so filled with David’s heart towards Jerusalem, and now it is all ruin.

How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow is she... She weeps bitterly in the night, her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her. – Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow... For these things I weep; my eye, my eye overflows with water... – No one comforts her.

O Jerusalem. If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy (Psalm 137:5-6).

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, then let my right hand forget her cunning, and let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I prefer thee not above my chief joy.

If I were capable of such a thing, I would plant these same tears and this same sorrow inside of your heart towards ALL of God’s people all across the earth REGARDLESS of any nonsense to which they have attached themselves.

God with Me. Time and again through my life, I read these words, and they gave me such comfort inside the deepest recesses of my spirit, for by them I knew that God was with me.

I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. He has led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light. Surely He has turned His hand against me time and time

again throughout the day... He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and woe... He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy. Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer. He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.

I Hope in God. **And I said, “My strength and my hope have perished from the Lord.”** Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall. My soul still remembers and sinks within **me. This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord’s** mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every **morning; great is Your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I** hope in Him!”.

I have known these paths; I have shed these tears. – Yet you have as well, for the Lord has prepared you in the same way He has prepared me. JERUSALEM – our home.

Reading for Next Time. I have added a chapter, titled “From Sacrifice to Church,” that will include more on Isaiah and Jeremiah together as the pattern of God’s Heart towards Jerusalem.

First read Isaiah 8, paying close attention to verse 18, but see verse 18 in its context. Then, read Isaiah 53 slowly and thoughtfully – then read it again. In fact, you will benefit from writing it out on paper, considering every phrase. Peruse Lamentations 3 again as well.

When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

**Let’s Pray Together.** We are calling God into our world, and we are calling Him first as Judgment. The entrance into life is the Doorway of Judgment, for to know Christ is to cease from all not-Christ.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, all three show us this Judgment and how God enters as Judgment through us.

“God, our Father, we ask You together, as Jesus instructed us to speak in faith, that You would enter our world through us now as Judgment. For Father, we know that no one can hear Your wondrous Mercy, until they first accept their guilt in silence before You. Yet we also know, Dear Father, that Judgment to life remains a terrible thing in its beginnings.

The True Against the False. “Yet Father, we also know that it is not Jerusalem, our fellow believers across this earth, that is being removed, but Babylon, the confusion of falseness that has sat upon Your people even through the Church age.

“Therefore, Father, we ask You to be strength in us, that we might stand immovable as a bulwark for the true Jerusalem and against the false Babylon.

“And Father, we ask in confidence, knowing that it is not our doing or our size or our significance that means anything, but rather our shared Spirit of Devotion going forth from You and us together as Life.

Let Mercy Triumph. “Yet Father, even as Your purifying Judgment comes now upon Your people, we stand inside of Your Presence for their sakes, just as Jesus does, Father, FORGIVE them; Father KEEP them: Father, MAKE them HOLY to You.

“Father, we accept the same tears of Jeremiah over Your people, that You through us would not be just a tearing down, but that which builds a HOME for all, and that You through us would not be just a plucking up, but that which plants a garden of life and abundance for all.

“Father, we ask of You, let Your Judgment now be swift and true, and let Your Mercy triumph inside of all.”